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# Forms of Social Quality Mobilization in Suburban Communities of a Changing World

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***Abstract*—**This article is to introduce the meaning and form of social quality moving process as indicated by members of two suburb communities with different social and cultural contexts. The form of social quality moving process is very significant for the community and social development, because it will make the people living together with sustainable happiness.

This is a qualitative study involving 30 key-informants from two suburb communities. Data were collected though key-informant interviews, and analyzed using logical content description and descriptive statistics.

This research found that on the social quality component, the people in both communities stressed the procedure for social quality-making. This includes the generousness, sharing and assisting among people in the communities. These practices helped making people to live together with sustainable happiness. Living as a family or appear to be a family is the major social characteristic of these two communities.

This research also found that form of social quality's moving process of both communities stress relation of human and nature; "nature overpower humans" paradigm and influence of religious doctrine that emphasizes relations among humans. Both criteria make the form of social's moving process simple, adaptive to nature and caring for opinion sharing and understanding among each other before action. This form of social quality's moving process is composed of 4 steps; (1) awareness building, (2) motivation to change, (3) participation from every party which is concerned (4) self-reliance.

***Keywords*—**Social quality, form of social quality moving process, happiness, different social and cultural context.

## I. Introduction

THE United Nations at the Millennium Summit Meeting in September 1990, laid out a new approach to development to promote human development and reduce gaps of development. 189 member-nations of the UN (including Thailand) all endorsed such a declaration and set joint targets of action which every nation has to achieve in 2015. The targets have been labeled in short as the "Millennium Development Goal: MDG". It includes 8 main targets as follows: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (2) achieve universal primary education, (3) promote gender equality and empower women, (4) reduce child mortality, (5) improve maternal health, (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, (7) Ensure environmental, (8) develop a global partnership for development [1], [2]. Many countries and organizations in Asia such as ECAFE, Japan and Korea which study social quality in the Far East all give more important attention to the problems of social quality mobilization [3]-[5].

As for Thailand, social quality as a concept is quite new. However, careful consideration of work in various organizations suggests that several studies have been conducted focusing on the matter/ issue. [2], [5], [6]. The concept of social quality has been given in these studies along the lines of UN Millennium Summit, which emphasizes results more than the development process of mobilization, nor conditions of people living together in society/ community including gender equality as mentioned not relevant to realization of Thai social system.

Though social quality concept in Asia emphasizes living together in society with high degree of social cohesion in the process of social inclusion and try to promote social empowerment among human beings including economic security, the researcher is still not convinced these are appropriate for Thai society because Thai society is characterized as a patronage on which give high respect to individuals. Therefore, considering only social inclusion is not sufficient for Thai social quality.

Thailand herself also develops her own Well-being Index to reflects the last target of development (end) whose means are also considered. The Well-being Index comprises 3 levels of consideration i.e., at the national, community and family/individual level [7]. The NESCB uses the Well-being Index as one source of data to indicate degree of economic strength and sustainability of the nation, to study Thai social quality, it is therefore necessary to include social characters that can make the Thais happy or living well.

Social quality has to embrace social characters which imply happiness, satisfaction of people living within society, whatever approaches taken (between salient economic gain or well-being as the main target). If the results of development are the only one upheld without considering means to achieve it, there are risks of not reaching sustainability or self-reliance. These make it necessary to include means to achieve ends in the path of development schemes. The researcher is interested in studying social quality mobility with the following core concepts.

Social order as a concept is man-made to facilitate living together in a society; to prevent and mitigate violence, conflicts or undesirable events. It is essential for people living together in a peaceful society.

Social equity means an individual's practice which corresponds to what is right according to social recognition including an act toward others freely and equally whether it be matters of income distribution, opportunity and other benefits.

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These are under the category of "social action". Forms of social equity may be alike or different depending on individual status. The researcher, after reviewing relevant literature decided to settle for 2 forms of social equity, i.e., (1) equity in exchange: everybody has a right to exchange under the law, (2) equity in distribution. Everybody has the right to receive distribution or rewards from work fairly according to social norms.

In addition, to achieve a sustainability stage, the researcher uses the "philosophy of sufficient economy" as a means or process of social quality development by applying the concepts of social capital management which means bringing in various capitals available to be used appropriately for common benefits whether it be cultural ones or others in order to make sure of economic security and social well-being all the way to ensure people living happily and with security in every aspect (environment, physical health, basic needs materials) leading the condition of social cohesion which is the equilibrium and most satisfactory condition. If one part dose not function properly, it signifies change or the dynamic aspect needs to be adjusted, for example, people want to move to full democratic life but old power is trying to preserve status quo in Thai politics. This may lead to social cohesion at the level of social solidarity in a new perspective, if people at the grass-roots level fully realize their potential to change for the better.

This study uses concepts and methods prevalent in the measurement of social quality mobilization process. There are, i.e., (1) the concepts of nature being powerful over human beings which are parts of nature. Under this belief, social quality means humans live and adapt to natural power. Religion has influence over human action, and (2) humans have more power than nature, i.e., human are confident of their and try to overcome nature by controlling and determining natural environment for the benefits of human life, for example, if it does not rain, humans will find way to make it happen. Under this concept, nature is under human control. Under this belief, religion has less influence over human action.

In brief, the researcher defined social quality by emphasizing the process rather than the end product, that is social conditions carrying happiness and mobilization process of social quality which are necessary for sustainable development in this area as sum-up in Fig. 1.

## II. Objectives of the Research

1) To study the meaning or social quality as defined by the community.
2) To study forms of social quality mobilization by the community.

## III. Research Methods

In this research, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants from two communities which are markedly different in social and cultural aspects; the first community is around Bangkok suburban, being a Muslim one (Wieng-Come community); the other one is at Samut-Songkram suburban area, the participants are dominantly Buddhists (Phu-Miphat community); 15 key-informants from each community were interviewed in-depth; the total key-informants interviews are 30 people. In addition, two other methods were employed, namely rapid rural appraisal (RRA) to identify key-informants and group discussion to get villagers' opinions and focus group as a platform for villagers to express their views and making joint decisions.

Furthermore, community history and their various contextual exhibitions have also ware collected including relation documentary study, all to make the study a reliable one.

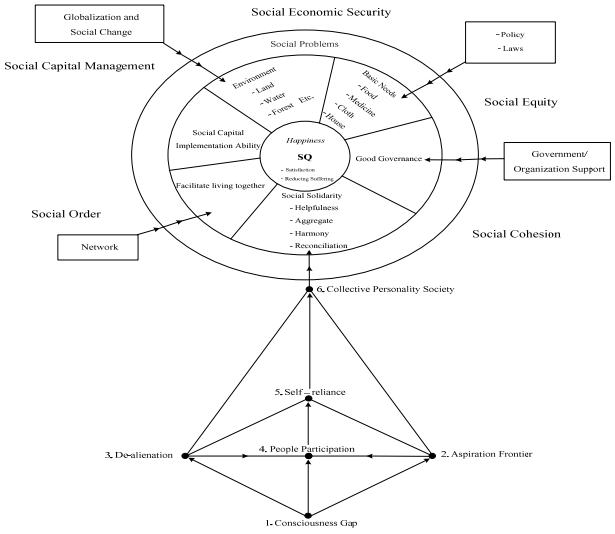



Fig. 1 Core Concept of Social Quality in Study

## IV. Results of the Study

### A. The Meaning of Social Quality

The meaning of social quality from community's viewpoint, it shows 37.00% social kindness, peaceful (27.00%), life and property security (18.92%), solidarity and self-reliance (16.22% each), followed by lovingness and kin relation, receiving services from the state sufficiently (8.11%). For more details, see Table I.

TABLE I
Characters and Meaning of Social Quality from the Community View-Points

| Characters of Social Quality | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|
| - Kindness, responsive | 37.84 |
| - Peaceful | 27.03 |
| - Life and property security | 18.92 |
| - Solidarity | 16.22 |
| - Self-dependence/self-reliance | 16.22 |
| - Kin relations | 8.11 |
| - Sufficient services from state | 8.11 |
| - Education for all | 8.11 |

The meaning of social quality from both communities emphasize social relations, although when considered

separately they reveal conceptual frameworks as follows:

1. Social Economic Security

Both communities possess water resource as an important asset; both are agricultural communities which encourage education and receive supports from the government and their own communities in providing the 4 essentials in life. Further, the study reveals that it reveals that things that make people in both communities feel secured are occupations with considerable income (73.33%), followed by mutual help among people and helping those who are inferior (56.67%) people having their own house, land (66.67%) including good travelling facilities (63.33%), having roles in social groups in communities (53.33%) as shown in Table II.

TABLE II
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SECURITY IN WIENG-COME AND PHU-MIPAT COMMUNITIES

| Social and Economic Security | Communities | | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Wieng-Come | Phu-Miphat | |
| ***Process*** | | | |
| - Kinship relations | 66.67 | 26.67 | 46.67 |
| - Seniority system | 26.67 | 13.33 | 20.00 |
| - Rational core leaders | 13.33 | 40.00 | 26.67 |
| - Mutual help, helping inferiors | 53.33 | 60.00 | 56.67 |
| - Considerable income jobs | 73.33 | 73.33 | 73.33 |
| - Available advice from government officials | 6.67 | 13.33 | 10.00 |
| ***Results*** | | | |
| - Safety in life and property | 33.33 | 40.00 | 36.67 |
| - Good care from off springs | 20.00 | - | 10.00 |
| - People are functional and not cost problems | 20.00 | 26.67 | 23.33 |
| - Social grouping, social responsibility | 46.67 | 60.00 | 53.33 |
| - Enough food | 13.33 | 6.67 | 10.00 |
| - Own house/ land | 53.33 | 80.00 | 66.67 |
| - Little poverty | 13.33 | 6.67 | 10.00 |
| - Small amount of unemployed | 13.33 | 26.67 | 20.00 |
| - No debts | 13.33 | 20.00 | 16.67 |
| - Social welfare | 32.34 | 20.00 | 26.67 |
| - Having resource | | | |
| ▪ Land | 33.33 | 60.00 | 46.67 |
| ▪ Water | 33.33 | 60.00 | 46.67 |
| ▪ Road | 53.33 | 73.33 | 63.33 |

2. Social Order

Both communities comply with established social order passed down from the family tradition, including working land and community as whole. At the family level, members are often voiced their opinions before and order will be enforced with flexibility (50.00%). However, in setting orders about working land (46.67%) and community, they are more formal via meetings before being enforced (60.00%). In organizing social order, both communities rely mostly on religious rules for fairness as revealed in Table III.

3. Social Equity

Everybody in both communities receives equal opportunity in pursuing life under the governance of the community. In principle, all have equity, though there may be some problems in practice, for example, in participation in school activities, and distribution of benefits derived from group activities. See Table IV.

TABLE III
SOCIAL ORDER FOUND IN WIENG-COME AND PHU-MIPHAT COMMUNITIES

| Social Order | Communities | | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Wieng-Come | Phu-Miphat | |
| ***At the family*** | | | |
| - Head of family set rule | 26.67 | 13.33 | 20.00 |
| - Exchange view prior to fix order | 46.67 | 53.33 | 50.00 |
| - Parents lead the way | 60.00 | 26.67 | 43.33 |
| - Parents fix children' household responsibility | 53.33 | - | 26.67 |
| - Follow religious rules | 40.00 | 13.33 | 26.67 |
| - Mother responsible in children and family spending | 13.33 | 20.00 | 16.67 |
| - Father responsible for family spending | 13.33 | 13.33 | 13.33 |
| - Husband and wife take joint responsible in family spending | 33.33 | 13.33 | 23.33 |
| - Mother fixes the order | - | 6.67 | 3.33 |
| ***Control and Punishment*** | | | |
| - Not uphold order, quarrelling will be punished | 6.67 | - | 3.33 |
| - Punish with sympathy | 6.67 | 26.67 | 16.67 |
| - Father acts as mediator | 6.67 | - | 3.33 |
| - Mother acts as mediator | 6.67 | 13.33 | 10.00 |
| ***Orders in working land*** | | | |
| - Follow religious principles | 26.67 | 6.67 | 16.67 |
| - Set example for the community (dividing a part for house and the rest as working land) | 26.67 | 20.00 | 23.33 |
| - Give some to offspring for new household | 6.67 | - | 3.33 |
| - Set out a solution from meetings in case of common land | 26.67 | 66.67 | 46.67 |
| ***Community orders*** | | | |
| - Have a formal meeting to decide what to do | 46.67 | 73.33 | 60.00 |
| - In formal meeting to solve problems | 20.00 | 20.00 | 20.00 |
| - Follow formal townplanning landscape | - | 6.67 | 3.33 |
| - Follow religious principles | 33.33 | 6.67 | 20.00 |
| - Give power to community leaders to decide | 13.33 | - | 6.67 |

TABLE IV
SOCIAL EQUITY IN WIENG-COME AND PHU-MIPHAT COMMUNITY

| Social Equity | Communities | | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Wieng-Come | Phu-Miphat | |
| ***Equity*** | | | |
| - Open for opinion expression | 26.67 | 20.00 | 23.33 |
| - Everyone can participate in communities activities equally | 53.33 | 6.67 | 30.00 |
| - Transparency in community organizations | 20.00 | 6.67 | 13.33 |
| - Decision-making rests with community leaders | 13.33 | - | 6.67 |
| - Distribution of scholarship is fair | 20.00 | 6.67 | 13.33 |
| ***Non-equity*** | | | |
| - Distribution of common benefits is done via meetings | 6.67 | 3.33 | 20.00 |
| - Community leaders are biased, not act as agreed upon | 13.33 | 6.67 | 10.00 |
| - Community leaders act alone without consulting people | 13.33 | 13.33 | 13.33 |
| - Unfair in selling-buying land | - | 6.67 | 3.33 |
| - Villagers do not understand laws, being cheated in land business | - | 6.67 | 3.33 |
| - Groups leaders do not follow rules as agreed upon | 13.33 | 13.33 | 13.33 |
| - Not distribute group benefits as agreed upon | 13.33 | 40.00 | 26.67 |

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4. Social Cohesion

What have been observed in social cohesion of both communities are people living together with ease, co-operating in doing public work, i.e., planting Phumirak garden, building Masjid, Church, and other community development works (53.33%), donating labour and money for traditional fairs (66.67%); joining merit making occasions (77.33%). More of these are found in a Buddhist community (Phu-Miphat) than at a Muslim one (Wieng-Come). As for reconciliation strategies, both communities rely mostly on flexibility and peaceful negotiation with doing one own duty at the best (33.33%) with more frequency at the Buddhist community (53.33%) than at Muslim one (13.33%). It is observable that at Wieng-Come, people rely on religious principles to solve conflicts or get reconciliation more as quoted from the bible as "...do not get anger more than 3 days, it will be sinful and do not get anger with those accusing us if it is not true because the fault accusation will return to the accuser...". More details on Table V.

TABLE V
SOCIAL COHESION AT PHU-MIPHAT AND WIENG-COME

| Social Cohesion | Communities | | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Wieng-Come | Phu-Miphat | |
| ***Co-operation*** | | | |
| - Participation in religious affairs | 46.67 | 40.00 | 43.33 |
| - Regard religion as mind upholding | 33.33 | 20.00 | 26.67 |
| - Donate labour and money in religious fairs willingly | 33.33 | 73.33 | 53.33 |
| - Co-operate in public works, e.g., planting trees, building church, community works etc. | 40.00 | 66.67 | 53.33 |
| - Dominate kin relations type of social relations | 66.67 | - | 33.33 |
| ***Reconciliation*** | | | |
| - When conflicts arise in community, the community head will negotiate | 13.33 | - | 6.67 |
| - Inferiors must listen to superiors and ask for pardon in case of having conflict | 20.00 | 6.67 | 13.33 |
| - Use religious principles to solve conflicts | 26.67 | - | 13.33 |
| - Be flexible with one taken care of one own duty at best | 13.33 | 53.33 | 33.33 |

TABLE VI
SOCIAL CAPITAL IN COMMUNITIES

| Social Capital | Communities | | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Wieng-Come | Phu-Miphat | |
| - Giving knowledge to insiders as well as outsiders | 66.67 | 73.33 | 70.00 |
| - Expansion of learning base in community | 26.67 | 26.67 | 26.67 |
| - Expansion of learning base to outsiders | 13.33 | 26.67 | 20.00 |

5. Social Capital

The most available and widespread use for the community's benefits is social network in various social institutions, i.e., the socialization undertaken from beliefs, experiences and consultative methods transmitted from older to younger generations including lovingness and helping each other within a family (60.00%). In Wieng-Come community which is a Muslim majority, religions teachings are the main sources for social relations and behavior (93.33%). In Phu-Miphat which is a Buddhist community, religious practices are more or less restricted to customary rites and traditional activities of merit making (73.33%). In addition, there are schools in both communities which instruct and lead young students to be efficient adults (56.67%). The other social capitals used are groups and networks available in the communities which perform as socialization agents as well as operational agencies for the benefits of people in the communities (70.00%).

Though both communities have many networks the expansion of the network base is limited which is quite worrisome (26.67% and 20.00% receptively). See Table VI.

*B. Forms of Social Quality Mobilization*

It is clean that form of social quality in both communities is similar regarding nature as a more powerful agents which humans need to pay respect to and from this concept, all human actions must adapt to natural conditions, at the same time religious beliefs play an important part in social relations among the people of the communities where Thai people regard kin bond as very important and give high priority in making decisions about actions in general. All these have made the social quality mobilization appear simple with relying mostly on conversation, listening to opinions and creating or reaching of mutual understanding before taking any action. However, we can elaborate steps in social quality mobilization into 3 steps as follows:

1. Realization Step

Both communities have similar ways to create public realization, starting with "telling, pointing and understanding". In Wieng-Come communities, a school administrator (Nai Fah) said that before taking any development scheme, people involved need to be informed clearly by citing a case of pulling down old wooden school which many previous administrators tried in vain. When he took the position, he tried to "talking and pointing (the facts)". Every evening pray, people have to pass-by the school which is on the brink of collapsing but he used a pole to support it, he told the people to be aware when passing-by to arouse their sense of danger until he felt people were aware of the need to have new housing. The then took the matter to discuss with local leaders and people concerned to finally consent to build a new school building. He emphasized the importance of giving information in a thoughtful manner; using a loudspeaker to disseminate information is inconsiderate. People need to thoroughly of the issue before it is realized/ before it is put into effect.

2. Motivational Step

Both communities tried to refer to "good things" about history of their community as an inspiration for action. For example, in Phu-Miphat, leaders tried to cite historic events of their ancestors when helping the king fight the Burmese until they won the battle to encourage younger generation to move forward.

3. Pulling for Participation Step

It is important to establish good rapport by always starting

with a decent conversation, exchanging views, analyzing the situation before launching development work. Though some of them may not succeed, they should not be discouraged. Both communities realize the necessity of having people's participation in projects to be successful and sustainable.

## V. Summary and Discussions

### A. Social Quality

View-point from the two communities about social quality include quality in living condition, i.e., being generosity, happiness, and solidarity of the people at large and finally they can attain a self-reliant stage with no faction, and property security too, followed by having kin type of social relations and receiving state's services all around whether they be education, employment and income. Social quality can be divided into 5 categories: (1) Socio-economic security, (2) Social order, (3) Social equity, (4) Social cohesion, (5) Social capital and management. Both communities have an acceptable level of social quality.

### B. Forms of Social Quality Mobilization

Both communities share a similar form of social quality as "respectful to nature under religious principles; i.e., emphasizing human relations within community and sustainability of natural resources which seem to be possible in both of them comprising 3 important steps, i.e., 1) realization, 2) motivation for change, 3) pulling for full participation from every sector for being self-reliant.

In addition, there are some minor problems in both communities, such as leader conflict, bias, self-interest, etc. But these are minor compared to what they achieve.

## VI. Recommendations

### A. For Practical Purpose

1) There should be a mediator to solve community leasers conflict.
2) The study revealed that leader's conflicts arose from biased on one or both sides particularly at Wieng-Come community. It is necessary to have a negotiator who are accepted on both side to solve their problems.
3) In Wieng-Come, people have higher income but some are really poor; the problem of income in-equality may arise in the future. This should be attended to before it is blown out of proportion.

### B. For Further Research

1) There should be an in-depth study of social quality in various dimensions.
2) There should be replication of lessons learned from the successful community in the management of social quality.

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