Diversity, Space Levels and Approaches to Multiculturalism in Thailand

ความหลากหลาย ระดับ และกระบวนทัศน์ของพหุวัฒนธรรมนิยมในประเทศไทย

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บทคัดย่อ

พหุวัฒนธรรมนิยมเข้าสู่ประเทศไทยและประเทศอื่น ๆ ด้วยเพราะการเกิดขึ้นใหม่ของชาตินิยมชาติพันธุ์และการเคลื่อนไหวเพื่อให้ได้มาซึ่งสิทธิต่าง ๆ ของกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ส่วนน้อย ในขณะที่คำต่าง ๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับเรื่องสิทธิและการปกป้องคนกลุ่มน้อยยังคงเป็นประเด็นที่มีการช่วงชิงและเปิดกว้างสำหรับการต่อรองกัน บทความนี้นำเสนอว่าพหุวัฒนธรรมนิยมในฐานะที่เป็นวาทกรรม เพิ่งเกิดขึ้นในประเทศไทยเมื่อไม่นานมานี้ และแนวคิดนี้ได้เข้ามาในเวลาที่หลายประเทศในยุโรป หรือแม้แต่ประเทศอย่างแคนาดา ที่ประสบผลสำเร็จในการใช้นโยบายพหุวัฒนธรรมเพื่อหลอมรวมผู้อพยพ ไม่ได้ให้ความสำคัญกับแนวคิดนี้แล้ว แต่ได้ทดแทนด้วยกระแสโลกียานุวัตรที่เพิ่มขึ้น บทความนี้นำเสนอว่ามีสัญญาณบางอย่างที่เป็นการส่งเสริมพหุวัฒนธรรมนิยมในประเทศไทย แต่ดูเหมือนว่ารัฐบาลและภาคประชาสังคมยังไม่เข้าใจถึงความจริงต่าง ๆ ในชนบทที่เป็นอยู่ในปัจจุบัน การปรับตัวขององค์กรพัฒนาเอกชนและภาคส่วนของประชาสังคมเข้าสู่การพัฒนากระแสหลัก อาจไม่ส่งผลดีต่อกลุ่มผู้อพยพที่เข้าสู่เมืองเชียงใหม่และกรุงเทพฯ ด้วยเพราะวิถีชีวิตบนพื้นที่สูงกำลังเข้าสู่การเปลี่ยนแปลงอย่างรวดเร็ว

พวกเขาต้องพึ่งพาการส่งเงินจากลูกหลานในเมืองและจากแรงงานอพยพในต่างประเทศ กลับมายังหมู่บ้านในชนบท บทความยังเสนอแนะให้มีการศึกษาพหุวัฒนธรรมนิยมในระดับของความสัมพันธ์ในชีวิตประจำวัน ยุทธศาสตร์ และกลยุทธ์ ลักษณะของความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างชนกลุ่มน้อยกับชนกลุ่มใหญ่ กับทั้งรูปแบบของการต่อสู้ดิ้นรนและความขัดแย้งในปัจจุบัน ซึ่งแนวทางดังกล่าวได้รับการเปิดกว้าง โดยนักวิชาการที่ทำวิจัยเกี่ยวกับพหุวัฒนธรรมนิยมในชีวิตประจำวันว่าด้วยการปฏิสัมพันธ์กันในพื้นที่เมือง นอกจากนั้น บทความยังเสนอให้เพิ่มความสำคัญเกี่ยวกับสิทธิ เพราะสิทธิต่าง ๆ เกี่ยวพันกับประเด็นการปฏิบัติในชีวิตประจำวันมากกว่าคุณค่าที่เป็นนามธรรม และวาทกรรมว่าด้วยเรื่องสิทธิ

คำสำคัญ: ความหลากหลาย, กระบวนทัศน์, ชนกลุ่มน้อย, พหุวัฒนธรรมนิยม, การศึกษาพหุวัฒนธรรมนิยม

Abstract

As new ethno-nationalisms arise and as ethnic minorities increasingly mobilize to claim their rights, multiculturalism has also arrived in Thailand and beyond, while the terminology of rights and protection of minorities remains heavily contested and open to negotiation. The article argues that multiculturalism as a discourse is relatively recent in Thailand and that the concept has arrived in a time in which many European countries and even the success stories of multicultural policies of immigrant integration, like Canada, withdraw from them and replace them with increasing securitization. The article argues that there are some encouraging signs, but the direction of the government and civil society seem to misperceive current realities of the rural. Not only shift NGO's and sections of civil society to join mainstream development, may disadvantaged groups move to the City to form migrant enclaves in Chiang Mai and Bangkok and the life-worlds in the uplands are changing fast, depending on remittances from rural-urban and international migrants. The article goes on to propose to study multiculturalism as everyday relation, strategies and tactics, configurations of majority-minority relations and current formations of struggle and conflict. This perspective has been opened up by scholars who research everyday multiculturalism in urban encounters. The article also argues for the increasing importance of rights and these rights are associated with practical livelihood issues rather than abstract values or rights discourses.

Keywords: Diversity, Approach, Minority, Multiculturalism, Multiculturalism studies

Diversity of Multiculturalism in Thailand

In this contribution, I reflect on the application of the concept of multiculturalism to the Thai context and make some suggestions for possible research agendas. Following up the aims of the workshop "*Multiculturalism in Thailand: Concept, Policy and Practice*"[1], I critically review approaches that solely focus on either moral guidelines or top down multicultural policy instruments and suggest that we might be interested to study multiculturalism from below, study how multiculturalism manifests itself in practice, and how plural situations are being negotiated in current struggles over the definition of modernization. Doing so, I draw on work by scholars such as Gillespie, Watson, Wise and Velayutham who have researched how multiculturalism plays out in everyday culture and everyday inter-action in urban public spaces/ mixed neighborhoods (Gillespie, 2002; Watson, 2007; Wise and Velayutham, 2009) as well as on my own work and that of others which examines configurations between majority and minorities in changing contexts, also on violence that threaten the social fabric and social ties of the community (Horstmann, 2011; Leach, 1973; Robinne/Sadan, 2007). I argue that multiculturalism can be approached from different space levels and that a fruitful perspective for Thailand would be to look at the expanding rights regime rather than on formal policies alone. The rights regime is increasingly influential at the global level, and aims to correct some inequalities rising from colonial and post-colonial experiences, but is still limited in scope and impact, as it is either filtered by states or appropriated by ethno-nationalist movements which claim to represent ethnic minority groups.

In the West, multiculturalism has been emphatically discussed in the 1980s. After governments in the West were conspicuously indifferent towards migrants until then, and had no intention to integrate the growing migrant

communities, suddenly the minorities were discovered and their growing exclusion was perceived as a cause to social problems (as it is now). But the time when multiculturalism not only made available substantial welfare funds, but also caused a boom in the celebration of migrant culture as the exotic, e.g. in carnevals and food festivals, seems to be a thing of the past.

The harsh and restrictive policies and the radical neo-nationalist turns of many European countries show that multiculturalism as state policy in the form of protection, recognition and social welfare can be withdrawn any time, especially when Southern Europe is hit by financial crisis and unemployment.[2] Europe has become a fortress that is defended against poor migrants from Africa and the Middle East with military means. Especially the "war" against criminalized migrants in the Mediterranean Sea and the dying children and women in front of the Italian offshore island of Lampedusa show the general unwillingness and no-tolerance policy towards the "Undesirables" (Agier, 2010: 1). It is remarkable that many of the African migrants who were completely dehydrated were saved from drowning by local people rather than the Navy.[3] The fate was shared by the Rohyngya boatpeople from Myanmar whose ships sank in the Indian Ocean or who were smuggled via Southern Thailand to Malaysia.

In fact, we observe something like a backlash on multiculturalism in the US and in Europe (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2009).[4] In the US and many parts of Europe, new securitization policies in the face of terrorism have marginalized minority and welfare policies. Terror also seems to reveal the failure of multicultural integration policies geared towards migrants. In England, for example, people were shocked to learn that British youngsters committed the terrorist bomb attack in downtown London to revenge British interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Big efforts to create a dialogue

with migrant groups at the local government and community level also had some perverse effect. The British intellectual Kenan Malik argues that cultural policies that supported ethnic associations consolidated and reinforced the most conservative factions of the ethnic and religious migrant groups organized in associations and allowed ethnic and religious leaders to exercise their power more firmly, to discriminate women and pressed young people into cultural boxes. Rather than integrating migrants, some neoliberals argue, these affirmative policies helped to create ethnic migrant enclaves and kept poor migrant families on welfare (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2009). Defenders argue that multicultural policies at the grassroots level (especially in the form of social street-work and community based organizations) are badly needed as the riots in suburban England or France showed that neglect and isolation has created real problems in the suburbs and have turned unemployed whites against immigrants, immigrants against the police or sometimes different immigrant groups against each other. On the other hand, marginalized people in the suburbs are tired of being represented as problem groups and prefer to organize themselves to improve their future by active associations rather than relying on an ineffective government.

Others argue that multicultural policies intended to produce packaged and exotic identities, which again reproduced the otherness of specific ethnic groups while youngsters largely share the same lifestyle as their friends and want to integrate. Some of the leading protagonists of multicultural politics defend instruments to help disadvantaged groups and argue that affirmative action has helped indigenous people's movements and that migrant populations that are offered support make good use of the incentives to participate in local politics and community services and achieve better results. The message of the protagonists of multicultural discourse is that

exclusion is a form of violence and humiliation, while integration communicates a moral message to the people that ethnic and cultural difference is no hindrance to social opportunities and mobility. In a time, when ideas of multiculturalism and human rights are introduced in the global South in the context of good governance, multicultural policies in Europe seem to be at a stalemate. The focus on the integration of migrant populations, especially from the former colonies and from refugee settlement programs, also makes the transfer of multicultural and affirmative policies doubtful, because while limited social welfare policies exist for legal migrants with working permit, migrants are in no way entitled to the same citizenship rights of Thai nationals. In fact, even long-term migrants are explicitly excluded from social services. So are stateless people among the ethnic minorities in the uplands or migrants who have only recently settled in the upland villages. What stays from the multicultural policies are fairly successful and effective institutional and legal policy instruments (Kymlicka, 2012: 7). Protagonists of the multiculturalism discourse defend these success stories (especially Canada, Sweden) against essentialist and neoliberal market people who engage in multiculturalism bashing, which they identify as expensive and ineffective state intervention and failure.[5] Even a superficial look reveals that there is a sort of war being fought against new migrants and that the defensive attitude of financially crisis-ridden governments results in a rather brutal treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

What stays perhaps most significantly from the remainders of multiculturalism is the new rights regime and the fast expansion of civil society in the global South, together with transnational activism. The rights discourse has penetrated the global South by way of the civil society intellectuals who have often gone abroad and imported new ideas as well

as through the increasing presence of international organizations. Sections of the Thai government have also adopted the rights catalogue as part of Thailand's adherence to international declarations and democratic rights elements that have been integrated to the Thai political system. Appointed civil servants affiliated to the Thai parliament have the explicit portfolio to educate minorities about their rights. These lawyers work closely with international and local NGO's that play a crucial role in mobilizing disadvantaged groups and educate them about their rights. The network of ethnic people's associations, NGO's, CBO's and their international networks is quite extensive and in a way introduces innovative forms of governance and government that defy the state thinking on security and establishes alternative normative orders in which disadvantaged and excluded groups can develop their social support networks (Prasit, this issue). In this way, multiculturalism in Thailand emerges by default not by the initiative of the state but despite and in the shadow of the state. To the chagrin of the prevailing authoritarian state culture, a parallel rights system has found a niche in many parts of Thai society in which public spaces and political opportunity structures emerge which can be used by disadvantaged groups. Shigeharu Tanabe has called these social support networks communities of practice. Community movements in his sense are grassroots and constituted by disadvantaged and excluded groups and not by the salaried middle class (Tanabe, 2008).[6]

Multiculturalism is a philosophical and moral concept that aims for the inclusion and recognition of disadvantaged groups in society, which have hitherto been discriminated (Honneth, 1995; Kymlicka, 1995; Taylor, 1994). Multiculturalism is applied as affirmative policies and instruments by a variety of actors, most importantly by the government, but also by private

actors such as academic institutions, NGO's and "community movements". As a start, I argue that a study that relies only on the philosophical assumptions of multiculturalism in the West will always be Eurocentric and will be limited by its ignorance for the historical experience of colonialism that has so profoundly shaped the experience of everyday multiculturalism in post-colonial Southeast Asia today. I therefore suggest that multicultural policies cannot be separated from the political configuration and negotiations taking place between the majority and more or less vulnerable minorities.

A discussion on rights has to be embedded within a context of social transformations in the places where ethnic minorities actually live. In Southeast Asian local contexts, the people have been exposed to governmental discourse and also sometimes to the discourse or training of NGO's or religious institutions. There are renewed efforts by anthropologists and activists of human rights to study the vernacular and local translations of cultural rights (Barry, 2013; Horstmann, 2012 (2555)). Research projects have also focused on community-based organizations that are able to mediate for the populations or act on behalf of indigenous people's movements. Instead of using only the highly abstract concepts, I suggest studying ethno-culturalism in practice, as it unfolds in concrete conflicts or struggles. In a society in which law is exercised by the state, the space for rights, discourses and practices in Thailand is still limited and restricted to the civil society sector. Indigenous movements, community based organizations, and academics contribute actively to push for people's rights and have successfully put issues of justice and equality on the agenda and into the public. But very little instruments are in practice and there is no overall general policy. Moreover, the idea of ethnic difference and special rights has so far not been accepted. Therefore, the push for multiculturalism

is also a push for equality and justice and its realization is a political question. I make a plea to study multicultural policy instruments in a comparative perspective (Kymlicka, 1995). The ideological foundations of Thailand's political history and especially its history of state formation and state building, the mindset of Thai national identity and the idea of a Thai race make a discourse on ethnic and linguistic diversity in the public sphere very difficult (Reynolds, 2002). As ethnic difference is not acknowledged and even taboo, it is already hard just to bring up special rights for ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities in Thailand are weakened by a lack of political organization and participation. It can be dangerous for ethnic minority speakers to defend their rights in a context in which they do not have much lobby. In Malaysia and Singapore, ethnic difference is much more obvious and a direct heritage from the colonial recruitment of labor in the plantation and mining sector. In Malaysia, Chinese and Indians constitute substantial population shares, and a presence in the urban and public sphere, to the degree that the term minority does not apply. In Thailand, ethnic minorities are mainly located in the uplands of Northern Thailand and Northeastern Thailand, and they have little presence in the urban or public sphere. In Malaysia, by contrast, ethnic difference is part of everyday life and civil society actors are eager to create platforms for inter-ethnic discourses and action instead of exaggerating difference.

Mary Beth Mills has argued that many people in rural areas organizing in the red shirt movement feel excluded from the political establishment and the consumer temples in Bangkok and do not have the same opportunities as people in Bangkok (Mills, 2012). Bangkok itself has become a globalized City in which more than hundred ethnic nationalities coexist. While many minorities are discriminated and stigmatized in Bangkok, this

discrimination is hardly addressed at all in the Thai public. Diversity and the living with ethnic difference is a phenomenon on many levels and spaces in modern Thailand and thus deserves a discussion on its own.

As Sirijit Sunanta has argued persuasively, “multiculturalism has not really arrived in Thailand” and the language for cultural rights and protection remains contested (Sirijit, 2013: 1). The workshop showed that liberal policies of protecting minorities in Thailand have effectively been introduced, although the academia in Thailand wonders about the sincerity of the government and also criticizes that the programs are not wide-reaching enough in scope (Aj. Malee, this issue). Especially the establishment of special cultural zones for Karen living in and with the hills and forests and for the Moken living on land and sea do not give sufficient attention to the question of natural resources. Still, it seems that there are some signals from some government officials that there is a different thinking about ethnic difference that has at least the potential to replace discrimination, exclusionary policies and racial prejudice. Other contributions in this special issue document and review in more detail recent efforts of the government to support and protect ethnic minorities and to support citizenship policies for stateless people. While the authors in this issue show that a lot of work remains to be done, these efforts go in the right direction. It is not really enough to just dismiss all government efforts as insincere, although it remains to be seen how successful current attempts to reform minority policies in Thailand are or can be.

The focus on the integration of immigrant populations, especially from the former colonies and from refugee settlement programs, also makes the transfer of multicultural and affirmative policies doubtful, because while limited social welfare policies exist for legal migrants with working permit,

migrants are in no way entitled to the same citizenship rights of Thai nationals. In fact, even long-term migrants are explicitly excluded from social services. So are stateless people among the ethnic minorities in the uplands or migrants who have only recently settled in the upland villages.

What is forthcoming is a slow change of the mindset of the government towards indigenous minorities in that they have in principle a right to their cultural identity on the condition that they consent to national integration. But the cultural rights given seem not yet to include economic rights, and in particular access to natural resources. It seems that there are conflicting interests of different ministries, such as the ministry of culture, education and the forestry ministry or the ministry of Interior and these interests reflect different priorities and also a different thinking. In contemporary Asia, in large parts the state or state factions (political elites and patronage networks) still behaves in a patrimonial way. State officials tend to emphasize sovereignty rather than responsible government policy. The logic of sovereignty of course does not allow much space or agency for vulnerable people, but enforce social control. The patrimonial model of Thai national identity which again and again has reinforced the assimilation paradigm and the necessity of subordination and national integration have also made a discourse on minorities very difficult, since decades of ideological brainwashing have made an open discourse on ethnic difference and special rights very difficult and problematic. The Thai government does not want to acknowledge the internal ethnic diversity and attempts to revitalize language diversity by establishing bilingual education are often blocked by many institutions that adhere to the dominant paradigm.

Another model of affirmative policies to disadvantaged or vulnerable ethnic minority groups, especially to hill-tribe people, comes from the royal

family which has promoted the self-sufficiency concept in Thailand and successfully markets the Doi Tung cash crops (rice, coffee, macadamia nuts) and handicrafts, that were introduced to Akha, Lahu, Tai Lue and Lawa in Chiang Rai province on 150 square kilometers for national and now even global markets. The project, under royal patronage, aims for an alternative development model of sustainable development, poverty alleviation and national integration. This model show-case, which attracts study groups from all over Thailand, takes on board many concepts from the NGO and civil society sector on integrated development and sustainable, environmental-friendly development and in particular alternative Buddhist discourses from academics and public intellectuals (Sulak Sivaraksa, Apichai Puntasen, Chamlong Srimuang) on self-reliance, sufficiency (as opposed to greed) and spiritual development. The royal self-sufficiency project can be regarded as a gigantic NGO, with heavy financial and political backing from monarchy-friendly political and business networks. Not unlike the NGO-and civil society sector, Buddhist values are contrasted with the greedy and corrupt logics of capitalism. However, the royal project is like an island in a sea and self-sufficiency becomes a technology of power to regulate the practices and movement of hill tribe people in the domesticated space of the royal project.

The biggest push for indigenous people's rights comes from the academic and NGO sector that has asked the government to pay more attention to rights, by using some leverage for the Thai government to comply to conventions from international human rights organizations. But even the NGO's tend to dominate representations of indigenous people as traditional and static. For example, many NGO's have adapted a community culture discourse in which self-sufficiency for indigenous people is emphasized.

In doing so, their concept comes close to the royal development patronage program on self-sufficient communities that draw huge resources from the government. By concentrating on indigenous Buddhist principles rather than the political economy of expanding capitalism in the hills, much of academic discourse has avoided to link the close connections of political economy and political marginalization. Although the civil society sector has successfully promoted a shift of the Karen in public awareness from forest destroyer to environmental protection, NGO's have undergone a substantial transformation by integrating alternative development discourse on the community forest and environmental protection into mainstream development.

However, the small-scale projects of the NGO's have minimal impacts on livelihoods and moreover do not empower people who are already deeply integrated into cash economies. Increasingly, the NGO's work for a third party audience of global donors from whom they are financially dependent without being able to stop the rapid erosion of people's livelihoods and the new poverty. Multiculturalism in the form of affirmative policies for disadvantaged groups in Thailand does not sufficiently help to fill the lacking social welfare component. Many people in Thailand lack sufficient access to food, health, education. Especially people without full citizenship rights are not entitled to health insurance, food supplements or warm clothes in winter.

In this configuration of relative neglect and dirt poverty of ethnic hill tribe groups, religious institutions provide extremely important social services to poor hill tribe people. Especially Christian churches and missionary movements really begin to prosper in Thailand among disadvantaged ethnic communities in remote areas of the country. Missionary movements are active in the most remote settlements, highest altitudes, in urban slums, in migrant enclaves

and in the refugee camps in Northwestern Thailand. While I cannot discuss the impact of religion here in full detail, it is worth to take a closer look at the place of religious institutions among ethnic minorities, because apart from the spiritual dimension, religious institutions often fill a vacuum and take over state functions of social welfare for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Looking only at the humanitarian side, Christians help out at every space they and often enough act not only as missionary but also as de facto development/relief workers, providing assistance in shelter, health, education and food for people in poverty or affected by natural disaster. Because of their presence, reliability and the material resources that they are able to offer to marginalized people, evangelical churches really prosper among the non-Buddhist hill-tribes and some Pentecostal churches find adherents among the ethnic minorities living in the highest altitudes. As Samak Kosem found out in his fascinating thesis on Islamic Salafi missionaries from Patani in Chiang Khong, hill-tribe people may also find other religious identity offers appealing that offer future avenues and scholarships, especially in a context in which Christian missionaries have withdrawn from the young converts (Samak, 2013).

Ethnic minorities in the uplands of Southeast Asia are being largely replaced by settler communities and have few opportunities for expression of their cultural rights in a situation where violent conflict, poverty and the dilution of identity push people either deeper into the frontier regions and illegality or into the Cities such as Chiang Mai and Bangkok where they re-organize themselves beyond the radar of the state. The remaining people become subjects of different and again competing policies of the state, international companies, or international organizations and various NGO's. Especially the economic investment and extraction of the cash crop plantations,

mine businesses and commercial forests massively affect the livelihood of ethnic minorities. In comparison, the scope of multicultural policies is minimal.

Despite of the upsurge of the discourse on ethnic diversity in academic centers, civic education which would stress cultural rights remains undeveloped in the mainstream educational sector. The question of rights is a political question and the granting of special rights would challenge some crucial political and economic premises on which the system in Thailand is built. For minorities in Thailand, it is not beneficial and rather negative to be an ethnic minority and many ethnic groups strategize by emphasizing their Thai identity and their successful integration in order to benefit better from the developmental state. In the dominant paradigm, it is dangerous to emphasize one's otherness as this would symbolically express opposition to the state and be sanctioned by withdrawal. In the 1970s, otherness could be easily presented as communist, as some repressed minorities indeed sympathized with the Communist Party of Thailand that promised land ownership and freedom. Suspected communists were easily kidnapped, abused or simply shot. Even today, in the period of cultural branding and human rights, local identity is not competing with loyalty to Thai national symbols. As Sirijit explains in a highly innovative article on the Phu Tai in Mukdahan, the ethnic leader of the Phu Tai successfully consolidated connections to a military general and asked for a visit to the royal family as strategies to build connections to the state (Sirijit, 2013b). The delegation presented beautifully handcrafted Silk and was able to request a high school close to the community. In regular intervals, Phu Tai ethnic identity, ethnic dress and local foods are presented to Thai visitors and crafts sold for profit. The discourse on self-sufficiency, ethnic culture, Buddhist values and community solidarity of the NGO and civil society movement is unattractive

to the Phu Tai who are eager to keep their cultural identity without sacrificing social aspirations.

The fact that thousands of people in the hills still do not possess any citizenship papers is an issue which is not discussed much in the public. Mukdawan (in this issue) explains that the unequal access to citizenship blocks educational and other life opportunities and produces stark inequality. For many minorities, the Thai ID card suddenly becomes crucial for reproduction, while before it was not. This state of the arts opens a black market for official papers in which indigenous people are being forced to pay exorbitant fees to corrupt officials on all levels.

Avenues for the Study of Diversity

In a world that is characterized by increasing diversity, especially in Asia's megacities, multiculturalism should not be studied only in terms of ethnic groups, but in the increasing correlation of ethnic identity with other variables, such as differential integration, gender, age, differential migration systems, differential social organization, mobility, contact with home communities etc. (see Vertovec, 2007). I suggest that a promising way to approach multiculturalism is the study of complex situations (Mitchell), the study of neighborhoods, the study of everyday practices (De Certeau, 2011), the study of social networks (Castells, 1996) and the phenomenological approach to urban milieu and life-worlds (Schuetz, 1970). We might like to employ visual anthropology (photography and video) to visualize the communication and spatial practices in everyday life. We might begin by building a research program on urban diversity and cosmopolitanism in Bangkok. This research program will include a systematic comparison of different and diverse communities and spaces of interaction. The focus on

religion and religious diversity will focus on the different face communities, and places of worship that double as shelter and protection. We need a communication of anthropology and cultural studies with architecture and urban planning. We have to include the increasing presence of transnational communities and the extremely mobile informal proletariat, moving between cities and countryside. We need a focus on rights and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in order to study the self-organization of urban communities and the reinforcement to a right of dwelling in the City. I further suggest that we might like to study the internal debates on multiculturalism in medias by comparing their divergent experiences and strategies. It would be interesting to cover the intellectual and grassroots initiatives and public spheres in the cosmopolitan center, whereby public life is regarded as a contested sphere of competing players and representations. Finally, a study of diversity in Bangkok should include the economy, and the multitude of markets (Samak, 2010).

Multiculturalism may hence be studied as a discourse, as a vision, as equal distribution of rights, as policy, as everyday interaction and as contact. In a volume I edited, entitled Integration through Diversity, I approached Multicultural society through the study of inter-ethnic boundaries and communication, and emphasized the construction of ethnic boundaries, but also the integration of antagonistic groups in cultural systems of communication, such as the case of Southern Thailand and the integration of Buddhists and Muslims in ancestor ritual communication (Horstmann and Schlee, 2001; Horstmann, 2011). In another forthcoming volume, Intimacy and Violence, I am looking at crucial transitions of intimate neighborhoods when, as in the case of the Deep South, trust is transformed into hostility, and ultimately, violence (Horstmann, 2004, 2011).

As in the case of the Deep South, structural discrimination, structural violence, militarization, competing religious nationalisms fuel the transition to mistrust and open violence. One of the structural reasons of violence in the Deep South seems to be the lack of recognition of Malay identity and the resulting lack of legitimacy (Horstmann, 2008; McCargo, 2008, 2012).

On the other hand, Thailand cannot stop the expansion of human rights ideas and international conventions on minorities' protection. Thus, the idea of rights and justice is a form of global cosmopolitanism and the idea of multiculturalism travels from one continent to the next and changes its meaning while it travels. Thus, the meaning of multiculturalism may mean very different things in different structural contexts. In Asia, multiculturalism is strongly influenced by the historical colonial experience and the introduction of racial categories. Multiculturalism from above can be distinguished from multiculturalism from below-in the form of intimate co-existence, inter-faith or communal civil society projects.

The concept of multiculturalism requires a genesis and history of the term. While multiculturalism as peaceful coexistence has been celebrated in the West, it has only been "belatedly" introduced in the global South, where the colonial empires founded societies based on ethnic and racial stereotypes and discrimination (Goh, 2008). The concept of multiculturalism comes from America and the settler countries where the "Melting Pot" disguised a history of discrimination and exclusion of native Indian and black African-American communities. Thailand, being a center of mail brides and global intimacy, becomes also a center of industrial production and agribusiness, attracting labor migrants from the impoverished neighboring countries. The experience of multiculturalism in contemporary Thailand thus coexists with surveillance, harassment and control of new migrants. While

some migrants from Burma have found some niches in Thailand and "succeeded", the life of most Burmese migrants is fairly miserable. Because of constant harassment by the Thai mafia most Burmese migrants hardly leave their rooms and are extremely cautious in their movements. The impunity is such that most crimes against migrants are never persecuted.

The New Migration and Patterns of Diversity

Nobody knows for sure how many migrants settle in Thailand. Migrants are highly mobile and cosmopolitan people who have an interest to escape from the harassment of the police. Statelessness is rampant in rural Thailand and many children are fragile for losing citizenship rights after their parents do not feel responsible for them. The discussion on ethnic minorities in Thailand tend to privilege hill tribes in the uplands of Northern Thailand who are portrayed as traditional, indigenous and largely immobile Swiddeners. But these authentic hill tribes as presented to tourists hungry for frozen exotic people do not really exist anymore. Settlers and commercial investors from the lowlands, who exploit the frontier in the forests for cash crop plantations, forcing tribal people into the forests or to higher altitudes, are replacing indigenous people in the uplands. In the remote highlands, indigenous populations largely now mix with new migrant populations, up to a degree where it is difficult to distinguish original settlers from incoming migrants. Indigenous ethnic minorities do not necessarily have solidarity with the new migrants who in their despair may indeed contribute to pressure on forests and be involved in logging and gathering and foraging of forests products or being involved in illegal logging operations (Duncan, 2004). As for the Karen, the Karen residents accommodate incoming Karen migrants as tenant farmers or helping hands in exchange for shelter and protection

(Prasert). As such, there is a whole hierarchy of indigenous people and rising inequality between them. Ethnic minorities in the mountains who lose access to resources have to come down to seek unskilled labor in town. Apart from growing migrant populations and flows, ethnic minorities who reside in the Cities have escaped from ethnographic scrutiny and are not included in the projects of civil society and NGO's who keep a romanticized gaze on the rural. We need much more research on the new patterns of diversity in Thailand's urban centers, migration and mobility patterns and the ecological niches and enclaves of ethnic groups in the City. A whole research program is waiting for the systematic study of people who are ethnically not Thai, but who have become citizens living in Thailand's Cities. These migrants live a distinctive urban life which is far from the romanticized image of the hilltop settlements.

The situation of indigenous people has become incredibly complex and confusing. Migrant populations come to co-reside with indigenous people in the borderlands and make a living at the edge by picking up all kinds of wage labor. But the best opportunities to make a living are in the urban centers and harbors, where there is a real demand for low skill labor for all kinds of jobs. Bangkok and Chiang Mai have become highly diverse cities that accommodate people from all corners of Thailand. The night-market in Chiang Mai has developed into a rather huge business with some communities in the hills making their main income from craftsmaking to it. Other Burmese migrants stay in Samut Sakhorn working for seafood processing factories hardly leave their room, because they are so afraid of harassment by a Thai mafia that is marauding among the migrants. In Bangkok, many older migrants have for generations become residents and have occupied particular occupational niches in Bangkok, while new migrants

from West Africa are vulnerable and have difficulties to extend their visas. For established ethnic minorities it is easiest to gather in community centers such as religious places of worship or ethnic restaurants, and to show their loyalty to the Thai monarchy as a symbol of assimilation.

Assertion of cultural rights is politically sensitive in the context of political repression and economic competition. Communal identities are revitalized in the wake of state violence, urban planning and modernization, *Fort Mahakan* at Rattanakosin, communities in Chinatown, Karen in *Kaeng Krachan* National Park. A typical strategy of threatened or vulnerable communities is Thai patriotism, rediscovering identity and cultural heritage in the face of assault on their livelihoods. A study of urban struggles would include the complete set of contested governance and the arts of resistance and the internal divisions and conflicts of the communities**.** In sum, I like to see research projects on different dimensions of diversity in Thailand, such as diversity in health, linguistic diversity, markets and diversity, religious diversity, media, diversity and communication.

Conclusions: Proposed Research Agendas

Thus, what I suggest as a research program is a study of multiculturalism in Thailand not as it should be, but as it is. This implies a study of everyday multiculturalism as it is manifested in the configuration of relations between ethnic groups. This ethnographic study would include life-worlds, situations, strategies, tactics and navigations in everyday life and encounters in public spaces. In particular, I am interested to study the ways the colonial state and imperial policies have shaped the classification of ethnic identities, how the state has contained the tensions for which it

was responsible, and the proceeding struggles of the state (representing the majority) and all sorts of vulnerable groups, for example state violence and hate campaigns against Muslims in Southern Thailand. Instead of studying the big structures, I suggest to study these multicultural conflicts in flux, in situations, and incase studies of multicultural milieus, life-worlds and contexts. Second, a rich path would be to study multiculturalism in relation to the mobilization and formulation of rights-claims, whereby rights are not understood as the universalization of particular Western traditions, but as practices of translocal activism that is intrinsically related to livelihood issues of real life-worlds and not romanticized, Disneyfied projections.

Endnotes

1 The workshop was organized by Sirijit Sunanta and Alexander Horstmann 01-03 October 2012 with researchers from the Ethnic Studies and Development Research Center at Chiang Mai University and hosted by the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia in Thailand at Mahidol.

2 See the collection on "neo-nationalism" in Europe and beyond by Andre Gingrich and Marcus Banks (2006)

3 Images of dying African migrants in sinking ships before Lampedusa were widely circulated in the media in October 2013.

4 As Vertovec and Wessendorf (2009) argue, neo-liberal politicians and media mobilized resentments against immigration for a backlash on multiculturalism, which was made responsible for rising problems.

5 Kymlicka (2012: 21) argues that multicultural policies persisted and in many cases have grown stronger. He admits that policies of multiculturalism have often been replaced by the more assimilationist civic integration concept. The question remains, if the concept is transplantable to Asia.

6 Tanabe (2008) focuses on the processes of "imaging communities" to explore how people imagine and create their own sense of knowledge, power, and identity. These, Tanabe argues, cannot be grasped by the conventional understanding of community.

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