SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SHAN NATIONALISM: A CASE STUDY OF THE SHAN STATE ARMY – SOUTH (SSA-SOUTH)

BY

MR PHANUPHAT CHATTRAGUL

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2020
COPYRIGHT OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SHAN NATIONALISM: A CASE STUDY OF THE SHAN STATE ARMY – SOUTH (SSA-SOUTH)

BY

MR PHANUPHAT CHATTRAGUL

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2020
COPYRIGHT OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY

THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

THESIS

BY

MR PHANUPHAT CHATTRAGUL

ENTITLED

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SHAN NATIONALISM: A CASE STUDY OF
THE SHAN STATE ARMY – SOUTH (SSA-SOUTH)

was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Political Science in Politics and International Relations

on _____January 9, 2021_____

Chairman _____

(Asst. Prof. M.L. Pinitbhand Paribatra, Ph. D.)

Member and Advisor _____

(Assoc. Prof. Chanintira na Thalang, Ph. D.)

Member _____

(Asst. Prof. Naruemon Thabchumpon, Ph. D.)

Dean _____

(Asst. Prof. Tavida Kamolvej, Ph. D.)

Thesis Title	SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SHAN NATIONALISM: A CASE STUDY OF THE SHAN STATE ARMY – SOUTH (SSA-SOUTH)
Author	Mr. Phanuphat Chattragul
Degree	Master of Political Science
Major Field/Faculty/University	Politics and International Relations Faculty of Political Science Thammasat University
Thesis Advisor	Assoc. Prof. Chanintira na Thalang, Ph.D.
Academic Years	2020

ABSTRACT

Despite various ceasefire agreements, violence in Shan state of Myanmar has not subsided. The Shan State Army-South (SSA-South) is one of anti-government insurgents that dismiss ceasefire agreements and continue their fight despite their lack of funding and well-organised military forces to fight for a separate Shan state from Myanmar. Due to the fact that the Shan nationalist movement is fragmented and divided into various groups, many groups have chosen to give up their fight or even cooperate with the central government of Myanmar. However, in the case of the SSA-South, they not only refuse to surrender but also persist with their fight regardless of structural changes in Myanmar's political landscape. Their fight is sustained by a common myth and belief in the rights and legitimacy of Shan nationhood which is a product of social construction dating back to colonial times and the first Panglong agreement. There are multiple channels that have been used to maintain Shan national identity. This thesis aims to examine how Shan nationalism and national identity are fortified through social constructivism but maintained and disseminated by multiple channels of social communication.

Keywords: Shan Nationalism, Identity Construction, SSA-South, Myanmar

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols/Abbreviations	Terms
BCP	Burmese Communist Party
JAC	Joint Action Committee
KMT	Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist) Army
KNLA	Karen National Liberation Army
NCA	Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement
NSH	Num Siek Han Army
RCSS	Restoration Council of the Shan State
SDU	Shan Democracy Union
SNA	Shan National Army
SNLD	Shan Nationalities League for Democracy
SNUF	Shan National Union Force
SSA	Shan State Army
SSA-North	Shan State Army-North
SSA-South	Shan State Army-South
SSIA	Shan State Independent Army
SSNA	Shan State National Army
SSNO	Shan State National Organisation
SSPP	Shan State Progress Party
SSRC/ MTA	Shan State Restoration Council/ Mong Tai Army
SUA	Shan United Army
SURA	Shan United Revolutionary Army
TRC/TRA	Tailand Revolutionary Council/ Tailand Revolutionary Army
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation
UWSA/ UWSP	United Wa State Army/ United Wa State Party

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Southeast Asia is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in the world. From its ethnic diversity, it sometimes evolves into an ethnic conflict which causes numerous negative effects. Many ethnic insurgents have taken up arms such as those in Thailand's southern border provinces, Mindanao (in the Philippines) as well as Shan state (in Myanmar) which continue to threaten lives and livelihoods, challenge state governance and hinder social and economic development. As majority of ethnic conflicts have emerged since independence, many groups have become involved in illicit trades such as drugs and arms trades in order to fund their continuous fight against the central government.

Like many other armed ethnic groups in Southeast Asia, many insurgent groups in Shan state have benefited from illicit drug trade such as opium which have been there since the days of colonial rule. Strong armed movement such as the United Wa State Army (UWSA) boasts a fighting force of up to 30,000 men equipped with modern weaponry can be attributed to income from narcotics as well as support from China. Based on perspectives of both local and foreign intellectuals, warlordism and ongoing ethnic conflicts in Shan area are sustained by either transborder support or income from illicit trades (Black, 2006; Brown 1999; Chao Tzang, 1987). Black (2006) assumes in his study of the communist UWSA that Chinese support (to have the UWSA as a geopolitical buffer) is an important element in enduring the insurgency while Brown (1999) stresses that opium trade is a source of income for warlords to procure arms and weapons to counter central government's forces.

As the empirical evidence and theoretical discussions have shown, conflict is a political phenomenon that is often economically driven (Meehan, 2015; Woods, 2011). However, paradoxically there are also some cases of armed ethnic movements that lack financial sources but have illustrated the ability to keep on fighting. The Shan State Army-South (SSA-South) is a nationalist army that continue fighting. The SSA-South was a post-Cold War Shan nationalist army succeeding the Mong Tai Army

(MTA). Nonetheless, unlike the MTA which is an armed group heavily involved in narcotics, the SSA-South refuses to involve in illicit drug trades which was a prosperous source of income. Despite international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) halted their monetary support to the SSA-South following democratisation and various ceasefire agreements in Myanmar, the SSA-South keep continue fighting against Myanmar and the *Tatmadaw* (Myanmar army). The question arises: what drives the SSA-South to keep on fighting?

By examining at the SSA-South in the media, one could observe Shan nationalist sentiment which most of the time demonstrate through images of military parades on Loi Tai Laeng. The leader of the movement, Chao Yawd Serk usually seeks transnational attention in order to gain support for the struggle for the group. Without subsequent financial aids and support from international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), Chao Yawd Serk gives emphasis to Shan independence and Shan nationalism as raison d'etre of the group. By juxtaposing nationalism and warlordism, it could be seen that warlordism is not only about income or support but also about how nationalism persists and is maintained. Nationalism, in this place, is sustained through multiple means of communication (Bieber, 2018; Ivarsson, 2018).

1.1.1 Thesis objectives
(1) To contribute to the theoretical discussions on Shan nationalism
(2) To offer different theoretical perspectives by utilising social constructivism in explaining construction of national identity.
(3) To contribute to the existing literature on the SSA-South which is scarce and rare.
(4) To explore intertwining relationship of nationalism and international political economy of war, conflict and ceasefire.
(5) To understand why economic incentives occasionally fail to be the cause to ongoing war and conflict.
(6) To see the process of how Shan nationalist sentiment is disseminated and is key to prolonging the conflict.

1.2 Theoretical framework

Because of the reduction of support from INGOs due to the nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA), the SSA-South has been compelled to reinforce their distinct ethnic nationalist identity to differentiate themselves from the rest in Myanmar. This construction of ethnic nationalist identity requires multi-faceted utilisation of political and sociological tools. As Harari (2018) and Conversi et al. (2019) suggest, humans have the ability to tell a story and that story could potentially replace old one with a new set of perspectives. The change in perspectives, most of the time, could form a new identity. For example, after the end of the World War II, the Shan identity changed under two contexts: first, reducing Shan ethnic identity to Myanmar one; second, drug as an ethnic indication of Shan people – for the SSA-South, it constructed an 'anti-ethno-narcotic identity' (Thitiwut Boonyawongwiwat, 2018). From this standpoint, this thesis not only requires a theory that could capture change in identity but also a theory that fit the SSA-South in particular, especially when the Shan nation is claimed to be pre-modern and transcending the physical boundaries of modern Shan state. Nevertheless, without recording and storytelling, a Shan could not realise themselves as a Shan. Therefore, this thesis follows social constructivism that views nationalism as a dependent variable (Brown, 1999; Hetcher & Okamoto, 2001; Smith, 1981). I use the instrumental approach rather than historical processes approach in viewing Shan nationalism as history has shown discontinuity and the emphasis of nationalist elements varies under different generations of leaders. In case of the SSA-South, Shan nationalism is not only constructed by political elites but also disseminated by multiple channels of social communication including advanced communication technologies that help elites to assimilate them from afar (Conversi et al., 2019), especially when those means contain certain accepted myth and symbols of ethnic golden age (Amporn Jirattikorn, 2007; Leoussi, 2004). The explanation of theoretical framework will be elaborated in the following chapter.

1.2.1 Theory of nationalism

There are many types of nationalism theory, and they can be divided into two main groups: primordialism and modernism. For the primodialists, nation is natural, transmitted, and tied to blood and genes. They argue that national identity is not changeable and inevitable which means individuals have no control over it (Geertz, 1963; Shils, 1957). For example, an American-born assimilated Chinese American will still be Chinese regardless because of his/her physical appearance. However, this primordial view has been rejected by many scholars in the field for being static. On the contrary, the modernists view national identity as a result of modernity including industrialisation that requires national language standardisation to create new political unit (Gellner, 1983) and printing press that formed an 'imagined community' of shared social, cultural, and national code (Anderson, 1983). However, upon closer look of Shan nationalism in particular, we can see references to the ancient Shan empire under Chao Seua Khan Fa and post-colonial divided ethnic groups in Shan state. In other words, collective myth and national symbol are strong features of national identity. Therefore, social processes of storytelling are crucial to give meanings and orientations to the audience (Hutchinson, 2001). Some stories may have roots in the past but every story has to have an ability to bind a nation or an ethnic group together through certain 'sacred foundations' which is usually relatable to older beliefs, symbols, and ritual of traditional religions (Smith, 2003). Nonetheless, Smith's ethno-symbolism does not explicitly emphasise how nationalist sentiment is disseminated. Therefore, this thesis aims to explain how national sentiment is dispersed through multiple channels.

1.2.2 Hypothesis

Shan national identity of the SSA-South, which is a basis of Shan nationalism, is constructed by the use of common myth and symbols and changes according to how leaders place an emphasis on different elements but it is maintained through the use of multiple channels of communication including social gatherings, radio, news and social media.

For this thesis, the resilience of Shan nationalism of the SSA-South is the dependent variable. The independent variables include social gatherings of Shan

community; radio transmitting the message of the SSA-South's leader; news about the SSA-South's military and struggle; and social media that the SSA-South has employed.

1.3 Literature Review

Upon closer examination of most studies about Myanmar, the majority of IR literatures treats Myanmar as a single unified nation-state in which ethnic conflicts are internal affairs as reflected in many articles on foreign policy where Myanmar is a sole legitimate actor (Fiori & Passeri, 2015; Han, 2017; Shee, 2002; Trager, 1956). But in reality, ethnic conflicts have a transnational impact that could destabilise state's security as much as conventional inter-state conflicts. Though there have been specific research focusing on ethnic conflicts in Myanmar (Burke et al., 2017), most of the studies talk about ethnic conflicts in general and under the shadow of nation-state actors and literatures concerning about the SSA-South is rare. Two from only few studies has directly emphasised the SSA-South (Amporn Jirattikorn, 2011; Thitiwut Boonyawongwiwat, 2018). Nevertheless, their works do not explain why the SSA-South has to continue their fight despite lack of income and nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA). Up to this point, there is no existing literature that has explored the SSA-South and their nationalist sentiment through social constructivism to explain nationalism that the SSA-South and Chao Yawd Serk use as primary reason for their nationalist fight.

A large proportion of the existing literature focuses on the drug trade in the Shan state as a source of funding for war that can be traced back to pre-colonial Myanmar. Both local and foreign intellectuals have continued to produce academic studies on the relationship between the drug trade and conflict in Shan state. Chao Tzang (1987) suggests that groups in Shan state are naturally fragmented into various subgroups led by warlords rather than a nationalist leader. Those warlords control illicit informal economy like opium trade to finance their armies as well as to maintain their autonomy. Similarly, Brown (1999) agrees with Chao Tzang (1987) that warlordism in Shan areas during the Cold War was a product of illicit trades and cultivation of opium. He also points out that the continuous violence is not only because the Myanmar central government failed to stop, but also reaps in the benefits. Likewise, Meehan (2015)

convincingly shows that Myanmar government and the *Tatmadaw* recent ceasefire with the ethnic insurgency has economic purpose by transforming past warzones into new economic zones. A study by Woods (2011) is also in concurrence with Meehan (2015) which illustrates how the ceasefire transforms resources-rich warzones into foreign concession areas under Myanmar government and the *Tatmadaw*'s control. Moreover, under 'ceasefire capitalism', ethnic armed elites, *Tatmadaw* commander and business people mutually gain profit from those ceasefire extraction (Global Witness, 2015, p. 61; McCarthy, 2019, p. 29). For the skilled insurgents, instead of seeking guns, they turn to be employees to make their livings and survive. However, while some of these studies provide useful implications to the study of sustenance of conflict by some groups, such perspectives cannot explain the SSA-South continuous fight despite the NCA, lack of income and support. Therefore, it is important to study the SSA-South through an alternative perspective.

Literatures focusing specifically on the SSA-South as a case are rare but not entirely non-existent. Amporn Jirattikorn (2011) and Thitiwut Boonyawongwiwat (2018) are two contemporary studies that are worth mentioning. Though these two studies mostly explain identity of the SSA-South, they stimulate ideas how this could be further developed. Amporn Jirattikorn (2011) explores the relations between SSA-South and mass media in igniting Shan nationalism from afar. She demonstrates that militarised images affect the audience Shan nationalistic sentiment. On the other hand, Thitiwut (2018) argues that the SSA-South nationalism stems from their leader's (Chao Yawd Serk) decision to promote anti-ethno narcotic culture. He presents that the role of narcotics in Shan nationalism has been altered in the official wordings of different generations of Shan leaders. Nowadays, as Chao Yawd Serk ethnically identifies drugs as a threat to Shan people liberation. SSA-South war for liberation is therefore a war against narcotics (Thitiwut Boonyawongwiwat, 2018). This anti-ethno narcotic culture not only distinguishes the SSA-South from other Shan drug trading insurgents but also illustrates that the SSA-South is a part of Thai state's drug eradication program as well as Thainess (*Kwam Pen Thai*). From the two studies, they inspire me to explore theory of nationalism more closely and constructively.

1.3.1 SSA-South and Shan nationalism

As Chanintira na Thalang (2009) puts, 'though modernisation theorists think that nationalism would decline, nationalist sentiment remains alive in most part of the world'. Nationalist sentiment drives people to protect their group from being destroyed by outside enemies. In defining who is us and them, nationalist consciousness has to be created. For Brass (1991), nationalism is constructed and sustained by elites in order to maintain their political and economic benefits. On the other hand, Shils (1957) and Geertz (1963) argue that nations are ancient, historic, and fixed based on language and territory. However, this primordial view does not open a space for nationalist sentiment of those who genetically belong to one ethnic group but are emotionally attached to another. For example, the West Timorese that are ethnically the same as the East Timorese but are loyal to the Indonesian nation. Therefore, I find social constructivism suitable for understanding the sense national identity chosen by individuals. The evidence, in Shan case, has also shown that nationalist consciousness is only born after the World War II since ancient people in this region fight for their personal glory not for their ethnic groups (Chao, 1987). Hence, nationalism in Shan state is obviously not primordial but rather a political and social construction like in Brass' view that political elites select historical facts and manipulate their audience. But unlike ancient Shan people, nowadays Shans perceive the world around them as the world of nation-states where they expect to see each nation to have own state (under globalisation and widespread of knowledge and information).

Hence, in my perspective, Shan nationalism of the SSA-South results from social constructivism by political elites, social interactions and channels of social communication. Not surprisingly, this enables the SSA-South leaders to keep separating Shan ethnic identity from that of the Burmese by the use of various communication methods. Moreover, the negative social interactions of the SSA-South members with Myanmar and other ethnic groups also encourage them to maintain their ethnic struggle for their own 'communal' nationalist goals. Regarding ethnicity, Taylor (2007) also presented that ethnic distinction and antagonism are legacies of British colonisation that result in multiple ethnic nationalisms in Myanmar.

1.4 Methodology

Data collection is principally reliant on qualitative methods. The method I use is content analysis. My main objective of the research is to see how nationalist sentiment is prolonged as well as processes of dissemination which keep the Shan nationalist sentiment alive. Sources of primary data will include documents and clips from and about the SSA-South as well as Chao Yawd Serk since their nationalist ideas are compressed in many interviews and media they utilised. Furthermore, most of the data is also available in Thai language which I can comprehend. In addition, I would refer to interviews of other SSA-South's members including the people who join the movement as it would prove that national identity is a social construct rather than primordial. I view that data taken from people is also fitting since those SSA-South members could provide me with the idea of the main incentives behind nationalist fight whether it is to fight or ceasefire. Considering this, I suspect that economic benefits are what determine the fight. However, the SSA-South, despite their lack of funding, they keep on fighting. According to many interviews, the reason behind their fight is because of the belief that Shan state should be independent among the SSA-South members. However, I realise some limitations that the interviews could offer only picked-and-chose samples of whom that can talk (or allowed to talk). In transcending this, secondary sources, such as previous works regarding the SSA-South and theoretical proceedings will be used my analysis to assess that to which extent ideological ethnic nationalism can persist as well as its relation to tangible benefits that support ethnic nationalism.

Considering ethical issues, the issue of representation might lead to representation bias. As most of my primary data sources are overwhelmingly in Thai, I am also concerned with the translation from Shan to Central Thai language. The 'lost in translation' paradigm may lead to misunderstanding as there are many vocabularies and pronunciation disparities that are unintelligible to me as a native of Central Thai dialect. Therefore, this thesis cannot be a sole representative of reality, but as only a part of reality.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Theory of nationalism

Table 2.1

Debate positions on nationalism

What occurred first?	Time (pre-modern/ modern)	Type (ideology, politics, sentiment)	Key factor (culture, economy, politics)	Theory (short name)	Theorist (example)
Nation	Modern	Sentiment	Culture (belief as identity)	Primordialism	Walker Connor
Nation	Pre-modern (ethnie)	Sentiment	Culture (myths and memories)	Ethno-symbolism	Anthony Smith
Nation	Pre-modern	Sentiment	Culture (beliefs as creeds)	Perennialism	Adrian Hastings
Nationalism	Modern	Sentiment	Economy (industry)	Modernism	Ernest Gellner
Nationalism	Modern	Sentiment	Culture (communication)	Modernism	Benedict Anderson
Nationalism	Modern	Ideology	Culture (intellectuals)	Modernism	Elie Kedourie
Nationalism	Modern	Politics	Politics (elite and modern states)	Modernism	Paul Brass; Charles Tilly; Michael Mann

Note: From "Nationalism, national self-determination, and international relations," by J. Breuilly, 2017, in J. Baylis, S. Smith, & P. Owen (Eds.), *The globalization of world politics: An introduction to international relations*, pp. 435-437, Copyright 2017 by Oxford: Oxford University Press.

As Table 2.1 has shown, scholars have been debating whether nation and nationalism are modern or pre-modern as well as what factor creates them. Although no consensus has yet been reached, I think there is no right and wrong. Each theory could explain certain scenarios, but has no capacity to universally explain all situations since each nation has developed and evolved differently. Therefore, before picking up any approach, we should carefully study the unit of analysis (nation) beforehand.

Considering the Shan, Shan nation is of course not as modern as American, Australian or other settler colonies of Latin America. Like China, Japan and nations in

the Old World and the natives of the New World, Shan nation has their own distinct culture tied to the Shan language and beliefs. If we situate a Shan next to a Burmese, we could observe a difference similar to how we see an English and Irish. This means that we cannot reduce whole Shan history to a product of economic industrialisation. However, for the SSA-South, ideology may have capacity to explain its anti-ethno-narcotic identity (Thitiwut, 2018). Moreover, considering communication channels the SSA-South leaders utilise and social interactions that construct Shan ethnic identity for the SSA-South, the emphasis on 'anti-ethno-narcotic identity' over other characters in maintaining Shan national identity as 'war against drugs' could increase its legitimacy and recognition.

2.1.1 What is nation and nationalism?

Before moving on to nationalism, I think it is vital to know how we define what is nation. Anderson (1983) describes that 'nation is imagined because it entails a sense of communion or horizontal comradeship between people who often do not know each other or have not even met'. In his view, nation is seen as a community rather than a blood inside each person's veins from birth. For sociologists, community is a form of social organisation based on spatially bounded locality (Delanty, 2003). Nation, for social scientists, is thus social rather than natural. Nation becomes nationalism when one belief in the superiority or uniqueness of one's community over others (Gries et al., , 2011; Gustafsson, 2014).

Nevertheless, a definition of nation has been occasionally mixed up with an ethnic especially in non-Western world. This is because of the confusion between civic and ethnic nationalism in the post-colonial states. Civic nationalism derives from a form of nationalism after the French Revolution which values political institutions such as commitment to a centralised nation-state (Surachart Bamrungsuk, 2007; Breuilly, 2017). This idea of Westphalian nation-state is exported around the world, through colonisation, it problematises the ethnic to see themselves as a nation, or even a state like how civic nationalism perceives. The term 'ethnic' has its roots in Greek *ethnos* meaning people. In Shan state, the people associate themselves with other sets of distinct culture, but they are colonised by western concepts such as citizenship. Therefore, for legitimacy, those ethnic will seek to establish their nation-state since the

old set of cultural practices such as *Mandala* or *Chao Pha (Saopha)* system have been collapsed. Notwithstanding, in essence, Shan nationalism is still a form of ethnic nationalism since it is a commitment to a group of (imagined) common community not to the colonising state of neither Britain nor Myanmar (Breuilly, 2017).

2.1.2 'Us' and 'Them'

'REFERENCE TO OTHERNESS IS MADE BY IDENTIFYING WITH OTHER NATIONS'

(Thongchai Winichakul, 1994 p. 5)

Note. From *Siam mapped: A history of the geo-body of a nation* by Thongchai Winichakul, 1994, University of Hawaii Press.

Thongchai Winichakul (1994) and Leach (1970) share a similar view that people defines their nation by contrasting themselves with other nations. Thongchai calls this as 'negative identification' (Thongchai Winichakul, 1994, p. 5). This negative identification always operates in relations to the other. In other words, we come to know of who we are by interacting and communicating with others. In the process of interaction, we cannot avoid to postulate certain subject, name or word to make it communicable such as Shan, Lao or Burmese. After knowing who we are, we become a part of something all of a sudden.

Differences between nations per se does not cause conflict; however, in the social world, interactions are inevitable. Some interaction may lead to a change in association with certain characteristics since national identity can be fluid (Chanintira na Thalang, 2009). Nonetheless, some interactions may foster the estrangement of certain nation such as war and violence. This bitterness is sentimental and buried in a nation's memory, recording, and myth. From this point, each nation starts to have their own version of memory and eventually identity.

'Us' and 'Them' is a common term to express binary choice. This means one always has to choose, include and exclude all the time. This practice of exclusion

results in different treatment and standard. Although nation is supposed to be the same, it is different by who possesses it or who is ready to sacrifice for it.

2.1.3 The social psychology of nationalism

Why do we have to possess or sacrifice for a nation? This question may arise after a nation has been formed, especially for individuals who might prioritise their personal or family life over a nation. To answer this, I would refer to social psychology. Lauren Langman has published a chapter named *The Social Psychology of Nationalism: To Die for the Sake of Strangers* in *The Sage handbook of nations and nationalism* (2006) edited by Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar. Langman has examined back to Sigmund Freud's work on civilisation (1961). Freud (1961) states that human has a desire to attach themselves with certain symbol and entity to hurt or destroy others (Langman, 2006, p. 67). Family, clan, and nation are all symbols to which individuals can attach. In contrast to Freud, I think a desire to harm others is quite biased. I think a person is more likely to strike back rather than being pre-emptive, so I believe that people fight back in order to restore and reclaim their symbol that has been taken away.

Langman (2006), in addition, has raised another important insight from Becker (1973) and Kecmanovic (1996) that 'people generally find comfort in being with those who are similar; group membership becomes an antidote to loneliness, nothingness and anxiety, which is ultimately based on fear of death' (Langman, 2006, p. 73). This desire to get out of fretfulness as well as to survive drives people to participate in the community such as nation. In my perspective, I would like to add that (imagined) nation is a spare sanctuary for individuals who might think that only being in a family or clan alone is inadequate to be secured (both physically and psychologically). A strong nation could safeguard individuals, clans, and their families all together. Hence, fighting or dying for a nation is personal, public, and political at the same time.

2.1.4 A nursery for nationalism

'WE CONSUME SHAN MUSIC TO REMINDS US OF OUR HOME' -
An interview with a Shan migrant in Chiang Mai.

(Amporn Jirattikorn, 2007)

Note. From *Living on both sides of the border: Transnational migrants, pop music and nation of the Shan in Thailand* by A. Jirattikorn, 2007, Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development.

'Exile is the nursery of nationalism' quoted by Anderson (1998) from Acton's "*Politique tirée de l'Écriture Sainte*" in *Oeuvres de Bossuet* (1870) can best explain the displaced and dislocated sentiments (Acton, 1870). Nationalism for those in-exile can be more intense than natives standing on that land. As I have stated earlier, nation is a social construct that individuals embrace to be a part of them. Therefore, nation is attached to individual or ethnic in everywhere they go. Acceptance of oneself is thus acceptance of nation. Being a part of certain nation is not solely voluntary, yet is interactional. Some national essence will remain in oneself long after one left their national sphere, and one cannot deny that. During the part of childhood, each individual experience and is exposed to different environment. Moreover, in order to grow up, human needs support from other humans and to behave in certain ways. Elias (1978) uses the term 'the invention of childhood' and systemic child-rearing to explain how one acquire manners, etiquette and control over bodily desire and impulsivity. (Langman, 2006, p. 69).

The term 'invention of childhood' reminds me of a book titled *The Invention of Tradition* (1983). In the first page, Hobsbawn contends that many traditions that seems old are invented or made up (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1963). To elaborate, national myth is perpetuated by elites through repetition and showing the continuity from the (golden) past. For example, the British parliament building is being built in the Gothic style but not in other shape because the Gothic form (which was a structure used by the Church) represents power (Then & Now, 2018). The Gothic architecture, 'invention of childhood' and systemic child-rearing, in Hegelian term, are the quest for recognition by the Other [Slave] (Langman, 2006, p. 74). Following this psychological logic, each individual is assimilated as an ethnic having their goal set up

by the Other. Nationalism arise from this is reactional as well as intrinsic since one recognises oneself from what other portrays and acts upon them. A Shan migrant in Chiang Mai would not feel as nostalgic if they listen to Shan music in Shan state as they were in Thailand. The feeling of longing for a nation that is physically unpresented always bring nationalist sentiment to the mind.

2.1.5 An alternative to existing nationalism theory?

As far as I have research through various views of nationalism theory, theory of nationalism seems to be divided into two main schools: primordialism and modernism. However, I personally find this division lacking in terms of explaining how national identity is maintained. In addition, I find this separation could easily bring confusion since some audiences may mixed up modernism with modernisation. Therefore, I use the term 'social constructivism' to explain modernism. In my opinion, it is a simpler than modernism and this term could be understood even to those outside the study of nationalism.

Social constructivism, despite not being entirely new concept of social science, can explain how nationalist sentiment is built and maintained by leaders and social interactions. Social constructivism is thus an inclusive term. In construction of national identity, there are two independent variables: first, leaders and their use of multiple tools to send out their nationalist message; second, social community that help echo as well as reflect the numbers of people with that shared national identity. Channels that help to send nationalist message includes radio, television, and words of nationalist leaders.

Through this form, nationalism is kept alive through a transboundary network of communication. Those tools become instruments of whom that create or have influence over it. This maintains social memories shared among the members and their national identity, especially when other alternative or representative that could reflect their existence and match well with their personal interests is not available.

2.2 Social constructivism in the modern age

While modernism stresses the role of modernity in igniting a sense of nationalism, it does not, by and large, discuss tools that socially constructs national identity in details. In addition to social constructivism in the past, national identity construction nowadays can be influenced from afar. The SSA-South leader could be physically absent but still able to send the message to members such as appearing in news, social media such as Twitter or publishing a book.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to bear in mind that, those tools are used as instruments to keep the myths and memories alive instead of constructing whole new identity. To me, the SSA-South identity is not different from former Shan movements as they always have their ethnic Shan identity preserved and does not, even at once, perceive themselves as ethnic Burmese (Chao, 1987; Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2012; Sai Aung Tun, 2009; Shan Human Rights Foundation, 1998; Shan Human Rights Foundation & Shan Women's Action Network, 2002; Thongtai, 1998).

Communication tools are media to disseminate nationalist information, yet it has no capacity to force people to believe in some agenda unless the people prefer to believe it. Beliefs, in this place, are not modern but are products from older generations. Hence, certain myths and memories are always relevant for nationalist construction even after the time of printing press and industrialisation. Hence, there is a constant need for ethnic identity maintenance by inciting members using ethnic nationalist narratives including reproduction of ethnic glory and nationalist goals.

Figure 2.1

Role of communication tools and social interactions in igniting ethnic nationalism
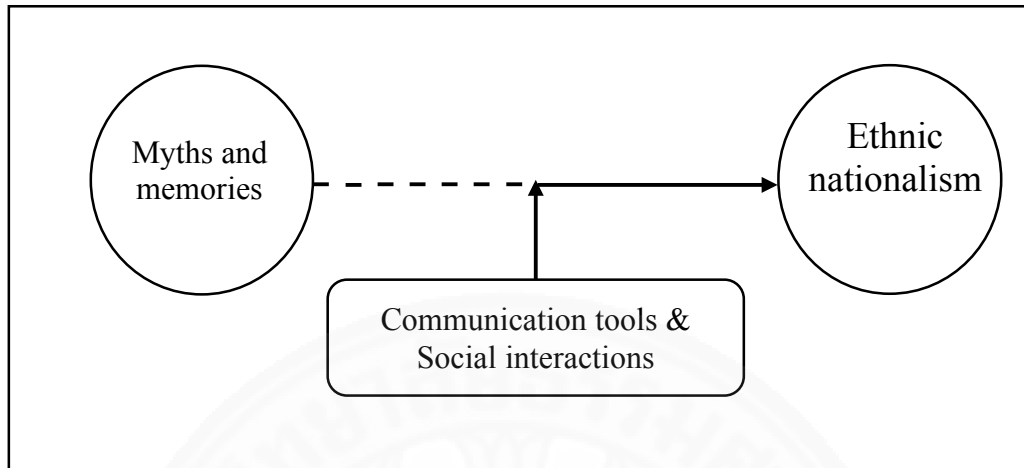
According to Figure 2.1, it can be seen that myths and memories are sources of ethnic nationalism. However, without instruments like communication tools and social interactions, myths and memories cannot be sustained. Furthermore, myths and memories will gradually die out if there is no mention or a lack of continuation of storytelling. In this manner, older myths and memories always need to be revised in order to catch up with modernity.

However, while I agree with ethno-symbolists that myth and memories are important, how leader successfully manipulate nationalism is also essential. I think that nationalist leaders always need these 'ancient' foundations to substantiate their claims as well as to keep the recent 'invented traditions' functioning well.

Nonetheless, having communication channels alone is not enough since any instrument needs an input to function. Therefore, myths and memories become an input to generate nationalism. These pre-modern beliefs are intensified and properly recorded through the usage of multiple communication tools. According to Gergen (2001), modernity facilitates connections of people who reside in different places which also contribute to transboundary shared realities, values and agenda (Gergen, 2001, p. 192). This also eases social interactions of scattered communities who perceive themselves as part of shared myths and memories. A perfect example of this are the Jewish population since they are not easily assimilated due to their strong religious beliefs and language. On the other hand, some may argue that examples of Southern Chinese immigrants in Thailand (Thai Chinese) and Eastern European immigrant in the

US (White American) may fit more with modernist construction of national identity considering their high degree of assimilation. In my opinion, I think that certain pre-modern identity from the past always pass from generation to generation. This is because interactions with the other always reemphasise differences of certain ethnic and national identity. Differentiation gives a feeling of being alienated and drives a person to 'attach' themselves with those who are similar to them in order to avoid being denied (Langman, 2006, pp. 73-76).

Freud (1961) believes people have a desire to be recognised and fulfilled, so they tie themselves up with abstract identities like nations (Langman, 2006, p. 67). Together with improved channels of communication, people could adopt nationalist identity at ease. They become a part of long path of national memories. After one realised themselves as a part, they are susceptible to follow nationalist agenda from their nationalist comrades. What is different with the modern communication channels is that they transcend nation-state's boundaries and can be reproduced in more absolute amount and a lot quicker than 'print-capitalism' (Anderson, 1983). Nevertheless, according to 2019 World Press Freedom Index, Myanmar was ranked in 'a difficult situation' (Reporters sans frontières, 2019), along with high poverty rate, this contributes to the low number of internet subscribers in Myanmar. As a result, only few ethnic nationalist narratives could survive. Therefore, apart from the internet, Shan nationalist leaders has to rely on other additional channels such as schooling, news as well as cultural gatherings both in the SSA-South controlled-areas like Loi Tai Leang and in Thailand to disseminate Shan nationalism. Through these channels, the SSA-South could manage to maintain Shan nationalist identity and nationalism which are their main reasons for their continuous fight for independence.

2.2.1 Fluidity of national identity

Jenkins (1997) defines ethnicity as a dialectical interplay between similarities and differences which are reproduced during interactions that Kachin identity in Highland Burma is flexible rather than fixed over time (Jenkins, 1997, pp. 13-14). I find this corresponds to what Chanintira na Thalang (2009) calls as 'a fluidity of national identity'. Although both tackle the issue of national identity from different fields, social anthropology and political science respectively, their argument could explain how national identity is flexible and fluid rather than unchangeable.

Ethnic or national identity in this place is the same one, yet an emphasis is put on different elements in different era. For example, Thai royalist-nationalist ideology placed an emphasis on the 'royal' during Sarit era while Field Marshall Pleak emphasise on 'nation' (*Chat*). This is what Chanintira na Thalang (2009) calls as fluid as the definition of national identity slightly changes across time depends on the selection of nationalist messages from leaders. However, the basis of Thai identity remains there. I find this expression of identity helpful in applying to the SSA-South who now put an emphasis on 'anti-ethno-narcotic identity' but having an ethnic Shan identity as a basis.

Considering economic logic, 'anti-ethno-narcotic identity' is of course not an ethnic nationalist identity that is preferred by other Shan nationalist groups. As a result, many groups have chosen to be in opposition to the SSA-South who holds 'war against drugs' policy and views narcotics as a threat to Shan national liberation. This demonstrates that economic needs are not primary concerns to the SSA-South members. Therefore, I think that political explanations could provide us an answer. Waltz (1989) states that the goal of individuals is to increase their power in order to securitise themselves. This stance has been supported by social psychologists that the fact every human seeks to survive is undeniable and is driven by the fear of death (Becker, 1973; Kecmanovic, 1996).

Myths and memories are essential to sustenance of ethnic and national identity. Without them, any nationalist instigation would ultimately fail. Hence, shared social memory has to always be dusted off. Social memory, according to Brewer (2006), is 'a set of specific public remembrances that are manipulated and constructed by various social practices' (Brewer, 2006, p. 215). In this way, social practices not

only give meaning to social memory but also keep an identity alive. Ethnic and national identity are thus in a constant maintenance by social practices. When one group is humiliated due to their identity, they will remember and react to that injustice by upholding the pain and spread it around both violently and peacefully. Together with today's increasing channel of communications, certain nationalist group will remain focused on particular national memories which makes the process of 'forgetting' unattainable.

2.3 Conclusion

In my perspective, I think 'social construction of national identity' is the most suitable approach to capture how national identity and nationalism are sustained. Moreover, social constructivism can be an inclusive term that could bring less controversies in study of nationalism. In applying social constructivism, it is required to study historical backgrounds and origin of the case beforehand which helps the researcher to identify that whether the case should fall into civic nationalism or ethnic nationalism. Generally civic nationalism would come from shared political ideology whereas ethnic nationalism has its roots in family, kinship, language and culture.

For the case of the SSA-South, though it holds a quality of ethnic nationalism, it should not be forgotten that the group has been recently formed despite their ancient claims. The SSA-South thus pose an interesting and challenging case for historians who follow discontinuous historical processes. Therefore, this thesis will mainly look at the SSA-South nationalist identity formation through instrumentalist lens: namely, through communication tools utilised by leaders and social interactions. Nonetheless, any nationalist messages and beliefs have to refer to the myths and memories of the past which are well-recorded and continuously reproduced.

CHAPTER 3

FROM SHAN TO THE SSA-SOUTH

3.1 Introduction

'THE FISH LIVES WHEN THE WATER IS HOT. THE FISH DIES WHEN THE WATER IS COLD. (NAM HAWN PA PEN, NAM YEN PA TAI)' – Tai Leu (1998) on Tai saying

(Sai Keunsai, 2018, as cited in South & Lall, 2018, pp. 191-192)

Note. From *Citizenship in Myanmar: Ways of being in and from Burma*, by A. South & M. Lall, Chiang Mai University Press.

I begin this chapter by picking up a Tai saying since it has been able to capture the situation in Shan state in general. According to Sai Keunsai (2018), a Tai Leu representative from Xixuangbanna said in a seminar he attended:

> You Shans are living under suppression, like a fish in hot water, you therefore do everything to survive. So, your literature and culture live on. However, we Tai Leu, bestowed freedom by the Chinese government to preserve, promote and propagate our literature and culture, face a bigger opponent – our own youth. Given a choice between Tai and Chinese literatures and cultures, they are not interested in their own heritage anymore. To them, the choice is to go the Chinese way. Had our literature and culture been suppressed and strangled like you are, these young people would have been easier to convince.

(Sai Keunsai, 2018 as cited in South & Lall, 2018, p. 192)

I think this metaphor could explain why hardships and oppression fails to stop people from giving up on their own national identity. Furthermore, all those difficulties even are fortification which make national assimilation of the state even harder.

When we want to access the origin of Shan nation. It may be subjected to various debates just like how we argue in natural philosophy of what comes prior to what. As the exact birth of Shan nationalist consciousness is unknown, we then have to rely on existing information from various academics. Nevertheless, we have to bear in mind that the pre-modern nationalist consciousness here is accessible by modern materials which means that there is a limitation to claim that every recorded history is valid. Nevertheless, I, instead, think that the validity of the material depends on the acceptance rather than being real. Hence, I will not treat the recorded evidences as ultimate truth, yet as an 'accepted reality' that is used to support and legitimate modern actions.

This chapter is mainly considering how Shan ethnic identity has been used as a basis of Shan nationalism as well as the genesis of the SSA-South. I will concentrate my focus on existing evidences related to the Shan nationalism that guide or even dictate the SSA-South to act in certain 'acceptable' way. In the following sections, I will talk about Shan history until the emergence of the SSA-South.

3.2 What makes Shan nationalism?

If we take a look back to the physical area called 'Shan state' which means a state of the Shan, we may get puzzled when only ethnic Shan is calling themselves Shan while other refer to themselves in the own ethnic term without –Shan suffix. In total population of 8 million, there are roughly 20 ethnic groups in Shan state: Shan, Palaung (Ta-arng), Pa-O (Taungsu), Wa, Kachin, Dhanu, Intha, Lahu (Muser), Akha (Ekaw), Kokangese, Padaung (Kayan), Lisu (Lisaw), Yang-lam, Liju, Chinese, Indian, Burmese, En, Dhanor, Palay etc. (Akhanee Moonmek, 2005, p. 144). Not only there are many of non-Shan groups residing in Shan state, the ethnic Shan themselves are divided into subgroups based on their ideological affiliations. In addition, Shan state being located in the nation-state of Myanmar has made the national identity issues far more complex.

Describing who is a Shan is both simple and difficult at the same time. In the most familiar way, we might describe a person from Shan state as a Shan. However, that identification ignores the fact that not everyone in Shan state is ethnically Shan.

The area designated as Shan state is also home to other ethnic groups including Kachin, Wa, Akha, Lahu and many others. Therefore, Shan is an ethnic based on common language, culture, and history not only on common place of residence based on administrative divisions. Nevertheless, differences in ethnicity do not necessarily mean that each ethnic will fight against one another, yet it is a discrepancy of ideology as well as colonial legacy that instilled ethnic antagonisms (Taylor, 2007, pp. 74-76). In the pre-colonial Shan state, during the building of city states (*Sang Baan Peang Mueang*), Mon, Burmese, and Shan normally fought among themselves not because of their ethnic differences but different interests (Chao, 1987). Shan nationalism, which is exclusive to ethnic Shan, was not there until the term ethnic Shan was portrayed in opposition to other nationalisms in Myanmar based on their ethnicity.

As traditional local leaders such as the Shan *Saophas* were allowed to run the day-to-day affairs in the Excluded Areas of British Burma, the Shan nationalists continue to claim their legitimacy among the ruled (other ethnics) in Shan state (Callahan, 2007, pp. 4-12). Finally, when the World War II broke out, it marked the formal birth of Shan as well as other ethnic nationalism (Taylor, 2007, p. 70). One of the important ingredients that separates Shan nationalism from others includes the belief of Tai people including Thai, Lao, and Shan that they believed they were descended from Khun Lu and Khun Lai (Chao, 1987, p. 12). Based on this common myth, Shan people can be certain that their nation is not Burmese.

Nevertheless, Shan ethnic identity based on this common myth alone does not naturally reinforce Shan nationalism. Shan ethnic identity has to be politicised by nationalist leaders as exemplified in the case of the SSA-South. This is done by prolonging the sense of Shan nationalist beliefs using multiple channels of communication.

Figure 3.1

Map of British Burma zones of administration

Note: Reprinted from *"Time to get rid of Mahar-Myanmar mentality"* by Kanbawza Min, 2012, https://www.kachinlandnews.com/

3.3 Shan nationalism in the nation-state of Myanmar

In contrast to the Burmese majority in Myanmar, ethnic Shan population does not share a sense of patriotism and civic nationalism with the Burmese. Additionally, in Shan state itself, each group has their own version of ethnic nationalisms (Taylor, 2007, p. 76). Defining Shan nationalism in the nation-state of Myanmar thus is not restricted to the physical boundary of Shan state. But if we take a look closely to the Shan ethnicity, each Shan group is also committed to their own group's agenda as well. In other words, there are many versions of Shan nationalism. For example, referring to Table 3.1 in sub-heading 3.5, post-*Saophas* Shan armed movements are deeply disintegrated and rely upon strong leadership of whom that might turn to be powerful military leader (Sao Konjung) or even druglord (Khun Sa).

Although most Shan groups allude to promise of Panglong agreement as their reason to fight, yet their Shan nationalist identity becomes gradually deterred from one another under different leaderships like during Khun Sa's era when income from illicit trades had overshadowed the need for Shan nationalism and independence.

Despite the common language and ethnic myth, the SSA-South's Shan nationalist identity and nationalism are significantly different from that other Shan group in two main points: first, their intense involvement with Thailand which was demonstrated in their war against drug which Thitiwut Boonyawongwiwat (2018) describes as 'anti-ethno-narcotic identity'; second, their refusal to surrender to the Myanmar government regardless of structural changes in Myanmar's political landscape both domestically and internationally. Attributions to the second point is a product of long Shan nationalist identity construction which is exclusive to the SSA-South. Shan nationalism, thus, is not a universal term that covers all Shan nationalist groups since Shan nationalist groups split into numerous sub-groups. Furthermore, each sub-group's nationalism is unique because of different inputs their received from their leaders. For example, if we take a look at ethnic nationalist group like the United Wa State Party (UWSP), we could observe that its location in northern Shan state does not impact their choice to at least add the term 'Shan' into their name. Hence, when studying the SSA-South, I think it is necessary to view them as ethnic nationalist group by the consideration of their ethnic roots as well as leaders rather than focusing just on the administrative zonings.

In Shan state, the nationalist identity and nationalism is not the same set with those in Myanmar. Each ethnic group tends to be more loyal to their own ethnic nationalist agenda than to Myanmar since the British colonial rule fuelled their interethnic suspicions (Callahan, 2007, p. 83). If we trace back to the post-colonial era, in comparison to Thailand, Myanmar government and the *Tatmadaw* has done little to assimilate those population into the Myanmar, neglect ethnic needs and instilling fear to maintain their power (Fink, 2009, p. 269). During the Cold War, Thailand has rapidly developed its infrastructure nationwide in order to help prevent the threat of communism under the 'buffer state' scheme; this project also supports frontiers people's needs (Pavin Chachavalpongpun, 2018, pp. 84-85). Whereas Myanmar during the Cold War has done little to reform the British colonial tactics of 'divide and rule'

which even pushed the ethnic armed groups out of negotiation process which in turn have prolonged inter-ethnic conflicts. Moreover, the Cold War situation has made the interaction in Myanmar worse. Myanmar government chose to send troops in the Shan area to drove out the Kuomintang (KMT) army. However, this 'protection' project is perceived as failure rather than a success in building trust. The *Tatmadaw*, instead of being viewed as a protector, is seen as a threat in addition to the KMT. Furthermore, there is also a strong sense of otherness between the Shan (as well as other ethnic groups) and the Burmese that is not yet been compromised (Shan Human Rights Foundation & Shan Women's Action Network, 2002, p. 27).

As each Shan nationalist group has their own goal, each of them could direct own ethnic nationalist sentiment. For example, SSA-South, as it split from the MTA, it has a negative view towards drug trades; furthermore, its main non-state enemy is the SSA-North who is more placatory towards the Myanmar government than them.

3.4 Shan nationalism of the SSA-South

The SSA-South has posed a complex case of how we make sense of Shan nationalism. While Shan nationalism plays a dominant role in SSA-South's struggle, the SSA-South's Shan nationalism cannot be considered as representative of Shan nationalism. In other words, the SSA-South's Shan nationalism is just only one part of Shan nationalism. Moreover, in the SSA-South, not all of its members initially identify them as ethnic Shan. Some of the interviewed SSA-South members are not even ethnic Shan. One of those people includes Moe Ma-yeua, an Akha member of the SSA-South, who was a refugee on Loi Kaw Wan. According to Spring News (Spring, 2018), she was educated in the SSA-South's school on Loi Kaw Wan which later turns her to become one of them. In the report, she was one of few youths who chose to participate in the SSA-South military training rather than leaving their homeland for jobs. She later adds that living on Loi Kaw Wan is not convenient and is far from comfort, but she still selects this path despite economic and living difficulties.

The case of Moe has demonstrated that being the SSA-South, does not requires one to be born as ethnic Shan in order to realise Shan nationalist goal. This thus becomes a perfect argument by modernists that ethnic is a social construct and not

pre-modern. Moreover, I found the concept of social constructivism relevant especially in the racially diverse region like in Shan state because what Moe perceived herself is not as an ethnic Shan but rather as an ethnic Ahka. For Moe, the reason why she joined the SSA-South is because of the same experience she shares with other SSA-South members. The memory of dislocation, disenfranchisement and being supressed are what drive her to join the fight with the SSA-South, who might not necessarily be in the same ethnic with her from birth.

Figure 3.2

Springs reports interviewing Moe, an ethnic Akha member of the SSA-South

Note: From *Rath Shan matu phum tai yai* [Shan State, motherland of the Shans] [Video]. by SpringNews, 2018, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_W4OjqhHiE

From the case of Moe, if we treat the SSA-South's Shan nationalist identity as a replaceable object ethnic just like how Cohen (1974), Gurr and Harff (1994) believe, then the ethnic Akha identity should have been already abandoned. But in reality, Moe agrees with the SSA-South's Shan nationalism in addition to her native ethnic Akha. This illustrate the complexity of ethnic nationalist identity when one could declare oneself as having multiple ethnic nationalist identities at the same time without any need to conceal in order to avoid racial discrimination. Hence, ethnic of birth is not a factor that limits one to become faithful to another ethnic, and agreeing with another ethnic nationalism does not mean that one must give up their loyalty to previous ethnic

beforehand. However, thanks to the high degree of acceptance by adoptive ethnic, Moe could manage to be a Shan nationalist Ahka. Ahka and Shan, in this place, could blend together just like how the most Thai Chinese identify themselves as 'Thai' ethnic while keeping their Chinese rituals (Gambe, 2000; Shi, 2016; Thak, 2014).

As the nation-state of Myanmar is concerned, it could be seen that, unlike the Chinese in Thailand, both Akha and Shan do not and have never considered themselves as 'Burmese'. This has resulted in two negative consequences: first, hostility and mistrust of ethnic minorities towards the Burmese as well as the nation-state of Myanmar; second, there is a lack of positive social interactions and connections between Myanmar state and ethnic minorities.

Antagonism and suspicion of ethnic minorities towards the Burmese and Myanmar could be compartmentalised into two main periods: pre-colonial and post-colonial Myanmar. The reason why I use these two particular periods is because post-colonial Myanmar marks the importance of Burmese-dominated nation state while the former does not. In pre-colonial Myanmar, most of the area was known to be under the influence of Konbaung (Alaungpaya) dynasty. During that time, inter-ethnic war was a routine, yet difference in ethnicity is not a cause of warfare. Instead, struggle for natural resources, manpower, and glory of each dynasty and king are main drivers of war (Chao, 1987). Inter-ethnic war thus was ultimately subjected to each monarch or chief's decision, as the result, people mostly chose to join under the influence of the most powerful one regardless of their ethnic identity. For example, Lanna Kingdom, which extended into Shan states, was on a constant switch between being with Burmese and Siamese militarily. In this pre-colonial time, those principalities could retain their own language, culture, and identity as there were never a mass migration of people nor effective assimilation until the industrialisation and modern nation-state-making. This pattern continues in Myanmar because of the British who did not seek to anglicise or burmanise those ethnic minorities, yet what came with them is the concept of division of ethnic or 'race' which was a colonial rationality of 'divide and rule' that legitimise the White man's rule. In post-colonial Myanmar, people of various ethnic started to consider ethnic as a division and cause of conflict which I view it as a legacy of colonial racism which divides and values some ethnic groups while disempowers others. From this period, hatred and rivalry resulted from injustices started to grow. The ethnic

animosity became even stronger when Panglong agreement was declared null and void and the *Tatmadaw* had advanced into ethnic zones which tries to tighten Myanmar's control over those regions. In contrast to the pre-colonial time when leaders loosely exert their direct control over occupied areas and allowed ethnic identity to flourish, the Myanmar state tries to diminish cultural roots and ethnic identity by various tactics such as schooling, demolishing artefacts or even warfare and forced migration which includes extrajudicial killings and rape.

Figure 3.3

Kengtung Palace demolished by the Myanmar military regime in 1991

Note. Reprinted from "Kengtung State," in Wikipedia, October 10, 2005, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kengtung_State (Public domain).

It should be noted that inter-ethnic paranoia can be overcome by positive social interactions and connections. As the case of the Chinese in Thailand and the ethnic Akha in the SSA-South have shown, ethnic boundaries would make no sense as long as each ethnic could co-exist and cooperate. One of the great example could be found in countries like Singapore and Switzerland that birth ethnic and nationality are intertwined and inseparable. Both Tamil and Chinese, French and German feel the same

sense of being Singaporean and Swiss respectively. This is due to the positive social interactions and connections which both Singaporean and Swiss share in building their multiethnic and multilinguistic nation-states. As Anderson (1983) has stated, in a deep and horizontal comradeship, a nation can be imagined as a community (Anderson, 1983, p. 7). Anderson's argument is based on modernist paradigm that communication can creates culture and imagined community. However, what he did not explicitly say is that nation-state identity could also cohabit with an ethnic of birth. Therefore, one does not have to always abandon their former ethnic for new one. Hence, the *longue-durée* assumption that pre-modern ethnic identity could live through the modern time could also be true in certain cases. Notwithstanding, as the time goes by, the more positive relationship will gradually overcome ethnic antagonisms.

On the other hand, negative social interactions and lack of social connection will result in the opposite. In the nation-state of Myanmar, it is very likely that ethnic minorities to retreat back to their pre-modern identity and nation as they lose more than they get in an uneven relationship with Myanmar. Not only negative social relations that drives the ethnic minorities out from the nation-state, many of those denials are also in pursuit for their own nation-state where they expect justice, respect and integrity as well. Despite both the SSA-South and the SSA-North shares same ideology of Shan nationalism, they have contrasting nationalist goals. According to Gurr and Harff (1994), 'common place of residence' defines its nationalist members. Nevertheless, I saw that explanation too census-alike. If we also take geopolitics and international relations into account, I think it will help us to see how nationalist goal is formed more clearly. For the SSA-South, it is undeniable that the SSA-South and especially its leaders have a strong connection to Thailand. But intimacy does not occur by accident, if we only refer to pre-modern Tai ethnic ties, that alone might be not solid enough as the SSA-North is not close to Thailand as the SSA-South does. Instead, the SSA-North is an ally with the UWSA whereas the SSA-South feel hostility against it ("Pama Prab Nak," 2011). Though both the SSA-North and the SSA-South both identify with Shan nationalism, the SSA-North's Shan nationalism does not emphasise on 'anti-ethno-narcotics culture' as the SSA-South does.

Though the ethnic minorities fall into the boundary of Myanmar, Myanmar has never successfully transformed them into Burmese like how the Thai state succeeds

in converting Chinese into Thai. Moreover, the case of the SSA-South also demonstrates that external recognition from other nation-states could not convince ethnic minorities to be more loyal to Myanmar state. Therefore, transformation of Shan nationalism resulted from both domestic and international interactions.

3.5 Genesis of the SSA-South

Table 3.1

Timeline of Shan State history since 1939

1939	Beginning of World War II in British Burma
1942	Japanese troop advanced into Shan State
1945	The End of World War II
1947	Shan, Kachin and Chin committee participated in the Panglong Agreement in Panglong, Southern Shan State with General U Aung San, the Burmese government representative on 12 February
1948	The four ethnic groups joined in 'the Union of Burma' gained independence. The parliament selected Sao Shwe Thaik, *Saopha* of Yawnghwe as the first president of the Union under the first constitution reserving the rights for the Shan to secede from the Union after 10 years (1958)
1949	Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) occupied Karen State (now Kayin State), Shan State, and parts of Burma. Burmese government sent *Tatmadaw* to suppress and took this opportunity to permanently stationed in Taunggyi.
1949-1953	Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist) Army (KMT) retreated from China into Shan State. Burmese central government sent troops all over Shan state to repel the KMT. Since then, the *Tatmadaw* had been engaging in land grabbing and other violent crimes including ransacking, extrajudicial killing and raping in Shan state.
1950	U Nu was a prime minister. Shan government maintained certain degree of autonomy.

1957	Shan *saophas* held a meeting in *Mueang Hai,* northern Shan state.
1958	Chao noi (Zaw Yanda) established Num Siek Han army (NSH) in southern Shan state.
1959	Shan *saophas* transferred all administrative power to the Shan government in late April.
1960	Shan State Independent Army (SSIA) was founded.
1961	- Shan National Union Force (SNUF) was founded - A conference for the inclusive Union was held in Taunggyi, southern Shan state - Chao Khung Tara (Sao Nga kham) established Shan National Army (SNA)
1962	General Ne Win arrested Shan *saophas* in the state council meeting including Sao Shwe Thaik, the first president of the Union who later passed away in the prison.
1964	- Sao Nang Hearn Kham, *Mahadevi* of Sao Shwe Thaik established Shan State Army (SSA) - Khun Sa (Zhang Qifu) and Burmese *Ka Kwe Ye* (Home guard) formed Shan United Army (SUA)
1968	Burmese Communist Party (BCP) expanded their influences in Shan state by occupying parts of eastern and western Salaween region
1969	Sao Konjung founded Shan United Revolutionary Army (SURA)
1971	SSA founded State State Progress Party (SSPP) in northern Shan state
1972	SSA and SURA fought in central and southern Shan state
1973	SSPP/SSA allied with China
1975	SSA, northern Shan state, and southern Shan state fought because of political disagreement between communism and liberalism
1978	- SSA re-united - Sao Charm Mueang, a high-ranking SSA leader, left northern Shan state for southern Shan state to form a new alliance with Khun Sa (SUA) at Baan Hin Tieak but later mysteriously disappeared
1979	SSA joined Burmese Communist Party

1982	Royal Thai Army had occupied Baan Hin Tieak where SUA stationed
1983	Sao Konjung demanded for Shan solidarity from fragmented Shan nationalist groups
1984	SURA, SSA, and southern Shan State formed Tailand Revolutionary Council/ Tailand Revolutionary Army (TRC/TRA)
1985	SUA and Khun Sa (Zhang Qifu) joined TRC and together formed Shan State Restoration Council/ Mong Tai Army (SSRC/ MTA)
1988	The Nationwide Popular Pro-Democracy Protests (8888 Uprising) demanding General Ne Win who ruled the country for 26 years to resign
1989	- Burmese Communist Party (BCP) dissolved - United Wa State Army (UWSA) signed a ceasefire with Myanmar - Establishment of Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) party
1990	Election under democratic regime in Myanmar; SNLD party won the highest number of seats in Shan state
1991	Sao Konjung passed away. His testament calls for a unity and cooperation among Shan revolutionary groups
1993	Golden Age of Mong Tai Army (MTA) under Khun Sa leadership
1995	Chao Kan Yod, commander of northern Mong Tai army regiment, separated from Mong Tai Army (MTA) due to inequality and discrimination between Chinese and Shan in Mong Tai Army
1996	- Mong Tai Army (MTA) disarmed and surrendered to Myanmar - SSA, northern Shan state, and Shan State National Army (SSNA) founded the Shan State Peace Council (SSPC) - Chao Yawd Serk separated from MTA and restored SURA following the way of Sao Konjung. He travelled north to meet SSA and SSNA - Chao Yawd Serk (SURA), Chao Kan Yod (SSNA) and Chao Ser Tean (SSA) consulted at Seangkeaw in northern Shan state and declared to cooperate under the name of Shan State Army (SSA) as well as created Shan State National Organisation (SSNO)

	- Chao Yawd Serk led SSA to a military movement in the West of Salaween river, central Shan state. Myanmar government brutally supressed the movement and forced 300,000 civilians in central and southern Shan state to leave their home. The area was later declared as 'Free Shooting zone' where killing is permitted. - Overseas Shan founded Shan Democracy Union (SDU) - Shan state was admitted as a member of Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO)
1997	Mass killing of Shan civilians in central Shan state by Myanmar troops
1998	SSNO changed its name to Joint Action Committee (JAC)
1999	General Chao Yawd Serk relocated SSA headquarter to Doi Tai Laeng opposite to Pang Mapha district, Thailand. He declared anti-narcotics policy.
2000	SSA under Chao Yawd Serk formed Restoration Council of the Shan State (RCSS)
2001-2002	SSA's drug eradication programme caused a conflict with Myanmar. Myanmar closed all its borders with Thailand
2005	Chao Chai Yi of SSNA, who was in the 10-year-ceasefire with Myanmar, joined General Chao Yawd Serk's SSA to mobilise across Shan state through both military and political means
2011	SSA under Chao Yawd Serk signed a ceasefire with Myanmar on 2nd December

Note. Adapted from *Plai khob fa Shan* [Shan's horizon], by Chao Yawd Serk, N. Pengkeaw & N. Buraphawat, 2012 (pp. 9-15), Siam.

Similar to other ethnic nationalist groups in the South of Thailand and Mindanao, Shan nationalist group are fragmented. If we take a look closely, since the pre-modern time, Shan city-states (*mueang*) has fought among each other naturally to expand one's influence over others. As Table 3.1 has shown, throughout the history of post-World War II Shan state, Shan nationalist movement is fragmented into various sub-groups. Notwithstanding, all Shan movements and armies were born after the expiration of the 1947 Panglong agreement in 1957. From the NSH in 1958, only two

decades later saw the merge of the TRC/TRA and the SSRC/ MTA in 1984 and 1985 respectively following Sao Konjung's demand for Shan solidarity in 1983. If we only consider at individual level, it has shown that only a strong military figure is capable enough to call for Shan nationalist unification after the age of *Saophas*.

Both Myanmar and external threats are capable of jeopardising Shan nationalist groups. For Myanmar, I think it is a permanent existential threat for Shan nationalist groups as well as Shan civilians. Especially after the period of expiration of the 1947 Panglong agreement in 1958, Shan nationalist groups realised that they should form their own armed forces to look after their own security. Nonetheless, without a strong leader, threat from Myanmar alone could not drive Shan nationalist groups to share common goals and interests. In this case, external threats such as foreign invasion will unite Shan nationalist groups together. Earlier than 1983, there were two significant points when foreign troops had set foot in Shan state in 1949-1953 (KMT) and in 1982 (Royal Thai Army). The period after that two events resulted in a unification of Shan nationalist groups. This has shown that Shan nationalist groups, though being naturally fragmented, will unite under the scenario that there were unusual security threats in the region.

Even though strong leadership is a paramount factor in inducing Shan people to engage in warfare, I suspect that some kind of benefit should be another important element that push Shan people to join the armed movements. After Ne Win took over the power in 1962, his 'Burmese way to Socialism' has turned Myanmar from one of the most Asian prosperous countries into one of the world's poorest due to various inappropriate, xenophobic and superstitious elements (McGowan, 1993, pp. 47-56). This upsurged the poverty rate and inequality domestically. One example includes the notorious case of demonisation of 50 and 100 kyats banknotes in the mid-1980s by replacing them with auspicious 25, 35, 45, 75 and 90 kyats notes which further drove the population in the rural cash-society into poverty. Not surprisingly, as Ne Win took over the government, marginalised ethnic groups, and placed them into poverty, some interest group such as the Mong Tai Army (MTA) used this opportunity to gain enormous benefits from illicit drug trades.

Following the end of the Cold War, the ease of conducting illegal businesses decreased as governments can concentrate more on non-traditional security

affairs. The MTA, which is purely an interest group without any tangible nationalist goal, suddenly agreed on the ceasefire with Myanmar government as his trade routes were cut down. However, the end of the Cold War did not stop the nationalist group like the SSA-South to stop its fight despite minimal funding. Moreover, in reality, despite a series of ceasefire agreements, many former-insurgents, including members of the SSA-South, have retained their arms and continue to exert control over their territory (South, 2004, pp. 233-256).

The SSA-South are opposed to the drug trade. In consequence, the only way for the Shan nation survival, especially for the dispossessed population who lost their way of living and is deprived of other basic needs to sustain their lives, is to keep Shan nationalism alive. Chao Yawd Serk broke away from the MTA and restored SURA which later became SSA(-South) in 1996. If we stick to economic logic, we may argue that the SSA-South lost its advantage from being with the MTA. But those central advantages may not be economic, since the SSA-South continues fighting alongside with the Royal Thai government to eradicate drugs which was the main source of income from the MTA. According to Myanmar Peace Monitor, there was an attempt in 2008 to transform ceasefire groups into border guards. Meanwhile, Myanmar government and the *Tatmadaw* could gradually exert more influence in the ceasefire regions. After the presence of central authority in those resource-rich areas, the Myanmar government had used that opportunity to induce foreign investments and employment as a substitution to diversify the region's over-reliance on illicit trades (Meehan, 2015). Moreover, this is seen by Woods (2011) as a part of 'military-state-building campaign' which tightens Myanmar's grip over the former insurgent zones. Additionally, Myanmar also use ceasefire agreements as tools to increase its legitimacy in those areas (Smith, 1999, p. 12). From those narratives, it can be seen that in the post-Khun Sa era, the central government is gaining control over those zones which they could not done before. Nevertheless, the new employment opportunities and the new way of live could not satisfy the SSA-South enough to surrender despite its series of ceasefire.

3.6 Relevance of economic needs for the SSA-South?

According to Enze Han's critique on Thitiwut Boonyawongwiwat's work (2018), Han stated that Thitiwut's research seems lacking on two main points: first, Thitiwut neglected on how Shan insurgent groups are financed; second, Han views that one cannot generalise Shan nationalism by doing whole research within only one refugee village in Thailand. Moreover, he also mentioned recent clashes between the Shan State Army-South and Shan State Army-North (Han, 2019). From the critique, I think that there are two points that I have to focus on my research of Shan nationalism: first, the role of financing source and its link to SSA-South ceasefire and fight; second, why the SSA-South engages in armed clashes with the fellow Shan like the SSA-North.

The main financing source of the SSA-South has long known to be from the Royal Thai government and the SSA-South is counted as a part of the 'Thai family' (Pavin Chachavalpongpun, 2018, pp. 86-87). Apart from the sense of Pan-Thainess, geopolitically, the reason why the Royal Thai government supports the SSA-South is inexorably linked to the advent to the United Wa State Party (UWSP). Due to weakening Shan movement, following the ceasefire agreement, the UWSP received Myanmar government's permission to advance southwards in order to take over former MTA's territory (Kramer, 2007). Yet we should not forget the fact that those areas were located at the border of Thai state. As a result, Thailand hence prefer to have the non-ceasefire SSA-South instead of the UWSP as the UWSP is perceived as pro-China drug smugglers (Kramer, 2007, p. 4). Moreover, according to Pathan (2005), Thailand has considered the ceasefire groups as a threat to their security in general (Pathan, 2005, p. 115). Therefore, the reason why the SSA-South is not on ceasefire is because of this funding across the border from Thailand.

However, the SSA-South has also joined in several ceasefires recently such as in 2011 which was a year Thailand suffered from the Great flood around Bangkok together with the more favouring stance of the Royal Thai government towards Myanmar government (Pavin Chachavalpongpun, 2018). This period is when the SSA-South started to have reduced financial support. Furthermore, after the NCA in 2015, the SSA-South seems to have more declining money flows. If we consider surrounding politics in 2015, we could see the two contrasting events in both nation-state, the 2014

coup d'état and the 2015 election in Thailand and Myanmar respectively. These events have eventually impacted the SSA-South's financial source and its decision to ceasefire. In Thailand, there was a brief halt in politics and foreign investments; in contrast, in Myanmar, the election attracted foreign investments and increase trust in the government. As Myanmar has gained more international support together with internal problems of Thailand and deduction of funds, the SSA-South is forced to reconsider their survival. At this time, what remains as the raison d'etre of the SSA-South might only be nationalism which is maintained by the memory of being oppressed and ongoing combat with the 'oppressor' which fair and just result has not been reached or even acknowledged (Callahan, 2007, p. 18).

Lacking in education and skills, the feeling of insecurity and economic uncertainty in the area have driven many Shans to seek to fortune overseas, mostly across border in Chiang Mai and Bangkok (Amporn Jirattikorn, 2007; Callahan, 2007, pp. 23-24). This particular remittance is transferred back to Shan state for family members. As working abroad provides an alternative to survive for many Shans, the SSA-South uses this opportunity to echo Shan nationalist through cultural elements which sustains Shan nationalism in transborder communities. Moreover, these transborder movements not only stop the SSA-South and Shan nationalism from being eradicated easily, but also the message that their sent out has already become permanent thanks to the numerous channels of communication. Those bitter memories made the surrender impossible since it is unforgettable.

As common shared memory gives birth to ethnic nationalist identity, the SSA-South thus has their own set of ethnic nationalist identity that other Shan insurgent groups do not have, a sense of *Kwam Pen Thai* (Thainess). The example of this are the inarguably strong ties of the SSA-South and its people to Thailand. Even though other Shan groups such as the SSA-North are also a part of Tai ethnic, they do not have much interaction to Thailand as the SSA-South does. One of the distinct national identity of the SSA-South is their worship of Ayutthayan King Naresuan the Great which is uncommon to other Shan nationalist groups. Therefore, if not economic, nationalist sentiment should be the reason why the SSA does not surrender to the Myanmar government.

Figure 3.4

King Naresuan the great statue on Loi Tai Leang

Note: Reprinted from "*Trip klai sud chao kor ror mor yeun tin Chao Yawd Serk doi tai leang rath shan 14 morkor 59 tee phan ma [Farthest trip of cabinet's group, visiting Chao Yawd Serk's homeland at Loi Tai Leang, last 14 January 2016]*" by Don Din, 2016, http://www.weekendhobby.com/

3.7 Turning point: How can the SSA-South carry on its fight?

If economic advantages are not the case, therefore, the SSA-South is pursuing something that means more than wealth. To me, I think that the SSA-South aims for their independence when their well-being and life security are expected. According to one of SSA-South's leaders, Colonel Chao Gun Juan, he stated that 'peace for the SSA(-South) is sovereignty, education, economy and politics' ("Pama Prab Nak," 2020). This could be a product of deep and complex sense of distrust to place their future in the hands of the Burmese. Furthermore, the Myanmar state is viewed as an oppressor among population who have lived in war zones (Callahan, 2007, pp. 18-19). Despite the importance of economic benefits, the SSA-South's agenda has never diverted from 'national sovereignty'. This derives from the Panglong agreement which promised the right for Shan state to secede from the Union. As the agreement was declared null and void, the sense of entitlement persists since the Panglong agreement

is the only arrangement that included the Shan on the negotiation table whereas other post-Panglong actions of the Myanmar government was done purely for Myanmar's interests without any consultation to other ethnic groups.

The sense of mistrust towards the Myanmar government remains strong. Prior to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in 2015, there were series of bilateral ceasefires between Myanmar government and ethnic insurgent groups, yet those ceasefires could not bring 'peace' which means sovereignty to the region. As I have researched, many ceasefire agreements including the NCA are temporary as it is perceived as unfair and unsatisfactory with not only the SSA-South but also other ethnic groups (Lipes, 2015). In case of the NCA, only 10 out of 19 insurgent groups signed while the rest observe it from afar and dropped out from the agreement. However, by being outside the NCA, the agreement becomes ineffective as the ethnic insurgents' opinion are not heard. Hence, at the end of the day, the fight may indefinitely endure considering the nature of ceasefire agreement and of the SSA-South who demands for their 'peace' that Myanmar government as a legitimate recognised nation-state could not provide them.

Nevertheless, the SSA-South realised that the recognition of their existence is in danger. The transborder support such as funds they received from international organisation and the UN is reducing due to the NCA (Spring, 2018). Therefore, their capacity to sustain their arm forces is also reducing. As a result, they shift to fight for their independence (or at least for international recognition) in an alternative way. In the 2020 Shan national day on February, the SSA-South had invited the *Tatmadaw* generals to its RCSS camp which was surprisingly unusual (Sit Htet Aung, 2020). However, this move was very symbolic in two ways: first, to illustrate that SSA-South could get over past grudges for the sake of peace in Shan state; second, having the *Tatmadaw* generals in their base implies that they are recognised as an entity by the most powerful force in Myanmar politics. This has yet to include the broadcasted message that the SSA-South sent to the world through the smart utilisation of communication channels.

From the previous paragraph, it has shown that the fight has not been limited to the use of weapons but also other non-violent means which helps the SSA-South to keep their ethnic nationalist identity survived and recognised by the

international community. In the meantime, the SSA themselves are still highly cautious of any moves out of their bases. For instance, the denial of Chao Yawd Serk to use the *Tatmadaw*-prepared route to the peace conference in Naypyidaw in the analysis by Nyein Nyein (The Irrawaddy, 2020). This reflects that the SSA-South is not surrendering to Myanmar government anyway as they refused to travel outside their trust routes due to safety concerns. Up to this point, one might be curious of the issue of mistrust and why it could persist this long. In my view, I think it is the fact that the SSA-South and the Shan civilians do not feel safe is because of the failure of Myanmar central government to satisfy their needs and way of living.

3.8 Why is the ceasefire not enough?

According to Zaw Oo and Win Min (2007), since 1989, Myanmar government has been offering a series of ceasefire agreement. This results from the nationwide 1988 pro-democracy uprising. Nonetheless, General Khin Nyunt, who was instrument in negotiating ceasefire deals, views that ceasefire is an opportunity to minimise the threat of national integration. In other words, ceasefire is another strategy to integrate ethnic groups and consolidate their power into the hands of Myanmar government and the *Tatmadaw*. At the first sight, the ceasefire may signal that the Myanmar government is loosening their grip over the insurgent areas, but, in reality, they use the opportunity as a chance to 'reconsolidate' and tighten their control over those areas. Moreover, Khin Nyunt may have also think that ceasefire can also bring black-market activities into state's supervision which also means that Myanmar government is also gaining from the ceasefire (Zaw Oo & Win Min, 2007, p. 13).

Considering the SSA-South, Myanmar's State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) is demanding an unconditional surrender since it sees that the SSA-South is a breakaway group of the MTA and has no other option apart from surrender (Zaw Oo & Win Min, 2007, p. 22) while the SSA-South thinks the opposite. The incompatibility of ethnic nationalist identity is a main factor that the SSA-South could not integrate and surrender to the Myanmar government. Both the central government and the SSA-South not only view their status differently but they also fight for their own survival. Therefore, as there will be no compromise for both of them, those actions

will only make the interaction negative as the longer they stay apart in their agreement. In my opinion, I think achieving a just agreement is nearly impossible since the SSA-South has been possessing their elements of a state such as land, army, people, and resources (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2012, pp. 337-338; Callahan, 2007, p. 84). Even though the SSA-South's controlled area is not recognised by the international community, their existence in indisputably acknowledged by the transnational community where censorship is becoming more difficult.

3.9 Conclusion

By researching through the origin of the SSA-South, evidences have shown that what appears to be *longue-durée* and unified is actually discontinued and fragmented. After the independence of Myanmar, among Shan nationalist groups themselves, there are a division in ideology despite declaring the same ethnic identity as well as nationalist aspiration. The SSA-South is only one of many Shan nationalist groups who claim that they are an 'incorrupted and rightful' successor of the Shan nationalist movements by the fact that it merged with other Shan nationalist groups after the MTA had dissolved.

Unlike the MTA and the UWSA, the SSA-South is in a direct opposition to the government of Myanmar and a loyal ally to Thailand. This not only made the SSA-South to engage in anti-narcotics campaign which are profitable source of income for the MTA, but also constructed the whole new Shan nationalist identity of the SSA-South who views drugs as a threat to their liberation. In addition to geographical location, this has moved the SSA-South closer to Thailand as well as increase a positive perception of Shan nationalist identity due to increased social interactions with transborder community.

CHAPTER 4

DISSEMINATION CHANNELS OF SHAN NATIONALISM

4.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have narrated that Shan nationalism is a product of social construction. In accordance to what Chanintira na Thalang (2009) has proposed, Shan nationalism, like the Acehnese, emphasises on different elements in different times. The SSA-South has been continuously promoting Shan nationalism through uses of channels of communication and social interactions. From my documentary analysis, Shan nationalism is sustained by four main elements: first, education about Shan nation and history; second, news that broadcast loss and nationalist sentiment; third, Shan belief and culture; fourth, funding. However, those elements need channels of communication to instigate Shan nationalism among Shan people. In the case of the SSA-South, the way that the leaders use to disseminate Shan nationalism includes social gatherings and communication tools such as radio and news.

This chapter will discuss about the way in which Shan nationalism, which is a basis of continuous fight, is sustained and promulgated. The aim is to point out the how leaders successfully use multiple channels such as education, news and social cultural gatherings to ignite Shan nationalism which is a belief that prolong war and conflict against Myanmar despite their minimal funding and lack of machineries or hardships of living in war zones.

In Shan state, the ethnic identity and nationalism is not the same set of those in Myanmar. Therefore, I would select some messages that highlights difference between Shan-Myanmar (Burmese) from both the SSA-South leader, Chao Yawd Serk as well as other SSA-South members.

4.2 Social gatherings: When Shan nationalism is strengthened

Despite the growth of technology, social gatherings remain one of the principal way to effectively pass on ethnic nationalist ideas and sentiments. These venues include education, cultural events, and other gatherings of Shan people.

Mae Sa only know Shan history and language after joining the SSA-South. In 1981, the nationalist army needs a teacher, so Mae Sa came to teach Shan writing and translated English and Mathematics from Burmese to Shan language. Moreover, she also teaches Shan history. Nipatporn Pengkaew's interview of Mae Sa (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2007)

Education is one of the most effective methods in igniting sense of ethnic nationalism. Since education always contains certain narratives, the author who wrote the curriculum may have already embedded ethnic nationalist values in the content. These values also mutually form 'reality' for their learners. With this perceived reality, the Shan nationalist identity will be recognised by both the learners who later will socially interact to others with this set of perspectives. Moreover, as time passes by, this reality will extend to larger crowds and become 'fact'.

School is what I view as the most vital venue to begin with since it obviously contains some values that are 'accepted' among peer group. The School for Shan State Nationalities Youth (SSSNY) sustains the spirit of Shan nationalism. The SSSNY is one of the example that educates its students from Shan state to be aware of their uniqueness of ethnic identity which cannot be generalised to Burmese. This school also promote social interaction among the ethnics from Shan state which also legitimise the status of Shan nationalist groups such as the SSA-South of holding separate ethnic identity.

Figure 4.1

The School for Shan State Nationalities Youth (SSSNY)

Note: Reprinted from "About us," by The School for Shan State Nationalities Youth, n.d., https://sssny.org/about-us/

Figure 4.2

Sao Shwe Thaik, last *Saopha* of Yawnghwe, the first president of Myanmar

Note: Reprinted from "Prasat phrasob chaofa tai yai (Cremation castle of Shan Saopha)," by Ngao Adit, 2009, Pantip. http://topicstock.pantip.com/library/topicstock/2009/03/K7586131/K7586131.html

Moreover, there are also education outside the SSSNY, there is a constant mention of the Panglong agreement and Shan history by the SSA-South leaders. The 1947 Panglong Conference has marked the point that 'Shan nation' is legally

recognised as an independent committee separated from Myanmar government. Unsurprsingly, SSA-South's leaders choose to repeatedly trace their legitimacy back to this era, the period when their right of sucesssion was reserved. Moreover, the history of having Sao Shwe Taik, who was also *Saopha* of Yawnghwe, as the first president of the Union of Burma made the Shan nationalists certain of their rights to have part in ruling the Union.

> In our Shan state, Shan people has their own history and *Saophas* for millennia. The Burmese are not our population. Furthermore, the establishment of the Union of Burma succeeded because of the Panglong agreement which Shan people had facilitated in 1947. Until the end of the World War II, Shan people has own Shan *Saophas* ruling among themselves. The Burmese was not our ruler.
>
> Relations between Shan and Thai, as far as I can observe, I can see that both Thai and Shan always have great respect to the king. In every Thai king reigns, Shan people always respect. Moreover, Shan and Thai people share same bloodline and have common history for millennia; thus, what we believe is blood not policy or politics. Lieutenant General Chao Yawd Serk (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2005)

Apart from the history, sense of Pan-Thainess is another significant element that Chao Yawd Serk uses to legitimise Shan nationalism and educate Shan people of their distinct roots. Though the fact that Shan and Thai people are part of Tai-Kadai ethnicity, most of the linguistic and cultural elements are not exactly the same. As a native Thai speaker (Central Dialect), I could understand little in Shan language and I found Shan cultural practices differ from the Siamese. For example, typical Siamese may consider Shan people as 'foreign' since they speak in a another langauge and eat 'fermented bean (*Tua Nao*)' as a staple. Nevertheless, this research does not aim to argue over these complicated issues that could cause controversies. What is interesting here is the use of 'blood' concept by Chao Yawd Serk to connect Shan with Thai people while distancing themselves from Myanmar. This has made the SSA-South to feel that they are not Burmese and is entitled to have their own state just like how the Siamese sucessfully bulit Kingdom of Thailand (Siam).

"Our army (SSA-South) is from Shan civilians and farmers. Their life and culture are inseparable, so our army has to support their cultural events. We cannot force them to abandon." Lieutenant General Chao Yawd Serk (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2012)

Besides education that is mainly a top-down process, cultural events are also another important venue in maintaining the Shan nationalist identity. Culture is a significant practice that separate one group from others. Hence, it is not surprising why the SSA-South chose to promote Shan culture but not others. Promotion of distinct Shan culture becomes a tool that the SSA-South uses to remind Shan people of their roots as well as keep the people separated from Myanmar.

Like what Leang Fa said "like the wedding ceremony, we Shan people have a tradition to avoid it during Buddhist lent. If some kids break it, we will tell Shan people not to go and warn their parents to cultivate them in order to keep our culture alive." Nipatporn Pengkaew's interview of Leang Fa (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2007)

If belief and culture are not practiced, it would have no impact to nationalist sentiment. Hence Shan nationalist sentiment can flourish only if they are practiced, not only individually but also comunually. Social practices therefore need to be coordinated and systematic. For instance, the abstinence from wedding ceremony during the 'critical' period which is seen as 'cultured' for cultivated Shan people. The social pressure arises from culture had cause one to adopt certain 'accepted' ethnic idenity in each particular time.

"After I met one Buddhist monk, he supported our movement and said 'not giving up arms is already rightful, but I warn you not to trust others easily and please always be cautious." Lieutenant General Chao Yawd Serk (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2005)

In addition to culture, Buddhism is often an enabler to confirm the SSA-South to believe that their movement is right. Just like most Burmese, Buddhism acts as a spiritual guidance that dictates what is right or wrong for Shan people. According to the passage above, the Buddhist monk approved Chao Yawd Serk's SSA-South to

continue fighting despite killing is forbidden in Buddhism. Furthermore, Buddhism in this region mostly co-exists or even merges with local beliefs in superstitions. Therefore, the support from a Buddhist monk is an important prove to what the SSA-South has been doing is right. This has given a boost in encouraging as well as strengthening the SSA-South and their Shan nationalism.

4.3 Communication tools: Transmission of Shan nationalism

The previous section discussed how Shan nationalism is strengthened. This section, on the other hand, points out how Shan nationalism is disseminated through multiple channels of communication. In general, there are three main channels: first, news and song with nationalist lyrics; second, recorded pictures and documents; third, social media platforms such as twitter.

"I recruited in the SSA-South Army because I believe that our country exists and it must be taken back. I must come back to save it." Daw Leang, SSA-South member (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2007)

Daw Leang, who was a Shan painter in Bangkok, went back to his native Shan state in order to join the SSA-South to fight against Myanmar. The interview has illustrated that he strongly believes in the existence of the 'Shan country' that is currently occupied by Myanmar. He told Nipatporn in the interview that there are two pushing forces that drive him to join the army: first, news about Chao Yawd Serk's unweary fight against Myanmar; second, Carabao's song about Shan state which made him cry after listening as did other Shan workers in every construction site (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2007, p. 73). From this case, it can be seen that Shan nationalist sentiment still remain alive to those Shan who consume Shan nationalist contents. News and song with nationalist lyrics therefore have capacities to be two effective channels to disemminate Shan nationalism. Those content has underlined the meaning to the audience that Shan are not Burmese.

We (the SSA-South army) are against the constitution (of Myanmar) because it is anti-federalism, which is like they occupy and ethnically cleanse our country. Shan has their own country and history for a long time,

the only constitution we agreed upon is only the first. Colonel Chao Yawd Serk (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2009)

Recorded pictures and documents are used to nourish the Shan nationalist sentiments. For the SSA-South, legitimacy is an important factor that compel the SSA-South to maintain its fight. Legitimacy, in this place, arrives from both politics and rights. According to what Chao Yawd Serk refer to, the first constitution is what confirms the existence of the Shan nation. This confirmation was further proven by that are usually used by the SSA-South as a reason why they have to fight to regain their rights.

Figure 4.3

Impression of the 1947 Panglong conference

Note: Reprinted from "*Union day: A day to rejoice or mourn?*," by Sai Wansai, 2020, Shan News, https://english.shannews.org/archives/20347

human rights become main *zeitgeist* of the post-Cold War world in addition to globalisation and loosening of state borders, the voice from Shan state is easily heard and could gain global society's attention.

4.3.1 Examples of communication tools used

Figure 4.5

A Thai media portraying Shan nationalism

Note: Reprinted from "*Kong thap kou chaat rath Shan rue Shan State Army jad ngan krob rob "wan chaat tai yai" phi 2563* [Shan State Army organises '2020 Shan national day' anniversary]," 2020, February 6, Chiang Mai News, https://www.chiangmainews.co.th/page/archives/1258160/

When one searches about Shan nationalism in Thai language, the SSA-South would appear in most results. This exhibits that the SSA-South has become the sole representative of Shan nationalism to Thai-language speakers as well as in Thai news. Moreover, many Thai-language new agencies and documents have called the SSA-South as merely SSA or *Kong Thap Kou Chaat Rath Shan* (Shan National Salvation Army). This portrayal has caused confusion over what is Shan nationalism for Thai speaking population who might think that the legitimate Shan nationalist group is only the SSA-South. Along with the continual presence of 'Chao Yawd Serk' in the Thai media, Thai news consumers could easily have perceived the SSA-South as a sole

successor of older Shan nationalist movements. Nonetheless, there is, of course, a population who considered Shan people as Burmese due to the location of Shan state in Myanmar which requires border-crossing, but with the fluency of Thai language of Shan people and language similarities shown, their ethnic nationalist identity is leaning closer to Thailand than to Myanmar.

Figure 4.6

General Chao Yawd Serk offering essentials to Kruba Boonchum in Chiang Mai, Thailand

Note. Reprinted from *Pol ek Chao Yawd Serk tawai patahan kab pajjai dae kruba boonchum tee ban pak nai jangwat Chiang Mai* [General Chao Yawd Serk offering essntials to Kruba Boonchum in Chiang Mai, Thailand] [Image attached] [Tweet], by Khurtai Maisoong [@KhurtaiMaisoong], 2018, June 21, Twitter.
https://twitter.com/khurtaimaisoong/status/1009680441069039616

The SSA-South under the leadership of Chao Yawd Serk has been successfully promoted their ethnic nationalist identity by the intense use of communication channels of such as twitter and other social media platforms to message their existence to transborder community. Militarised images and its Shan nationalist struggle's story which can rarely be found in the post-Cold War world entice transborder media attention especially Thai media whose language and culture are similar to the SSA-South. The fact the most of the SSA-South leaders and members could converse in Thai language has facilitate social interaction between the SSA-South

and Thai audiences who started to acknowledge the Shan nationalist identity as a distant cousin of Thai nationalist identity.

Figure 4.7

Lieutenant General Chao Yawd Serk giving an interview to a Thai media

Note: Reprinted from *Krob rob 69 pih rath Shan sampas pontoh Chao Yawd Serk* [Shan state's 69 anniversary, interviewing with Chao Yawd Serk] [Video] by 13siamthai2, 2016, February 22, YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ba2gmMqNrm8

The Shan nationalist identity of the SSA-South is inextricably related to Thailand politically. For example, there have been numerous television programmes from Thailand following up the movements of the SSA-South. Many of those have revealed the high level of intimacy between Thai reporters and the SSA-South leader. For example, Figure 4.7 has shown Amorn Amornratananont, a Thai reporter, in SSA military uniform which appears to be quite eerie, especially when the SSA-South is designated as the government of Myanmar as 'insurgent group'. The fact that I could access the SSA-South materials containing negative content about Myanmar and the *Tatmadaw* are obviously evidences that Thai society tolerate or even prefer the SSA-South over other Shan nationalist groups who were labelled as mere hostile 'insurgents'.

Figure 4.8

General Chao Yawd Serk and 'Shan brothers' in yellow shirts felicitating King Rama X portrait

Note. Reprinted from *Pol ek Chao Yawd Serk nam pi nong tai yai tawaii phra phon ror 10 [*General Chao Yawd Serk and 'Shan brothers' in yellow shirt felicitating King Rama X portrait], (2018, July 29), Siampongs News. https://siampongsnews.blogspot.com/2018/07/10_28.html

As most of the interviews with the SSA-South is in a version of Thai language that is intelligible to audiences in Thailand, the SSA-South then has an advantage that cannot be found in other Shan nationalist groups. The constant appearance of the SSA-South on news and Shan people in Thai society not only sustain its ethnic nationalist identity but also increase political and induce economic benefits. In terms of political benefits, the SSA-South appears to be a representative of Shan people due to their constant appearance as 'friendly nationalists'. This political power of the SSA-South has succeeded in taking over Shan nationalist identity as their own at least among Thai audiences.

SSA-South's leaders and members thus become successful political and market campaigners. They have use channels of communication to break away from the monopoly of Myanmar's government narratives. This has made their existence recognised by people in transborder community which not only brings in political and

economic support but also rises the awareness of the SSA-South and Shan nationalist identity. The most notable figure of the SSA-South could not be other but General Chao Yawd Serk who and whose wife graduated from Thai academic institutions and follow the sense of *Kwam Pen Thai*.

4.4 Resources and support for the SSA-South

Although in previous paragraphs I have proposed that Shan nationalism is a main basis for the SSA-South's struggle, Shan nationalism and dissemination channels still need some resources and support in order to thrive. Those resources include natural resources and transborder remittances that managed to escape Myanmar's controls. Additionally, failure of Myanmar to better Shan people's livelihoods such as in drugs eradication as well as violent suppression from the *Tatmadaw* also increase support for the SSA-South.

> Nuankeaw (in an interview with Chao Yawd Serk): 'Where did your civilians get money and provisions from?'
>
> Chao Yawd Serk: 'Though our people live with difficulties, they always have enough to eat because of abundant resources in our mountainous country where the Burmese cannot yet reach. Another part is from Shan people abroad. Some people is very rich and ready to fully support us since they see that the SSA-South fight for our nation, but I prefer not to say their name. Some are from Mandalay and prosperous entrepreneurs. If we only rely on taxation in Shan state, it is not enough. (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2005)

Comparing to the MTA and the UWSA, the SSA-South has benefited little from ongoing conflict with the central government of Myanmar. According to Nuankeaw's interview, Chao Yawd Serk had admitted that his people were living with difficulties, but with abundant natural resources of Shan state as well as remittances from Shan diasporas, workers and business groups abroad, the SSA-South therefore has managed to continue their survival which also supports their Shan nationalist programmes such as education of Shan nationalist history.

Shan people have to develop our country, support self-governance as well as repel Burmese occupation. Myanmar always claims that it engages in drug eradication programme in Shan state, yet in reality, drugs are still on the rise. UNDC (United Nations Development Coroporation) and DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) inspection in Shan state did not see this and blindly support Myanmar. They do not listen to Shan people. (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2005)

Furthermore, the failure of Myanmar government to eradicate drugs in Shan state is what legitimise the SSA-South's actions. As narcotics have been universally designated as illegal, the SSA-South's will still be proven right in their fight. Additionally, considering the negligence of the central government to protect their citizen from forced resettlements, extrajudicial killings and raping, the Shan civilians hence chose to rely on the SSA-South's protection which, in turn, rise the support of SSA-South.

Our RCSS (SSA-South's council) makes a clear statement that we must get independence. There are four prerequisites in order to gain independence: first, land and well-defined territory; second, population; third, adequate resources; fourth, own culture.

Throughout the history, Shan people always have these four elements. We used to have own *Saophas,* we have our own language, writing script, enough resources and population. In Shan state, only us (the SSA-South) can demand for independence but other ethnic groups such as Wa and Pa-O never have these elements. (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2012)

The absence of central government's rule that Shan people experience is also another decisive factor that supports their movement. As Chao Yawd Serk has said, the SSA-South has almost all prerequisite of an independent state: well-defined territory, population, resources and culture. Therefore, as long as Myanmar could not tighten their rule in the SSA-South-controlled areas, an independent Shan nationalist identity would remain a reality and a reason to fight continuously.

After the Cold War, Myanmar government has been tirelessly putting an effort to end its internal conflicts in order to catch up with the market and global

capitalism, yet the influence of the *Tatmadaw* is still strong. The *Tatmadaw*, like other armies in many third world countries, has its main function to supress domestic political enemies rather than engage in international warfare. As a result, the *Tatmadaw* holds a significant degree of power that is out of control of the government even after the democratisation in Myanmar. Since the *Tatmadaw* situated itself in opposition to its civilians, it thus become an obstacle for national integration. Moreover, the deployment of the *Tatmadaw* troops in frontier areas like in Shan state in the post-Cold War era is a blatant attack of security and well-being in Shan area. Considering low level of positive interactions with Shan civilians, the *Tatmadaw* appears to be a threat itself rather than a protector.

'AS TATMADAW TROOPS ENTERED ETHNIC ZONES,
THEIR FEELING OF BEING ALIENATED CAUSING THEM
TO ENGAGE IN VIOLENT CRIMES'

(Shan Human Rights Foundation, & Shan Women's Action,
2002, p. 27)

Alienation of the *Tatmadaw* troops has reflected an incompatibility of nationalist identity between the *Tatmadaw* and Shan people. This portrays Myanmar's failure to assimilate ethnic groups to have more loyalty towards Myanmar than to ethnic of their own. Moreover, the will to assimilate ethnic groups had resulted in the opposite. Attempts to supress ethnic nationalism by the central government had ended up reinforcing and widening the divide between the ethnic and nation-state.

The Shan population managed to maintain and secure their Shan nationalist identity through multiple communication channels since Myanmar central government's influences and positive interactions in Shan area are minimal. Just like what Langman (2006), Becker (1973) and Kecmanovic (1996) argued that 'people generally finds comfort with those who is similar to them' (Langman, 2006, p. 73), it is not surprising that most Shan population may find themselves closer to the SSA-South than to Myanmar.

4.5 Shan nationalism as a social construct

As far as this chapter has shown, Shan nationalism is stressed and disseminated through multiple means of communication. Hence, I would like to discuss that Shan nationalist narratives have to be continuously produced in order to keep the movement active. Although the SSA-South lacks of formal recognition from other states, its existence contends that that their ethnic identity is different from the Burmese. Due to the multiple channels mentioned, Shan nationalist identity can continue to exist and rival the formally-accepted civic nationalist identity of Myanmar. Moreover, together with today's increase in people and information mobility, the SSA-South could successfully keep their audience intact with its Shan nationalist sentiment.

The foundation of the SSA-South Shan nationalist identity is based on Shan nationalist history. From tracing through the evolution of Shan nationalism in previous chapter, the evidences have shown that there is no single definition of what is Shan nationalist identity as well as Shan nationalism. Furthermore, there is no single unified group of Shan nationalist movement. According the Anderson (1983), in his book 'Imagined Communities', he stated 'it is easier if one treats nationalism (in Southeast Asia's context) as closer to religion or kinship than to liberalism or socialism' (Anderson, 1983, p. 5). In this spirit, Shan nationalism is rather based on kinship rather than a grand ideology ('–ism') that covers all nationalist groups in Myanmar. Hence, the SSA-South is a family in the larger society which is comparable to an individual in a nation-state who do not share or even oppose the nation-state's nationalist project.

The SSA-South leaders often legitimise their Shan nationalism by connecting their history to Thailand. They point out that Shans and Thais are kin which is also used to distinguish ethnic Shan from other ethnic groups in Myanmar. Many of those messages sentimentally link to the concept of pan-Thainess. For example, Chao Yawd Serk has been referring to King Naresuan:

> King Naresuan and Sao Kham Kai Noi (a Shan leader) were supportive friends, so Shan people respect King Naresuan very much … King Naresuan had an ideology to help Shan people fight against the Toungoo (Burmese dynasty) in order to establish Thai-Shan kingdom but this plan was stopped by his death in Shan territory. (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2012)

Chao Yawd Serk's reference to King Naresuan not only stresses out the antiquity of Shan nation, but also highlights that Sao Kham Kai Noi was in an equal status to King Naresuan. This also implicates that Shan people deserves their own independent state just like how Thai people do. Nonetheless, the fact that Chao Yawd Serk claimed that King Naresuan is a revered figure to Shan people as he was on the way to help the Shan to repel the Burmese in order to 'create' Thai-Shan kingdom could also be interpreted in a realist way: King Naresuan intended to repulse Toungoo dynasty's influence, which is a potential threat to Ayutthaya, in surrounding (Shan) vassal cities because he wanted to increase Ayutthayan influence instead of 'helping' his kin. Therefore, the narrative that Chao Yawd Serk has laid might just be a discourse to elevate the status of Shan state by the use of the term 'Thai-Shan kingdom'.

As what Thongchai Winichakul (1994), Pavin Chachavalpongpun (2018) and Leach (1970) proposed 'an identity is born after there is a reference to the contrasting other', similar to Thailand, the Shan nationalist identity is not intrinsic in its nature as many primordialist argued, but it is a product of social construction. Nonetheless, the history which seems to be ancient and factual, was selected and said in the manner to serve the interest of the present. Only certain history that will not cause future animosity or challenge the status quo is allowed.

Up to this point, it may seem that the SSA-South's leader exploits the history for the sake of their own interests by telling their own version of Shan nationalism to maintain the SSA-South's Shan nationalist identity. Nevertheless, Shan nationalist narratives the SSA-South used do not make their ethnic nationalist sentiment less real, especially to those who find Myanmar as their enemy because of the negative experiences that the Shan people experienced with the *Tatmadaw* and unequal treatment from Myanmar. Rather than co-existing, Shan nationalist identity is thus an ethnic identity that is opposed to Myanmar identity just like how Thainess is in opposed to un-Thai elements such as communism during the Cold War (Thongchai Winichakul, 1994).

4.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, unsupervised natural resources, remittances and failure of Myanmar government to create trust, are enablers for the SSA-South not to cease their fight. Education, historical records, news, nationalist songs, and networkings are channels that encourage Shan nationalism which is used as a main reason for the fight. As a result, the Shan population becomes more loyal to the SSA-South than to Myanmar as the SSA-South represents their interests better and warmly embraces them as a part in accordance to their Shan nationalist identity.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis substantiates that ethnic nationalism and armed rebellion can persist with minimal funding. Moreover, this thesis also suggests that ethnic nationalism is still alive and can still be an important basis for fighting. Considering the international political economy of war, I would argue economic benefits are not always a source of continuous fight especially in the case of the SSA-South. The SSA-South is able to continue fighting against the Myanmar government and *Tatmadaw* even after the political landscape both in Myanmar and international community have changed.

Ongoing conflicts are results of prolonged sense of ethnic nationalism sustained by multiple channels of communication and social interactions. The SSA-South has been utilising communication tools to incite people to join its armed movement using Shan nationalism. Shan nationalism, in this place, is not only exclusive to the Shan people but also extends to other ethnic members who share common aspiration as well as experience with the SSA-South. Moreover, the SSA-South's version of Shan nationalist identity is unique as it is 'anti-ethno-narcotic'. Shan nationalist identity, in this place, is fluid since the definition has been altered over time based on the emphasis given on certain elements. The reason behind this is that Shan nationalist identity always exists with regards to what is not Shan; or as Thongchai terms as 'negative identification'. This identification has been an instrument for different generations of Shan leaders to use Shan nationalism to prolong the conflict with Myanmar.

The SSA-South prolong their Shan nationalist identity in order to continue fighting through the use of various communication tools. Communication tools that the SSA-South use to disseminate Shan nationalism include news, recorded pictures and documents, and social media platforms such as twitter. These communication tools can pass on ethnic nationalist messages that can awake Shan nationalist sentiment. Moreover, the receivers of those messages will also help to convey ethnic nationalist messages to larger Shan group, for instance, the Carabao band's song and Thai news agencies who further echo Shan nationalism in addition to the SSA-South. This mode

of communication help to overcome limitations that Shan people encounter since not everyone has access to the SSA-South's original messages. Following the reception of the messages, the people can be ideologically motivated and go back to fight for 'Shan nation', which is not only in a form of territory but also felt as a nationalist sentiment, along with the SSA-South. The reason why they chose to go back is because they believe that Shan nation exists, is occupied by Myanmar and should be taken back. Those beliefs ultimately derive from the SSA-South's leaders like Chao Yawd Serk who constantly produces ethnic nationalist discourses by referring to evidences which includes common history and myths. Whether those common history and myths are true is debatable; nevertheless, for the people who experience trauma and loss during the Myanmar's occupation, they will likely perceive and accept that as 'truth' in order to legitimise their actions. Since the SSA-South uses Shan nationalism as a reason for unweary battles against Myanmar, it attracts those who psychologically feel that they are a part of liberation movement and obligated to Shan nation to fight despite living difficulties and minimal funding they expect to live through.

After the research, I think that I have achieved my 5 thesis aims. First, I have discussed about the roots and transformation of Shan nationalism as well as how Shan nationalism is emphasised by leaders of different eras. Shan nationalism is significantly emphasised after the World War II citing its ancient roots dated back to ancient Shan empire under Chao Seua Khan Fa as well as the belief that they were descended from Khun Lu and Khun Lai (Chao, 1987, p. 12). As the time passed by, the definition of Shan nationalism has been altered by different generations of Shan leaders; in other words, a definition of Shan nationalism is 'fluid' (Chanintira na Thalang, 2009). For instance, the SSA-South under Chao Yawd Serk perceives drug as a threat for Shan people liberation thus made Shan nationalism associated with 'anti-ethno narcotic culture' (Thitiwut Boonyawongwiwat, 2018). Second, utilising social constructivism offered me a perspective in viewing Shan nationalism as 'fluid' and interactional instead of being fixed from birth. Social constructivism provides me an alternative view apart from choosing side between primordialism and modernism. It also can help me to explain how nationalist sentiment is maintained and manipulated by social interactions and nationalist leaders. Moreover, social constructivism opens a space for me to explain how Shan nationalism is sustained by multiple channels of

communication. Social memories which give a meaning to Shan nationalist identity and dictate Shan nationalist sentiment are also kept alive by these channels. Third, I think that this thesis is one of few studies about the SSA-South in English since most of the evidences related to the SSA-South are available in Thai and Shan languages. Furthermore, the thesis also offers a view of Shan nationalism in the perspective of the SSA-South. Among those few studies, there is a lack of research on how the SSA-South is fund as well as how leaders use multiple channels of communication to disseminate Shan nationalism. Therefore, I think that this thesis is one of the first studies to cover on those research gaps. In addition, this thesis also contributes to Pavin's study which looks at the Thai-Burmese relationship through Thailand's perspective. The sense of Pan-Thainess is also a major contribution in viewing the SSA-South as a part of 'Thai family'. Fourth, I found that political economy of war is not the reason of the SSA-South's continuous fight since the SSA-South does not benefit from fighting with Myanmar and the *Tatmadaw*. The research has demonstrated that the SSA-South is different from other interest group such as the MTA since they are principally motivated by their Shan nationalist ideology rather than profits from illicit drug trades. I also discover that the SSA-South's continuous fight is fuelled by Shan nationalist sentiments rather than economic gains. Moreover, I also discovered that ceasefire is not always a solution that bring an end to ongoing war and conflict since the ceasefire agreement is just another instrument to tighten Myanmar's grip of ethnic areas and do not stop the SSA-South from fighting for their independence as they gain so little from the ceasefire agreement. Fifth, the thesis has proved that economic incentives are not an ultimate reason in political actions. Instead, political actions can be stemmed from ideology such as Shan nationalism which are disseminated by the SSA-South leaders through various communication tools. Sixth, this thesis has demonstrated how Shan nationalist sentiment is disseminated and prolonged through multiple channels of communication and social interactions. As Shan nationalist is a driver of ongoing war and conflict, the SSA-South thus keep on fighting regardless of any structural changes such as democratisation in Myanmar that increases international support of the central government.

Theoretically, I think this thesis is useful to explain other nationalist groups that continue their fight despite minimal funding such as the Karen National Union

63

(KNU) who continue their struggle even after the Fall of Manerplaw in 1995 that the KNU lost most of its income. Moreover, just like the SSA-South, the KNU also uses various communication channels to disseminate Karen nationalism. Furthermore, the thesis's theoretical framework could also be applied to other social movement groups such as student or climate change demonstrations that use ideology or sense of kinship (our country's or our world's future) as a basis for the movements.

Empirically, based on my analysis, I would suggest Myanmar government as well as the *Tatmadaw* to understand the SSA-South needs in the perspective of the SSA-South because the SSA-South do not perceive themselves as a breakaway group from the MTA, yet as a successor of Shan nationalist movements since Panglong. Furthermore, I would encourage that the Myanmar government and especially the *Tatmadaw* not to give a cold shoulder on the extrajudicial killings and rapes as well as a forced relocation issues in Shan state in the past. If the Myanmar government and the *Tatmadaw* can compensate for the loss or punish those perpetrators rather than keeping capturing the state's opponents, then positive interactions and sentiments towards Myanmar with the ethnic groups will increase which will facilitate many negotiations, compromises and eventually peace to come.

5.1 Future consideration

This thesis also has shown that nationalist sentiment is still relevant or even more important in this modern era. Just like to what Chanintira na Thalang (2009) has presented that 'nationalist sentiment remains alive in most part of the world, though modernisation theorists claimed it would decline', nationalist sentiment is also growing in the more complex one based on the ancient foundation. What modernity brings is the tools that facilitate globalisation of information, yet it does not also make the world to have one common identity as nationalist sentiment differs for each group of ethnic or nation. It can be seen that even globalisation of information has been reaching to more number of population regardless of their ethnic, nationality, citizenship or where they live due to the increasing range of internet coverage and digital devices ownership, national sentiment and nationalism is proven to be alive or even on the rise as

globalisation facilitates multiple channels of communication to disseminate nationalist content in larger scale and from afar.

In the future, Shan nationalism will still persist and continue to expand. Over the course of time, Shan nationalism will be refined and re-emphasised again. Each generation of leaders will put an emphasis on different characteristic of Shan nationalist identity and continue to use that as a basis of Shan nationalism. In the framework of social constructivism, Shan nationalism will be sustained by social interactions and be disseminated through channels of communication. Moreover, considering the ease of communication of the 21st century, Shan nationalist messages can even be further dispersed covering more audiences.

Despite the growth and advancement of communication technologies, there is still some impediment such as lack of devices and infrastructures in accessing the information in Myanmar (Reporters sans frontières, n.d.). As a result, digital channels like twitter and online news may have less impact towards Shan people comparing to other traditional means of communication such as social gatherings. The real of impact of digital communication, in my opinion, is towards larger audience including people of many other ethnicities apart from Shan. For example, Thai media will help to echo the news about the SSA-South's nationalist movement. This is also proven by the case of Daw Leang who joined the SSA-South after he had heard news and Carabao's song about Chao Yawd Serk in a construction site in Bangkok (Chao Yawd Serk et al., 2007). Therefore, not only Shan nationalism is fortified by direct communication from SSA-South's leader to Shan people, but also indirectly through a medium like news who help to record and disseminate Shan nationalist messages.

Though Shan nationalism could explain why the SSA-South engage in the fight against Myanmar and the *Tatmadaw,* I think that the idea of Shan nationalism will be changed. After the various ceasefires with Myanmar, the SSA-South has been altering its way to fight, from fully-armed battles to favouring negotiations. However, most of the negotiations are still unsettled due to discrepancies between the SSA-South's and the central government's demands. In my perspective, I think that Myanmar will not change its stance towards the SSA-South by demanding an unconditional surrender. On the other hand, the SSA-South will have to rethink and redefine Shan nationalism in order to survive especially when sources of fundings have

been cut as well as difficulties and sufferings are becoming more and more unendurable. At the end of the day, Shan nationalism may turn from a basis for continuous fight to be a support for a compromise.

The concept of 'fluidity of national identity' will be able to explain future changes in emphasis of Shan nationalist identity. As it can be observed in the genesis of the SSA-South, Shan nationalism has gradually evolved from *Saopha*-centric to nationalist army-centric which the latter does not demand for *Saopha*'s rule. For the SSA-South, the emphasis is put in an 'anti-ethno-narcotic culture' as well as Pan-Thainess which continues to differentiate and distance itself from Myanmar. Nevertheless, the trend in the future seems to be that the SSA-South might instead choose to highlight other part of its ethnic nationalist identity by the fact that negotiation culture is gradually becoming a more 'reasonable' and replacing armed struggles due to reduction of transborder fundings and international acceptance of Myanmar.

As this thesis has presented that Shan nationalism is sustained by multiple channels of communications and social interactions, Shan nationalism may be personal as well. Those people who share Shan nationalist sentiment may not choose to involve in any political processes, but rather choose to look from outside – all depends on personality and preference. Furthermore, those people who are outside the social gatherings pose a limitation for a research since their nationalist sentiment cannot be accessed and thus is not counted. Hence, social psychology can be a useful tool in understanding feelings as well as sense of mistrust of people, which I think contribute to the SSA-South's growth and increasing support, that may not be expressed in anthropological field research interviews.

I find that the SSA-South's Shan nationalism is a political discourse. Shan identity alone will not be adequate reason for fighting, yet it has to be politicised by incorporation of grievances and belief of ethnic distinctiveness (Shan nationalism) into it. For instance, there are constant reminders of extrajudicial killings and rape by a group of people stereotyped as 'Myanmar military' in Shan human rights documents. These incidents have ignited Shan nationalist sentiment by juxtaposed it against the out-group perpetrators who might be the Burmese. However, this politicised image can be remembered in a certain period and will eventually disappear if there is no mention of it. Therefore, channels of communication will help to preserve the grievances of

Shan people which will persuade Shan nationalist to support the SSA-South both physically and economically.

Shan nationalism, thus, is a product of social construction as its meaning is given by social interactions which change across the time. It can be transformed by changing context of political needs. In other words, Shan nationalism can be a basis for a continuous fight now, but in the future, its function as a basis for fighting may be altered. The change Myanmar's regime towards democracy which is favoured by international community may also influence the SSA-South to use of Shan nationalism in a more compromising way with Myanmar in order to gain international support and especially recognition as well.

As a political scientist, I did not take Shan nationalist identity as primordially granted yet as politically interactive force where the most powerful group of people holds power in defining of what should be its nationalist identity. However, I always keep in mind that, I should not be succumbed to each of narratives since every study is political and contain some values. Therefore, I tried to connect the dots of all findings to explain why the SSA-South's Shan nationalist identity is different from other Shan nationalist identity.

This thesis topic also has a potential to be researched in various disciplines apart from political science. First, I think ethnographic research can help to supplement and double-check the validity of the Shan nationalist discourses by accessing the culture that facilitates the construction of Shan nationalism. Second, social psychologists as well as psychoanalysts can also employ their theory in understanding why the people join and support SSA-South based on the convert aspects of the mind that are not manifested. Third, this topic can be studied in the field of journalism and mass communication as the SSA-South uses channels of communication to sustain Shan nationalism. The wordings that can spark nationalist and sentimental feelings can also be analysed.

Moreover, I also think that my research findings can be applied to other cases and further developed in many other methodologies. For example, recently I have been reading a book from Akhanee (2016) on Nagaland, I am surprise to find out how similar the Shan and the Naga nationalist identity have been developed and bulit as a basis of ethnic nationalism. The author has pointed out that the Naga nationalist identity

was born out of the interaction between them and the outsiders from the British colonial officals, the Imperial Japanese Army to the Indian Army just during the World War II. This has substantiated the concept that ethnic nationalism is constructed by social interactions.

When assessing documents, I can see the perspectives both from the ordinary people and political elites. This makes me understand not only the ideologies, but also a psychological group phenomenon. Additionally, I can also see the way in which memories have altered over the time by the use of different evidences and stories. As modern evidences contain of footages and photographs that cannot be entirely made up, the ethnic nationalist sentiments are guided by selection of content makers in order to substantiate their claim and present the narrative that they prefer. I also find out that ethnic nationalist history might be subjected to its author and strongly believe that it is almost impossible to find a total value-free materials since everybody always adheres to certain social values or groups as it is 'an antidote to nothingness or loneliness' (Langman, 2006, p. 73).

To future researchers on this topic, I would suggest them to explore Shan nationalism from other Shan nationalist groups' perspectives such as of the SSA-North. Additionally, I encourage them to debate on whether Shan nationalism is enough in sustaining fight against the Myanmar government and the *Tatmadaw*. As I realise that most of my arguments are based on the SSA-South's perspectives, I hope that future research could offer a new perspective of Shan nationalism as well as how they manage to survive since there is a lack of evidences as of now. If possible, I would be glad to see a research of this topic from a quantitative side.

This thesis topic has been developed in 2019 and is written in 2020. During the thesis writing, there is a global pandemic of COVID-19 which affects my plan of research in data collection. Therefore, I shifted to focus mainly in documentary analysis. The materials available that I employed are mainly written a decade ago, therefore, Shan nationalism then and now may be different. I realised that the documents about the SSA-South in particular is still rare especially as a printed version in a library. On the other hand, the online materials are mostly collected years ago and most of their messages do not provide enough information for the genesis of the SSA-South. Therefore, I encourage future researchers to publish an updated information of

the SSA-South which I believe that will reflect the changes in emphasis over Shan nationalist identity and nationalism.

Considering the world after COVID-19 and globalisation of information, I think the popularity of field research will decrease as there are travel restrictions and health risks. Therefore, in overcoming this limitation, I think that incorporation of theory into an analysis may provide us an alternative explanation over the issues such as social psychology which I believe can be used to analyse people regardless of ideology and ethnicity. In my perspective, following this thesis's logic, ideology and ethnicity are not fixed and can be influenced by social interactions and channels of communication that will ultimately change people's beliefs and identifications.
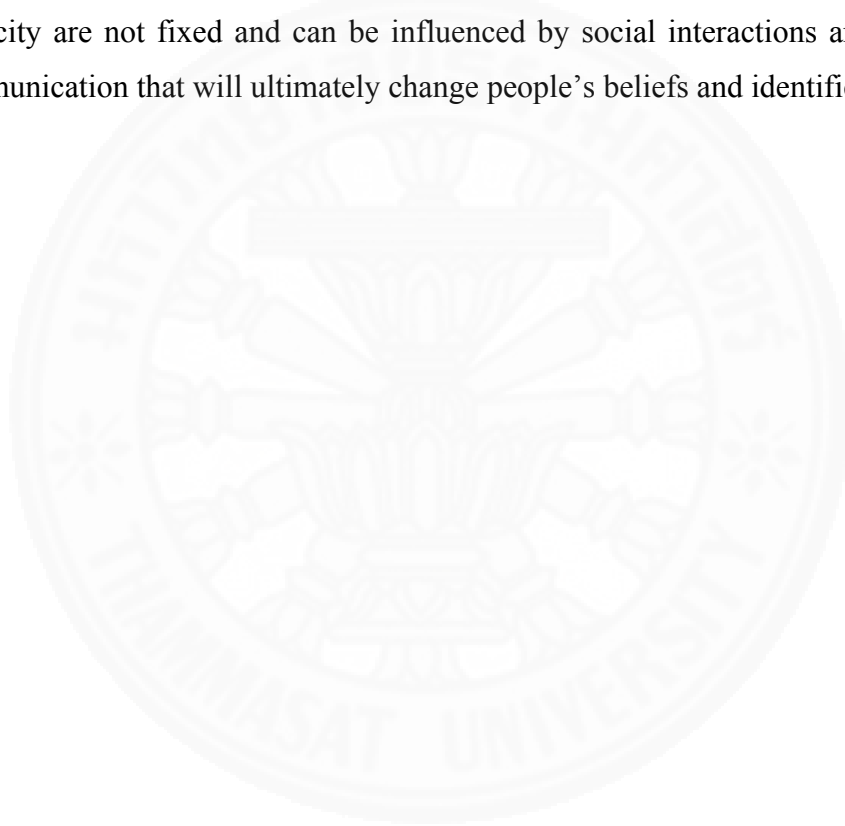
REFERENCES

13siamthai2. (2016, February 22). *Krob rob 69 pih rath Shan sampas pontoh Chao Yawd Serk* [Shan state's 69 anniversary, interviewing with Chao Yawd Serk] [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ba2gmMqNrm8

Acton, E. (1870). "Politique tirée de l'Écriture Sainte" *Oeuvres de Bossuet [The Bossuet quotation], 1*, 304.

Akhanee Moonmek. (2005). *Rath Shan: Prawati satra lae kan patiwata* [Shan State: History and revolution]. Matichon.

Akhanee Moonmek. (2016). *Nagaland din dean ti lok leum* [Nagalim: The Forgotten Land]. Gypsy.

Amporn Jirattikorn. (2007). *Living on both sides of the border: Transnational migrants, pop music and nation of the Shan in Thailand*. Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University.

Amporn Jirattikorn. (2011). Shan virtual insurgency and the spectatorship of the nation. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 42*(1), 17-38. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022463410000524

Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso.

Anderson, B. (1998). *The spectre of comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the world*. Verso.

Becker, E. (1973). *Denial of death*. The Free Press.

Bieber, F. (2018). Is nationalism on the rise? Assessing global trends. *Ethnopolitics, 17*(5), 519–540. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2018.1532633

Black, M. (2006, December 13). *World politics watch: On Myanmar-China border, tensions escalate between SPDC, narco-militias*. BurmaNet News. https://web.archive.org/web/20140413142227/http://www.burmanet.org/news/2006/12/13/world-politics-watch-on-myanmar-china-border-tensions-escalate-between-spdc-narco-militias-michael-black/

Brass, P. (1991). *Ethnicity and nationalism: Theory and comparison*. Sage.

Breuilly, J. (2017). Nationalism, national self-determination, and international relations. In J. Baylis, S. Smith, & P. Owens (Eds.), *The globalization of world politics: An introduction to international relations* (pp. 435-437). Oxford University Press.

Brewer, J. D. (2006). *Memory, truth and victimhood in post-trauma societies*. Sage.

Brown, C. (1999). Burma: The political economy of violence. *Disasters, 23*(3), 234-256. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00115

Burke, A., Williams, N., Barron, P., Jolliffe, K. & Carr, T. (2017). The contested areas of Myanmar: Subnational conflict, aid, and development. The Asia Foundation. https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ContestedAreasMyanmarReport.pdf

Callahan, M. P. (2007). *Political authority in Burma's ethnic minority states: Devolution, occupation, and coexistence*. East-West Center Washington.

Chanintira na Thalang. (2009). The fluidity of nationalistic and ethnic aspirations in Aceh. *Nations and Nationalism, 15*(2), 319–339.

Chao, T. Y. (1987). *The Shan of Burma: Memoirs of a Shan exile*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Chao Yawd Serk, Nipatporn Pengkeaw, & Nuankeaw Buraphawat. (2007). *Gon tawan cha chai shan* [Before sunrise on Shan state]. Openbooks.

Chao Yawd Serk, Nipatporn Pengkeaw, & Nuankeaw Buraphawat. (2009). *Pan din shan nai maan mohk* [Shan state in the mist]. Openbooks.

Chao Yawd Serk, Nipatporn Pengkeaw, & Nuankeaw Buraphawat. (2012). *Plai khob fa shan* [Shan's horizon]. Siam.

Chao Yawd Serk, Suea, & Nipatporn Pengkeaw. (2005). *Ban tuek chak sanam rob* [Dairy from battlegrounds]. Siam.

Cohen, A. (1974). *Two-Dimensional man: An essay on the anthropology of power and symbolism in complex society*. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Cole, J. W., & Wolf, E. R. (1974). *The hidden frontier: Ecology and ethnicity in an Alpine valley*. Academic Press.

Conversi, D., Smith, A. D., Breuilly, J., Walker, C., Thanes Wongyannava, & Pipat Pasutarnchat. (2019). *When is a nation?* Illuminations Editions.

Decha Tangseefa. (2006). Taking flight in condemned grounds: Forcibly displaced Karens and the Thai-Burmese in-between spaces. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, 31*(4), 405-429.

Delanty, G. (2003). *Community*. Routledge.

Elias, N. (1978). *The civilizing process*. Urisen Books.

Fink, C. (2009). *Living silence in Burma: Surviving under military rule.* Silkworm.

Fiori, A., & Passeri, A. (2015). Hedging in search of a new age of non-alignment: Myanmar between China and the USA. *The Pacific Review, 28*(5), 679–702. https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2015.1012543

Freud, S. (1961). *Civilization and its discontents*. W. W. Norton. (Original work published 1930)

Gambe, A. (2000). *Overseas Chinese entrepreneurship and capitalist development in Southeast Asia*: Palgrave Macmillan.

Geertz, C. (Ed.). (1963). *Old societies and new states: The quest for modernity in Asia and Africa.* Free Press of Glencoe.

Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism*. Basil Blackwell.

Gergen, K. (2001). *Social construction in context*. Sage.

Global Witness. (2015). *Jade: Myanmar's "big state secret".* Author.

Gries, P. H., Zhang, Q., Crowson, H. M., & Cai, H. (2011). Patriotism, nationalism and China's US policy: Structures and consequences of Chinese national identity. *The China Quaterly, 205*, 1-17.

Gurr, T., & Harff, B. (1994). *Ethnic conflict in world politics*. Westview Press.

Gustafsson, K. (2014). *Is patriotism distinct from nationalism?: The meaning of "patriotism" in China in the 2000s*. Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University.

Han, E. (2017). Geopolitics, ethnic conflicts along the border, and Chinese foreign policy changes toward Myanmar. *Asian Security, 13*(1), 59-73.

Han, E. (2019, October 18). Review of the book *The ethno-narcotic politics of the Shan people: Fighting with drugs, fighting for the nation on the Thai-Burmese border,* by T. Boonyawongwiwat. *Mountain Research and Development, 39*(2), M3-M4.

Harari, Y. N. (2018). *21 lessons for the 21st century*. Jonathan Cape.

Hetcher, M., & Okamoto, D. (2001). 'Political consequences of minority group formation'. *Annual Reviews of Political Sciences, 4*, 189-215.

Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T. (1963). *Invention of traditions*. Cambridge University Press.

Hutchinson, J. (2001). *Nations and culture*. Polity Press.

The Irrawaddy. (2020, February 14). 'We have never talked about secession': RCSS Chief. https://www.irrawaddy.com/in-person/never-talked-secession-rcss-chief.html

Ivarsson, C. H. (2018). Lion's blood: Social media, everyday nationalism and anti-Muslim mobilisation among Sinhala-Buddhist youth. *Contemporary South Asia, 27*(2), 145–159. https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2018.1528210

Jenkins, R. (1997). *Rethinking ethnicity: Arguments and explorations*. Sage.

Kecmanovic, D. (1996). *The mass psychology of ethnonationalism*. The Free Press.

Kengtung state. (2005, October 10). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kengtung_State

Khurtai Maisoong. [@KhurtaiMaisoong]. (2018, June 21). *Pol ek Chao Yawd Serk tawai patahan kab pajjai dae kruba boonchum tee ban pak nai jangwat Chiang Mai* [General Chao Yawd Serk offering essentials to Kruba Boonchum in Chiang Mai, Thailand] [Image attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/khurtaimaisoong/status/1009680441069039616

Kong thap kou chaat rath Shan rue Shan State Army jad ngan krob rob "wan chaat tai yai" phi 2563 [Shan State Army organises '2020 Shan national day' anniversary]. (2020, February 6). Chiang Mai News. https://www.chiangmainews.co.th/page/archives/1258160/

Kramer, T. (2007). *The United Wa State Party: Narco-army or ethnic nationalist party?* Insitute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Kruba Boonchum maen dang ta hen eek song wan pob tua jer jing jing yad hey dai lukluk klab keun su aom oak kaad eek song wan tueng rong phayaban [Kruba Boonchum's precise intuition 'discover junior football team in two days']. (2018, July 3). Chiang Mai News. https://www.chiangmainews.co.th/page/archives/745767/

Langman, L. (2006). The social psychology of nationalism: To die for the sake of strangers. In G. Delanty & K. Kumar (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of nations and nationalism* (pp. 66-83). Sage

Leach, E. R. (1970). *Political systems of highland Burma: A study of Kachin social structure*. London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology. Bloomsbury.

Leoussi, A. S. (2004). 'The ethno-cultural roots of national art'. *Nations and Nationalism, 10*(1-2), 143-159.

Lipes, J. (2015, October 15). *Myanmar signs historic cease-fire deal with eight ethnic armies*. Radio Free Asia. https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/deal-10152015175051.html

McCarthy, G. (2019). *Military capitalism in Myanmar: The origins, continuities and evolution of "khaki capital"*. ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

McGowan, W. (1993). Burmese hell. *World Policy Journal, 10*(2), 47-56.

Meehan, P. (2015). Fortifying or fragmenting the state? The political economy of the opium/heroin trade in Shan State, Myanmar, 1988–2013. *Critical Asian Studies, 47*(2), 253-282. https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2015.1041280

Migdal, J. (2001). *State in society: Studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another*. Cambridge University Press.

Pama prab nak kong thab rath Shan 'nuea' la sood tong sala than lai haeng [The SSA-North left their bases after Myanmar's attacks]. (2011, March 18). Prachathai. https://prachatai.com/journal/2011/03/33624

Pavin Chachavalpongpun. (2018). *A plastic nation : The curse of thainess in Thai-Burmese relations*. Fah Diew Kan.

Pathan, D. (2005). Thailand's war on drugs. In M. Jelsma, T. Kramer, & P. Vervest (Eds.), *Trouble in the triangle* (pp. 115). Silkworm Books.

Pol ek Chao Yawd Serk nam pi nong tai yai tawaii phra phon ror 10 [General Chao Yawd Serk and 'Shan brothers' in yellow shirts felicitating King Rama X portrait]. (2018, July 29). Siampongs News. https://siampongsnews.blogspot.com/2018/07/10_28.html

Prasat phrasob chaofa tai yai [Cremation castle of Shan Saopha]. (2009). Ngao Adit. http://topicstock.pantip.com/library/topicstock/2009/03/K7586131/K7586 131.html

Real Stories. (2016, January 23). *Inside Burma: Land of fear (war documentary) | Real Stories* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZUssUf8daU

Reporters sans frontières. (n.d.). *2019 world press freedom index – A cycle of fear*. https://rsf.org/en/2019-world-press-freedom-index-cycle-fear

Reynolds, Craig J. (1991). *National identity and its defenders: Thailand 1939-1989.* Silkworm Books.

Sai Aung Tun. (2009). *History of the Shan State: From its origins to 1962*. Silkworm Books.

Sai Keunsai. (2018). *'How I became Shan'*. Yusof Ishak Institute and Chiang Mai University Press.

The School for Shan State Nationalities Youth. (n.d.). About us. https://sssny.org/about-us/

Scott, J. C. (2011). *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press.

Shan Human Rights Foundation. (1998). *Dispossessed: A report on forced relocation and extrajudicial killings in Shan State, Burma*. Author.

Shan Human Rights Foundation & Shan Women's Action Network. (2002). *Licence to rape : The Burmese military regime's use of sexual violence in the ongoing war in Shan State*. Authors.

Shee, P. K. (2002). The political economy of China-Myanmar relations: Strategic and economic dimensions. *Ritsumeikan Annual Review of International Studies, 1*, 33-53.

Shi, J. (2016, October 16). Time of uncertainty lies ahead for Bangkok's ethnic Chinese. *South China Monrning Post*. https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/2028412/time-uncertainty-lies-ahead-bangkoks-ethnic-chinese

Shils, E. (1957). Primordial, personal, sacred and civil ties. *British Journal of Sociology, 8*(2), 130–145.

Sit Htet Aung. (2020, February 7). Tatmadaw generals to celebrate Shan National
    Day at RCSS camp. *Myanmar Times*.
    https://www.mmtimes.com/news/tatmadaw-generals-celebrate-shan-
    national-day-rcss-camp.html

Smith, A. D. (1981). *The ethnic revival*. Cambridge University Press.

Smith, A. D. (2003). *Chosen peoples*. Oxford University Press.

Smith, A. D. (2010). *Nationalism: Theory, ideology, history* (2nd ed.). Polity.

Smith, M. (1999). *Burma: Insurgency and the politics of ethnicity.* Zed Books.

Smith, M. (2006). Ethnic participation and national reconciliation in Myanmar:
    Challenges in a transitional landscape. In T. Wilson (Ed.), *Myanmar's
    long road to national reconciliation* (pp. 38-74). Insitute of Southeast
    Asian Studies.

South, A. (2004). Political transition in Myanmar: A new model for democratization.
    Contemporary Southeast Asia 26(2), 233-256.

Spring. (2018, February 24). Rad Shan ma tu phum tai yai [Shan state, Shan
    motherland]. [Video]. YouTube.
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_W4OjqhHiE&t=1340s

Surachart Bamrungsuk. (2007). *Ethnonationalism*. Security Studies Programme,
    Thailand Research Fund (TRF).

Taylor, R. (2007). British policy towards Myanmar and the creation of the 'Burma
    problem'. In N. Ganesan & Kyaw Yin Hlaing (Eds.), *Myanmar: state, -
    society and ethnicity* (pp. 70-95)*.* Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Thai cave rescue: Stateless boys and coach granted citizenship. (2018, August 9). *The
    Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/09/thai-cave-
    rescue-stateless-boys-and-coach-granted-citizenship

ThaiPBS. (2018, July 28). *Yodia tee kid (mai) tueng: Maha Thein Taw Gyi tee tuk
    leum* [(Un)expected Yodaya: The forgotten Maha Thein Taw Gyi]
    [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5qn8q3Nz9Y

Thak, C. (2014). Are we them? Textual and literary representations of the Chinese in
    twentieth-century Thailand. *Southeast Asian Studies, 3*(3), 473-526.

Thitiwut Boonyawongwiwat. (2018). *The ethno-narcotic politics of the Shan people: Fighting with drugs, fighting for the nation on the Thai-Burmese border*. Lexington Books.

Then & Now. (2018, July 28). *Theories of nationalism and national identity: An introduction* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uwv9XjTZh2c

Thongchai Winichakul. (1994). *Siam mapped: A history of the geo-body of a nation*. University of Hawaii Press.

Thongtai. (1998). *Tai Yai* [Shan]. Samaphan.

Time to get rid of Mahar-Myanmar mentality. (2012). Kanbawza Min, https://www.kachinlandnews.com/

Trager, F. N. (1956). Burma's foreign policy, 1948–56: Neutralism, third force, and rice. *The Journal of Asian Studies, 16*(1), 89-102.

Trip klai sud chao kor ror mor yeun tin Chao Yawd Serk doi tai leang rath shan 14 morkor 59 tee phan ma [Farthest trip of cabinet's group, visiting Chao Yawd Serk's homeland at Loi Tai Leang, last 14 January 2016]. (2016). Don Din. http://www.weekendhobby.com/

Waltz, K. N. (1989). Structural realism after the Cold War. *International Security, 25*(1), 5-41.

Woods, K. (2011). Ceasefire capitalism: Military–private partnerships, resource concessions and military–state building in the Burma–China borderlands. *Journal of Peasant Studies, 38*(4), 747-770. https://doi.org/10.1080/ 03066150.2011.607699

Yiamyut Sutthichaya. (2020, February 13). *73 pee wan chat rath Shan: Arai kue santiphab samrub khun suek nak santiphab lae prachachon* [73 years of national day, Shan State: What is the 'peace' of warlords, peacemakers and citizens]. Prachatai. https://prachatai.com/journal/2020/02/86316

Zaw Oo & Win Min. (2007). *Assessing Burma's ceasefire accords*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

BIOGRAPHY

Name	Mr Phanuphat Chattragul
Date of Birth	May 1997
Educational Attainment	2015-2018: Bachelor of Political Science
	Major: Politics and International Relations
	(English Program)
	Minor: Governance and Transnationalism
	Thammasat University, Thailand
	2017: Exchange student (Scholarship),
	Department of Politics and Public
	Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences
	The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
	SAR, China
Work Experiences	2021-present: Research Assistant,
	School of Public Policy
	Chiang Mai University, Thailand
	2020: Research Assistant and Interpreter,
	Visiting Research Graduate
	University of Gothenburg, Sweden
	2018: Internship at African Division,
	Department of South Asian, Middle East and
	African Affairs
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand