

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325415004>

The Contestation Practice of Ideology Space to Build Citizenship in Thailand–Laos PDR Border School

Conference Paper · May 2018

CITATIONS

0

READS

25

2 authors:



Wasan Sapphasuk
Chiang Mai University

4 PUBLICATIONS 0 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Nongyao Nawarat
Chiang Mai University

24 PUBLICATIONS 22 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Localism and Schooling Border [View project](#)



Localism and Schooling in Globalization [View project](#)

The Contestation Practice of Ideology Space to Build Citizenship in Thailand-Laos PDR Border School*

Wasan Sapphasuk^a and Nongyao Nawarat^b

^{ab}Faculty of Education, Chiang Mai University

Abstract

In the age of globalization, moving inbetween the borderland is easy for people, labour, and products. So border school is usually used as a mechanism in citizenship ideology building. This article argues that school is not only a state apparatus but also a space for citizenship building of both previous actors and new actors. Ban Rim Khongschool, Chiang Khong district, Chiang Rai province which is located in Thailand – Laos PDR borderland, was chose as a case study. Phenomenological Qualitative Research was used to analyze the data which were documents, observations and semi structured interviews. Data collecting started from November 1, 2017 until March 30, 2018. The practice of ideology of Louis Althusser and Michael W. Apple is the concept used in this article. The finding was that Ban Rim Khongschool has both old and new actors which are state organizations and non – state organizations. The actors have participated in both official curriculum and hidden curriculum. State organizations have top – down operations which are ordered through administrators, teachers and students respectively. By the way, non – state organizations are more flexible because they place importance on students, followed by teachers and administrators. The factors that can get more space in the contestation are created by inside actors in schools in order to get involved in curriculum, media, physical symbols and classroom instruction both inside and outside the classroom. This is very challenging because it has to deal with attitudes of administrators and teachers including bureaucracy in the school system. This indicated that school is not only a mechanism in state ideology building but also a place to do citizenship ideology

*This paper is a part of PhD degree program in Education (Multicultural Education), Faculty of Education, Chiang Mai University

contestation for people in borderland equally. This causes a happy way of living in borderland globalization multicultural society forever.

Keywords: border school, ideology, contestation, multicultural education

Introduction

Mainstream Education Discourse usually places school in a space which is neutral in politics and is free from ideology. On the other hand, critical pedagogy sees school as a state apparatus that overflows with ideologies, thoughts, values, and beliefs in order to create awareness and embed it in experience and practice until it becomes a part of all citizens' daily life (McLaren, 1998). One of the most significant ideologies is the ideology about citizenship construction to bring loyalty towards nation state society and other artificial cultures and to make it becomes unity.

In Thailand, modern school is used as a important mechanism in destroying ethnic identity and constructing the experience, ideas and imagination to make a person realizes that he or she belongs to the state which has only one ethnicity and culture. Moreover, it also expects to create unity, build sense of belonging to the Thai state, educate them to Thai language, and other essential knowledge for stability and development of the country which must follow the government's direction. Even Thailand has a variety of people with more than 70 groups of different races, ethnicities, languages and cultures. (Premsrirat, 2006; Buadaeng, 2007)

The modern school is also used as a place for the contestation of citizenship ideology which originally belonged to community and religion. The nation took control of the ideology systematically and legally (Siwarom, 2008) while existing actors were pushed to be subordinate in ideology contestation unworthily and illegally (Pipatpen, 2004). This causes culture gap among school, community and student. Other groups of students also tend to become rightless and voiceless. (Leepreecha, 2007)

On the borderland, the government has been practicing citizenship ideology building through

various types of schools such as local school, border patrol school, Sueksa Songkhro School – a boarding school, and other kinds of special schools. Curriculum content, textbooks, teaching activities, and symbolic reproduction were made to represent nationality, create sharing of imagination and emphasize state sovereignty. Even some students are not Thai but they are members of immigrant family.

By the way, in a globalized borderland, the state can't control everything absolutely because people, labour, product and culture can cross borders rapidly. This causes the borderland to have a variety of people in race, ethnicity, and nationality continually under the complexity of geo – politic and geo – cultural. Especially in the borderland that was promoted to be a special economic zone. (Santasombat, 2008). This kind of situation happened the same way in schools and also brought the existence of some new actors.

Recently, Ban Rim Khong School, located in Chiang Khong district, Chiang Rai province, welcomes many actors from both state organizations and non – state organizations on the borderland to participate in the education system via many spaces such as curriculum content, textbooks, teachers and teaching activities including hidden curriculum such as physical artifacts, symbols, and building school relation in order to reproduce citizenship ideology to meet the needs of local actors on the borderland.

This article aims to reveal who are the actors in the practice of Ban Rim Khong School in building citizenship ideology?, how can they participate in the practice and what is the challenge in the practice? This article argues that border school is not only a state apparatus in building citizenship but school is also a space for building citizenship of many actors in the multicultural society of the globalized borderland.

Objective

To study and analyze the practice of citizenship ideology building of actors from state organization and non – state organization in Ban Rim Khong School

Concepts

In this article, the author used the practice of ideology concept which was invented by many scholars; Louis Althusser (1918 – 1990) said that ideology is a system of representation which has strict logic passing through image, imagination, myth, ideas or concepts for producing awareness in knowledge and truth (Althusser, 1969). The most important mechanism of the modern state is school because it is a place where students from every class in society spend a lot of time to learn how to live their life (Althusser, 2014). Similar to Michael W. Apple (2013), he presented that school is a place where ideology is communicated and also a place where the politics of knowledge is intense among class identity, race, gender and religion to determine which knowledge is the most valuable for learning imprinting in experience and way of life of students for forever. However, school usually compromises when it comes to political topics and ignores this contestation (Siwarom, 2008).

Methodology

Qualitative research emphasizing in Phenomenological Research was used in this article and chose Ban Rim Khong school as research space. Data collecting included 1) document such as curriculum and related documents 2) observation in general psychical, activities both inside and outside classroom 3) semi structured interview by choosing purposive approach including four teachers who manage the curriculum, four teachers and four actors. All data were collected since November 1, 2017 until March 30, 2018. Analysis and analytical descriptive were used to present data using alias's instead of using real name of places, organizations and people in order to protect all informants' privacy and avoid negative impact causing from the informants.

Findings

1) Actors who contest in ideology of citizenship building in Ban Rim Khong School

1.1) State Actors

Before education reform, education management in school systems in the borderland was controlled by Ministry of Education acting through government curriculum, textbook and classroom instruction of teachers. District education officers took responsibility in education service as a whole. At the time of serious and sensitive political situation in Thailand – Laos PDR borderland, education management was usually controlled and intervened by the National Security Service, soldiers and police with security reasons.

After the education reform and National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999) was launched, other sectors such as organizations, communities or business sectors started participating in schooling. This caused other organizations to start taking a role in education; for example; The Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand, Anti Human Trafficking of Thailand, The Customs Department, and other state sectors located in local areas such as The Local Administrative Organization.

Apart from that, the changing of the borderland into Special Economic Zones in the late 2015 made state organizations, especially organizations which help driving Border Special Economic Zones Policy, come to help push and build understanding in order to prepare students to be ready for various kinds of development, particularly being labour in Border Special Economic Zones.

1.2) Non – State Actors

Non – state actors have joined schooling since the launching of National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999) because each school had to form a basic education board including religious representative, community, parents, alumni and representatives from local business sectors in

order to frame the school policy. However, all board members were selected by state people and the school run in bureaucratic form.

By the way, it was found lately that non – state organizations continue taking a bigger role such as religious organizations, local community, local business, and multinational companies such as Samsung Electronics and Tesco Lotus. They provide textbooks, learning media, and experts to assist teachers and students.

Apart from that, local civil society has taken a part in school continuously, for example; 1) Ruk Chiang Khong group – create activities about local knowledge and environment along Mekong River 2) Hmong New Life Foundation – support accommodation and scholarship for Hmong students 3) Chiang Khong Kids Rights Protection Center – escort girls who are the risk in nationality, poverty, disease, opportunity in education and economy and 4) Ruks Thai Foundation – support accommodation, education and Chinese language and culture for ethnic students.

2) Practice (Expand – Contest) Citizenship Ideology in border school

2.1) Practice of expanding state ideology

Most of state organizations operate by following a bureaucracy system which the final decision depends on an institutional administrator. Teachers and students are not allowed to participate in policy planning. This causes the lacking of the continuation when administrators or teachers change their position.

Although the steps of practice are similar, the methodology is different in each organization. For example, Zero Waste School supported by Department of Environmental Quality Promotion created many activities such as setting up clubs, participating in local learning centers and integrating the content with instruction to be seen in classrooms. Other state organizations occasionally join school activities such as providing experts, exhibitions, activities budget, learning media and learning centers.

Promoting borderland to be Special Economic Zones (SEZs) has brought many special curriculums to school such as Special Economic Zones curriculum, Logistic Management curriculum and Dual Education (Mechanical studies and Business computer studies). These curriculums are controlled by the education service area. School has to push itself to create an education network with other sectors such as SEZs – OSS, The Thai Chamber of Commerce, Immigration, Logistic Service and other vehicle companies.

2.2) Contestation Practice of non – state organizations

In the past five years, developments and changes in the borderland made the practice of non – state organizations become clearer especially business organizations, civil society and local community. They entered school space and reproduced the ideology repeatedly. Each organization has different operations depending on its level of social capital.

The practice of the business sector with a specific mission normally enters the school through the bureaucracy system and spreads its mission to teachers and students. For example, Samsung Corporation provided learning center, books and electronic devices. Teachers and students got a chance to join seminar. Samsung has built inside actors and managed classroom instruction for a flexibility and changeability of school and local context.

Civil society sector starts the contestation through teachers and students then spread to institutional administrators and policy. One great examples is Ruk Chiang Khong group. This group started by collecting knowledge capital via community research and established itself to be local institution called “Hong Hian Maenam Khong” in 2015. This group persuaded teachers and students to join participatory observations and camp activities. This brought an agreement to do Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the school in order to use the institution as learning center. In 2017, Hong Hian Maenam Khong and the school started developing local curriculum called “Khon Chiang Khong” and supported instructional media, special lecture and many special activities for school.

As same as other organizations, they have taken a great care of cultural subaltern students by giving scholarship, providing accommodation and building security both inside school and outside school. They teach foreign language and special class for community. They set many special activities and join many local activities. They don't cling to bureaucracy system but start from students then expand to friends, teachers and administrators.

3)The Challenging of practice in school system

The contestation of citizenship ideology building under bureaucracy culture of school which was produced for many decades is not easy to do. Furthermore, it has to face many problems and challenging situations such as attitude of administrators, teachers and school culture.

Administrators and teachers are main factors for either failure or success. In Ban Rim Khong School, there are 80 administrators and teachers in total. Each of them has different thoughts and ideology. When the state places a premium on the result of Ordinary National Education Test (O-Net) for quality measurement of students and school, some teachers choose to deny or ignore new ideology especially the ideology of non – state organizations.

The practice needs to build “inside actors” in school. It is found that actors from other organizations have to grab teachers and students to be a part of the practice especially local teachers by private or public talk, inviting to join activities and helping in hands when teachers or students ask for. These kinds of practice make teachers, students and administrators feel that it is reliable and allow themselves to join the actors' ideology operation.

Unfortunately, actors also need to face a big challenging which is called the ‘timetable’. Timetable programs teachers and students' daily life starting from entering school until leaving school. Moreover, bureaucracy rules and regulations play a big role in classroom instruction such as bringing students for field trip. The steps of outside – school field trip is complex. School is required to obtain a lot of documents to obtain permission, according to law and regulations. In contrast, this opens a chance for outside actors to be a part of instruction in both classroom and school.

Apart from that, other school cultures such as measurement and evaluation, education guidance, school policy and school value are main factors in placing other organizations as sub stream which is inessential for higher education. The actors tend to face many hard and challenging problems in school system continually.

Discussion

Modern school system on the borderland of Thailand exists under a colonialism context of the Western. This made the education system focus on citizenship ideology building to create unity. The existence of a school system has pushed away traditional education such as temple and community. The school management is under control of state ideology through the reproduction of government curriculum. Teachers are also prepared by the state. Symbols, buildings and culture of the school are all related to state. Researchers, Panklao (1998) and Mahama (2017), found that Thai state tried to participate in education management by imposing core curriculum, using standard Thai language to communicate, teaching by using textbooks and paying respect to Buddha images. This indicates that school is an important mechanism of ideology which brings children in society to school, the place where students learn and infiltrate many ideologies both directly and indirectly. This causes consensus without awareness of domination (Althusser, 2014).

The school space occupied by the state does not make religious organization, community organizations and other organizations who act in citizenship building disappear from the space. However, those organizations have started collecting knowledge capital and build ideology space outside school. After education reform, school space is open widely for non – state organizations. Those organizations, which were pushed away in the past, came back to school space for joining the contestation in reproducing ideology of citizenship. Apple (1986) said that school is a place where ideology is passed on and a place where politic of knowledge is contested. Politic of knowledge is struggle due to the complexity of power relationship and contestation among identity in class, race, gender and religious groups. The purpose of

contestation is looking for the most valuable knowledge that should be learned and imprinted in students' experience and way of living for forever (Siwarom, 2008; Apple, 2013).

The contestation has different form and methods depending on actors' background and social capital. The practice of state organization through bureaucracy system has a top - down behest. Although business organizations have top – down behest as well, it is more flexible or some of them have bottom – down behest which makes the practice be more adjustable. It is conform to a research of Arunotai et al. (2013) which states that actors from non – state organization have a high performance in school space because they are types of social movement based on informal interactive network and under the belief of sharing value. By the way, factor which leads to success and sustainable of practice is building inside actors in all levels especially teachers.

However, the practice of state organizations and non – state organizations can't occupy ideology space in official curriculum and hidden curriculum absolutely. They can participate only in selective subject, integrative activities, psychical space and extra - curricular activities. It is not powerful enough to completely occupy core curriculum or main psychical space in school system. Pipatpen (2004) pointed out that the process is just creating righteousness of the state in order to append other ideologies because it is easy to control as subaltern knowledge needs to lean on official knowledge, rules and regulations of school.

Finally, this indicated that school especially border school is a mechanic in building citizenship ideology not only for state but also for other actors from non – state organizations. All actors use school as a place for citizenship ideology reproduction for people who have different cultures in borderland to live equally and happily.

REFERENCES

- Althusser, L. (1969). *For Marx*. (Brewster. B., Trans.). London: Allen Lane.
- Althusser, L. (2014). *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. (Kaewthep. K., Trans.). Bangkok: text.
- Apple, M. W. (1986). *Education and Power*. (Thongthew. S., Trans.). Bangkok: Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University.
- Apple, M. W. (2013). *Knowledge, power, and education: The selected works of Michael W. Apple*. New York: Routledge.
- Arunotai, N. et al. (2013). *Weaving the Future to Borderless World : Education Promoting of Children and Youth in Maesot District, Tak Province*. Bangkok: The Thailand Research Fund.
- Buadaeng, K. (2007). *On Thai government policy over the last half century regarding education systems for hill tribe communities in northern Thailand*. Chiang Mai: Center for Ethnic Studies and Development, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.
- Leepreecha, P. (2007). Educational System and Language in the Thai Nation-State Building. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 19(1), 278-309.
- Mahama, A. (2017). Malayu-Muslim and Thai-ization. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 29(1), 127-159.
- McLaran, P. (1998). *Life in schools: introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education (3th ed.)*. New York: Longman.
- Naowarat, N. (2015). *Multicultural Education*. Chiang Mai: Faculty of Education, Chiang Mai University.
- Panklao, S. (1998). *Governments' Education Policies in Southern Border Province' Thai Muslim Communities (B.E.2475-2535)*. Chiang Mai: M.Ed (Educational Administration), Graduate School, Chiang Mai University.
- Pipatpen, M. (2004). *The Inclusion of Local Wisdom into Thai Schooling System*. Bangkok: Ed.D. (Development Education), Graduate School, Srinakharinwirot University.
- Premsrirat, S. (2006). Language Situation and Multi-Ethnic in Thai Society. *Journal of Language and Culture*, 25(2), 5-17.
- Santasombat, Y. (2008). *Power, Space and Ethnic Identities : Cultural Politics of Nation - State in Thai Society*. Bangkok: Princess MahaChakriSirindhorn Anthropology Centre (Public Organisation).
- Siwaram, S. (2008). *Social Science of Education*. Chiang Mai: Sangsan.