

Buddhism in the Mekong Region: Modernization and Globalization

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Abstract

This study depicts to explore the tests for a cross-section of six countries including Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, the Yunnan province (PRC), Thailand and Myanmar. The findings presented here are primarily based on research on urban Buddhism carried out in Vientiane Province. This article sets out mainly to evaluate the Lao Buddhist Sangha's way towards establishing a form of socially engaged Buddhism. The research paper analyses about the Buddhist clergy's position and involvement in society in the mirror of modernization and give a short historic overview of the Sangha's early pre-revolutionary social engagement. The topics will cover illustrations about – (i) Vital role of the Lao, Sangha, (ii) pre-Buddhist activism, (iii) Towards a constructive view in Buddhism, (iv) Exploring new steps of engagement, (v) The Metta-view HIV/AIDS project, (vi) Buddhist Sermon in GMR (Drug prevention). The paper also reveals globalization which is manifested in the Mekong Region both through processes and discourses that reflect the ideology of borderless World allowing easy passage of capital and commodities, and through resistance to such processes in an increasingly trans nationalized Civil Society movement. However, more immediately significant supranational integrative agendas take the form of regionalization, a process that received less attention but which raises analogous concerns of re-scaled governance.

This study further examines the impact of economic globalization that increases trafficking inflow into the GMS. However, only FDI affects of trade is insignificant, Moreover, Migration, population, Exchange rate and Democracy induce higher rates of trafficked persons, whereas GDP and other factors such as education, Vocational training and micro-finance through urban development funds decrease this problem is the Region. GNI and rule of law don't have any significant effect on human trafficking.

Keywords: Modernization; Economic globalization; Human trafficking; Greater Mekong Sub-region countries; Socially-engaged Buddhism.

1. Introduction

One difficulty, in our view, lies in the very concept of “Mekong Region”. Is the Mekong Region a natural generic concept or is it a geographic and political construct imposed from outside. If we talk about what is called the “Greater Mekong Sub-Region” normally shortened as GMS. We know it is a geo-political concept created by the ADB in 1992, I think to make it possible to develop a massive economic development Programmed geographically covering fully five countries Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar & Thailand, China a few province only But what about the Mekong Region or the Mekong River basin? It is often or perhaps at least sometimes said that a cross-boundary rivers unite people for the very reason that historically waterways facilitated communication and connections between people. The Mekong is the world’s 12th longest River and the 7th - longest in Asia. In 1995, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam established the Mekong River commission to assist in the management and co-ordinated use of the Mekong’s resources. It may well have been so in the past. But in Recent history, the Mekong River does not seem to have helped uniting people, rather the contrary. The Mekong River became during the cold war the dividing line between fundamentally the two different ideological systems. The ideological divide continued roughly till the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, which got unexpected consequences interestingly had quite dramatic spin-off effects on the far away South east Asia. The new global geopolitical configuration made the continental South East Asian countries reconsider its previous policies and paved the way for dialogue and co-operation between countries of different political systems.

1.1 Modernization: Part-I

Although, the teaching of manifold religious traditions depicts a mythical and non-historic nature, it is apparent that they are not immune to change and indeed have to be transformed in order to remain meaningful in the everyday lives of their followers. The discontinuities within society, caused for example by a rapid cultural and economic transformation and effects of globalization, are often the source of re-conceptualization for religious teaching. What before has been accepted as an effective but invisible common sense norm, a fixed value system and set of practices, suddenly becomes negotiated and subject to more intense reflection. Depending on the internal structure and resources of a religious Organization and the field it operates in, religious leaders and lay people are more or less successful in adapting to next contexts and manage to construct a coherent argument around new developments in society and thereby react to current discourses and shape them. Currently the Lao Buddhist Sangha has to face a

situation similar to that described above: The fast cultural and economic change, primarily in urban areas such as Vientiane, has transformed the life-world of monks and lay people alike. Less positive developments are part and parcel of this deep social change: drug addiction environmental degradation, prostitution trafficking and migrant labor, plus the increasing spread of HIV/AIDS are marking the late but thou fore concentrated arrival of globalized modernity in Laos. The somewhat surreal speed of social change is, despite all its positive features, a cause of deep of concern within the Buddhist clergy (SANGHA). Most of its members have the conviction that the country’s modernization is largely a positive development but feel as well that the negative consequences of this process present a challenge and are sometimes even a threat to Lao society. They believe that they can influence these developments in a positive way and actually have a responsibility to do so: from a Buddhist from a Buddhist perspective, it is the monk’s duly to instruct the lay population in Buddhist teachings and ethics, to give moral support and get engaged in activities that reduce “Suffering” (dukkha), one of the main objective of Buddhism. Another important motivation for the Lao Sangha becoming active can be found in the fact that there is a potential danger of secularization or more accurately, the ability of people to choose between different life worlds outside the religious sphere. In an urban society, which more or less differentiates itself into increasingly detached fields, Buddhism is likely to lose some of its significance.

Vientiane monasteries revealed a strong sense of a need to reinforce and also to reinterpret Buddhist teachings (dhamma) so that they can comment upon current problems in society. The Buddhist term ‘dhamma’ implies a large sematic field and can be variously translated as ‘doctrine’ ‘teaching of the Lord Buddha Law’ ‘nature’ or ‘truth’. Without intending to go into doctrinal details, it can be said that dhamma itself does not change in the course of time but is subject to different interpretation and understanding. While discussing this topic in a Vientiane temple in 2004, the abbot of the monastery explained:

Dhamma is eternal, but the problems society encounters and the sources of suffering change. The sufferings in the time of the Lord Buddha were different in nature to the ones we encounter today. Therefore, it is crucial that we explain fundamental teachings again and set them in relation to the everyday lives of people so we can help them to understand “dhamma” and lead better lives.”

The recent social actions and projects putting this insight into practice could be described as the first steps of the Lao Sangha towards settings up a form of socially-engaged Buddhism.”

The important role monks play in village affairs, their reputations and influence on the lay people, and the Sangha's institutional and personal networks have very often been represented as one of the main features of Lao communities. The Temple is also the hub of a wide-ranging ritual economy of symbolic and monetary exchanges.

In the late 60s in Vientiane and the Western Zones of Laos controlled by the Royal Lao Govt. (RLG), the Lao Sangha first became involved in projects for rural development. Zago (1973:131) remarks that "after a long of hesitation the monks finally tried to integrate themselves into the programmes for socio-economic development" and from 1970 onwards participated in seminars organized by the commission for Rural Affairs and the Ministry of cults.

Boutsavath and Chaplier (1973:26) states the objective of the clergy's participation in the programme was to "lend moral authority to the cause of development" and "contribute to shaping new ways of existing, new ways of looking at things and new ways of doing things oriented towards the constitution of a progressive society". The Sangha was supposed to act as a 'development catalyst', helping to inject new development with religious significance and thereby integrate them into the village' World View.

Preaching a mix of politics and Buddhism in local meetings and radio transmissions to raise the revolutionary morale' were their most frequent tasks. They also worked in the education and health sectors. The roles monks were about to fulfill some years later after the revolution, de-emphasizing their special position and focusing on their productive role in society, were already taking shape in the liberated zone.

Despite the differences in the two zones, the parallels are interesting: monks were seen as having an essential position for propagating new developments and World Views, Thereby ensuring, that the ideas put forward by the centre could be 'Sangha' was perceived as a potential agent of change, Spearheading ideological and technological transformation and introducing new developments by setting an example for lay people. Perhaps because of the significance attributed to the Sangha, This process went hand in hand with a system of light control of the Buddhist clergy by the govt. in both RLG and PL (pathet Lao) controlled zones (Zago. 1973). The Sangha became more or more polarized and the world lier activism also clearly had some political significance.

2.1. Toward a 'Constructive' Buddhism:

After 1975, the Lao Buddhist Fellowship organization (LBFO) was to become the only representation of the

Sangha in Laos, unifying the Dhammayut and Mahanikay sects. As in other areas of society, The 'Sangha' was subject to a brain drain and most projects started under the old regime were abandoned. Parts of the 'Sangha' fled to Thailand monks disrobed, lay people's associations were dissolved and higher positions in the eterical hierarchy were taken over by monks who were already established in the LBFD of the liberated zones. From now on, monks were assigned an explicitly active role in society as outlined by Kaysone phomrihane in the first official party congress after the liberation:

To venerable monks, novices and other clergymen who should in order to contribute actively to reviving the spirit of patriotic union, encourage the population to increase production and economize, help in educating people so as to raise their cultural standard contribute to persuading educating and correcting those who don't live virtuously or misbehave, so that they become good citizens."(Lafloat, 1982: 152).

The emphasis on national unity, rational economic behavior, correction of the deviant and a new patriotic morality occurs in most speeches and documents related to Buddhism in this period. The traditional role of monks as educators was meant to be put to the service of revolution. Buddhism was assigned a decisive role in the production of hegemony and paradoxically, it was at the same time an active agent of this process. While also being itself reshaped by it. The new ethics needed to build up a functioning economy and a new society was partially to be derived from a transformed Buddhism. One of the few readily available cultural resources in a period that was marked by an intense brain drain and loss of capital. Consequently, religion was perceived as a resource pool for producing economically productive and docile citizens imbued with a new moral--- the new reformed men. The venerable Thepbuali, at the time the leading ideologist of the Lao Sangha, made clear that monks could not pretend to practice upekkha (equanimity) and keep out of worldly affairs but from now on were in society and should have a beneficial and productive role (ef. Gunn. 1982:93). The dependency of the Sangha on lay people was supposed to be stopped and transformed into a productive and beneficial relationship for the nation. Monks got engaged in farming, gardening, literacy and hygiene campaigns and were thereby integrated into the mass mobilization.

This attempts to transform Buddhism in order to accomplish the great leap from feudalism to communist society is an excellent example of what Michal Foucault (1979: 20) has described as an essential feature of modernizing regimes and labeled 'govern mentality'.

In Foucault's words, these strategies are representative of a "form of power, which has as its target the population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its target the population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security" (1993:20). The Buddhist clergy was supposed to become a population controller and mass educator, while at the same time being an object of surveillance itself. It was also to be a productivity enhancer that was obliged to become engaged in production itself. James Scott (1998) has described this as a feature of high – modernized regimes that for the sake of utopian vision of efficiency and technological and bureaucratic control want to increase the 'legitimacy' of nature, cities and society in general. As in Adorno's rather dark vision of modernity, it seems that his suggestion that in modernizing regimes like even "those professionally concerned with things of the mind are themselves more and more turned into technicians" (1994: 34) to a certain extent also be applied to the Lao case and the Sangha for this period.

As an outcome of this, many tasks traditionally carried out by monks, such as the performance of rituals, prayers and meditation were now regarded as secondary, this went hand in hand with stronger emphasis on rationality and ethics, but also a rejection of parts of the traditional Buddhist cosmology and Values; Laos developed its own form of what has been labeled "protestant Buddhism" (Gombrich, 1988: 196f.). This rapid and forced transformation was on the surface one which emphasized this worldly social commitment and could be interpreted as pushing towards a more socially –engaged Buddhism. However, it was rarely combined with a deeper reflection on traditional teachings. Sometimes they are merged in a somewhat unsophisticated manner and it seems that there were no real growing discourses in the Sangha about these changes, but rather just an unprepared massive thrust into this new field. The years after 1975 were not really the best time for experiments into new ways of combining Buddhism and social activism. The government of the Lao PDR, now explicitly a multi-ethnic but nationwide monolithic state, Centralized all development policies leaving little room for development approaches that were really suitable for the clergy and would have entailed more sophisticated discussions of the topic.

2.1.2. Sangha's Role as Cultural Inheritance:

Although in some areas, the Sangha continues to play an active and socially engaged role the effects of the institutional secularization are clearly visible were especially been mentioned by older Lao monks that we visualized.

Institutional secularization refers to the transfer of activities from religious to secular institutions (Chaves, 1994), but does not imply a total and encompassing loss of significance

Buddhism and its institutions in Laos are now mainly perpetuate culture and transmit moral values, while others areas of involvement have largely been transferred to the state and its institutions. Whereas in countries like Thailand this process of religious change was simultaneously accompanied by an emerging culture of socially – engaged Buddhism, the Lao Buddhist clergy did not really have many options to develop new approaches except those set out by the Govt. outside of this light frameworks, it was more or less doomed to remain and fulfill the prescribed functions, serious limitation, including poor infrastructure, low educational standards little international cooperation, government suspicion of new projects, the generally strict grip on religious affairs and recent tendency to confine religious discourses exclusively to the field of pure belief, contributed. What more radical activists may term as Lao Buddhism's disengaged from society it is perhaps the result of this institutional secularization and the missing possibilities to compensate for those developments through new engagements.

Most monks are aware of the fact that Buddhism's role in society has undergone some deep changes. In the face of these developments, the threat of Buddhism becoming only a ritualistic machine fulfilling the desires of the charitable merit-maker is internally, & sometimes even publicly, admitted.

Consequently in 1998, in fourth congress of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization re-outlined the role of Buddhism in Lao's future, calling for emphasis to be placed on the dissemination of Buddhist teachings and mortality, the expansion of religious education and maintenance of discipline (VINAYA) within the Sangha. Mass education, health care and environmental issues are classified as a secondary now. The Sangha itself seems to be caught up in process of establishing its new role in society and has to deal with a number of challenges including the improvement of schooling for novices and monks, the introduction of previously disapproved meditation-practices (Vipassana), the maintenance of the religious knowledge and the seemingly never-ending fight against spirit-workshop in order to 'purity' Buddhism. The Buddhist clergy is facing the dilemma of carrying a double burden. On one side it has to focus on the maintenance of its own resources and reintroduction of traditional Buddhist teachings, and additionally, the Lao Government has assigned it a role as a curator of Lao Culture. At the orientation and ethical guidelines concerning problems in contemporary Lao Society, which to some degree cannot be so easily integrated into the traditional teachings and forms of action. While traditional teachings and commentary upon current social problems do not exclude each other, a process of adapting and experimenting, in which the Lao clergy has little experience, is required.

A small minority within the Sangha now deems it necessary to recognize, what Buddhism has, besides being relevant for 'pure religious' reason, to offer for contemporary Lao Society. Some of the research projects discussed below is to be perceived as a conscious effort to expand Buddhism's role in society and find new ways of applying Buddhist teachings in a more appropriate way in order to counter secularization tendencies and iniquitous developments, and to ideally contribute to the construction of a righteous society.

2.2. Exploring New Ways of Engagement

Despite the effects of institutional secularization and recent trend of seeing Buddhism simply as a preserver of Lao culture, some numbers of the Lao clergy are investigating the potentials of Buddhist involvement are applying Buddhist teachings to current Lao Society in order to develop ways of social activism. Some monks have taken active instance, and, in the light of the limited resources they have, they typically make use of Buddhist ethics and moral teachings and merge these with new discourses. The goal is, as one monk put it in a conversation, to show that "Buddhism" is not only about giving blessings and delivering sermons, but about real life in the here and now. "In this context, I shall first outline some of the potentials the Buddhist Clergy has by referring to the concept of social capital. Monks are ascribed a special position in society, which bestows them with authority. They are highly respected members of their communities, clearly distinguished by life-style and everyday behavior. They have the reputation of having acquired a knowledge that is often beyond that of normal villager. People often consult monks in moments of crisis and family problems. Morality and Buddhist ethics are taught in the temple on Buddhist holy days (Vansin) and the Village Community regularly meets in the temple for Buddhist festivals of the yearly ritual cycle (hid sip soong). Buddhism has a very strong notion of social ethics, both for the order of monks and laypeople (Rajavarani, 1990: 29ft). Preaching 'dhamma' is seen as an obligatory and meritorious act for monks. Lay people listening to it also gain merit, while speeches, books and other discourse that are related to 'dhamma' are conceptualized as a gift of truth. In regard to practice monks should be an example for lay people. The monks ideal life style, regulated by the Vinaya (rules of discipline), is an explanatory one based on right moral conduct, purity, and comparison towards all beings. While the Vinaya is of a more fixed nature, the teachings for lay people are largely left open for temporal regulation to suit the specific time and place. Concerning lay people, the receptions of the five precepts is a crucial part of many rituals & is practiced regularly on Buddhist holy days. Guide times for house holder morale are still important orientation points, at least in the lives of practicing Buddhists. Other applicable

Buddhist teachings of ethics are noble eight noble eight fold path, the ten perfections, the four sublime state of mind, and the avoiding of defilements. All these teachings bear a relation to the amount of merit and status of Karma earned by an individual, and can be seen as giving laypeople a range of options for cultivating virtue. In this sense, they have a similar function to Michael Foucault's idea of the "technologies of the self, which permit individual to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, souls, thoughts, conducts, & ways of beings, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection [---] (1997:225). It is crucial to point out that Theravada Buddhism does not exist secluded from society in monasteries as a set of disconnected practices; its value and ideas are present in society, whatever from that may take in the course of time". Therefore, from a general perspective, the Buddhist Sangha – with its wide-reaching network in the villages, its close connection with the lay community audits strong voice in the communities – has much that development specialist and anthropologist have labeled Social Capital'.

Recently the LBFO has set up a new administrative section which is called 'committee for the spreading of dhamma and Vipassana – meditation?' This primarily makes use of these forms of social capital. The projects carried out are supposed to spread Buddhist teachings and mediation more widely among the population. An important part of its agenda is, for example, sending monks to school where they teach about 'dhamma', Buddhist ethics and morality. This is now quite common in urban areas and in my own experience, these teachings are very much focused on traditional Buddhist topics (learning to pray, respect for elders & teachers, value of education and Lao Culture etc.), although they are sometimes connected with other topics such as the environment, drug-prevention and so on. The activities are sometimes centrally organized by the LBFO in co-operation with local schools but largely take place in the context of local personal networks between monks and teachers.

From a general perspective, it must be noted that crucial society, as a field in which a reflection of Buddhism's role in modern society could be performed and reconceptualised, is even in its rudiments barely existent (Stuart-Fox, 2004:21) in Laos. A clergy that is experienced in social work and environmental issues (as in Thailand or Cambodia) probably has to go through a lot of internal and public discussions before establishing itself in these areas of work. Under present circumstances, this is hardly possible. Furthermore, as Queens (1998) has shown, monks and people at the basis of socially-engaged Buddhist movements in Thailand, Burma and Vietnam reacted to a crisis in their societies and were very often in open opposition to mainstream discusses in politics and within to Buddhist Clergy.

2.2.2. Impact of Economic Globalization on the Human Trafficking in the GM Sub-region Countries: Part-II.

In the great Mekong Sub-Region, trafficking in Women and Children is an established and complicated issue, often intertwined with illegal migration and transnational organized crime. In spite of various governmental and non-governmental efforts to oppose human trafficking, the problem seems to be increasing at a frightening pace (World Vision, 2005). The UN office on Drugs and Crime (2006) provided a definition of trafficking in persons as “the recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of food, of deception, of the abuse of power, or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve, the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation “(UNODC, 2006).

This definition recognizes foremostly that trafficking in persons is a gross violation of human rights. The GMS includes Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PRD), Myanmar, and Vietnam (2010), this region is home to more than 260 million people. Once devastated by conflict, the region has become increasingly wealthy, with travel, tourism and trade all growing despite the injustice of human trafficking remaining. In fact, the changes in political and economic climates, freedom and relative political stability may have made migrant were vulnerable than ever before to modern day slavery. Fast economic growth has brought greater affluence to the region and this economic expansion has created new opportunities for exploitation. The contradiction in wealth between neighboring countries is attractive to those wanting to escape poverty. The disparities between countries provide traffickers opportunities to exploit the vulnerable, who seek to cross porous and increasingly open borders. Collecting accurate statistics is a challenge because of the criminal and underground nature of trafficking and due to different data collection and methodologies used by researchers. However, globally, it is estimated that 800,000-2.5 million people are trafficked each year including some 1.2 million children. At least 12.3 million people are engaged in exploitative labor practices, including children. At least 12.3 million people are engaged in exploitative labor practices, including children. In the GMS alone, it is thought that a quarter of a million people are victimized by trafficking each year (World Vision, 2005). The Mekong Region, compared to many other parts of the World, include very diverse patterns of human trafficking, such as internal and cross border, highly organized and also small scale; sex and labor, throughout boat formal and informal recruitment mechanisms and involving the victimization of men, women, boys, girls, and families. Therefore, within the GMS, there are not so much a single pattern of trafficking in persons as a range of different forms, with diverse victims

and criminal profiles. For example, trafficking victims and families into Thailand from neighboring Lao PDR, Myanmar and Cambodia is done against a background of widespread irregular migration. Traffickers are forced into prostitution domestic servitude or labour in sweetshops or on fishing boats, construction sites or farms. In addition, there is trafficking of children from Cambodia or Myanmar border areas or rural Vietnamese or Chinese areas to beg or sell flowers or the streets of larger cities. Also, there is the form of trafficking from rural China, Myanmar or Vietnam into the interior of China, in order to be forced into marriages which lead to domestic servitude and / or sexual exploitation.

As commerce becomes globalized and borders open, the transfer of people both willing and forced in becoming more widespread. This is in large part due to the phenomenon that human trafficking has become such a profitable and fast-growing criminal activity. Globalization is the development of a significantly integrated global economy, marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital and the cheaper foreign labor markets that transcend nation state boundaries. In part, globalization spreads practices, values, technology and other human products throughout the globe (Bales, 2005). It must be acknowledged that forms of slavery and human trafficking are not just outcomes of globalization but rather part of the globalization process itself, which involve a functional integration of dispersed economic activities. To explain this phenomenon author Kevin Bales offers the example of the victim recruited in Thailand and forcibly trafficked to other states as a sex-slave, who thereby generates income that in turn recycled back into the Thailand brothel economy. Moreover, globalization fosters interdependence between states for commerce and facilitates the transfer of good. Comparative advantage in cheap labor and goods in developing countries has played an important role in objectifying and exploiting humans for economic ends. In developing states, where agriculture life styles were once the preponderance of income providing activities nationals are left without an education or the appropriate skills to compete in a developing workforce. To a larger scale, the developed countries of the World have become the factories and workshops. A high demand for cheap labor by multinational co-operation in developed countries has resulted in the trafficking and exploitation of desperate workers who, in turn, are subsequently to a lifetime of slave-like conditions. Trafficking still occurs from the Mekong Countries to destinations further abroad. For instances, women and girls from Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam are significantly found in forced prostitution or domestic servitude in Malaysia. Many using formal labor recruitment agencies were expected to be able to migrate safely and legally, but were deceived and violated at their destinations. Therefore, a research problem can be conceptualized concerning how economic globalization is influencing human trafficking in the Great Mekong Sub-Region Countries.

2.2.3. Methodology:

Economic Globalization concerns the founding of a series of worldwide exchanges is labor, trade, technology and capital between countries (Stubbs and Underhill), 1994.

Advantage from this phenomenon comprise world economic development, diminishing trade barriers, higher living standards, rapid innovation, spread of technology and management skills, and also new economic opportunities for nations (Head, 1997; Larkin). In its broadest sense, the term contains all types of economic and cultural transfers between nations which comprising domination of the media & widespread by using the World Wide Web. In a narrower sense, it refers to the economic exchange of goods and services internationally and international financial flows. This study concentrates on the economic aspects of globalization, & especially on trade and FDI.

The countries and areas encompassing the Greater Mekong Sub-Region together combine a great variety of land escapes, resource base ethnic groups and economic and political systems. For example, Thailand has followed free-market principles in its pattern of development. Cambodia, Lao, Vietnam and Yunnan are engaged in a transition from mainly planned economics towards more open, free-market systems. Myanmar remains largely isolated from the informational community and pursues its special variant of specialist, mainly planned, economics. With the exception of Yunnan, all are members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) and all are experiencing, although to various degrees, flows of regional and global investment, trade and labor that warrant the designation of these countries as a separate sub-region in the Asian and global economy (World Vision, 2005).

Of course, it may also be that economic globalization has positive impacts, organized crimes has been taking advantage of fast-moving technological advances, such as the internet, overall globalization and the freedom of the flow of goods and services as well as the founding of global markets. The acceleration of the liberalization process of market, for example, has been at least partly technology-driven, with the rapid development of travel, global networks, electronic commerce and the information economy. It has, therefore, been easy for people to trade and communicate. Financial activity, services and investments are expanding rapidly. These developments give opportunities for sustained enhancements in economic performance and also raise important new challenges in the form of globalized crime: Economic globalization has absolutely brought countries closer together via technological innovation and the integration of financial

markets. The ability to manage trade and the integration of financial systems, which now operates on a 24-hour basis. The phenomenon has also extended levels of cross-border investment and the transfer of technology, skills and knowledge across countries. Therefore, economic globalization has contributed advantageously to both the legal economy and the illegal economy (Findly, 2000).

The rapid extension of free markets, driver by liberal economic globalization, has resulted in enormous progress in living standards and lifted millions out of poverty. From an economic outlook, human trafficking raises some interesting facts. Undocumented migrants are fundamental to the some 10 million undocumented migrants account for remittances from migrants produce gigantic domestic incomes, while relieving the unemployment rates by decreasing domestic labor supply (Cameron, 2008). Other impacts are that market integration has originated substantial economic growth on a global scale consequences in more jobs, enhanced livelihood and an overall alleviate in poverty. Furthermore; by bringing larger advantages to individual and countries already holding physical and human capital, globalization has stressed disparities within and between countries. Among the impacts are expanded urbanization and cross-border migration. The difference between poverty and disparity is an important one. While there is significant empirical research showing that economic growth causes a general lowering of poverty levels, the impacts of growth on disparity are less clear cut. Growth occurs to have supplemented an increase in disparity as poverty diminishes. Moreover, globalization is differentiated by increased focus on competitive markets. Such competitive market inclines to be characterized by significant inequality incomes and wealth. It is inequality and disparity, compelled with the rise of consumerism that forces poor people into migration, for if the anticipation of better opportunities was not accessible elsewhere, thou would be less cause to migrate (Marshall, 2001).

Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis has been made:

- Measuring Economic Globalization and hypotheses.

This paper examines a hypotheses linkage between economic globalization and human trafficking on the basis the literature of Cho (2012): integrating equality Globalization women's Right SON preference and Human Trafficking Based on the aforementioned discuss of economic globalization in this section we develop a hypothesis on changes as major influencing factors on human trafficking; in particular, openness to free trade and FDI du used to measure economic factors. In the following sections, this study examines the associations between human trafficking and these two factors.

Based on the aforementioned discussion of economic globalization the study addressed economic globalization as being closely linked to the trafficking problem. Specially trade openers are used to measure economic globalization. Rodriguez and Rodrik (2000) stated that such openness is the sum of exports and imports of goods and services measured as a share of the GDP (Dreher et al., 2011) the supporting of trade openness had a positive effect on economic liberalization which forces economic globalization in a given a (Dreher et al, 2011; Rodriguez and Rodrik 2000). Another factor is FDI Apodaca (2001), Mitchell and McCormick (1988), Poe and Tate (1994), and Rosenau (2003) claimed that economic integration produces economic wealth, the establishment of the rule of law and a higher respect for human rights and (personal) freedom (Dreher et al., 2011). Additionally, Gelleny and McCoy (2001) stated that due to expanded wealth and modernization global integration leads towards a higher level of political stability, whereby governments are less tempted to impinge on human rights to maintain control (Dreher et al., 2011), Likewise, Richards et al . (2011) maintained that economic globalization forms a “middle class”, having the power to demand (fundamental) human rights and freedom. If countries become entangled in an unexpected war, the probability of receiving FDI decreases, as does the amplitude of such investments (Dreher et al, 2011; Li 2006). Thus human rights abuses should diminish with a country’s level of economic globalization. Since this brings benefits for government that take part in economic integration (Dreher 2006; Dreher et al., 2011), regimes have an incentive to respect human rights. There are theoretical arguments, as well as empirical evidence, that trade of economic globalization reduces conflict in a country, since the possible loss trade decreases the willingness to fight (Dreher et al, 2011; Morrow 1999: 48)

Thus, we test the following hypothesis:

H₀: Economic globalization does not increase human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

- **Estimation Strategies**
- **Scope of the study**

One of the biggest challenges of doing research on human trafficking is the scarcity of reliable and comparable data (Cho et al., 2011) contained within the data of human trafficking is a clandestine, criminal activity with those being trafficked and involved in such activities being part of “hidden populations” (Tyldum and Brunovskis, 2005).

Thus the true number of human trafficking victims is unknown (Belser et al., 2005). Among the currently available information sources, the Incidence Reporting Index developed by the UNODC (2006) is one of the most reliable indicators. Aggregated numbers of incidence

reporting from 113 major institutes during the data collection period of 1996-2003 are used here.

The index covers 161 countries and has an ordinal scale ranging from 0 to 5 with score 0 indicating no (reported) inflow of human trafficking and 5 a very high inflow (Cho et al., 2011). This data covers six countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, which also differentiates between the intensity levels human trafficking inflows. This empirical analysis is based on the UNODC data given that to test the impact of economic globalization on the degree human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

Furthermore, this study discuss in gender-neutral referring to individuals, persons and prostitutes in general rather than female prostitutes because the theoretical arguments, in principle, equally apply to boys and, possibly, men also trafficked into the sex industry and under no illusion that the overwhelming majority of individuals affected by trafficking are in fact girls & women. (Cho et al., 2011)

• 2.2 Conceptual Framework and Model

The study uses pooled cross-section, which examine the effect of the incidence of trafficking with economic globalization. Pooled data consists of 48 annual observations from the six countries between 1996 and 2003. Data is a balanced panel, as there are no missing values. The data set has a small sample size from the cross-sectional data, thus the model does not include country fixed or random effect. The reason for this is that we would control for unobserved country heterogeneity and the estimation of the random effect is only required and efficient in the case of larger sample sizes. The equation to test our hypothesis is as follows:

$$Y = \alpha_1 + \alpha_2 E G_i + \alpha_3 Z_i + u_i \quad (\text{Eq. 1})$$

From Equation 1:

- Y defines as the incidence of trafficking inflows
- EG_i denotes as economic globalization (main variables)
- Z_i is a vector including control variables
- u_i is the idiosyncratic error term

From the cross-sectional data, the model does not include country fixed effect and period effect since this cannot handle unobserved country heterogeneity. The dependent variables (Y) has an ordinal structure ranging from 0 to 5 (0 being no reported trafficking flows, 5 being very high), taken from UNODC Incidence Reporting Index, 2006. The main independent variables (EG_i) are trade openness (the ratio of imports & exports to GDP) & foreign direct investment (FDI, net inflows) due to increasing of FDI, which can indicate of a growing economic globalization. Both factors are the most commonly used indicators (Cho, 2012; de Soysa and Vadlamanati, 2010; WIKI, 2011).

The control variables (Z_i) are the proposal measure for the most significant determinants of trafficking flow according to the literature (Akee et al., 2010; Cho et al., 2011). The variables include the (log) GDP and (log) population size from WDI 2011, as richer & more popular countries should experience higher flows. National income per person (GNI per capita) from WDI 2011 reflects the average income of a country's citizens (WKI, 2011). Rule of law is taken from the World Bank Governance Indicators (WGI) (Kaufmann et al., 2009). It ranges between -2.5 and 2.5 . Higher Values mean better outcomes or reduced number or victims because

the trafficker has a higher risk of prosecution. Index indicating democracy is taken from Cheibub et al. (2010). The dummy is coded as 1 if the country is democratic and 0 otherwise, because countries with more open borders increase the risk trafficking. The (log) international migration is also a factor since potential victims might be attracted by the existence of pre-existing migrant networks in a country (Mahmoud and Trebesch 2010). Data are taken from WDI (2011) and are only available from 1990 to 2005. Exchange rate is also included in the model, as it coincides with the success in sex trade (Ouyenoru).

Results and Discussion

Table 1: The result of the incidence of human trafficking inflows in the GMS between 1996 and 2003.

Variables	Pooled OLS	
[log] FDI	0.048*	[3.608]
Trade	0.0004	[0.712]
Exchange rate	2.38**	[6.283]
[log] GDP	-0.204**	[-4.987]
GDI per capita (Income)	7.17	[2.256]
[log] Migration	0.28**	[6.269]
[log] Population	0.404**	[6.603]
Rule of law	-0.008	[-0.588]
Democracy	1.622**	[46.742]
Other variables	-3.552**	[-8.794]
R^2 : 0.998457	Adjusted R^2 : 0.9981	
F-Statistic : 2732.628	Prob [F-Statistic] : 0.000	

Note: t- Statistics are in parentheses;

*: Significant effect at 10% level;

** : Significant effect at 1% level

Table 1 presents the result of the incident trafficking inflows. According to the F- test, our null hypothesis can be rejected which means that the economic globalization increase trafficking inflows into GMS. However FDI has a positive effect with conventional level of significance, while the effect of trade is insignificant. On the control variables, some of the economic factors have a significant effect, including exchange rate, international Migration Population,

Democracy, GDP and other variable. All these factors are statistically significant at the one percent level, except FDI, which is only significant factor at the ten percent level. All factors (except GDP and other variables) increase the trafficking inflow. However, GDP and other variables decrease the degree of human trafficking, which GDI per capita and rule of law do not have any significant effect.

2.2.3.1 Empirical Findings:

The determination so far point to the degree of trafficking inflows in the GMS, but cannot control unobserved country heterogeneity. Our results show that economic globalization is associated with a higher degree of trafficking victims; however, a cross-sectional analysis cannot give the specific globalization factors that would increase trafficking. Economic globalization factors have an increasing influence on trafficking. Open trading and improved infrastructure have some benefits, such as poverty, reduction, and generate greater market opportunities, but the facility has eased to increase victims through the transfer of people, capital & business. Trade and similar migration also concern the movement of labor because traded goods comprise labor inputs. Trade has increased through the region and FDI flows have also extended throughout the last 2 decades. We have to mention that this is a continuously spreading process at the macro level and is already occurring naturally in the position of procedure of economic growth. Cross-border movement of labor over the GMS has been so dynamic that there is no sub regional governing or convention to case it. Regional income disparities within Thailand have aggravated results from a decade on economic boom that was focused mainly in the Bangkok Metropolitan area and the Eastern Seaboard. The concentration of growth forced people to move from rural to urban areas. Moreover, developments in the roads and infrastructures connecting the GMS in the economic special zone namely, east west corridor in Savannakhet and along the Rz road (Luang Namatha-Bokeo province) are the crucial movers of cross-border labor mobility into Thailand. The Laotian economy is dependent on both investment and trade with its neighbours, such as Thailand, Vietnam, and particularly China in the north. Thus, these changes have led to increase in migration and related human trafficking. Large cities and other provinces; national and international high ways, specially Vientiane Savannakhet and Champasak, serve as transit points for trafficking move through into Thailand. The opening border for the Vietnamese has meant expanding chances to migrate to China; especially women have crossed the China-Vietnam border to seek opportunities for marriage or an occupation. Because of the enhancement of roads, open border policies and especially the rapid increase of cross-border trade and tourism, it has now appeared in all provinces and especially in the deltas of the Red and Mekong Rivers. Since the late 1990s, the opening of the border, while helping economic exchange, exposed populations from both sides to economic and social opportunities, which comprise the risks of trafficking. The country is a source, transit and destination of victim trafficking. Due to its proximity to China, in facilitating transformation and cross-border trade, the Quang Ninh and Lao Cai is also one of the Vietnamese border towns where the flows of goods and capital, as well as cross-border movements of people associated with human trafficking is

seen. The trading routes between Burma and Thailand are Mya Maung Stresses, 1) this certainly explains the routes and trading points that allowed black markets to advance along the Sino-Thai-Indo-Burmese borders. The most active illicit border trade between Burma and Thailand appeared and still occurs in three points: MAE SAI, MAE SOT & RANONG, all which are associated with sex and labor trafficking (Maung, 1991) Recent ILO research in the Thai border town of MAE SOT faced with the difficulty of Myanmar migrant child labor in factories exposed that 77.3% of workers were girls and 30% of the children were exploited as child workers living at the factory (World Vision, 2009). Thou are no reliable statistics available on the total number of trafficked persons, most observers believe the number of trafficking is at least several thousand per year (TIP, 2001). The global stock of victim is estimated 800,000 to 2.5 million people that are victims of trafficking each year, containing some 1.2 million children.

In the GMS alone, probably a quarter of a million people are victimized by human trafficking each year (World Vision, 2005). The figure is consistent with the results of a quantitative analysis which determined that the economic globalization leads to increasing inflows of human trafficking. With respect to control variables; FDI, population, exchange rate, international migration and democracy induce trafficking victims to migrate to the GMS. The evidence is lacking to reveal the negative impact of FDI on trafficking in the Mekong Sub Region. However, the UNIAP (2010s) claimed that FDI sanctions in Myanmar led to factory closures in Hlaing Tharyar, Htaukkyant, Hlawgar and the Shewpyithar Industrial Zones. Many female workers became unemployed and confronted with the burden of providing for themselves and their families, which mean that, are vulnerable targets for trafficking (UNIAP, 2010s).

Trafficking causes a demographic imbalance, which leads to differences in sex ratios between neighboring countries. For examples, the population of Vietnamese Women increased more than that of men; meanwhile, the situation is the opposite in rural China. These gender imbalances has important and long term connotation. Gender imbalance is one of the trafficking risk causes in Yunnan. The uneven in the sex ratio has proceeded to enlarge since the 1980s, the number of males per 100 females at birth was 117 in the fifth census in 2000 (Le Bach Doung et al, 2005) Victims who are forced into marriage may be vulnerable because they usually do not know the language and are not versed in this new culture. Guang Xi and Yunnan have the highest gender imbalances within China these provinces sharing a border with Vietnam. Migration for marriage is increasing quickly, as Vietnamese Women are marrying men from China, the Republic of Korea and also Taiwan province of China. Armed 60,000 trafficked women married men from the Taiwan Province of China in 2001.

The fast expansion in work and marriage associated migration flows within Asia has been supplemented by a thriving trafficking market, especially the trafficking of women and children from Vietnam for marriage or labor and often for entertainment and sexual purpose. (Le Bach Duong et al., 2005). Regarding the exchange rate, the most noticeable of the experience opportunities in the destination countries are foreign exchange earnings. Most migrant workers came to Thailand to search for better carriers and have better lives than in their home countries. The majority gain more money or earn hard currencies. Pearson (2005) revealed that for instance a shrimp peeler has saved 100,000 kyat (4,000 bhat) and sent the money home. Nonetheless, not every one is so lucky. Some people end up being exploited or become HIV positive. Everyday life and economic gain in Thailand are not easy for all migrant workers. Some workers have to work as animals. They have to escape to avoid arrest due to their lack of a work permit. Additionally some of them work very hard but do not earn enough money to make a living or even get diseases. International migration-particularly unauthorized migration – is a main problem for administration. The higher purchasing power and the more vigorous economies of Thailand create demand for labor, Alluring migrants from their poorer neighbors. There is a growing demand for cheap sexual and labor services. Thus, there is violent irregular migration in GMS for sex trafficking. Some countries in GMS, i.e. Thailand is the main receiving country for migrants in GMS, hosting around 2-4 million migrants. Cambodia and the Yunnan Province of china are hosts to huge migrant populations

Accurate data involving the number of migrants are long term residents in their host countries and most migration occurs through informal channels. Several studies about the living and working conditions of undocumented migrants have revealed a high incidence of violence, generally seen in retained passports, types of work, deception about wages, physical restriction, inferior working conditions and threats of being reported to the authorities (Huguet, 2011). Such examples of Cambodian illegal migrants are increasingly in number, some of them con-front forced and abusive situations that consist of sexual and labor exploitation. Some people are also trafficked victims. According to the UNIAP (2010a), every year thousand of Cambodians are victims in Thailand. Men are forced to work on fishing boats or as construction workers. Women are abused by the entertainment industry, consisting largely of work in prostitution. Marshall (2001) showed that Cambodian Children are being trafficked as beggars and flower Vendors in Thailand. Cambodia is a destination country for labor and other types of migrants, some of whom came from Vietnam and China. In 2002, the Govt. of Cambodia exposed at least 70,000 irregularly registered Vietnamese (10M, 2008). Many women are worked in sex industry, such as in massage parlors and dance Halls Labor migration is

characterized best by the international migration from the Lao PDR. The main destination country is Thailand, Lao Women migrate and work with unofficial statuses, thereby increasing their probability of being forced into undesired and illegal activities, and abuse and being trafficked (10 M, 2008). Concerning democracy, the Cambodian regime is a constitutional monarchy with an elected government, but people are dominated by the govt. through for example limitations are the freedom of speech. In short, trafficking still appears and the regimes in the GMS would seem unwilling to fight against it. On the other hand, the Government does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of these problems. Conversely, which GDP reduces human trafficking inflow, thou is no data to support the linkage between the effect of GDP and declining inflow into the GMS.

Other factors decrease this problem, such an education of children, to increase skills & public health knowledge, thus giving them the ability to prevent themselves from being tricked by a trafficker. Indeed, education could serve as a key means of fighting trafficking in the future. The Women's Federation has developed brochures an improving the vocational skills of girls and community members. Micro-finance through a village development funds project also helps to relieve poverty and can be used to reduce to vulnerability of young persons to being abused. This would help people to start expand and purchase supplies for local business (ILO, 2008).

Conclusion

This research paper-Part-I-reveals modernization that a minority within the Lao Buddhist Sangha is already adapting Buddhist teaching and is attempting to actively influence developments in contemporary Lao society. These monks are trying to explore new ways of reinterpreting dhamma and applying it to current social problems. Most of the projects make use of the small amount of resources available to the SANGHA and move in the field of activity that have been assigned to the Lao clergy, namely the spreading of Buddhist teaching, morality and ethics. A very small group of monks ha a more far reaching vision of Buddhism's role in society, but is just starting its activities. It has to battle with financial difficulties and a lack of human resources, and the outcome of its training program is still somewhat uncertain. The lack of wider and open discussion about the Sanghas involvement and the tight control of the state are factors that inhibit the process of formulating a coherent discourse on the contribution of Buddhism to contemporary Lao society extra to the role of perpetuating 'fine traditions.

Under These circumstances, the Lao clergy will primarily have to rely own capacities which as mentioned above are still rather limited and are needed to secure its own infrastructure.

The upgrading of educational facilities for monks and novices improved training of works in their traditional tasks, the revitalization of meditation practices and the up-keep of its internal administrative structure are huge tasks, which already reach the limits of its resources. The skepticism of some leading monks regarding the expansion of social activism is also an intelligible argument t the primary task of the Sangha should be assuring the perpetuation of the traditional teachings which are the roots of a socially engaged Buddhism, and the lay population expects the Sangha to continue to fulfill this role. Moreover, in Theravada Buddhism the authority of the clergy is based on its continuity and partial immunity to the changes happening around it on the other hand, the difficult circumstances under which the discussed projects emerged and the enthusiasm of younger monks are also signs of a strong commitment that could perhaps have a synergetic effect in the future and slowly lead to a re-orientation within the clergy and the formulation of a more coherent approach. The latter point, however, also very much depends on the willingness of the Lao government to leave religious organizations and particularly the LBFO enough room for is determining its own course. A potential problem here is the fact that many movements subsumed under the term socially engaged Buddha of for have a quite critical stance forwards the government and its institutions. Personally however I can hardly imagine monks for example, publicly talking about some of the more direct government induced reasons for the disappearance of forests in Laos, as monks have done in Thailand. Perhaps a small proportion of monks will at least be able initiate moves towards this direction and develop appropriate concepts and practices. These will probably be inspired by the example set by Thai Buddhism and other transnational Buddhist networks but in the end will have to be adapted to the specific context in Laos. Otherwise it could be possible that some of the rather liberal ideas occasionally employed will contravene the line of the government or not appeal to the laity.

The progressing differentiation and institutional Secularization of urban Lao Society, has ambivalent implications for the Sangha. On one hand the Buddhist clergy has the role of cultural protector and is tying to intensity this cultural role or ever reconstructs it. Buddhism is now seen as a resource pool for defining `Laoness` and is supposed to help to ward off the dangers of globalization of cultural hybridization.

On the other hand, recent developments in society lead lay people to search for orientation in Buddhist teachings which will have to address these issues in a manner beyond the

traditional way of instruction. Abortion, medical ethics and other topics are not yet relevant in Laos, but it seems that the clergy will be very busy in trying to catch up with these and in finding appropriate positions. To a certain extent, the Lao Sangha has already been successful in applying new methods and adapting teachings but it is still for away from actually defining a new potential role. Young urban people in particular admitted that Buddhism has very little appeal for these because the traditional topics which are frequently discussed in temple sermons & the way monks teach, hold little or no meaning for them. A reiteration and preservation of traditional teachings may serve as an anchor and orientation for a certain part of the population but this way conversely also alienate other lay-followers and lead them to search for orientation in more secular and other religiously-inspired value systems.

Part-II of this paper examines how economic globalization affects human trafficking is the Great Mekong Sub-Region. This hypothesis is tested by employing pooled data from six countries for the period 1996- 2003. Using the pooled OLS method, as the Theory predicts economic globalization increases trafficked flow into GMS. However, while FDI has an influence on trafficking trade does not have any significant effect. Economic factors such as Exchange Rate, Democracy, Migration, and Population induce more traffic flow. In contrast, GDP and other variables such as education micro-finance through a Village development fund and Vocational training decrease the flow of victims into the region. Further research could investigate and reveal more economic indicators from the social globalization dimension in the current period to illustrate the new incidents of human trafficking inflow into the Great Mekong Sub-Region. However, this in turn essentially requires the right blend of local wisdom, skills, attitudes, aptitudes, commitments, and political ethics to mitigate what could become a more serious moral crisis' of the Mekong Region in the near future.

“----Buddhism endorses a spirit of toleration and co-operation with the natural world. It does so because this traditional mode of behavior is given a specific sense by the tradition, and in the final analysis does not come into conflict with the ultimate goal, which is transcendence of the conditioned world.

From the perspective of enlightenment, nothing may have aortal purpose or essential value, but at least in the early stage of the spiritual path'; Buddhism acts as though it does. Here then is one of the many paradoxes encountered in the study of these unique religious systems of though.” (HARRIS IN HARVEY 2001: 254).

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