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STRUGGLING IN BETWEEN:

The Everyday Practice of Weaving Shan Home Territory
Along the Thai-Burma Border

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May 2016

A thesis submitted to the University of Sussex for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Migration Studies in the School of Global Studies

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature: Ting, Wen-Ching (丁文卿)

DPhil in Migration Studies
9th May 2016

Dedicated to My Dearest Family
Whose Love Always Supports Me on My Way

（獻給我最摯愛的家人）

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School as well as RCSS etc.

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

TING, WEN-CHING   Ph.D. in Migration Studies

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ABSTRACT

The overall aim of this study is to explore the relations between home-places, mobility and social networks through the home-making of displaced Shan in limbo, and to see how they negotiate belonging during their displacement along the Thai-Burma border. This study highlights how displaced Shan remember, reconstruct and represent home-places they left behind and their physically fragmented journeys that led them from home-places to in-between border areas.

Furthermore, the study sets out to discover how Shan placed their displacement by repairing their social ties and (re)constructing a feeling of at-homeness. This refers to the issues of how they dealt with their status of *Stratified Others* from the perspective of state institutions. It demonstrates how the displaced Shan live a double life with a series of tactical practices against their subordinate and oppressed positions. In this sense, although it does not deny displaced people's vulnerability, it sees them as having significant control over their lives, rather than as passive objects or "victims" (Brun: 18). This active role as a tactical agent engaged in the search for security highlights how migrants re-establish themselves and their families in society, differently from those who have citizenship and can travel freely and enjoy their membership (citizenship).

Finally, the study also examines how displaced Shan develop and maintain their social connections within and beyond their effective spatial incarceration. They create multi-layered constellations of social relations by 'weaving' social relations through space, creating translocal linkages. This constellation of social relations can be regarded as displaced Shan's fluid translocal lived space forming their 'home territory' beyond national borders in the face of their protracted displacement. This human-orientated perspective challenges the notion of state-centred 'national territory' to (re)construct Shan's place affiliation and create a base for their future generations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFO	Anti-Fascist Organisation
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BERG	Burma Ethnic Research Group
BIA	Burma Independence Army
BNA	Burma National Army
BRC	Burma Relief Centre
BPP	Border Patrol Police
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIDKP	Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People
CPB	Communist Party of Burma
FBR	Free Burma Ranger
HRW	Human Right Watch
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
KKY	Ka Kwe Ye
KMT	Kuomintang (the Chinese Nationalist Party, or National People's Party)
KNDO	Karen National Defence Organisation
LBF	Local Burmese Forces
MAP	Migrant Assistance Programme
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MTA	Mong Tai Army (also, Muang Tai Army)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRCT	National Research Council of Thailand
PBF	Patriot Burmese Forces
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PVO	People's Volunteer Organisation
RCSS	Restoration Council of the Shan State
RTG	Royal Thai Government
SAPA	Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy
SHRF	Shan Human Rights Foundation
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SSA	Shan State Army
SSA-N	Shan State Army-North
SSA-S	Shan State Army-South

SSSNY	School for Shan State Nationlities Youth
SURA	Shan United Revolution Army
SWAN	Shan Women's Action Network
SYP	Shan Youth Power
TBBC	Thailand Burma Border Consortium
TBC	The Border Consortium
TECA	Taiyai Education and Culture Association
TRA	Tailand Revolutionary Army
TRC	Tailand Revolutionary Council
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UWSA	United Wa State Army
WASS	Women's Association of Shan State
WLB	Women's League of Burma

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction: Rethinking 'Home' in Displacement

Home is the idealised notion of stability, comfort, privacy and security (see also McDowell, 1997:13; Young, 1997). However, the notion of home being a stable place has been challenged for a long time, in particular as regards people who are on the move in a globalised world. Over the past two decades, there has been significant research on the concept and understanding of home, which reveals a growing critical rethinking of this concept in various disciplines such as anthropology (e.g. Gurney, 1997), architecture (e.g. Somerville, 1997), human geography (e.g. Massey, 1992; Black, 2002; Blunt and Varley, 2004; Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Brickell, 2012; Dufty-Jones, 2012; Ralph and Staeheli, 2011), phenomenology (e.g. Gurney, 1997; Jackson, 1995), social and environmental psychology (e.g. Moore, 2000), sociology (e.g. Mallett, 2004; Saunder, 1990) or interdisciplinary area (e.g. Ahmed, 1999; Kabachnik et al,2010; Rapport and Dawson, 1998; Morley, 2000).

In this vein, home no longer simply refers to a physical and precise place but a complex and ambiguous term, that changes in time and space for migrants (Wang and Wong, 2007: 182; Leung, 2007: 210). It includes a wide range of meanings and concepts, including house(s), dwelling(s), place(s), nation(s), journey(s), feeling(s) and a state of being in the world, etc. (see also Mallett, 2004). Meanwhile, in some studies, home has been described as being closely related to the self, family, gender, identity, memory, beliefs, customs, traditions, cultural rituals, habitus or practices. It is thus difficult to define the concept of 'home'. However, the multiple meanings of the term also illustrate that home consists of various relationships between people and their environment. As Saunders and Williams (1988) suggested, "the home is the crucial setting through which basic patterns of social relations are constituted and reproduced" (cited in Saunders, 1989: 178). From this perspective, home not only offers a place for people in society but also mirrors the significance of people's lives in relation to their social structure.

With reference to mobility, as Eastmond (2007) points out, this often involves a change from the familiarities of people's lives. Therefore, it is inevitable that people modify relationships with their home-places, while they leave their places of origins, whether by force or voluntarily, as well as further re-negotiate their position in the new reality. This may create some forms of subjectivity and emotion (Conradson and McKay, 2007:168). The relationship between people, place and identity has become part of a growing debate (see Brun, 2001; Gustafson, 2009; Kibreab, 1999; Malkki, 1995; Massey, 1992, 1994a, 1995). Two different notions of place are apparent: One notion asserts a 'natural' relationship between people and places, while the second stresses 'de-naturalisation' of the relationship. Regarding displacement, the 'naturalised' approach argues that mobility undermines place attachment, so individuals who are torn from their places are likely to suffer severe emotional grief and risk being separated from their culture and identity. On the other hand, the 'denaturalised' approach is not to deny that experiences of displacement may be devastating. It suggests mobility may have few negative impacts on some aspects of place affiliation, but individuals do not necessarily lose the ability to exercise power and their place identity by relocation. This latter approach emphasises mobility across communities and regions may facilitate affiliation with a wider regional life (Brun, 2001:15, 18; Gustafson, 2009:490).

In refugee or forced migration studies, the theoretical concepts of space and place have presented a growing critique to the taken-for-granted ways of thinking in an essentialist notion of place. The essentialist idea shows a natural relationship between people and place: "culture has a place-focused understanding, where people are seen as being firmly settled in a home environment as opposed to a state of uprootedness and displacement" (Brun, 2001:17). This essentialist notion dismisses cultural flows and hybridity. People who are displaced or "moved out" of their country of origin are viewed as a challenge to the "national order of things" (Malkki, 1992:33). Therefore, being 'displaced' and 'uprooted' is regarded as a pathological state of being and becomes a problem for the sedentarist communities as well as threatening the cultural and national identity (Malkki, 1992).

These notions have far-reaching influences on the solutions to refugee and internal

displacement (Brun, 2001: 18), such as projects of voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement to a third country. The notion of sedentarism supposes that the optimal durable solution to address refugee crises, or the end point of the migration journey, is to return displaced people or refugees back to their places of origin, with a view of seeing displacement as a temporary status brought about by provisional assistance (Lindley, 2013:292). When repatriation is regarded as a 'natural' and 'unproblematic' solution, the view of local integration and resettlement is based on the idea that refugees or displaced people will become 'naturalised' residents of being integrated in "an orderly manner" in a new state (Malkki, 1992:31). Therefore, refugees or displaced people could thus be settled in a place and then 'dis-placement' would successfully be resolved.

In response to this notion, many studies have highlighted the difficulties associated with return and resettlement, as well as challenged the assumption that returnees would simply 'slot into place' and return to a normal life without difficulties (e.g. Hammond 1999, 2004a; Flynn, 2007; Rodgers, 2008; Grabska, 2010). Therefore, it is important to examine how relationships between people and their home places are shaped by mobility, and also how mobility is affected by practices of place attachment. Numerous scholars focus on long distance moves and highlight the difficulties and adaption issues of migrants in a third country (e.g. Waxman and Colic-Peiskor, 2005; Jeffery, 2010). Some also look specifically at the transnational relationships between host countries and migrants' country of origin (e.g. Blunt, 2003; Oeppen, 2012). Several studies have shifted their focus to short distance moves, especially to neighbouring host countries or borderlands (e.g. Dudley, 2010; Hammond, 2004a; Gren, 2002). Hammond (2004a, 2004b) studied the home-making process of refugees' repatriation to Ethiopia settling in a new resettlement site, and Dudley (2010) explored Karenni refugees' material culture and embodied experiences in a particular refugee camp in Thailand. Also, Gren's (2012) research in Palestinian camps on the West Bank indicated notions and practices of home and return. These studies facilitate our understanding of the complexity of the concept of 'home' in forced mobility. Nevertheless, studies on displaced people who are 'out of place' living in an 'in-between' place – with a 'temporary' status in between *return* (*repatriation*) and *resettlement* – seem to draw

less attention from academics. There remains an open question which involves understanding the relationship between displaced people in limbo and their 'home' places.

Therefore, my research takes the specific case of the displaced Shan (they call themselves *Tai*[1]) to fill the current academic gap. It offers a further understanding of 'home' with regard to displacement, and provides an alternative notion of moving beyond a single refugee camp or resettlement site to explore how displaced people maintain and extend their connections with each other beyond spatial confinement. This is done by examining their embodied experiences and practices of homing while they are in an ambivalent state of being "at home but not at home" (Wang and Wong, 2007:182).

The term *Shan* originated from the Burmese (Leach, 1954), and was used during the British rule in Burma. It refers to Tai-language speaking people living in Burma. These Tai-speaking groups spread within a broad transnational social field, where their cross-border practices regarding entrenched kinship, trade, cultural and religious networks often go beyond geo-political state boundaries[2]. The Shan have suffered a similar predicament to other ethnic groups in Burma, such as the Karen, Karenni, Kachin, Chin and Mon, etc., with conflicts over half a century against the Burmese government. From a historical perspective, the Shan, as a Tai-speaking group, have a closer ethnic relationship with northern Thailand. However, they were not granted refugee status and have lived without official refugee camps. This situation raised my interest in further exploring displaced Shan's survival tactics without international humanitarian assistance.

During the past two decades, ethnic conflicts with the Burmese regime have taken second place to the issues of Burmese democracy. The *silent* war, which is both political

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[1] Generally speaking, the Tai-language speaking people are roughly divided into six groups: *Tai-Long* (they are called *Tai Yai* in Thailand); *Tai Nü* and *Tai Mao*; *Tai Khün*; *Tai Khamti*; *Tai Lue* and *Tai Yuan* or *Khon Muang* (Murakami 2002:82-83, citied in Yasuda, 2008:4).
[2] As modern nation-states were created in Southeast Asia, this led to Tai-speaking people becoming ethnic minorities and spreading across different political entities, including Southern China, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Northern Vietnam and North Eastern India.

and military, and tied to human rights abuses, has been raging over the last half century inside Burma. Even though an increasing number of reports have been issued by the IRC (International Rescue Committee), the SWAN (Shan Women's Action Network), the SHRF (Shan Human Rights Foundation), HRW (Human Rights Watch), TBBC (Thailand Burma Border Consortium, renamed as The Border Consortium, TBC) and numerous academics documenting the human rights abuses in Shan State, Burma, these have primarily focused far less directly on displaced Shan's survival strategies on both sides of the borderlands. In addition, even though the repatriation issue regarding refugees and displaced persons on the Thai border has been raised in recent years, the Shan's situation still attracts relatively little attention.

In the context of the above discussion in this study I will consider how the Shan survive on the frontier without a legal status and rights to settle, and how they construct their 'home' places in their displacement. Also, how the displaced Shan's case contributes to our understanding of ongoing home-making, even in an unstable status will be described and analysed. During my fieldwork, I gradually shifted my focus to the Shan's home-making and the relationship between their mobility and home-making. In particular, as they have faced a prolonged war over half a century, the situation has been changing over decades and returning 'home' has been full of uncertainty.

1.2 An Overview: Displaced Shan in Ambivalent Status

Regarding the ambivalent status of the displaced Shan migrants in Thailand, I have addressed this issue in three sections: a basic overview in this section to show the liminal phase of displaced Shan and a further discussion in chapter 6 about displaced Shan on the margins of legitimacy (details in section 6.2), then to explore how displaced Shan led to a dual life with the tactics of (in) visibility due to their current ambivalent status in Thailand (details in section 6.3)

Thailand is neither a signatory to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees nor the 1967 Protocol and therefore does not formally recognise refugees. However, the UNHCR was still invited to process the claims of asylum seekers and decide the refugee status for other camp residents in 9 'official' temporary shelters, which do not cover

the displaced Shan outside of those shelters. In tracing records of the estimated population of displaced Shan (including unofficial refugees), the most recent report showed it remains the paper issued by the SHRF in 2003. Since then, no surveys have been carried out, so the demographic figures have not been updated. In June 2002, SHRF and SWAN estimated that, since 1996, the total population of Shan refugees in Thailand had reached over 150,000 (SHRF, 2003:6); yet those who can successfully cross the border into Thailand are only the tip of the iceberg.

In addition to those who crossed over the Thai-Burma border, a report from TBC in 2013 revealed that more than 3,700 villages had been destroyed and forcibly relocated by the Burmese military regime during 1996-2011 in Eastern Burma[3], due to ethnic conflicts and in the name of border development projects. By the end of 2012, estimates showed at least 400,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) remained in the rural areas of 36 townships of South East Burma (TBC, 2013:18). In 2010 in Shan State alone, it was estimated that about 128,750 IDPs had been forced to leave their villages, almost 23,900 were hiding and 16,650 were living in relocation sites unable to return to their home-places (TBBC, 2010:21). According to records showing the numbers in refugee and IDP camps in June 2014 from TBC, over 6,600 displaced Shan took refuge in several unofficial temporary shelters[4] (TBC, 2014); IDP camps were mostly under the protection of the Shan State Army (SSA) along the Thai-Burma border. In particular, those camps located on the Shan side cannot be reached by the Burmese and Thai authorities, thus creating a political symbol of Shan national resistance against the Burmese military regime (Yasuda, 2008:13).

Moreover, owing to the approximate 2,400km border shared with Burma, Thailand has unavoidably hosted a great number of migrants from Burma (Yasuda, 2008:1). In contrast with those long-term Shan residents who have lived in Thailand for generations, the displaced Shan arrived later, mostly post-1996 (SWAN, 2003:5-6).

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[3] It includes Shan State, Karenni State, Eastern Pegu Division, Karen State, Mon State and Tenasserim Division.
[4] According to the records giving the population numbers in refugee and IDP camps from TBC, in June 2014 the total camp population was 6,690: 2,654 in Loi Tai Lang; 267 in Loi Lam; 545 in Kuang Jor; 2,805 in Loi Kaw Wan; and 419 in Loi Sam Sip.

Their displacement or migration histories and processes of (re)placement are intertwined with complex political, economic and social factors, in particular within the context of recent political changes in Burma.

After crossing the border, displaced Shan are exposed to a variety of policies and attitudes from the Thai authorities, which mirror the continuous changing social, political and economic relations between Thailand and Burma. However, as mentioned earlier, the Shan are in a unique and distinct position due to their similar ethnic origins and culture with the northern Thais. In addition to the same Tai-language speaking groups, they also share Theravada Buddhism and some aspects of the historical context; for this reason, they are often described as 'siblings', 'cousins' or 'relatives' of the Thais. While this appears largely to be a friendly characterisation, it creates a myth that Shan refugees are displaced migrants who can easily be integrated into Thai society, and therefore do not need special humanitarian protection and assistance (SWAN, 2003:6).

Consequently, many of the displaced Shan who are without any legal documents are unable to move freely; they may remain hidden to avoid being noticed by Thai officials or being sent back to Burma. Some live as irregular migrant workers with low-wages in construction sites and factories, or as domestic workers with less-skilled jobs (Caouette and Pack, 2002:1). Some youths may work at pubs, while some Shan ladies drift into the local beer bars and fall into prostitution (Grundy-Warr and Wong, 2002:111). Additionally, there are several former combatants or armed irregulars, generally well-educated, who are often linked with past resistance and gathered in Chiang Mai (Vatikiotis, 1984:110-111, cited in Jirattikorn, 2008:23). Some work together in networks with other ethnic groups to provide cross-border assistance to IDPs inside Burma.

Some of the displaced Shan have made efforts to resign their cultural identity and struggling to learn the Thai language, dress like the Thais (SWAN, 2003:5-6) or become integrated into existing Shan communities (Jirattikorn, 2008:18). Others have applied different tactics to obtain legal citizenship in Thailand and assimilate within the Thai society (Jirattikorn, 2008:19; Aphijanyatham, 2009:49). However, some others are

continuing to move as a survival tactic to stay away from the attention of the Thai authorities (Grundy-Warr and Wong, 2002:111) and seek a better life.

These complex circumstances directly affect the status of Shan living in Thailand and their requirement to access support, protection and external assistance. As a result, the displaced Shan population have been widely dispersed in *marginalised* spaces along the Thai-Burma border where they are offered temporary shelters as 'homes'. These temporary dwellings do not fully enable them to have a sense of security and belonging. Instead, what they call 'home' often bears witness to their position of displacement and uprootedness, and is also a symbolic of their inferior social status and sojourn situation. It shows the disruption and uncertainty in their everyday lives. Meanwhile they are continuously vulnerable to exploitation. They are often required to pay bribes and are likely to face expulsion (Caouette and Pack, 2002; Grundy-Warr and Wong, 2002; SHRF, 2003).

In this vein, the situation of displaced Shan is what Kabachnik *et al*. (2010) describe as experiencing a "double displacement" in both place and time (317). They have been displaced physically or spatially from their home places in Shan State, and are now also experiencing further 'temporal' displacements; they are between their construction and reproduction of the understanding of the past and future senses of home. It also means that *Displacement* refers not only to a physical state but also a state of mind. Similarly, Grillo (2007:199) interprets the situation of both physical and symbolic threshold as the status of 'betwixt and between' to represent those who fall into a state of legal limbo.

Following this argument, it is worth noting that, even though the displaced Shan experience a liminal status, the often-portrayed figure of refugees as helpless victims or illegitimate migrants is not accurate. Their narratives often reflect that they would rather keep a low profile and stay as ordinary people than live in restricted camps with official refugee status but losing freedom and chances to make their living. Refugee status was not an attractive option for them to pursue, even though it could help them obtain more resources and rights to apply for resettlement in a third country. The leader in SUAN refugee camp stated that:

> "We don't want this village to be legally registered as a refugee camp, if by doing so, we would lose our freedom, and officially we could not leave the camp. But as it is an 'unofficial camp', we could work for neighbouring villages when they need daily workers for farms or construction works." "We could make our own livings; in particular, some of us have relatives in neighbouring villages, which makes us feel we live the same as ordinary civilians." (informal interview, 05-01-2012)

His narratives encourage reflection on relevant refugee policies and social lives of displaced groups, both in the academic and practical dimensions. The Shan prefer to remove the refugee label rather than being granted 'refugee' status. They do not live in a social vacuum. They remain actors in their own life trajectories as ordinary people. Living with dignity beyond spatial incarceration is also their basic demand. Accordingly, in this research, it is difficult to use a proper term to indicate my target research group. In particular, the status of the Shan often varies; this is based on when they arrived and where they live as along with which policy they fit into. A range of terms, such as Shan refugees, displaced Shan, undocumented Shan, stateless Shan, forced migrants, migrant workers, transmigrants, illegal migrants or irregular migrants, imply the subsidiary status of the Shan and to some degree seem problematic, but have gradually replaced Shan's status of 'cousins' or 'relatives' of northern Thais.

Meanwhile, the boundaries between these different terms are often blurred because of Shan's fluid mobility and diverse backgrounds. As a result, the Shan can also be grouped into more than one category, depending on their locations or motives for mobility. Therefore, I use the less problematic term, displaced Shan, to encompass other terms, such as the Shan refugees and sometimes Shan migrant workers who fled from Shan State settling in migrant communities, and also cover those internally displaced Shan who live in IDP camps along the border in Shan State. Occasionally these terms will be used interchangeably in the thesis. Moreover, in this research I suggest that, no matter which categorisation is used, the Shan have to be seen as ordinary people who desire to live a normal life.

1.3 Rationale and Context of the Study

The prolonged war and conflict with the Burmese military forces, including active memories passed on through the generations, is also at the heart of the Shan political struggle. The future of the displaced Shan is, in fact, one of the most difficult issues to be resolved in the peace negotiations with the Burmese government. Their long-lasting displacement has made in-between 'temporary shelters' 'home' for the displaced Shan people along the border for many years. This context gives rise to some key questions: How the displaced Shan responded to their 'double displaced statuses'? Where is their home? When their return becomes uncertain, where can they claim is their own home? How have the Shan who live in temporary residences such as camps, thatched farm huts or factory dwellings responded to issues of homing? Therefore, how they struggle in-between and (re)construct their homes in limbo as well as how they get back to their 'normal' lives are the main concerns of my study.

Until now, the displaced Shan' home-making has not been studied in the existing literature. Looking at the research trend in Shan studies over the past decade shows most studies tend to follow Leach's (1954) first major work, *Political Systems of Highland Burma*, which established an outstanding example, focusing on ethnic identity and socio-political structures of the Kachin group while interacting with the Shan. In particular, the political uprising in 1988, which was a turning point in the ongoing changes in the cultural, social and political assemblage in religious practices, has overwhelmingly drawn scholars' attention.

Numerous scholars have shown considerable interest in the formation of Shan identity in Northern Thailand by exploring various facets, such as Shan religious festivals (e.g. Eberhardt, 2007, 2009; Tannebaum, 2007, 2009; Lehman, 2007, 2008, 2009; Ferguson, 2009), Shan pop music and media (e.g. Jirattikorn, 2007, 2008; Siriphon, 2007a), Shan ethnic food (e.g. Lertchavalitsakul, 2009), Shan nationalism (e.g. Christiani, 2012), or studies within the context of Thai nation-building (e.g. Cadchumsang, 2011). Some scholars' research focuses on political relations between the Shan and the surrounding countries, which enriches our understanding of how Tai states have struggled and negotiated with adjacent dominant empires and colonial power for their survival

throughout history (e.g. Conway, 2007, 2009; Lehman, 2009; Lintner, 1984; Walker, 2009). In addition, Thai academic writing about the Shan provides an alternative direction, covering a range of issues; many focus on the linguistics, culture, social history, proverbs, local wisdom and responses to tourism (Farrelly, 2003:38).

Nevertheless, among the above mentioned studies, it is worth noting that there is a growing emphasis on the dynamics of transnational flows and mobility that go beyond the place-bounded research (e.g. Cohen, 2001; Davis, 2006; Panyagaew, 2007; Jirattikorn, 2008; Yasuda, 2008; Siriphon, 2007a, 2007b, 2008; Lertchavalitsakul, 2009) which many ethnographic studies have used, such as in Mae Hong Son (e.g. Tannenbaum, 2007, 2009; Eberhardt, 2007), Chiang Mai (e.g. Tambiah,2002; Eberhardt, 2007, 2009; Lehman, 2007, 2008) and a border village (e.g. Ferguson,2009; Cadchumsang, 2011). They highlight cross-border movements of a wide range of people, including monks (e.g. Cohen, 2001; Davis, 2006), restaurant owners (Panyagaew, 2007), migrants (Jirattikorn, 2008; Yasuda, 2008), dress peddlers (Siriphon, 2007a, 2007b, 2008) as well as media flows (Jirattikorn, 2008) and food flows (Lertchavalitsakul, 2009). However, of these aforementioned studies on cross-border mobilities, most mainly focus on the circulation of Tai speaking groups among Burma, China, Laos and Thailand. Few researchers, such as Jirattikorn (2008) and Yasuda (2008) focused on the Thai-Burma border.

Yasuda's (2008) study, which is closely related to this research, illuminated the dynamic process that the Shan cross-border migrants have negotiated; it represents their identities by manipulating various spatial practices in their daily lives. Her rich research facilitates the broadening of this research's initial understanding of the complex practices of Shan's mobility. However, although her research sites are not limited to Chiang Mai city and its surrounding areas, in addition to a border camp near Mae Hong Son, her focus still pays little attention to the larger number of Shan cross-border migrants in the remaining part of Chiang Rai and Chang Mai provinces. As Yasuda herself mentions, it is estimated that approximately 200,000 Shan migrants live in Chiang Mai Province (2008:114), and Fang district is one of the crucial places where it is estimated that the majority or 60% of Shan refugees initially headed on their arrival

in Thailand (SHRF, 2003:6). This exploration of only two extreme cases (e.g. an IDP camp and a city), and the dismissal of the spatial practices of the majority of displaced Shan who live in the countryside of northern Thailand, could lead to research bias.

In addition, Jirattikorn's (2008) research is insightful and inspiring. Her study focuses on the relationship between transnational media flow and construction of Shan ethnic identity through the consumption of Shan pop music, including various forms of audio cassettes, video CDs and movies that Shan migrants carry with them. Moreover, she illustrates how mass media and different actors are used as "brokers of nostalgia" (Jirattikorn, 2008:114) in various ways to create Shan solidarity for developing Shan nationalism between both sides of borders. In particular, media could be used not only as a technology for political purposes (e.g. control of Thai state or propaganda of Shan State Army-South, SSA-S) but also as "parallel spaces for alternative transnational practice" (241). Meanwhile, she illustrates that, through media consumption (both Thai and Shan) some Shan migrants are exposed to knowledge and information concerning armed struggle and inspired to identify more with a notion of a Shan 'nation' (237).

Building on Malkki's (1995) approach of examining difference in meanings that Hutu town migrants and refugees in a camp ascribe to national identity and homeland, Jirattikorn (2008) highlights four different categories of migrants from specific backgrounds. These are: Shan migrants, Shan national activists (e.g. Shan musicians, intellectuals or insurgents), Shan prisoners and HIV+ prostitutes and the long-term resident Shan (i.e. Thai Shan, such as radio broadcasters). They assist in investigating how different social and material conditions and the history of migration shape the ways people ascribe to ethnic and national identity, using different ways of engagement with media. She discovered that different categories of Shan migrants have varying degrees of identification with Shan nationalism.

Although her findings do not suggest any tendency towards a unified Shan identity and leave some space of flows, Jirattikorn's (2008) research sustains the analysis of Shan identity in one single dimension, but loses sight of multi-layered or multiple identities. In particular, her study demonstrates the shifting identity of Shan migrants while they seek ways to assimilate into the host society. I argue that the tactics of assimilation do

not necessarily lead to a change in their identity. Meanwhile, the four categories of Shan migrants are problematic while she analyses diverse Shan migrants and their varying degrees of identification with Shan nationalism. In particular, the second group is Shan ethno-national activists and the final group is the long-term resident Shan. The former is often engaged in homeland politics and work with Shan ethnic insurgency operations along the border to fight for the "nation-state-yet-to-be" (2008: 220), and the latter are those who come from existing Shan community in Chiang Mai who have obtained Thai citizenship in addition to completing formal education in the Thai school system. While one is closely linked to the homeland politics, the other is well-assimilated into Thai society. To compare whether these groups share similar nationalist sentiments by analysing their consumption of mass media could lead to bias in the research as the categories may predetermine the results. In addition, there might be a lack of sufficient evidence to convince their varying degrees of identification of Shan nationalism are influenced by their consumption of media.

However, her research demonstrates that transnational 'parallel' spaces have been created and negotiated by various actors for different purposes through use of media. This fascinating idea offers an alternative dimension for my research to explore the diversity of mobilised Shan's social world. In contrast with exploring Shan ethnic identity, I shift my attention to the interaction between the displaced Shan and locality where they physically move and settle. This will assist in exploring how they (re)make their homes during displacement and mobility, and how they negotiate and interact with 'others' to create inhabited spaces as their 'home territory'.

In exploring the Shan's mobility, both Jirattikorn (2008) and Yasuda (2008) use the lens of 'transnationalism' to indicate Shan's transnational flows and social world beyond territorial boundaries. Yasuda (2008) further asserts the deterritorialisation of Shan identities that no longer correspond to a physical place or locality, or are no longer culturally homogenous (188-189). This notion echoes the theoretical concepts of deterritorialisation within the widespread discourse on globalisation. Due to intensive cross-border migration practices, a growing number of scholars assert that national boundaries have blurred, leading to the notion of deterritorialisation (Appadurai, 1996).

This thesis argues that this notion has overstated the idea of deterritorialisation and, to some degree, is unable to capture the reality of displaced people's lived experiences. The assumption of transnationalism, 'deterritorialisation', is problematic. As Dirlik (2002) points out, it overlooks the fact that transnational lives are grounded in place and "their cultural self-identification may be impossible to grasp without reference to the particular places they inhabit and the particular trajectories of 'transnationality'" (228). In particular, we need to be aware that Shan's mobility is not a new phenomenon and is still primarily based on their ancient ties before the delineation of national borders. Their transnational mobility and social world are still interwoven and interconnected in physical places. Therefore, even though Shan identity goes beyond the nation-state, it does not imply deterritorialisation or the possibility that local identifications are disappearing.

Therefore, my research further questions the current emphasis on deterritoralisation in transnational discourses on enforced mobility. I use 'translocality' as an analytical framework as it overcomes some of the biases in the study of transnational migration (see Chapter 2). Furthermore, it is then possible to explore the displaced Shan's relationship with the places they move to and from. A translocal perspective focuses on both "what flows through places" and "what is in them" (Verne, 2012:19). In other words, it constitutes the fluid nature of place and its linkages to "outside" (Massey, 1991:29). Furthermore, as Fullilove (1996:1519) argues, a place in which people live (or lived) can also signify "the accumulation of many relationships and much history" (cited in Black, 2002:127). In this vein, except for employing an ethnographical method, I add a historical dimension to explore both macro and micro perspectives to address changes over a longer period for the displaced Shan who are situated in those 'in-between' places, and how landscapes of 'home' are being changed by them.

Clifford (1997:31) uses the term "routed home" to present an alternative notion of home in mobility. The idea fits well within this research to show the dialectical trajectory of home-making during journeys and migrations. His well-cited ideas of "dwelling-in-travelling" and "travelling-in-dwelling" further illustrate the notion of in-betweenness. In the case of Shan, the dynamics of home-making can be seen as

'dwelling-in-mobility' and 'mobility-in-dwelling' (extending from James Clifford, 1997). Therefore, neither dwelling nor mobility can be regarded as conflicting ends of the spectrum, analogous to the opposing notions of *fixity* and *fluidity*. This notion mirrors the idea of translocality, that a place possesses both features of *situatedness and flows.* In this vein, I argue that the 'in-between' place cannot be seen as what Relph (1976) names "placelessness", nor as what Augé (1995) describes as "non-places".

Therefore, how are the displaced Shan people situated in the 'in-between' place during their displacement? How do they perceive it? And what do they think of 'home'? Exploring these issues can facilitate a better understanding of displaced people's reality and social world notwithstanding confronting fluid, unpredictable situations during and after their displacement. Meanwhile, it also examines the current practices of displacement protection and aid policies on repatriation and resettlement to strengthen proper aids so that international actors can be aware of the existing mechanisms and seek proper solutions.

1.4 Research Aims and Questions

In this study, my aim is to explore the relationship between people in limbo and place and how they negotiate issues of home, by placing their narratives in the wider socio-political and cultural contexts, to look at how displaced Shan repair their disrupted lives and construct a sense of home through place affiliations. Meanwhile, by examining the complex intersection of mobility, home-places and cohesive networks from the perspective of protracted displaced Shan, I challenge the concept of 'de-territorialisation' of globalisation and suggest that displacement is a process of re-territorialisation', which implies not only moving 'out of place', but also a process of laying out a place as *home* in uncertain, insecure and unstable settings. Therefore, I argue that the displaced people may need a place with a feeling of continuity and coherence even more strongly, through their mobility as livelihood tactics for home-making as well as seeking a better life.

Therefore, my research intends to address the following key questions:

1. **Territory and contested powers**: Mobility beyond the border has a long history for the Shan; how has geopolitics of the nation-state and its contested powers affected the formation of the Shan ethnoscape? What elements provide a basis for maintaining or (re)constructing the Shan's place affiliation or territorial bonds in the course of their mobility or displacement?

2. **Mobility and policy**: How have specific policies with regards to migratory categories contributed to the creation of notions of (il)legitimacy of displaced Shan's status? How do the Shan perceive and recognise their complex and subtle positions, respond to such social divides and negotiate their (il)legitimate boundaries in their lived experiences?

3. **Mobility and homing**: How have such negotiations and mobility affected and shaped the home-making of the displaced Shan in limbo? How do 'homes' come to be lived, felt and made in the course of mobility?

4. **Home-places and cohesive networks**: What provides the bridge for homing to link their past loss of homeland with the possibilities of the present dwelling? How do they negotiate and create a base for future?

1.5 Situating the Tai: Place and its People

Who are the Shan? As Leach (1954) argued, the term 'Shan' is somewhat vague. However, based on my fieldwork, the majority of informants self-identified themselves as *'Khon Tai'* (Tai people). When they mentioned their country of origin, they used the name '*Muang Tai*[5]'(Tai state). They called their writing script '*lik Tai*' and spoken language '*Khwan Tai*'. Therefore, this information seems to provide sufficient rationale to refer to the subjects of this research as the 'Tai'. So why do I still use the term 'Shan', even though it is vague? The term 'Tai' is also diverse in terms of groups, terrain and history, and it is ultimately dependent upon who one talks to, and where and when.

The Tai speaking groups who originally belonged to the Mongoloid stock spread over south western China, Hainan, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma[6], and north

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[5] The term '*muang*' '*möng*' or '*mäng*', which means 'city' 'state' or 'kingdom' in Tai is the term '*mo*' or '*maing*' in Bamar, which was and is their common political unit for subsistence during the emigration and settlement process (Michio, 2007:179). In this thesis, Shan and Bamar scripts are basically Romanised by customary usage, such as some words like *saopha or Tai*. Some Chinese terms are given first in the Wade Giles or old Romanisation, followed by *Hanyu pinyin* Romanisation in parentheses, such as Sipsongpanna (Xishuangbanna), or Kuomintang (Guomindang). Marks of tones are all omitted.
[6] The country's name was changed to Myanmar in 1989 by the SLORC as ethnically neutral and inclusive of all the country's ethnic groups, but the new name is not yet universally accepted. Those who prefer

eastern India in Assam (Sai Aung Tun, 2009:3). To distinguish themselves from other Tai-speaking groups, they use a modifier after *Tai*. Generally speaking, they are often named on the basis to their locations. According to Murakami (2002) there are six Tai groups (see map 1.2):

> (1) *Tai-Long* who live in Central and Southern Shan State, part of Karenni State and Northwestern Thailand (they are called *Tai Yai* in Thailand); (2) *Tai Nü*[7] who live along the Burma-China border including Southern Kachin State, Northern Shan State and Daikong in Southwestern China and *Tai Mao* on the south bank of the Shweli River in towns such as Muse and Namkham; (3) *Tai Khün* who live in parts of Eastern Shan State such as Kengtung; (4) *Tai Khamti* who reside in Northern Kachin State and part of Northeastern India; (5) *Tai Lue* who are spread over Sipsongpann in Yunnan Province, China, Northwestern Laos and Northern Thailand; and (6) *Tai Yuan* or *Khon Muang* (as self-designation) who live in Northern Thailand (Murakami 2002: 82-83, citied in Yasuda, 2008:4)

In addition, according to Sai Aung Tun (2009), Tai groups are also known by a range of names based on colour of their dress, teeth and tattoo, such as *Tai Lam* (Dam, black), *Tai Kau* (white), *Tai Leng* (Deng, red) and *Tai Lai* (striped waistband). Sometimes they are known by names related to streams, rivers, lakes forests, plains, hills, mountains and valleys where they live, such as *Tai Leng* (Deng) living by the Red River and *Tai Lam* (Dam) living by the Black River, etc. (Sai Aung Tun, 2009:3; see Map 1.1). Some are also named according to the names of their states, such as *Tai Lao*, *Tai Dehong*, *Tai Daikong* or *Sipsongpanna* (*Xishuangbanna*) *Tai.* If these multitude of names are not confusing enough, numerous scholars have applied the Burmese term 'Shan' and referred to *Tai Mao* or *Tai Daikong* as 'Chinese Shan', 'Mao Shan', or 'Shan of Yunnan' (Santasombat, 2001:2).

As Leach (1954) noted, the term 'Shan' was obtained from the Burmese[8]. The geographical terms in English, *Assam* and *Siam* were relevant; Kachin (Jinghpaw) was like the Burmese *shan is sam.* The term 'Shan' was used by the Burmese quite

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the old names, including political and ethnic opposition groups, often use them to express their belief that the post-1988 martial law government is illegitimate.

[7] Davies reported that the Tai of Longchuan called themselves "Tai Nö"(Tai Nü/ Tai Nüe) while the Tai in Burma called them "Tai Che" (means Chinese Shan).

[8] When the Tai entered Burma, they were given new names by other ethnic groups in Burma. The Tai were then known to Bamar as *Shan*, to the Kachin, the A-chiang, the Azi and the La-shih as *San*, to the Ma-ru as *Sen*, to the Ta Arng of Palaung as *Tsen*, to the Wat as *Shem*, to the Mon as *Sem*, and to the Yunnanist as *Pai-yi*. But the Shan referred to themselves as *Tai* (Sai Aung Tun, 2009:20).

consistently to refer to all residents who called themselves *Tai* living in the political region of Burma and along the Yunnan-Burma border. However, this term was, to some degree, vague for both groups who also called themselves Tai, inhabited in the west and south-west of Burma, since the Burmese defined the Shan from the Siamese. These groups have similar but different dialects and their own script. The variations in their dialects are significantly varied from place to place, except for a few special areas, such as the Shan in North Burma and Western Yunnan, who speak one language. In addition, all Tai-speaking people also share cultural affinities, including language, Theravada Buddhism, irrigated rice cultivation, a hierarchical social system and political structure based on feudal states governed by traditional rulers called '*saopha*'[9].

The most significant feature of the Shan identity is that "all Shan are Buddhists", although most of them are not necessarily pious. Therefore, as Leach indicates, if a Kachin would like to 'become a Shan' (*sam tai)*, to be a Buddhist could be an essential element of the process (Leach, 1954:29-30).

Map1.1 Tai-speaking groups and their locations   Map1.2 Tai-speaking world
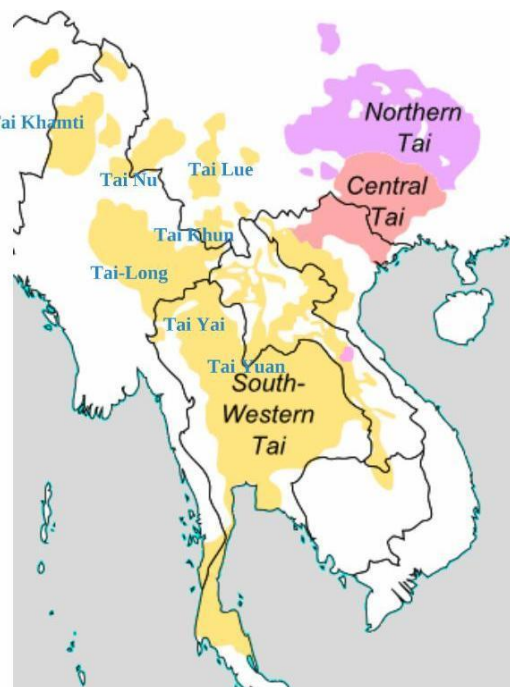
Source:
Map 1.1:   Adapted from: www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=428061
Map 1.2:   Adapted from: www.skyknowledge.com/tai-studies.htm

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[9] Lords of Sky.

Today's Shan State of Burma, the plateau with rich resources nurtured by the *Nam Hkong* (or Nam Koang, Salween River) and its tributaries [10], is home for most populations of the Tai population. The Shan State is geographically and administratively divided into three regions for the three main Tai groups —*Tai Mao* in the North, *Tai Long* in the South, and *Tai Khün* in the East[11]. Their administrative centres are Lashio, Taunggyi, and Keng Tung[12], respectively. Each of them has its own history, with different ethnic consciousness. They have similar but distinct speaking dialects; they have also developed their own scripts. Among these groups, the largest number of the *Tai Long* accounts for over 60% of the Shan population in Burma (see Cadchumsang, 2011:53; Jirattikorn, 2008:8-9).

In reality, it is not easy to specify these groups concisely. Sometimes they are ambiguous and the boundaries between them are fluid. In particular, Shan State also comprises various ethnic groups, which the Shan call *Kher Tai*[13] (these translate as 'Tai ethnic groups' or 'sub-groups of Tai'). They include Palong, Pa-O, Lahu, Lisu, A-Ka and so on, and sometimes also include Kokangese (Chinese in Kokang[14] region). '*Tsao Kher Tai*' is used as an aggregation to refer to all Tai-speaking groups and Tai sub-groups.

According to the narratives of the informants, the relationship between the Tai and the Tai sub-groups are 'bi-nong'[15] (in Tai, this means siblings). In the past, the Tai sub-groups were subordinate to the Tai *Saopha* system, so they also learnt the Tai culture

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[10] Besides Nam Hkong, the Tai soil is also fertile from other two important rivers, the Mekong and the Ayeyawadi.

[11] East Shan is located on the eastern side of Nam Hkong.

[12] The Thai call this city "Chiang Tung".

[13] Drawing on interviews.

[14] Kokang, the First Special Region, is an autonomous region of Burma in the northern Shan State. With the Salween River on its west, it shares its eastern border with the Yunnan Province of China. Its habitants are mostly Kokangese who have the official status of a minority in Burma and are regarded as Han Chinese. Historically, the Kokang feudal state was established by the Yang clan (a *Tushi* clan, originally the Chinese military house in the Ming dynasty) in the mid-17th century when the Ming loyalists fled Nanjing to Yunnan and further migrated to the Shan State on the Sino-Shan border. After the British conquest of Upper Burma in 1885, Kokang was placed in China under the 1894 Sino-British boundary convention.   Later, in 1897, it was relinquished to British Burma, but the Yang clan still retained its power in the region. However, the Yang clan lost its power after Burma gained independence from the British. From the 1960s to 1989, Kokang was governed by the Communist Party of Burma; after its dissolution from the party, it then became a special region of Burma under the control of the Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA).

[15] 'bi-nong' in Tai or 'pi-nong' in Thai language, means 'siblings'.

and language. Although nowadays, *Kher Tai* learn Burmese and may not necessarily follow Tai culture; these groups have increased the complexity of distinguishing between Tai-speaking groups. This finding reflects the 1931 Census of India, which reported that the Shan called their hill tribes 'Tai-Loi[16]' or 'Hkun (Kun)-Loi' (i.e. Shan in the mountains) in the surrounding areas, (Census of India, 1933:245, cited in Michio, 2007:190).

In addition, an essay entitled 'Thirty Tai names' lists around 30 sub-groups of Shan people, including 'Tai-Pao', 'Tai-Yang', 'Tai-Lisu', and 'Tai-Lawa' (SPYS, 1966:46, cited in Michio, 2007:190). In fact, 'Yang' is closely linked to Karen while 'Lawa' belongs to the Mon-Khmer linguistic group. According to Michio's (2007:190) empirical data from fieldwork, the Shan informants included both Tai-speaking groups and their hill neighbours (e.g. Kachin, Kayin/Karen and Chin) as well as the Chinese Tayok in the 30 sub-groups of Shan, but excluded the Bamar. Therefore, it is obvious there is a "collective image" of 30 Shan sub-groups incorporating the Tai and their hill neighbours. Therefore, the term 'Shan' here includes all of the Tai-speaking groups in Burma (sometimes extending to the Tai in southern Yunnan and northern Thailand); it can refer to those living in Shan State (e.g. including non-Tai, but excluding Bamar), and itself also clearly shows a geopolitical unit (e.g. Shan State)

When we look further into the relationship between Tai and non-Tai in Shan states, the ethnic boundaries between the groups are sometimes porous. Leach (1954) provides varied evidence to support the fact that large groups of people we now know as Shan are descendants of hill tribes who have, in the recent past, assimilated into sophisticated ways of the Buddhist-Shan culture (Leach, 1954:39). According to Leach, there are various ways in which Kachins may become *Shan.* One example is given below:

> Blood brotherhood is supplementary to marriage as a means of establishing a permanent alliance between Shan and Kachin aristocrats. The procedure is for the two groups to 'exchange names'. 'Lists of the immediate parents of the two prospective "brothers" are exchanged, memorised and included by each amongst

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[16] Leach (1954:30) mentioned 'Tai Loi' (i.e. Hill Shans) are like Palaung and Wa. They live the mountains, but have adopted Buddhism and are known as Tai Loi.

their own relatives (i.e. the first "brother's" son becomes the second "brother's" nephew, etc.' The family nats of both lineages are shared, the exogamy rules of the one groups are shared by the other, lineage feuds are shared and so on. In effect the Shan royal lineage and the Kachin royal lineage become one and the same (Leach, 1954:221).

However, he also emphasises ways of *becoming Shan* (*sam Tai*) at the aristocratic level are different from the Kachin commoner level. For aristocratic Kachins, to *become Shan* in a sense means that "they can become sophisticated and establish a *mayu-dama* marriage relationship with an aristocratic Shan lineage". They do not need to surrender their Kachin chief status; their recent status is upgraded and the Kachin *duwa* should be regarded as a *saopha* by the Shan counterpart. On the other hand, however, the assimilation of Kachin to Shan at commoner level implies that the Kachin commoner must cease to be Kachin and enters "the bottom of the scale" of the Shan system as "a person of the lowest caste, he is virtually a slave" (Leach, 1954:221-222). Leach argues that there are two lower-class groups in Hkamti society, which are named Hsampyen (i.e. *sam hpyen*) and Share. In Jinghapw speech these terms denote "Shan mercenary soldier" and "hired soldier" respectively, which means that these two low-class Shan are of Jinghpaw Kachin orgin (40).

My findings during my fieldwork also correspond with Leach's statement. What interesting is that this situation of ethnic flows has not changed in 60 years. An informant, who originally migrated from Keng Tung but now lives in a border camp as a Shan State Army (SSA) soldier, stated, *"in our hometown, no matter which ethnic group we belong to, we still have some relations with each other, like 'relatives'".* He mentioned that intermarriage between members of different ethnic groups in Shan State is very common, and therefore ethnic boundaries are fluid and create a grey area between them. His father was Kachin and his hometown was in Loi maw[17] (meaning Maw Hill) near Tangyan, Shan State; his mother was Shan, from Keng Tung. His father's name was changed to a Chinese name although he did not know why, so he acquired both a Chinese and a Shan name. He was sent to Chinese schools and received Chinese education. Therefore, he could speak very fluent Mandarin Chinese. If he said he were

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[17] Loi maw is translated into Mandarin Chinese as 萊莫山 (*Laimo Shan*), and it is well noted due to the leader of MTA, Khun Sa who originally came from there.

a Chinese then he would not be suspected by a Chinese national. At another Shan temporary camp, on the border, lived some Yunnanese Chinese families. Their children could speak only the Shan and Thai languages and some Yunnanese. They learned Tai Long script rather than Mandarin Chinese.[18] They dressed in Shan costumes and attended Shan cultural and religious activities. One Chinese youth fulfilled his duty as a tutor teaching the Tai Long language at the camp. He mentioned that at times he had identity confusion; he felt more of a Shan than a Chinese.

In fact, the confusion over: 'who are the Shan?' and 'who are the Tai?' has troubled me throughout my fieldwork, since I tried to confirm who they were to distinguish them from other ethnic groups. In particular, at the camp, I could not distinguish those who wore SSA army uniforms were Shan or from other ethnic groups. If they were not Shan, who did they fight for and what did they fight for? Were they fighting for an 'imagined' Shan State (*Muang Tai)*? At the IDP camps, not only 'Shan' soldiers but also others, such as school teachers, medics and officers, regardless of their ethnic background often stressed that they had come to help 'their own people' and fight for 'their country', 'Muang Tai' (Shan State), because the Burmese military had oppressed and killed their people and burnt their houses. The national oppression and human rights abuse to some extent had led to unity, which had blurred the distinctions between various ethnic groups in Shan State and constructed a growing sense of shared oppression, a sense of 'rowing in the same boat'. In this regard, the term 'Shan' does not simply refer to 'ethnicity' or a 'geo-political unit': it symbolises their mutual 'homeland', from where a sense of pan-Shan-ness emerges.

Although the term Shan is problematic and vague, somehow it is useful to indicate the links between northern Burma, southern Yunnan and northern Thailand, as well as the relationship between the Tai and their hill neighbours. Therefore, in this research the term 'Tai' is used as a self-reference to the Tai speaking groups. I also use 'Shan' as an umbrella term covering various self-distinguished Tai groups who live in Shan states of Burma and Southern China, and those who have flowed from Burma into Northern

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[18] At the end of April 2012, one Yunnanese family decided to send their second child to a Chinese boarding school in another district.

Thailand.

It is important to examine how people see themselves as it can be crucial to their ethnic identity. Thus, the term 'Shan', as I use it, includes people who identify themselves as Tai or Shan and act in ways that validate their 'Tai-ness' or 'Shan-ness', including multi-identity. As Eriksen (2002) argued, "ethnicity is an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction" (Eriksen, 2002:13). It is also important to note that multitude of ethnic names implies different interpretations of Tai history. The differences in the interpretations also remind me to treat the historical analyses with caution; in particular, the term 'Shan' itself incorporates a fluid intersection of dynamic ethno-cultural affiliations, political awareness and other implications.

1.6 Structure of Thesis

The study comprises eight chapters. In Chapter 1, first, I outline a comprehensive picture of this research and present some important theoretical and contextual background. Second, I provide an overview of the displaced Shan with their "betwixt and between" status (Grillo, 2007) and sketch the aims, scope and significance of the study as well as identifying the research questions.

In Chapter 2, the methodological approach used for guiding the design and implementation of this research is presented. The chapter is organised into three main sections. Starting with a brief introduction of the methodological options through the lens of translocality, I explain the multi-sited fieldwork and politics of spaces in diverse settings. Section 2 addresses the approaches to data collection and analysis, including how the research was conducted by using participant observation, 64 in-depth life history interviews in various sites and daily fieldnotes. The main themes explored through the interviews included: the participants' prior lives and their perceptions of home/homeland; experiences of displacement or mobility in Shan State; their journeys of migration or border-crossing practices; the realities of (re)placement in current dwellings; and their future plans. Finally, Section 3 notes the methodological challenges,

myths and ethical considerations.

In Chapter 3, my aim is to introduce the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study by reviewing relevant studies and debates to explore key themes in this research – the relationship between displaced persons and their home-places. Drawing on Dovey's (1985) concept of "home as connectedness", I start with a discussion of key analytical concept 'home' and show its connections both to people and place. Next, I address the idea of home-making as a dynamic dialectic process in three dimensions. Third, by employing Sack's (2001, 2004) concept of place-making in term of 'weaving', I discuss how this framework facilitates to explore Shan case through a translocal lens (Brickell and Datta, 2011). Meanwhile, I add a key element 'time', which allows me to explain the home-making of the displaced Shan in relation to their various historical encounters and entanglements.

The following four, essentially empirical, chapters (Chapters 4-7) make up the core of my research. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 mainly focus on three themes, place (territory), mobility and survival tactics respectively, while Chapter 7 extends the concept of the cohesive network with translocal connections to link the four themes together.

Chapter 4 concerns place and territory. It maps the Shan in the Tai social world from a historical perspective and traces the current transformation of the Tai social world, in particular how Tai principalities were squeezed and how they struggled for their survival in the premodern time. They also shared Tai brotherhood through a "tacit alliance" (Hsieh, 1995) at the junction of political and economic relations among the adjacent empires and colonial powers. Meanwhile, this chapter explores the relationship between contested powers and transformation of the Shan ethnoscape, from a historical angle to highlight how Shan's lives have been seriously affected and marginalised in the shadow of forming modern nation-states. Their historical context and the cultural components (e.g. rituals, habitus, language and materiality, etc.) together with Shan's mobility (either voluntary or enforced) circulating among Tai brotherhood, have offered some familiar lived ingredients which, later on, facilitated and secured journeys of exiles as well as provided shelter for displaced Shan. Some elements that Shan use reconstruct and familiarise their current reality throughout the

interweaving historical periods, which I will discuss in the following chapters.

In Chapter 5 concerns mobility. I argue that mobility is a process of politics (Cresswell, 2010) to challenge the notion of a 'deterritorialised' global world, by exploring the displaced Shan's fragmented journey and roundabout movement during their displacement. Either voluntary or enforced mobility involves a series of political processes (being rejected or permitted; moving or staying). Therefore, I examine how displaced Shan remember, reconstruct, and represent home-places they left behind and their physically dynamic journeys that led them from home-places to in-between border areas. In addition, I reveal how displaced Shan secured their journeys of exile and chose provisional dwellings as stopover destinations in their displacement.

In Chapter 6 concerns survival tactics. I explore how displaced Shan placed their displacement by repairing their social ties and (re)constructing a feeling of at-home looking at both individual and societal aspects. This refers to the issues of how they dealt with their status of *Stratified Others*[19] from the perspective of policy, including issues of citizenship (belonging with) and ownership (belonging to) as well as raising questions of inclusion and exclusion. Therefore, I demonstrate how the displaced Shan have lived a dual life (Goffman's (1959) frontstage and backstage practices) using, for example, the "weapons of the weak" (Scott, 1985) against their subordinate and oppressed positions. This is one of the tactics they use to protect themselves and deal with a sense of alienation, as well as a way to retain some degree of freedom of movement against the geo-political control they have been subject to.

In Chapter 7 I combine the analysis of place, mobility and survival tactics and extend the discussion to explore cohesive networks woven by multiple continuous strands within displaced Shan society. The chapter reveals how various actors facilitate gathering Shan's mobility and network to form a home territory through translocal connections. I focus on three main dimensions: folk routes and practices, institutional efforts and cultural and religious spheres; they link various localities and are

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[19]Lan (2006) raise the concept "stratified otherisation" to emphasise the *relational* construction of racialised boundaries (Lan, 2006:16).

themselves interactive. First, in the dimension of *folk routes and practices*, I argue that translocal mobility becomes a survival tactic to address their social and economic issues; second, *institutional efforts* play the key role in connecting the scattered Shan's temporary bases, which leads to translocal connectivity between both sides of the border and inside the Shan State; and third, *cultural and religious spheres,* which offer Shan emotional and spiritual security, facilitating Shan's translocal solidarity and co-existence, which is negotiated with ethnic others. Within the context of these networks, the displaced Shan not only seek to repair the disjunction caused by war and their forced migration along with maintaining their way of life, but also have been involved in developing, extending and negotiating their relationships at destinations in the course of their mobility as well as their dwellings.

The final chapter is the conclusion in which I present major findings of my study and the theoretical and empirical linkages. In short, this research has provided a further understanding of the changing and (re)constructing nature of displaced people's connections to place over time through everyday practices of home-making. Meanwhile, it has explored the course of being displaced and situated through a framework of translocality to demonstrate how they maintained their way of life wherever they lived, and constructed a wider 'home' territory for future generations. These findings can help different actors to be aware of existing home practices of displaced Shan and allow rethinking of relevant policies or strengthening proper aid. In addition, I reflect on the limitations of my study and suggest directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2 Methodology and Data Collection

2.1 Introduction: Methodological Options through a Translocal Lens

In this chapter, I present the methodological approach that has guided the design and implementation of this research. The chapter is organised into three main sections. I start with a brief introduction of methodological options through the lens of translocality; I then explain the multi-sited fieldwork and the politics of space in diverse settings. Section 2 addresses approaches to data collection and analysis, including how research was conducted using participant observation, 64 in-depth life history interviews in various sites and daily fieldnotes. The themes explored through the interviews included life before displacement, experiences of displacement, migration histories, and realities of (re) placement and perceptions of home/homeland. Finally, Section 3 notes methodological challenges and ethical considerations.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I use 'translocality' as an analytical framework instead of the notion of transnationalism, although sometimes translocality is used as a 'synonym' for transnationalism in other research. These two terms do have some concepts in common, and, in particular, the theoretical concept of translocality is derived from the idea of transnationalism. However, it overcomes some of the weak points of transnational concepts (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013:373), in particular, the implications of transnationalism are inadequate to shed light on the significance of locality and lose sight of the relationship between people's everyday practices and the formation of places.

With the diverse impacts of globalisation, the notion of a society or culture bounded in a specific place has been questioned in anthropological studies and related disciplines (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992; Malkki, 1992), and the idea of 'de-territorialisation' has become a significant feature of globalisation (Kearney, 1995, 2004). Therefore, 'de-territorialisation' is often used to refer to loosening ties with a place and increasing connections between the local and the global (Kokot, 2007:15). Nevertheless, some studies provide evidence on increased academic interest in the development of territorialised ideas of belonging and ethno-nationalist; these are enabling to refocus

on the importance of the locale (16). Therefore, there is, to some degree, a gap between the theoretical concepts of deterritorialisation or boundlessness and the reality of people's lived experiences.

In addition, I argue mobility does not necessarily reduce the importance of locales. It is a way of connecting places and people at different localities beyond geographical and political borders. There are many flows and connections between these localities, including the circulation of people, products, resources, capitals, information and so forth. The locale itself constitutes multiple encounters of translocal migrant lives. Therefore, even within units of research beyond local boundaries, studies of transnational networks cannot dismiss the significance of the locale and place (Kokot, 2007:20). In this vein, the approach of translocality is often used to simultaneously address localities and mobilities.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, the dynamics of displaced Shan's liminal status can be seen as *dwelling-in-mobility* and *mobility-in-dwelling*, which echoes the conception of translocality whereby a place possesses both features of 'flows' and 'situatedness'. Therefore, the notion of translocality can facilitate a better understanding of the relational dimensions of the Shan social world created through mobility across various locales. My research focuses on their everyday practices in the social world, including spaces of home, family, community and neighbourhood. Neighbourhoods could be seen as "the building blocks of translocality in ways that facilitate – through kin and friendship networks embedded within them – the ability to migrate, be mobile yet maintain connections across localities" (Brickell and Datta, 2011:16). This approach not only overcomes the binary oppositions, such as here-there and rural-urban, but refers to the emergence of multi-directional and overlapping networks (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013:375).

Furthermore, according to Brickell and Datta (2011), situatedness during mobility is "embodied and experienced in places", so that translocal perspective also offers "a vehicle to engage with subjective and phenomenological dimensions of place-making" (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013:377). Accordingly, I use translocality approach to explore the relational dimensions of locale created through the Shan's mobility, and

extend it to understand how the Shan's home territory is constructed across various individual locales. However, this does not mean those locales are necessarily seen as homogeneous to bind them together. In addition, I add a historical dimension that allows an exploration of how displaced Shan's home territory is created through their 'situatedness' and 'connectedness' to a range of locales over time, together with various historical encounters and entanglements. I suggest that the process of home-making is a dynamic dialectic relationship between the environment and experiences, between the past and the present as well as between 'us' and 'others', by weaving their home territory with historical components together in both diachronic and synchronic connections.

2. 2 Multi-sited Fieldwork in Diverse Settings

According to Gupta and Ferguson (1997), the 'field' of ethnographic exploration is not just a geographical place, but rather a concept of space. Its boundaries are constructed by continuous negotiation between researchers and the objects of research. Meanwhile, Clifford (1997) stresses the field site is understood more in terms of connections, a series of "shifting locations". Therefore, a growing number of scholars suggest field site is not necessarily a concrete place rather a series of sites linked by the research argument. In particular, in migration studies, mobility and travel are emphasised over the conventional ethnographic terms of dwelling and long-term fieldwork (Lapegna, 2009:8).

In response to questions raised on deterritorialisation by cosmopolitan cultural forms of the contemporary world (Appadurai, 1998:49), and those on transnational political, economic and cultural forces within the local or regional world have challenged current anthropology with a transnational perspective on migration and 'multi-sited' ethnography (Marcus and Fischer, 1986; Marcus, 1995). As a result, ethnography has shifted from the single-site location of traditional ethnographic method designs toward the 'multiple sites'[20] of investigation in macro perspectives. This is within the context of a larger social order, in order to address the empirical changes in the world (Marcus,

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[20] See also the debates and reflections on the notion of multi-sites in Section 2.4.

1995:96-97). This way cuts across "dichotomies such as the 'local' and the 'global', the 'lifeworld' and the 'system'" (95).

Furthermore, there are some common attributes between transnationalism and multi-sited methodology, concerning the assumptions and topics of concern, in particular the critiques of the "Malinowskian complex" (Marcus, 2009:181) and methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller, 2002, 2003). Both perspectives criticise the conventional method based on bounded and allegedly homogeneous unit, such as taking either a culture or a society as a field or unit of analysis (Boccagni, 2014:4). Accordingly, multi-sited ethnography is often practised in transnational migration studies (ibid: 1), and may be the most common current research method in migration studies (Marcus, 1995:106). The basic definition of multi-sited research is:

> Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography (Marcus, 1995: 105).

In this research, I took 'multi-sited' fieldwork as my key approach to obtain a comprehensive understanding about displaced Shan or Shan refugees' real situation and their social world across different geographical and social settings.

2.2.1 Research Settings and Politics of Spaces

I chose four types of locales as my field sites and conducted fieldwork from October 2011 onwards for 13 months:

(1) four months in a metropolitan northern Thai city, Chiang Mai, and its surrounding areas;
(2) three months in a semi-open unofficial refugee camp on the Thai border;
(3) three months in a confined IDP camp secured by the SSA-S army in Shan State; and
(4) three months in a remote Shan migrant community on the edge of a Thai village in Fang district, Chiang Mai Province.

Shan communities with different geographical or social contexts were chosen to represent their diversities. Meanwhile, those chosen places are densely populated with

displaced Shan and migrant workers from the Shan State of Burma; in particular, they are made up of heterogeneous Shan populations who arrived at different times for various reasons.

I was based at each field site for 3-4 months, the exact length depending on each location's community schedule (e.g. festivals, events or activities); meanwhile, another constraint was my visa issues. Due to the non-immigrant multi-entry visa, I had to make quarterly 'visa runs', leaving Thailand every 90 days to visit nearby countries to get a new 90 day entry: I took these opportunities to move on to next field site. The accommodation where I stayed varied according to the environment and location, but priority was to be near the camps so that respondents could be approached easily and participant observation facilitated. By so doing, I closely observed how places were constructed by various powers through embedded meanings, thus showing contested relationships within places and how they impact on Shan people's lives.

2.2.2 Entering the field

As an outsider and a foreigner arriving in an unfamiliar city, I wondered how I would access Shan society. I recalled that Jirattikorn (2008: 26-27) had mentioned, as regards her fieldwork in Chiang Mai city in 2005-2006, that finding Shan migrants was not an easy task at the beginning of her research, even though Chiang Mai was her 'home' place. She felt frustrated as she could not find 'informants' despite being told that the Shan were 'everywhere'. Afterwards, she noticed Shan migrant workers preferred to keep a low profile, in case their accent might reveal they were alien and thus be the risk of being arrested by Thai police. Moreover, due to security issues, most Shan groups established by migrant communities preferred to efface themselves in the Thai society. Often they had branch offices without registration in Thailand.

Therefore, to gain access to Shan society, I tried to contact two key organisations in Chiang Mai: one was a migrant worker group and another Shan school[21]. These organisations were more open to outsiders. Fortunately, I was accepted at the Shan

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[21] To maintain confidentiality, I have deleted the names of the organisations.

School to attend their Thai language classes along with other Shan migrant workers. The School was a good starting point for me to access Shan networks and other ethnic groups from Burma.

Initial visits were primarily made to select appropriate field sites. Meanwhile, I also visited relevant NGOs and attended their events. These experiences helped me to obtain a better understanding of displaced Shan's lives. Although biographical narrative has rarely been considered as a means of designing multi-sited research (Marcus, 1998:94), I still followed some life history' narratives to consider several significant places in Chiang Mai or Chiang Rai province as well as a border town in Shan State, which had played a crucial role in the history of Shan resistance. As Marcus (1998) noted through narratives of personal experiences, the life histories, by providing a potential guide to ethnographic description on the spaces that may not be visible within the systems shaped by categorical differences, presents juxtapositions of social backgrounds. Sometimes, among the scenes and social contexts depicted in the life histories, these spaces were created by unexpected links (1998: 94).

Fieldsite 1: a city with mixed culture of Shan and Northern Thai

Chiang Mai is the main metropolitan city in North Thailand. It has become a major destination for a significant and increasing amount of transnational migration from Shan State over the past decades. According to the figures on permitting immigrants to work in Thailand in August 2008, Chiang Mai ranked first for the number of illegal migrants; 25,995 out of 56,990 migrants were Shan (Aphijanyatham, 2009:20). It is estimated approximately 200,000 Shan migrants live in Chiang Mai Province (Yasuda, 2008:114). Throughout history, some specific urban spaces have been constructed and negotiated through their embodied everyday practices as Shan areas, such as Samkampaeng, Saraphi, Maetaey, Mae Hae or Big C neighbourhood and so forth. These are not simply spaces created for Shan to connect their present residence to their past homes, but also formed a contested landscape outside the dominant Thai mainstream society.

In order to gain access to displaced Shan, I visited various locations in Chiang Mai. At

the outset, I registered in the Shan school to study Thai and Shan languages five days a week for three months. Thus, I had more opportunities to interact with Shan migrant workers; the school also became a platform to for Shan migrants to know me. Subsequently, the school played a key role being an information centre for me and alongside, I expanded my connections to other NGO staff and CBO members.

Moreover, I expanded my observations to some surrounding Shan or North Thai temples (e.g. Wat Papao, Wat Kutao, Wat Suan Dork and Wat Tiyasathan Taiyai), Shan communities and construction sites are dotted around Chiang Mai city. Among the northern Thai temples, I visited Wat Papao most frequently. This is a Buddhist Shan temple located in the centre of northern Chiang Mai's moat. It was built over 400 years ago by the Shan people and significantly influenced the Shan community since then. In 1997, the Abbot of the temple and some community leaders set up the Wat Papao Foundation to support education of Shan and preserve Shan culture. In 1998, the foundation in conjunction with the Thai Non-Formal Education Department started an adult education school at the temple. In order to extend my connections to other Shan communities, I participated in the adult education programme by enrolling in an evening course to learn Thai language in Wat Papao with other Shan migrant workers for two months. I therefore often visited the Shan community behind the temple for meals and bought items from their shops.

In addition to taking this course, I attended various events, accompanied by some Shan friends; I joined Shan festivals and visited restaurants, shops, markets or construction sites where they worked. Occasionally Shan friends also hosted me at their dwellings and we watched Shan VCDs or DVDs and Thai TV programmes and listened to Shan songs together: this facilitated my understanding of Shan people's everyday lives in the city.

Apart from the approaches mentioned above, the experience of seeking accommodation in Chiang Mai gave me further understanding of Shan living conditions in the city, and how undocumented Shan migrant workers effaced in certain locales of the city. I noticed this when I was accompanied by a Shan teacher to see some residences where his students (Shan migrant workers) used to live. Of those residences,

I was impressed by one old apartment located near a construction site in the corner of the city. As we entered the building, the reception staff stared at me and asked the Shan teacher if I had a legal document to stay. The teacher laughed and replied that "She comes from Taiwan and has a passport, not from Burma", which relieved the staff. They were worried about hosting illegal migrants so had to ask in advance, to avoid getting into trouble if police conducted an occasional inspection. It occurred to me that perhaps I should stay in this apartment so I could get to know more about migrant workers' daily lives. However, due to appalling condition of the rooms and without clean water, I realised the gap between me and the research subjects, and that I could never live as they live and feel as they feel.

Field site 2: SUEN refugee camp - Thatched huts as a marker of the exiles

When I was in Chiang Mai, one of my interviewees was an ex-medic in the Mong Tai Army (also, Muang Tai Army, MTA)[22]. I learned from his life history that there was a Shan refugee camp (here I rename it as SUEN Camp) near where he used to live by the border. He suggested me to visit this camp set up by Shan refugees rather than by Shan military forces. It was as a semi-open[23] camp located near a Thai township where ex-Shan forces - the Shan United Revolution Army (SURA) – used to be based (see section 4.3.3)[24]. Today the adjacent Royal Thai Army irregularly patrols it, without any Shan armed groups stationed or any Shan State Army flag.

Following the ex-medic's hand-drawn map, I visited the camp and considered choosing it as my second field site. On the way to SUEN camp, a small Chinese community was located next to the camp. Soon after passing through the Chinese community, the road condition became worse and housing patterns changed dramatically. A row of temporary thatched huts were situated along a rough uphill road; inside the camp was tidy and clean just like an ordinary hill village, but it was regarded by neighbouring

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[22] see section 4.2.3, p108

[23] I use 'semi-open' to describe this camp, to distinguish it from the other nine official 'temporary shelters' built and supported by the Thai authorities and international NGOs along the Thai-Burma border, such as Mae La camp and others.

[24] In 1968, Col. Gon Jerng broke with the SSA (of which he himself was a co-founder). He crossed the Salween River with 1,200 men to Thailand to join forces with Gen. Li's 3rd army of the Kuomintang (KMT, Guomindang) for protection (Smith, 1999:334). One year later, SURA was established.

villagers as a 'refugee camp'.

Officially, the camp residents were registered with the Thai authorities as 'displaced people from Burma', who fled from the conflict between the SSA and a joint Burmese-Wa army in 2002. According to the policy, Shan refugees were only allowed to use temporary materials to build their houses; this created risks for camp residents, particularly during rainy season. At night, there was often a heavy downpour with thunder and lightning, and the thatched roofs were in danger of collapse. Rain easily flooded the rooms, and some roofs could not withstand the strong wind and heavy rains.

A 28-year-old informant recalled three years ago he went to work at a construction site in Chiang Mai, and left his wife and two children in the camp. One windy and rainy night, his little daughter was burnt by lamp oils being used due to lack of electricity and solar panels. His wife gave a further description saying she rushed to pick up a pillow and tried to put the fire off, but overturned the oil lamp. The oil splashed on her little girl's body, arms and face, causing serious burns and leaving visible scars. On 23rd February 2012, a gas explosion caused a major fire at Umpiemai camp, a Karen refugee camp in Tak province, which destroyed 1,000 thatched houses and their contents. Accordingly, the camp committee called an emergency meeting to remind every household about the safety issues regarding fire.

Since they escaped conflict in 2002, the camp residents were unable to return to their homes. This was because Burmese military had blocked the area and damaged paths; the ravine was now fenced and overgrown with trees and allegedly laid with landmines. The conflict resulted in dividing the historical Shan temple into two: the glittery golden stupa and main temples were on the Thai side, but former monks' quarters were located across the gully on the opposite side, which was used by Burmese forces as their military base. The temple complex was built on two adjoining hills to serve both Thai and Shan villagers. However, after the conflict, this gully became the national border between Thailand and Burma; therefore, a small Thai force unit was encamped on the hill.

A camp friend took me to the historical temple and showed a place about 50 metres away from the Burmese military outpost that used to be their village. The gully trek was used to walk up to the temple school every day to study. She recalled that, in the past, along both sides of the gully trek was a market. She still remembered as a primary student, when they walked through the gully pass, the Thai soldiers sometimes gave them sweets due to their good manners: however, now the path to their village is fenced and blocked. This historical temple was noted for its memorial to one of the most respected *Siam* monarchs, King Naresuan from the 16th century, who was well-known for his battles to free *Siam* from the Burmese rule. When the SURA was encamped in this area in 1968, the temple was rebuilt by leader of the Shan United Army (SUA), *Sao Gon Zerng* (alias Mo Heng).

Shan people believed that King Naresuan was a symbol of giving heart to the Shan soldiers to fight against the Burmese military. This could be proven by Huanok's (2006) and Yasuda's (2008) studies to encourage Shan soldiers' spirits to fight against the Burmese military, a huge number of charms decorated with a portrayal of King Naresuan and his name in Shan script were minted and reproduced. These were then distributed among Shan soldiers and civilians who believed that the power of King Naresuan would protect them and give victory over the Burmese (Huanok, 2006:28-29; Yasuda, 2008:171-2). This account was, afterwards, echoed at Shan National Day on 7th February 2012. While I was based at one IDP camp on the Shan side of border, a Thai film "King Naresuan" was shown on a big screen at the celebration venue. Therefore, with a memorial of King Naresuan and the Mausoleum of *Sao Gon Zerng* at the foothills, the Burmese military outpost and the Thai forces camp on both sides of the hill displayed sensitive past historical context. The presence of thatched huts signifies the influence of contesting forces.

After completing data collection in Chiang Mai, I moved here and rented a place next to the camp for three months. Therefore, I had more opportunities to participate in and make closer observations of their daily lives, such as chatting, eating, cooking at home, taking showers at public wells, attending meetings, watching TV in a public hut and taking part in rituals. In addition, attending engagement or wedding parties,

replacing thatched roof or rebuilding huts, conducting educational projects in the camp (e.g. evening English courses for children, Thai course for adults and holiday intensive Shan script lessons), as well as learning how residents worked together and took care of each other, in particular of children, orphans, those sick and the elderly.

Fieldsite 3: LOI Camp: the symbolic landscape

Except SUAN (unofficial) refugee camp, along the Thai-Burma border there are a few IDP camps located close to the Thai side and secured by the SSA-S forces. Many of my interviewees had relatives or friends living in one or more of the border IDP camps, and a few used to be Shan soldiers or students who studied there. Therefore, some visited the IDP camp regularly, in particular during Shan festivities.

Therefore, I selected one IDP camp[25] (here I rename it as LOI Camp[26]) as my third field site; it is about 40km away from the bordering district of Thailand. Since 1999 it has become a refuge for displaced Shan who escaped from their homeland. However, due to sensitivities, the confined IDP camp has strict regulations for the entry of outsiders. During three crucial Shan festivals – Shan New Year ceremony, Shan National Day and Shan Army Day – the camp invites or permits a variety of groups and visitors from both sides of the border to partake in the rituals. If visitors are from Thai side, the camp works with the Thai authorities to obtain permits to pass through Thai checkpoints when crossing the Thai border.

During my fieldwork, I was allowed to enter LOI Camp twice: initially, I made a short visit with a group during the festival, and then, I applied to enter and stay in the camp for voluntary and research purposes for three months. On 6th February 2012, at the first visit, I took a pick-up truck with a Shan association from Mae Hong Son province to join the celebration of Shan National Day: I stayed for two days. For LOI Camp, this Thai Shan association was an 'outside' group, but their ethnic background was Shan (*Tai Yai*, Great Tai, Thai Shan), which easily allowed them to be included as 'We (Shan)'.

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[25] In late 1999, some soldiers of SSA-S who followed the leader, Yawd Serk, settled around the area, and since then the border camps have become a refuge for Shan people who escaped from their homeland.

[26] To maintain confidentiality, I modified the camp name.

Meanwhile, their Thai citizenship enabled them to pass easily through Thai checkpoints with simple registration. For me, with an Asian face (or easily regarded as Thai Chinese), it became natural to hide within this Shan group only if I kept silent, although I still needed to register.

Along the border, there were always several allocated checkpoints secured by the Royal Thai Army (RTA) and Border Patrol Police (BPP) on the way to the IDP camp. In some mountainous areas, the winding uphill roads were very steep. Both in the dry and rainy seasons, it was always a challenge for transportation to pass over. In the dry season, people often had to get out of the transport to walk, particularly if the roads were dusty. Road conditions were much worse during the rainy season; the dusty roads turned into mud roads so that vehicles easily got stuck; they were also hard to drive up the hills. Along the way, we often met a few people who rode motorcycles with their family or friends moving back and forth between the camp and Thai territory.

Before approaching LOI Camp, there was an ethnic village with a mixture of Pa-O, Shan and Lahu people located at a crossroads. On the other side of the village, about three miles away, was the Wa armed camp (the United Wa State Army, UWSA, which was supported by the Burmese military junta, SPDC)[27]. After passing by the final Thai military outpost, the pick-up truck turned into the deep forest. While some Shan State flags were flying along the hill road, we arrived at the gate of LOI Camp. There was a big sign in three languages (Shan, Thai and English) to announce people were not allowed to bring camera, mobile phone, video, etc., without a permit; if found, they would be questioned about the purpose. However, these rules were waived during the festival period, so visitors took photos freely.

Set in the remote terrain, surrounded by deep forests, to some degree the LOI Camp was set up beyond Thai and Burmese control and maintained its own ruling system. The camp contained not only Shan State flags but also memorial statues of *Muang Mao Long (Sao Sua Kha Fa)*[28] and *Sao Gon Zerng* (1926-1991**,** the former leader of SUA,

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[27] United Wa State Army is one of the ceasefire army groups based in Shan State. There have been occasional clashes between UWSA soldiers and SSA-S soldiers along the Thai-Burma border.
[28] As mentioned in Chapter 4, in order to unify Shan people to revive former glory and achievements of the kingdom of *Muang Mao*, the resistance groups often used *Muang Mao Long* as a symbol.

mentioned in Field site 2). However, the presence of LOI Camp with political markers, several Thai checkpoints along the way and the nearby UWSA army camp, all apparently displayed the sensitive and contested nature of political power in the area. Walking in the camp, it was not easy for me to tell where the national border between the camp and the Thai soil was. I was told that it was the main road that had some shops and restaurants: there was no obvious landmark to show the border other than a stone tablet at the crossroads. However, along one side of the road, it was easy to see some empty houses, which was called 'the Thai side'. According to the narratives of camp residents, people have moved to other areas of the camp on the 'Shan side'. Earlier in 1999, when the SSA-S started placing forces in this area, the camp straddled along the national border, covering parts of both sides of the border. Some institutions, such as a school, temple, clinics, dormitories for students and houses for the displaced people, which used to be located on the Thai side, have been required by the Thai authorities to move into the Shan side on three occasions, in 1999, 2005 and 2011.

In 2005, after the camp was attacked by the UWSA (the fighting lasted over 10 days), people fled to stay in the old Shan temple on Thai side. Later on, Shan living on Thai aside eventually moved to Shan side. This was because the inhabitants still relied on some medical, economic and educational support in or through Thailand, which played a key role and was one of the main gateways for the camp residents to access the outside world. The SSA-S depended on its political wing – the Restoration Council of the Shan State (RCSS) – to handle relations with Thailand through administrative procedures. In order to maintain a good relationship with the Thai authorities, the RCSS/SSA-S often had to compromise. This implied that power relations between Thai forces and SSA-S or residents in the camp were unequal and dynamic, and could often vary due to Thai state action on national security. Therefore, some camp inhabitants used alternative routes to avoid Thai checkpoints and limitation of regulations.

Meanwhile, LOI Camp also had their own rules to regulate people living in the camp. The second time I obtained a permit to enter LOI Camp, I was accompanied by a broker who took me through the cross-border journey. At arriving in the camp, I followed arrangements made by camp officers to stay in a guest residence, which was often used

to host visitors. I thus had more opportunities to meet RCSS officers, soldiers, civilians as well as other visitors from both sides of the border, and participated in their everyday lives in the camp.

As a Shan National School volunteer teacher, I applied to move to the teacher accommodation to live closer to civilians and to work independently. In addition, there were various limitations to living in the camp, including strict camp policies, tight school schedules and environmental restrictions (i.e. rainy season, foggy and muddy roads, and lack of transportation, etc.); I had very limited time to fully participate in people's daily lives and mostly made handwritten field notes due to the shortage of electricity. However, as a camp resident, I also followed camp rules and experienced their way of life there, including dealing with water shortages, collecting rain for showers and washing, obeying a curfew, using firewood from the jungle as cooking fuel, and facing the control over communications with the outside world, etc.

Fieldsite 4: A Shan migrant community - Negotiating with national power at the periphery

Fang district in northern Chiang Mia province is one of the crucial places where a considerable numbers of Shan from Burma live; as mentioned earlier, it is estimated that 60% Shan refugees initially headed there on arrival in Thailand. This is because Fang and its neighbouring districts are in an intensive agricultural area with high demand for wage labour, in particular the rapidly expanding orange industry, so that new refugee arrivals can easily find jobs to support themselves (SHRF, 2003:6).

Some of my Shan interviewees in Chiang Mai city held a so-called Green card with Red frame[29] registered in Fang district (see section 6.2); however, they did not actually live in Fang district. Whenever they needed to travel to other provinces, they had to return to Fang district to apply for a travel document.

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of displaced Shan's real life, I thus chose a Shan migrant community in Fang district as my fourth field site. I was based in one of migrant communities with a huge population of Shan migrants around the

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[29] This card refers to people who live in the mountain areas but are not Thai citizens.

neighbouring areas at the edge of northern Thai villages. Through Shan youth' networks, I took a motorbike taxi (or tuktuk) from Fang district to a location not marked on the Thai administrative map. I jotted down the sound of the place-name in Thai pronunciation and spoke to the driver. The driver told me that he knew the place as he had previously taken someone there. We went through the winding countryside roads half an hour from town and passed through a couple of mixed Shan and northern Thai villages.

Without apparent markers such as those at the 'IDP camp' or 'refugee camp', the majority of displaced Shan have integrated into northern Thai territory, such as on the margins of Thai villages, in scattered farms or factories and so forth. At the entrance, there was a large portrait of Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej displayed alongside a broad square, without any Shan symbols. Outside or within the Shan migrant communities, there were few Thai national flags or King's and Queen's flags, which often hid the existence of migrant communities from outsiders. Meanwhile, they kept a low profile and showed loyalty to the Thai royal family.

In the square, many villagers were dressed as farmers, waiting for trucks to pick up workers. The motorbike taxi climbed uphill and left me at a small plain square. What caught my eye was a traditional Shan *Tsao Muang* located along the entrance to a small village: the *Tsao Muang* compound[30] could easily be distinguished as a Shan village. This village was situated on a hillside, and houses seemed more crowded and much simpler than nearby villages, but not like thatched huts in the refugee camp. Some rough roads on the hillside were quite narrow, only passable on foot. Such Shan migrant communities were widespread in this area, and to be managed, they were placed under the administrative system of the Thai villages but without formal names and addresses.

Moreover, huge numbers of displaced Shan were immediately taken by employers to the factories as they arrived on the border, or followed their relatives or friends to

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[30] The *Tsao Muang* (or Sao Muang) is the cadastral spirit of a Shan village. The *Tsao Muang* compound is placed in a tree-shaded spot away from residential areas and it is a small elevated building, which has an open porch and a closed room. Offerings are placed in the porch area. Women cannot enter the compound (Tannenbaum, 1995:48-49).

reside on farms. Displaced Shan worked and stayed across numerous fields among a variety of cash crops, particularly oranges, lychees, garlic and rice etc., and made themselves 'invisible' to mainstream Thai society.

The migrant community where I was based was far away from the town and had no place to rent during my fieldwork. At the beginning, I was kindly hosted by the SWAN Safe Home[31] for a brief period, and later moved to a nearby foreign-sponsored organisation's office[32]. This gave me opportunities to conduct participant observation among both organisations' activities, such as preparing rice and daily items for SWAN clients, visiting clients at different locations, delivering SWAN magazines, running a Shan broadcast programme and attending outreach projects at orange plantations, brick factories and so forth.

Occasionally, I also followed a Shan teacher to assist with evening educational project on the farm. He was granted this project by another foreign-sponsored organisation. The farm I often visited was one of the numerous *homes* for displaced Shan. On the way, we went through some villages and turned into a twisty countryside pathway and rode on the field ridges. In this area, there was a cluster of thatched huts and some others scattered in the distant fields. Children walked through fields along the barbed wires, to attend evening lessons. They sat on a mat under a thatched pavilion, next to some humble cottages near the edge of the farm ridge. The evening breeze was accompanied by frogs croaking, while children tried to speak unfamiliar English in their own accent. After the lessons, they continued practising Shan traditional musical instruments and dances for oncoming Shan festivals. As night fell, the beating of drums and the crashing of the gongs and cymbals resonated across the fields. This seemed to display a meaning beyond its importance for preserving Shan traditions that under a starlit sky this farmland was where the displaced Shan lived; wherever music and singing could be heard was their home territory.

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[31] SWAN Safe Home is partly used as the local office and also partly offered as accommodation for Shan women and children from other places during their medical treatment at the clinic. Therefore, SWAN hosted me until I found a new place to stay.

[32] Due to confidentiality I am not using the organisation's name.

2.3 Approaches to Data Collection and Analysis

In this research, I adopted a qualitative approach to collect data, primarily through participant observations, in-depth life history interviews and individual narratives. Some interviews were tape-recorded, while for others handwritten notes were taken due to interviewees' security or to prevent their discomfort. In addition, reflections from participant observations and my fieldnotes served as a crucial data. I also collected online academic papers, documents, reports, diaries, newsletters and newspaper articles along with relevant audiovisual materials (films, songs and documentaries) on issues of displaced Shan or migrant workers. Furthermore, secondary data was collected from the SWAN, SHRF, the Migrant Assistance Programme (MAP), Shan Youth Power (SYP), the School for Shan State Nationalities Youth (SSSNY)[33], Tai Freedom Magazines and so forth.

2.3.1 Participant Observation and Sampling

> We cannot study the social world without being part of it (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994: 249).

Participant observation is a crucial part of fieldwork. At the outset, I tried to participate in various Shan gatherings and events to gain a general understanding about Shan communities on the border. In particular, through some meetings arranged by relevant NGOs, I had informal conversations with staff members from different organisations, which facilitated my understanding of their projects and services for displaced Shan and migrant workers, as well as the difficulties Shan encountered.

When arriving at each field site, I first spent time participating in community events and activities as well as building rapport and trust. Through daily practices and activities, I gained a broad understanding of the communities. Subsequently, by involving myself more deeply into everyday practices I began to identify potential informants. I rarely used snowball referrals to select informants, except for those who lived on remote

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[33] The School for Shan State Nationalities Youth (SSSNY) was founded by a group of youths from Shan State in May 2001. It offers an opportunity for youths to attend an educational project on social justice issues, and further creates a platform for them to take action for social and political change. [Online] Available from: http:// sssny. org. [Accessed: 27/10/2014].

farms. Jacobsen and Landau (2003) have advised that many refugee researchers rely on 'snowball sampling' approaches, which may cause both methodological and ethical problems. They further explained if snowball selection is done cautiously, it may still avoid the high risk of creating a biased sample. As to the ethical problem, they warned snowballing may increase the risk of exposing important and potentially harmful information to members of a group (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003:195-196). In order to avoid a biased sample and to reach a more heterogeneous range of people, as well as to evade raising some relevant confidential issues, I attended various events at different field sites to select a wide range of displaced Shan.

Consequently, I interviewed 64 informants among three main groups; gender and generation variations were also considered. Informants were selected from two generations who came from Shan States from 1980 onwards. The three groups were: (1) staff members working with Shan-based organisations, community-based organisations (CBOs), schools and small western-supported NGOs. Then, (2) civilians and youth (in their 20s who still had memories of their lives in Shan State): those living at the IDP camp, refugee camp, migrant communities or neighbouring farms. Lastly, (3) ex-MTA, SSA Shan soldiers or RCSS officers who worked for Shan communities. These categories were dynamic rather than fixed due to their multiple or changing statuses.

In order to juxtapose voices, I included informants from diverse backgrounds within Shan society. For example, some monks retired and join the army, while some soldiers retired to become civilians. Some who lived at camps moved to work in neighbouring villages or cities. In addition, I talked to community leaders, monks, group members and Thais who worked for displaced Shan or migrants. Meanwhile, I stayed in touch with almost 20 informants from different sites through the internet, facebook, or by visiting their homes or places of work during the course of fieldwork.

2.3.2 In-depth Life Histories Interviews

> Life stories are not just accounts of individual trajectories, within the framework of family relations, but also histories of specific periods and places as these have been experienced by the narrators (Olwig, 2007: 6).

I focused on how interviewees narrated and interpreted their life histories and divided

interviews into three parts. The first part referred to their past lives in Shan State or Burma and then highlighted their decision to move as along with their experiences of border crossing. The second part was to examine their situation and practices in current dwellings; and the final part focused on how they reflected on their understandings of life experiences and their future plans. These narratives were divided in accordance with the three main themes of this research: home places/territory (life in their homeland), mobility (journey of exiles), and social cohesion (everyday practices in the present places).

When I first arrived at each field site, I explained my topic to the people, interacted with them, attended events and participated in community activities so they could understand my research purpose. When inviting potential interviewees, I did a lengthy introduction explaining the purpose and themes of my research. At the beginning of an interview, I described the research topic again to ensure participants fully understood the interview setting and gave their oral consent to participate. I also mentioned their right to withdraw from the research at any time. Meanwhile, they could also stop responding to questions at any time as per their wish. I explained that I might stop the questions if I felt it was causing undue stress to the participants. Their security and situation would always be my utmost priority.

However, there was a further practical decision to be made on whether to use a single interview or conduct a series of interviews with each interviewee. In principle, each interview was to last approximately one and a half hours, which is regarded by many researchers as the optimum length for qualitative interviews (Elliott, 2005:32). In practice, this was very flexible due to the field situation. Some interviews extended up to three hours or divided into two interviews of one hour each. After interviewing, the informants also had an opportunity to ask me any questions, including those about my personal life story.

Their life histories were like numerous pieces of jigsaw puzzles. The more I learned from their life histories, I was able to form a clearer group portrait of Shan migrant community. This covered a range of historical and political junctures and made connections across the spaces and time of over half a century since Burma's

independence from British colonisation.

2.3.3 Research Method: applicability of Reflexive Ethnography

I applied grounded theory (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967) as the methodological basis of this research, and used *reflexive ethnography* as a research method for fieldwork. Grounded theory not only to provide the study with a good way to analyse the data and interactions, but also helps develop some theoretical concepts for explaining the process encountered in field sites. While writing up, I adopted the experimental forms of *reflexive ethnography* (see Davies, 2008) for genres of writing to present the research findings. Therefore, in the following sections I will first depict the amendment of interpretative anthropology regarding reflexive ethnography, and further explain how multi-sited ethnography is embedded into this trend. I will then explore the applicability of *ground theory* on the analysis of field data and its theoretical position between ethnography and interactions in the field.

During fieldwork, I used three notebooks to write fieldnotes. One was to collect contact information (locations, addresses, telephone numbers, names of groups or organisations, contact persons or drawing maps, etc.). Second was a pocket notepad to jot down any key words or any brief points in the field (when, who, what and how). Third was for in depth reflections and observations every day. In spare time, I would type fieldnotes or completed those which were unfinished.

In order to create a dialogue between fieldnotes and wider theoretical concepts, I used an approach elaborated by Schatzman and Strauss (1973). They advise recording data and organising notes into three categories of "distinct packages" as 'Observational Notes' (ON), 'Theoretical Notes' (TN) and 'Methodological Notes' (MN) (1973:99). I thus divided my fieldnotes into four columns: Observational Notes, ON; Theoretical Notes, TN; Methodological Notes, MN; and Other Notes. I tried to develop and maintain this writing habit as part of my routine, and whenever I wrote fieldnotes, I also did some rough coding and constantly moved back and forth between detailed fieldnotes and some relevant theoretical concepts.

Alongside, I also wrote some plans for the following day, such as who is to be

interviewed, what I should observe and what am I hoping to find. This gave me the opportunity to analyse interaction processes, help me be aware of my biases, and develop some theoretical concepts for interpreting what I encountered in the field sites.

Themes were derived by coding raw data from the fieldnotes. Although I had some theoretical directions in my mind at the onset of the fieldwork, after hearing life histories from the informants, it was easier to examine and analyse the displaced Shan's life world. During the course of fieldwork, I was shifting between empirical data and the theoretical world. Accordingly, my own encountered resources and chances plotted the research trajectory, led to consequent construction of the field, and guided my decisions on where the research should focus. However, it sometimes became difficult to draw boundaries for scope and made research more complex. In the end, a huge amount of data and information created a range of potential themes and linked to a broader theoretical structure. This disturbed the direction of the research and it became difficult to form main themes. Fitzgerald (2006: 3) notes that "multi-sited fieldwork is even more dependent on a clear theoretical orientation and strategic site selection than work in a single site". Nevertheless, this approach still provided flexibility for site selection and adjustment from fieldwork contacts, which created a dynamic dialogical space between theoretical concepts and empirical practices.

While writing up, I delineated the extent of this research, selected main themes from coded fieldnotes and placed them within theoretical concepts. This was done especially to analyse relationships between home-making and mobility as well as cohesive networks to explore how these three concepts interplay with one another throughout the whole research.

2.4 Methodological Reflection: Myths, Challenges and Ethics

Would critical thinking of the methodological approach describe this research as 'multi-sited' ethnographic study by conducting fieldwork in more than one field site, or is the term 'translocal' ethnographic research more appropriate? At the beginning of my research design, I had never questioned the practicality of doing multi-sited fieldwork until I was challenged to think about this issue. What defines 'multi-sited' fieldwork? Is

'multi-sited' fieldwork necessarily opposite to 'single-sited' fieldwork? Could I say that I have conducted multi-sited fieldwork by studying multiple locations? And how wide could I draw the boundaries of 'multi-sited' fieldwork?

A growing number of scholars have argued that the term "multi-sited ethnography" has been taken for granted in migration studies and other fields, without exploring its substance and implications (Hage, 2005:464-465). Hannerz (2003) argues that when Malinowski followed the Trobrianders along the Kula ring, he was, in fact, already going multilocal (Hannerz, 2003:202-203). In this sense, could selecting numerous sites along the border necessarily be regarded as using multiple sites?

Hannerz (2003) further argues that the term "multilocal" is confusing, and clarifies how multi-sited research is different from a comparative study of localities constituting a single place without precise connections. He underlines that the fields of current multilocal projects are not simple "collections of local unit[s]" (206), but "coherent fields" (210), in which the sites are linked to one another. Meanwhile, the significance of these multi-local fields is *translocal*; they are selected to explore a common problem or a particular formulation of an issue. In similar vein, Fitzgerald (2006: 5) also asserts that each "multiple site" cannot be regarded as a single discrete unit. They are connected through mobility of migrants and equally shaped migrant experiences in different ways. Therefore, in Lapegna's (2009) formulation, a 'multi-sited' field could be understood as "less in terms of a space and more as connections" (cited in Boccagni, 2014:7), and as Boccagni (2014) uses the term "multi-relationality" instead of "multi-spatiality" to interpret the implications of multi-sited studies (2).

In addition, another aspect of multi-sited perspective that scholars challenge is its myth of ethnographic "holism" (Hage, 2005; Candea, 2007; van Maanen, 2010). Although multi-sited ethnography emerged by reflecting upon previous approaches, which had dealt with realities within a bounded field without considering mobility and flow, its perspectives still seemed to fall into the myth of ethnographic holism. By intertwining multiple ethnographic sites and issues, would researchers be able to display a full epistemological picture of a global phenomenon? Hage (2005:466) argues, "no ethnography can capture all social relations in any case". Each single ethnographic

perspective has its own limited glance. The method of selecting a variety of mutually interdependent field sites is based on a researcher's ideas and perspectives, or their encounters. A researcher's choice to include or exclude, and their research trajectory through the whole process, creates the image of the study. Therefore, I acknowledge that even thirteen months of fieldwork along the Thailand-Burma border could still provide me with a limited and partial picture of displaced Shan society, with potential selection bias and missing data.

Another crucial challenge worth exploring is locating the researcher in the field, including a range of visa issues, gaining access to confined areas, approaching research subjects and accessing related institutions, as well as researcher's positionality. In the field, the interaction between researcher's characteristics and field settings could play a key role in affecting various dimensions of the research process (Carling et al, 2013:2). The status of the researcher is both methodological and political (3).

Due to sensitive research issues and the need to avoid unforeseen risks to research subjects, I decided not to apply for a non-immigrant visa (research visa, RS) to do research in Thailand. This required a letter of approval from the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), which I was supposed to apply for three months prior to the start of research. Without the official approval, I lost the opportunity to be associated with any research institution or faculty at a university in Thailand.

The alterative way of resolving this problem was to enrol in Thai language courses at a Thai university, which offered me a one-year non-immigrant visa with multiple entries to study in Thailand as well as conduct research. However, I was only allowed to stay for 90 days per entry, so after this period I had to do the visa run for re-entry, in particular cross the Thai-Laos border back and forth. Afterwards, when my visa expired, an international NGO offered me a volunteer identity proof to extend my visa. However, to acknowledge the NGO for their assistance, extra surveys were conducted for them within my limited time during the fieldwork; this could be considered a reciprocal relationship but also caused stress and anxiety due to time limitations.

In addition, approaching displaced Shan at different locations was also a challenge. This

was not only because I had some unexpected journeys while tracing their mobile trajectories, but also since there were entry restrictions in to some locations (e.g. camps or factories) without permits. For the former, it was a significant phenomenon for me to experience the displaced Shan's hidden routes, which I did not expect or plan prior to conducting fieldwork. In order to avoid Thai checkpoints, some Shan friends often took me along roundabout ways they frequently used. I also experienced entering LOI Camp when accompanied by a broker; this was the first time I crossed a national border without showing my travel documents. Afterwards, arrangements had been made for me to leave the camp using a 'paper document' to cross the border instead of using my passport, until I finished my research.

I felt nervous while passing through the checkpoints. In addition, while I followed one informant who used to work in LOI Camp (but was assigned a special task back in a border town in Shan State), I gained understanding of everyday practices of borderlanders' crossing national borders. They did not pass over the immigration bridge or showed any travel documents. Through this itinerary, I was able to observe and experience cross-border migrants' encounters, which helped me move beyond my imagination of their cross-border practices. On some occasions, the journey was uneasy; in particular, during border police inspections.

For the latter, gaining trust of and assistance from key persons or gatekeepers became a crucial factor. However, I still remembered Mackenzie et al (2007) stating that some researchers may not have completely thought through the ethical complexity of their research. This, in turn, may lead to immoral and potentially exploitative research, in particular in refugee or displacement studies.

In order to create a reciprocal relationship, I applied to be a voluntary teacher at a Shan national school in LOI Camp and afterwards I worked with an NGO as a voluntary researcher. I ensured trust and emotional engagement were the foundations of the research process and relationships were developed with potential interviewees. This research was mainly based on trust. I was aware that research design and positionality of a researcher are not only methodological approaches but also involve ethical issues.

For example, an aged potential female informant lived in LOI Camp. Her ex-husband was killed during the fighting in Shan State, so she did not want to mention it. Even though her family encouraged her to talk, they still could not persuade her. I decided not to push her for an interview. Finally, her family agreed to be interviewed instead to share their life stories. This was not the only case where informants' families agreed to be interviewed to share their life histories.

Moreover, I was also aware of my position and role in the field, which often influenced my interaction with the Shan communities. In migration studies, the position of researchers is typically divided as insider and outsider, which supposes, "an insider researcher is a member of the migrant group under study, whereas an outsider researcher is a member of the majority population in the country of settlement" (Carling et al, 2013:1). As a foreign female research student, I was not a member of Shan community and therefore regarded as an 'outsider'. However, in the field, my role and position sometimes become vague, and the boundaries between 'me' and 'them' were often blurred.

When I settled at different sites, the Shan people used certain ways to identify my role. I could notice the slight distinction between myself and other western foreign aid workers, in particular when they introduced me to their friends or communities. They always addressed western foreigners with their names. Whereas they mentioned me as a teacher at LOI Camp: some called me '*Kru*' (teacher), in either Shan or Thai language; others called me '*Syama*' (teacher) in the Burmese language (specifically in IDP camps or border town in Shan state). Often they also referred me as their '*bi-nong*' (sibling) or '*tai-go*' (friend) in the Shan language. When they used my name, they added 'bi' (in Shan), 'pi' (in Thai) or 'kru' as a prefix before my name. They addressed other female Thai researchers in similar way. Which *markers* do they use to define my position and decide how to address me: my Asian face, my name, language spoken, religious background (Buddhist), sharing an Asian social context or their relations with Yunnanese/Chinese? How does this relational construction of insider-outsider or in-between position take place? It is worth noting here that I am not saying the Shan could not distinguish me from them, rather they used some ways to admit my co-presence

in their society. As mentioned in Chapter 1, in Shan State, there is often intermarriage between different ethnic groups, so ethnic boundaries are thus fluid and they regard different ethnic groups as brothers and sisters. In some ways, I could be grouped into a grey area in between ethnic boundaries.

There seems to be some subtle social categories at play within a relational way, which may not be commonly used in western countries. As Carling et al (2013:9) points out, those specific markers offer research subjects signals to refer researchers to their preceding social categories. When a stranger becomes a friend or a sister of participants over the course of fieldwork, then how to balance the relational ethics? How could participants always be aware and conscious that I was a researcher in the field to participate in and observe their everyday lives? What accounts for the fact that they might talk to a friend rather than to a researcher?

2.4.1 Ethical Considerations

Focusing on forced migration research, despite caution, I could not fully guarantee avoiding all unforeseen situations. As Eastmond (2007) points out, "narratives are not transparent renditions of truth but reflect a dynamic interplay between life, experience and story". He argues those who use qualitative methods often have to deal with tensions between practical and interpretive requirements, between reality and its representation. In addition, Eastmond further states that researchers who interviewed vulnerable participants should be more aware of the ethical issues and sensitive to questions of power, confidentiality and accountability than subjects in other fields (2007:260).

Although I prepared the informant sheet and consent form in advance, I noticed it might raise additional issues due to misunderstanding and mistrust. Therefore, I did not use the informant sheet and consent form for some interviews in certain sensitive areas. As most participants in my research were displaced Shan, whether they had a legal status to live in Thailand or not, they often kept a low profile. If they were asked to sign the information sheet and give written consent, they would have felt uncomfortable or nervous. In particular, some were illiterate and unfamiliar with the

consent form; they might have thought their 'signature' would expose them to academic or official authorities. I only used information sheets and consent forms for those who worked for organisations and felt comfortable signing. Mostly, for security reasons, I obtained their oral consent. In addition, before the interview, I showed the interviewees a digital voice recorder, demonstrated how it worked and explained the purpose. Thereafter I let them decide whether it was appropriate for me to record their interviews; in this way I kept the use of a digital recorder more flexible.

I also considered that the outcomes of this research might well be of interest to government agencies or police and could, indeed, be misused against the displaced Shan or the NGOs working for them. Therefore, I tried to reduce potential risks to the participants in following ways. First, I discussed my research topic with some grassroots groups and displaced communities to obtain their perspective. Consequently, I adjusted my research title considering sensitive political concerns, and modified its dimensions in the interest of my research subjects. In addition, storage of information was also a matter of concern in case sensitive data accidentally became available to others. One safeguarding measure was to write and type most of my fieldnotes in traditional Mandarin Chinese, and another was to anonymise the names of participants and places by using pseudonyms or composite characters in a mixture of languages such as English, Mandarin and Thai. Therefore, by using this strategy I ensured there were no names in my notes and transcribed scripts to identify individual interviewees. I uploaded most key documents and transcribed scripts to an online storage facility, Dropbox. I used this as secure storage space instead of keeping files on the laptop.

2.4.2 Multiple Languages Surfing in Different Social Settings

Additionally, during fieldwork, the language issue could be another factor contributing to research bias and one of the challenges and obstacles in accessing the research subjects, in particular for participant observation. Due to language limitations, I missed obtaining some key information. Even though there were some people who spoke English and able to interpret, this often disrupted the meetings or workshops. Various languages used at different events also made interpretation more difficult. Shan was used at SWAN's workshop or at Shan Youth Power's forum and Thai was used at MAP's

workshop; at the ethnic teachers' training course, they spoke in Burmese.

To find a full-time interpreter to accompany me on each occasion was not possible, because of time restrictions, my budget and the location of field sites. Those who could speak English and Shan fluently usually had their own jobs, so they could only work part-time with me when I needed help with interpretation during interviews or special occasions. Some were perfect interpreters, who had abundant experience working with foreign researchers and were also involved in migration support; they also knew some crucial Shan work sites and gathering places. However, they often obtained higher pay from other western researchers than the senior Shan NGO staff.

I also had to consider issues such as gender, power and ethnic background along with concerns of security and confidentiality of the interviewees. The ethnic background of interpreters could affect the trust and open-mindedness of interviewees. Therefore, to use suitable and reliable interpreters was one of main concerns in my fieldwork. I did not directly hire interpreters at the beginning of my research. I asked teachers in the Shan school or staff members from Shan grassroots organisation for advice or recommend interpreters. My priority was to choose interpreters who were themselves displaced Shan and could closely relate to the situation. As fieldwork was at multiple sites, I recruited new interpreters at each site. To resolve this issue, I owed much to SWAN, SYP and SSSNY networks for assisting me in finding interpreters at different locations.

In addition, I invited those potential interpreters to assist when we knew each other better and the interviewees could trust them. Prior to the interviews, interviewees could select preferred interpreters. Additionally, to maintain confidentiality, I requested the interpreters not to disclose the personal life histories of interviewees to other villagers. Interviewees chose the interview locations depending on their comfort and safety. Some chose to be interviewed at their homes, workspaces, private offices, empty classrooms, temples and so forth. Others were interviewed along with their family members or friends.

However, I also noticed that I could not fully rely on interpreters throughout the

fieldwork, in particular for 'participant observation'. Language was not only the basic tool for data collection, but also a crucial way of interacting with people directly. Some Shan spoke Thai fluently, so learning to speak Thai or basic Shan enabled me to build trust and friendships. Even though it was insufficient, I could decipher if some information was adequately interpreted or missed out in the course of interviews. Meanwhile, in each field site, few Shan informants spoke fluent Mandarin Chinese and English. On such occasions I did not need Shan-English interpreters. Some informants also became my interpreters facilitating the progress of my interviews. Sometimes, when I did not have suitable interpreters for participant observation, I switched to different language codes (such as English, Thai and Chinese), mixing with a couple of languages to communicate with people.

In addition, to avoid misunderstandings and ensure accuracy, I often had to double-check some information provided by interviewees and interpreters as a kind of triangulation. I had planned to recruit another interpreter to ascertain the content of interviews by listening to the audio recording. However, after considering the confidentiality of interviewees, to avoid accidental exposure of data I used other methods instead. In particular, interpreters within Shan networks knew each other; if one listened to the recordings, he or she would recognise the voices of the interpreter or the interviewees.

2.4.3 Reliability and Validity

"What is authenticity?" This question is raised very commonly while doing interviews. To conduct qualitative research, the researcher must deal with the question of whether stories and information constructed in interviews is 'accurate' or 'valid' demonstration of reality (Elliott, 2005:22). I was reminded of this during my stay in the IDP camp, when one of my Shan friends saw me talking with a woman near his house. He later said "do not trust everything that people told you, sometimes what they said was partially true. They might just want you to sympathise with them". Indeed, the validity of narratives, whether they are life histories or information produced in interviews, needs to be examined to see if the information strongly correlates with other information that might happen unexpectedly in conversations and other aspects of daily life, or whether

narratives are constructed purposely for the researcher (Elliott, 2005:24).

In particular, when studying forced migration, Jacobsen and Landau (2003) note the potential problems with reliability of data, including "whether refugees are telling the researcher what they think she or he expects or wants to hear, it is likely that over time inconsistencies will be revealed". They further reveal that:

> Refugees and IDPs might (consciously or unconsciously) be reluctant or afraid to tell researchers their true views or they might wish to promote a particular vision of their suffering. Their responses could be part of their survival strategy. Refugees are unlikely to tell researchers anything that might jeopardise their (the refugees') position in the community (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003: 191-192).

Another issue regarding interpretation was that, except for daily conversation, I worked entirely through interpreters for in-depth interviews and during specific events or situations. This inevitably left out a great deal of information about their daily lives; in particular, the language was linked to a set of shared collective memories. In addition, a couple of interpreters did not interpret all the narratives and conversations; in particular, those who had immense past experiences could easily fall into their existing working patterns and knowledge. Sometimes they took it for granted that they already knew the content of interviews or conversations, or they added their own viewpoints rather than interpreting from the interviews. Even more, sometimes they directed interviewees to answer in a particular way. As I became aware of these issues, I tried to remind the interviewees to give detailed responses and clarify specific terms or experiences.

2.5   Concluding Remarks

This chapter has demonstrated the methodological framework from a translocal lens. By conducting a multi-sited qualitative approach to collect data for 13 months along the Thailand-Burma border, I selected four styles of Shan temporary dwellings as my field sites. This allowed me to take a closer look at everyday embodied practices of Shan communities in marginalised places and observe various powers contested within these groups.

The methodological approach mainly included participant observation, in-depth life

history interviews, narratives of individuals and reflective fieldnotes. In total, I conducted 64 interviews, also considering gender balance and different generations. Due to ethical concerns, I guaranteed the participants' confidentiality and the tape-recorder was only used if interviewees felt comfortable. I further addressed the challenges confronted in this research and methodological reflections; in particular, I focussed on how theoretical concepts were derived from field data, the interplay between theory and raw data, the challenges of locating the researcher, and some specific key ethical concerns for forced migration studies.

Therefore, in the following chapter, I will introduce the conceptual and theoretical framework to explore and analyse the key themes derived from the fieldwork data.

CHAPTER 3 Theoretical Framework:

Making a Place as 'Home' in Displacement

3.1 Introduction: Dynamics Home-Making in Displacement

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework to provide a background on home and connectedness, which will help explain some of the key analytical themes of this study. First, I will expand Dovey's (1985) concept of 'home as connectedness' by discussing features of home connected with people and places, through which the former construct personal identity and collective belonging and build their place in a meaningful way. Second, I will discuss home-making as a dynamic dialectic process (Altman and Gauvain, 1981; Case, 1986, Dovey, 1985; Seamon, 1979) by describing dialectical relationships of making a place home and examining three main dimensions: physical/spatial, sociocultural and historical/temporal aspects. Thirdly, using Sack's (2001, 2004) concept of place-making, I will propose home-making as a process of re-territorialisation by *weaving* together three main threads or components of home across different place scales. Over time, mobility across these place scales may extend people's lived space and forge a sense of translocal affiliation to form their 'home territory'. This framework will facilitate further analysis and discussion of place scales in the subsequent empirical chapters using three themes: place, mobility and cohesive networks, respectively.

In chapter 1, I outlined the aim of this study is to explore relationships between people in limbo and places by looking at how displaced Shan negotiate issues of home and (re)construct a sense of home through their everyday practices. For migrants, home is a dynamic and complex concept with multi-faceted aspects that change in time and space. It also implies that home consists of various relationships between people and their environments.

To explore relationships between people and their places, some major terms, such as place identity, spatial identity, place attachment, place affiliation, place belonging, territorial belonging, rootedness, at-homeness, and home as 'symbol of self' and so

forth, are widely used by scholars to represent people's experiences and their deep relatedness with home places or living environments. Some of these terms are used interchangeably in academic work although their meanings often overlap but are slightly different. There is also no general agreement on the definition of these concepts. It is not my aim to clarify all these terms, but I may use different terms as appropriate to the context. Existing studies on these terms have an important contribution to facilitate an understanding of ways in which people interact with places.

In regard to mobility or displacement, there are always questions concerning the relationship between mobility and people's place identity, attachment or belonging; in particular, those on uprootedness, loss of meaning places and maintaining a sense of 'belonging'. Therefore, it is important to examine how mobility shapes relations between people and their home places and in reverse, how mobility is affected by practices of place attachment, and ways "people actively make sense of displacement in their everyday lives" (Lems, 2014: 7), in particular focus on "*the placement in displacement*" (ibid: 19).

Therefore, the concept of mobility refers to staying, leaving, journeying and emplacing and is inseparably connected with notions of home-making, alongside variations between exclusion and inclusion in a new place. I have used the above concept within the theoretical framework of the research. Meanwhile, adding a temporal dimension is crucial to explore the meaning of home places and variations within historical backgrounds. In this sense, as Blunt and Dowling argue "home does not simply exist, but is made" (2006: 23). This viewpoint resonates with Massey's discussion of place and home in her book, *Space Place and Gender;* it suggests looking at place as a non-essentialist concept, emphasising 'becoming' rather than 'being' (1994a: 119).

3.2 Relationships: Home as a Set of Connnections

Home is "a relationship, an experienced meaning", as distinguished from 'house' by Dovey (1985:34). She argues that home is a highly complex system of relationships that bring order, integrity and meaning to dwelling practices in the world. It is also a series

of connections that bond people and place within a wider spatial, temporal, and sociocultural context (39-43).

I expand Dovey's notion on "home as connectedness" (1985:43) and present the framework of home as connected with people and place into two major categories in Figure 3.1. The former includes personal (the Self) identification and social (the Others) interaction; the latter is associated with place in symbolic and material facets. Terkenli's assertion also echoes this notion; the idea of home is "a parameter that infiltrates every relationship between humans and environment as humans reach out to the unknown and return to the known" (1995: 325). It means people transform space into place through occupation and usage of symbols and further denote place and context as home.
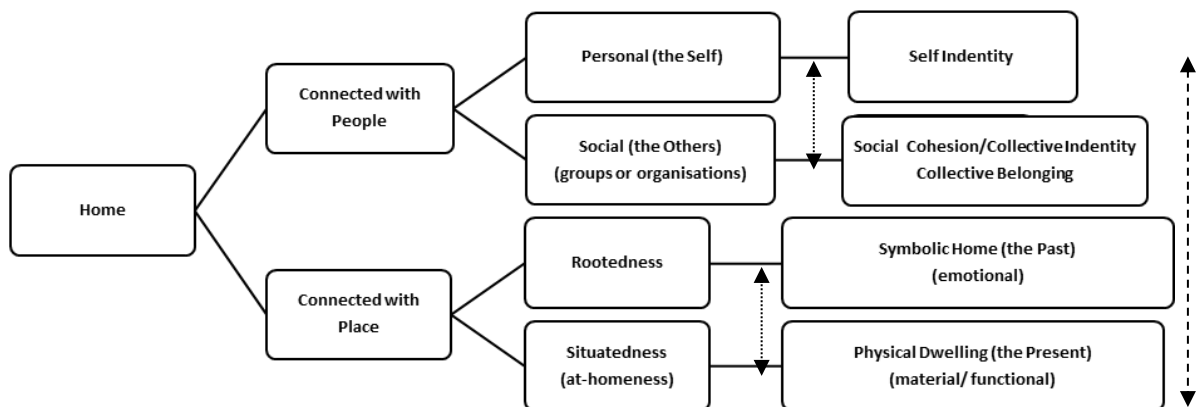
Figure 3.1: Composition of the meaning of home

This framework is also derived from several relevant literatures, in particular within the fields of phenomenological philosophy, human geography and environmental psychology, which I will discuss in the following sections. However, the framework does not include comprehensive components of home in four dimensions of personal, social, symbolic and physical. Rather, it is a means of organising and illustrating the ideas presented in this research and offers a structure for facilitating an understanding and discussion of home in a series of key dimensions. In addition, these four dimensions are closely interactive rather than completely exclusive or competing. Therefore, the

classification of four modes is depicted by the presence of dashed rather than solid lines.

The following section is divided in to two parts: first part discusses home connected with people; second part goes on to describe connections with place.

3.2.1 Connectedness with the People

Several studies (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Dovey, 1985; Feldman, 1990; Harris and Brown, 1996; Gustafson, 2001; Vasta, 2013; Young, 1997) suggest people have positive and passionate experiences, symbolism and sentiments attached to their places. In particular, Young emphasises more personal, localised experiences of home. She identifies "four normative values of home that should be thought of as minimally accessible to all people": safety, individuation, privacy and preservation, whereby an individual can (re)construct one's self (1997: 161-164). Feldman also indicates "the home place becomes the centre of experiential space, a place of comfort and security, of care, concern, and commitment, and a place in which the personal meanings of home become tied to the individual's conception of self" (1990: 184). Meanwhile, Korpela provides a further notion that through practices of environmental usage, a coherent sense of self is constructed and maintained (Korpela, 1989:246). By the practices, home places are characterised for sustaining individuals' self-coherence and self-esteem as well as for understanding self-regulation principles (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000:29). Furthermore, Harris and Brown mention, "the home becomes an extension of the sense of self, providing a tangible support of the self-image and a vehicle for experiencing the sense of self" (1996: 188). Therefore, home has a direct connection with self-identity. As Dovey (1985:40) stresses "home as identity", it echoes the proverb "home is where the heart is" and bonds people and their dwellings.

Moreover, home is also a place which enables people to develop relations with others (Harris and Brown, 1996: 188). As Massey suggests, the spatial can be seen as "constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales" and "place is as a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those

networks of social relations and understandings" (1994a: 4). This notion coincides with Gustafson's (2001) statement, that referents of place are organised around personal (the 'Self') and social (the 'Others') categories. In other words, place is about the relationship between self and others, and individual and society. It is based on individual's identification within the society, with/out acceptance or acknowledgment by others. Therefore, a sense of belonging is created within the interaction of the self, collective society and structural positioning (Vasta, 2013: 198).

Sense of belonging is multi-layered; it can be translocal or transnational or contain individuals and groups including a community, group, organisation, locality, nation or region. Meanwhile, belonging can also refer to the material, symbolic and emotional dimensions of life, which contributes to a sense of continuation for migrants in the new dwellings (see also section 3.3). Shared ideas, valuation, daily practices and symbols may be represented in some sort of collective identity and facilitate collective solidarity (Faist, 2000: 192, 195).

On this subject, an authentic sense of place presents a sense of belonging embodying a very deep appreciation of attachment, as Holloway and Hubbard further explain, "making place a strong part of who you are and the way you think about yourselves" (2001:76). These ideas are closely tied up with the concept of home places, as Lupton (1998) declares that home is often idealised as a "territory of the self" (cited in Holloway and Hubbard, 2001:76). Therefore, in the following section, I will extend this idea by discussing the concept of home connected with place.

3.2.2 Connectedness with Place

The concept of home cannot be analysed without examining two interrelated concepts: place and space. In some discourses, space and place are used interchangeably. 'Place' is often regarded as a socio-spatial concept or a geographical location within a social status referring to "appropriate" or "inappropriate" manners (Holloway and Hubbard,

2001:87). Similarly, Relph claims "to be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know your place" (1976:1). Agnew (1987) further defines three elements of place:" location, or space; locale and the sense of place". Although they are regarded as mutually incompatible or competing definitions, they are closely related (Agnew and Duncan, 1989:2). A sense of place is part of the systems of meaning through which people make sense of the world. Rose (1995) further explained "senses of place develop from every aspect of individuals' life experience and … senses of place pervade everyday life and experience" (88). In this way, a sense of place can be seen as a part of the cultural interpretation of the environment around us and the place within (1995:98-99).

Moreover, Holloway and Hubbard (2001: 2001:75) emphasise that a sense of bodily being and feeling "in place" or "at home" can then be where "an individual has established an emotional tie to a place". The emotional bond is crucial for fostering a sense of place, where individual's needs are actually intimate with the place.   With regards to 'a sense of place', Tuan makes a distinction from 'rootedness'; he claims "rootedness implies being at home in an unselfconscious way. Sense of place, on the other hand, implies a certain distance between self and place which allows the self to appreciate a place" (1980: 4). This means "rootedness is unreflexive" (1980:6) and is "a knowing that is the result of familiarity through long residence" while a sense of place is "a knowing that is the result of conscious effort" (1980:8).   Furthermore, some form of rootedness may facilitate practices of everyday routines by instilling a sense of comfort and stability in life. This may extend personal being by evoking individuals' identity through an extended appreciation of customs and traditions and possibilities taking place from their lifeworld linking the past with the future. This notion mirrors that cultural rootedness may provide guiding principles for continual existence and community identity construction, and further facilitate the creation of a "collective home" (Terkenli, 1995:330).

In *Place and Placeless*, Relph's (1976) argument also suggests that a sense of place is important for individual and community identity. He further stresses that a sense of place can be either "authentic/ genuine" or "inauthentic/artificial". He argues that the key to identity of places is *insideness,* "the degree to which a person belongs to and associates himself with a place" (49). Therefore, the more deeply the person feels about a place, the stronger his or her identity is with that place. Relph suggests dualism between *insideness* and *outsideness* to be an essential dialectic of environmental practice and actions: for different people, diverse places take on different degrees of *insideness* and *outsideness.* The development of at-homeness is helpfully analysed in terms of Relph's inside-outside designations (1976: 49-55).

In recent years, some geographers, such as Lefebvre, have challenged this radically neutral style of analysis; he argues absolute space is unable to exist when it is occupied with social activities, it then becomes "relativised and historicised space" (1991:48). Furthermore, he claims, "every society … produces a space, its own space" (31), and suggests a 'trialectics' of spatiality, which scrutinises the diverse entangling of cultural practices, representations and imaginations. Meanwhile, this notion asserts 'space' as a configuration being produced through a three-mode dialectical interaction between perceived, conceived and lived factors (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1999)**.**

Recently, space and place have been conceptualised and used as a methodology to make sense of the world in different ways. For many geographers, places have commonly been theorised as authentic, closed and lived spaces. Place thus implies a distinctive type of space defined and constructed by lived experiences of people. It could be created through "acts of naming" with distinctive practices and imaginations connected with particular social spaces (Hubbard *et.al*, 2004:3-6). Meanwhile, Casey (1996; 1997) presents a phenomenological explanation of space and place. He argues against the notion of 'space' as a neutral, infinite and empty setting, and 'place' as space inscribed with culture. He further argues that place offers a mode for space and time to merge, and so identity and being is directly linked to place (Grabska, 2010:231). Another well-known scholar, de Certeau provides an alternative idea of space and place. He explains the difference between space and place: "… space is a practiced place"

(1984*:* 117). For him, place represents the idea of a particular place for everything and "implies an indication of stability"; furthermore, space is more dynamic, as there are numerous ways of practicing space. He describes space in a linguistic analogy, which is just "like the word when it is spoken" (1984: 117)*.* Therefore, de Certeau's notion of *space* can be regarded as equal to the *place* which has been discussed earlier (Awan, 2003).

On the other hand, Rose (1995) suggested sense of place involves different groups of people in different ways; the same place may mean different things to different groups, as different senses of place are also related to social differences and unequal power relations (Rose, 1995:97). Rose's viewpoint mirrors Massey's (1993:59) notion of a 'progressive sense of place'. Massey suggests a place is "the lotus of complex intersections and outcomes of power geometries that operate across many spatial scales, from the body to the global". Therefore, places are composed of multiple, intersecting social, political and economic relations leading to innumerable spatialities (citied in Hubbard et al, 2004: 6).

3.3 Dialectical Process of Home-Making

While displacement or mobility, identity, belonging and rootedness often become core concepts to discuss and debate on within home studies, in the case of displaced Shan, home and mobility cannot be completely regarded as binary oppositions. The process of home-making is fundamentally dialectical, rather than linear. I argue that displacement cannot simply be seen as loss of place, but also as a process of emplacement. The meaning of home emerges from its dialectical interactions along a set of dimensions (Altman and Gauvain, 1981; Case, 1986, Dovey, 1985; Seamon, 1979).

Sørensen argues that the analysis of displacement should reveal how people continuously construct particular relations to places. In other words, "the experience of displacement and relocation cannot be rendered as a linear process with a final termination, but must be understood as a multiple process that stretches its influence in many directions and continues to include new aspects in an ongoing process of

identifications" (1997:161). Therefore, I suggest home-making is a journey to construct a place to become home, which is an ongoing process of highly complex hom*ing* practices. I divide the process of making home into three main dimensions: physical/spatial, sociocultural and historical/temporal aspects (see Figure 3.2). These are primarily derived from fieldwork data and significant in Shan's displacement and mobility, some aspects on the meaning of home have been taken from other studies, such as Case (1986), Dovey (1985), Terkenli (1995).

In the three-strand classification of sociocultural, physical/spatial and historical/temporal aspects, hom*ing* is dynamic dialectal interaction within and through time. It binds people and their places, with a set of connections between the everyday practices and the wider context and surroundings, as well as the past, the present and the future. Therefore, these processes can be understood as dynamic interactions involving people, place and time. (The classification of three dimensions in home-making is for ease of discussion, but their interwoven relations cannot be fully separated, which is depicted by dotted line instead of solid lines)
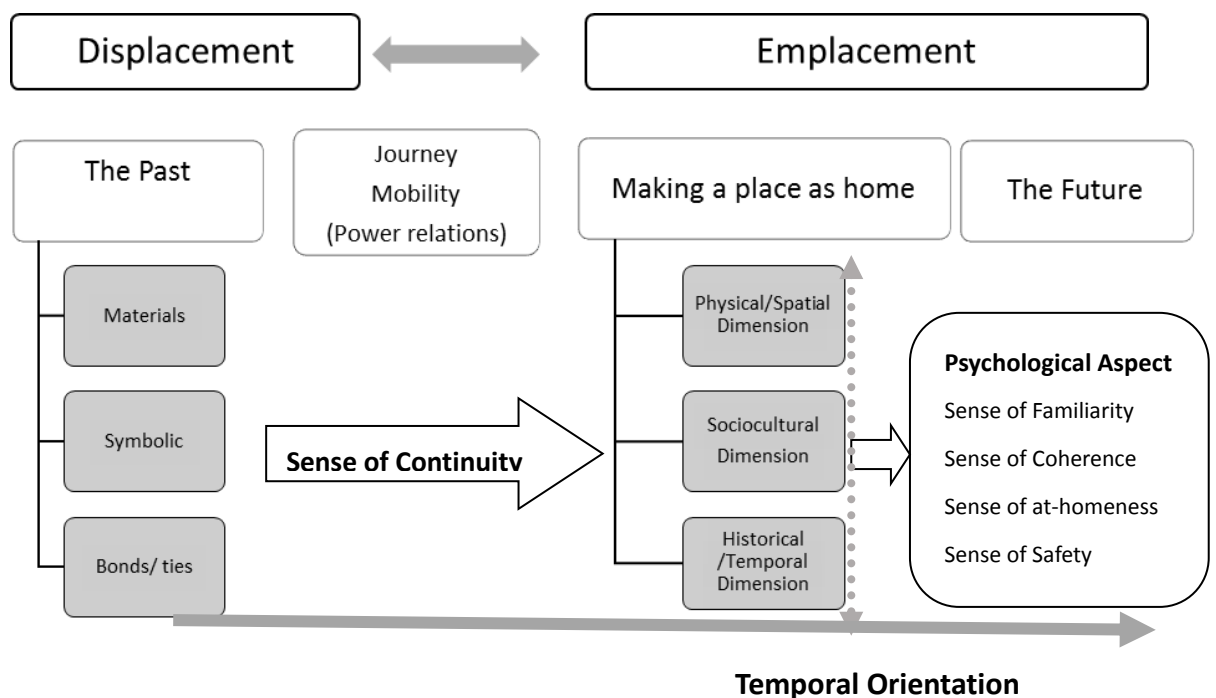
Figure 3.2: A dynamic process of making a place as 'home'

3.3.1 Physical/Spatial Dimension

Displacement and mobility inevitably change the relationships between people and their places. While moving to a new place, it complicates the interactions and involves a dynamic dialectic process between insiders and outsiders, along with raising different levels of social power (Jess and Massey, 1995: 136).

The process of negotiation involves everyday embodied practices which are essential to how people experience the world, while being encoded culturally and socially of physical reality (Cresswell, 2010:20). Therefore, mobility and embodied practices create various "spatial stories" (Cresswell and Merriman, 2011: 5) and may go beyond their original meanings as "weapons of the weak" (Scott, 1985). The everyday operations (e.g. eating, reading, talking, walking, dwelling, shopping, cooking, etc.) can be interpreted into power relations, as Foucault's (1981) argument suggests that, "power is everywhere and that it comes from everywhere" (cited in Holloway and Hubbard, 2001:209).

Michel de Certeau's (1984:91) observation of 'walking' can be one such example. Instead of conducting research 'from above', de Certeau emphasises observation at 'street level' and focuses on the act of walking in the city to illuminate the tactical practices of the weak. Interestingly, he compares walking with speaking in analysing place making; he claims walking is analogous to speaking rather than a linguistic system; speaking "operates within the field of a linguistic system" and it impacts "an appropriation, or reappropriation, of language by its speakers" (1984: xiii). Like a linguistic system, a city has a static dimension and is also structured through names of cartographic 'spaces' that are before walkers as they move around the city space. However, "these names make themselves available to the diverse meanings given them by passers-by" (1984:104), who could "reappropriate" the city of the cartographers and planners and make the best of their situation for their own ends (1984: xiv). In this sense, the simple act of walking could be seen as resistance from pedestrians or dwellers as simultaneously building meaningful 'places' against the notions of social order which have been inscribed on the landscape. Here, de Certeau refers to resistant

operations of everyday spaces as tactical, and tries to distinguish between the strategies of the strong and the tactics of the weak (1984: xix-xx; 35-38).

Within empirical research on migration, some scholars (e.g. Awan, 2003; Nast and Pile, 1998) seek to highlight relations between migrants and an alien place by applying theoretical notions of embodied practices of everyday life, in particular applying de Certeau's notion to explore how people transform their marginalised places in to their 'home' through everyday practices in a foreign land. Awan (2003) focuses on the situation of Pakistani people who live in the UK and herself is a British Pakistani living in Sheffield. Through her eyes, she writes about space and city by using walking and photography as her experience and tool to explore the hidden identities within a city landscape and to describe home-constructing in a foreign country. This involves issues of diaspora and the relationships between the coloniser and the colonised. She draws on de Certeau's work as the tools to analyse the city. She examines a dialectical relationship between margin and the centre and how the margin can be transformed into a home for those people who choose it by writing 'walking' to construct a subjective path within the space. She argues 'home in the margin' is a site in flux between personal memories and spatial experiences, and at the same time a 'tactical' home that constantly reforms itself. She further exposes that through spatial practices people reveal their identity, and the city is a 'canvas' to host diverse identities of those who inhabit it as home.

In similar vein, Wise also offers a spatial theory of everyday life by studying the idea of home. He asserts that "a territory is an *act*, territorialisation, the expression of a territory" (2000: 298) and culture is "a way of behaving", "a way of territorialising" (303) as well as "ways of one making oneself at home" (300). His essay, Home: territory and identity, starts with a story from Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) work, illustrating a child in the dark comforting himself by singing. He indicates that the song begins at home, marks a place and the repetition of simple melodies constructs the space and makes a milieu. He points out through the song the child sings, a space of comfort is created. It is an example of the way people establish personal territories in search for a place of comfort called home. He thus suggests that home is not an original place

where identity takes place and not the place where people 'come from', but a place where people are. He thus argues" identity is grounded in habit; the repetition of action and thought establishes home" (Wise, 2000:297).

This notion echoes Dovey's (1985) concept of 'being-at-home', which is based on patterns of daily routines in familiar places. Such repeated movements along with encountered and bodily practices imbue us with a sense of home and also Henri Lefebvre's notion of 'rhythm' to use as an analysis of interpreting the social world. To Lefebvre, 'rhythm' is part of the production of everyday life; he suggests "everywhere there is rhythm, there is measure, which is to say law, calculated and expected obligation, a project" (2004: 8), as part of social order. Another concept of "place-ballet" developed by David Seamon (1979) also provides a framework for an extended account of relations between people and home. Seamon (1979:16) follows Tuan's and Relph's notions and develops a movement-rest-encounter framework. Basically, he suggests individuals as "body–subjects"; he employs a remarkable vivid metaphor of "body ballet" to decipher how people use space in their daily routines, and extends this term to account for how different groups interact with each other in particular places.

Meanwhile, he uses another phrase "place-ballet" to explain the "choreographed" but complicated movements of numerous bodies concurrently in motion (Seamon, 1979: 54); he further emphasises that people are attached to place both emotionally and in body. This multidimensional attachment is a crucial part of being 'at home' in a place. He suggests attachment and 'at home-ness' could be connected with people's everyday routines and continuation. Therefore, he asserts that between movement and rest is a fundamental dialectical relationship, of which one side is the safety and 'centredness' of home, but the other side is the sense of adventure and unknown risk. He argues that as human beings may have simultaneous desires to be safely at-home, they also move among the unknown places. He concludes, as people move away from home to the 'unknown' places in the end these may become familiar; thus, the notion of home cannot be seen as a fixed concept but an expansion of unknown-turned-familiar (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001:80).

3.3.2 Sociocultural Dimension

Following the argument of an 'unknown' place becoming familiar from the physical/ spatial dimension, migrants face the question of *Otherness*, which involves issues of membership (citizenship) and ownership, reflected in sociocultural contexts (see details in section 6.2). The idea of being 'at home', as Dovey argues, is where "one can feel in control and free from others (1985:46) ". However, to experience home practices is a process of understanding a dialectic and tension under an alien world where others make the rules. This process is essentially dialectic of boundary negotiation (Somerville, 1997: 234)

A boundary is seen as a mark of difference in physical, national, political, racial, linguistic, religious, as well as in symbolic terms. Facing such issues of classification by delineation of boundary, a straightforward contradiction arises between locals and new comers, insiders and outsiders, how people are defined as 'locals' (Jess and Massey, 1995:150) and who defines them (1995:162). This echoes another question: "how long do you have to be in a place to be counted as a local?" (1995: 165). Yet another question is which are temporary and permanent boundaries. As such, a boundary also has fluid and dynamic significance; Haq (2006:2) suggests, a boundary may also be "a signal for opportunity" and could be seen as "potentially permeable, a crossing point, if conditions are conducive", although it may also be "a place of risk, and potential danger". This view mirrors Sibley's (1995:32) description where crossing boundaries could offer anxious moments as one enters a foreign space that is under others' control; it could also be an exciting adventure of transgression. Nast and Pile (1998: 410) also have a similar viewpoint that "crossing boundaries can be liberating and confining and both at the same time". Therefore, boundaries, to a certain degree, or in some situations may also provide security and comfort, as Hall (1995) mentions contact zones of cultures may host various groups and offer them a space to establish a 'co-presence'. The diasporas or displaced groups with their original cultures come into the contact zones and negotiate with other groups (Hall, 1995: 193).

In some studies, researchers overstate the difference between "old typed home" and

"new typed home", supposing they are completely inconsistent (Wang and Wong, 2007: 184). However, as Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) have noted, home is "a veritable storehouse of identity symbols" that maintains place identity (cited in Cuba and Hummon, 1993a:550). Cuba and Hummon (1993a) further argue that those domestic things serving as personal and social symbols can be mobile and used ritually to "transform a *new house* into an *old home".* While on the move, this personalisation of new abodes enables the construction of a coherent sense of personal place identity (550). This shows how migrants retain a continuous way of life, which ties with their past through rituals and habitus in their mobility, to maintain their social order.

A theory of home and everyday life is territorialisation, as Wise reveals; it may facilitate a better explanation of how cultures shift, transform and resist. He claims that the process of home-making is a cultural one. The significance of milieus and territories is cultural, so that particular representation of an object or space is divergently influenced because of culture. Although cultures can share objects and information, they display these differently, such as when same ingredients produce different food. Therefore, one culture varies from another by territorialising in diverse ways (2000: 299-300). He further explains that "we cultivate habits, they are encultured" (2000:303), such as ways of acting, moving, gestures, interaction with materials, surroundings, technologies, which are all cultural. Wise also argues that "our habits are not necessarily our own" and "most are created through continuous interaction with the external world". People thus are a result of their own reactions to the external world and disciplined through habit (Foucault, 1977). In addition, Wise claims that the habits, rituals, practices, ways of thinking and costumes may be closely attached to people travelling to new places, worlds or territories (2000:306). As King (1995: 28) highlights "habitus gives people a sense of their place in the world, a sense which is carried with them and refashioned in the new context when they migrate".

It echoes the notion of Bourdieu (1984) about "habitus" which could be a range of inherited and learned characteristics that shape ways of acting, dispositions, styles of physical movement, cultural tastes and judgements. Bourdieu (1992: 53) suggests habitus is "a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures

predisposed to function as structuring structures". Furthermore, it is "an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 133). As such, it is also the production and reproduction of relationships amongst individuals, society, culture and environments.

Moreover, religion is often tied to culture, therefore, engaging in religious practice is also a way of practicing culture. Case of Shan is one of the examples. Shan culture is closely linked to ritual practices of Theravada Buddhism and follows the Buddhist calendar. Building on some recent research on forced migration and religion, Horstmann and Jung (2015) argue that "religion is more than just a relief from suffering or a source of hope…., it can be an integral part of refugees' public space making" and they believe it is "a lens for understanding the kinetics of homemaking in often hostile environments" and also "a tool with which displaced people rebuild a sense of homeland, belonging" (1). Meanwhile, refugees are able to "retake control over their lives" to shape spaces while "placing themselves in and outside of the international regime of refugee protection" (2). By studying Buddhist Karen refugees in Mae Sot valley in Thailand, Rangkla (2013) reveals how Buddhist webs of connections have, spiritually and materially, created a space for Karen refugees to maintain their continuity in religious practice, to (re)construct locality and to create a sense of place and belonging in a new social environment. The refugees also re-emplace themselves through celebratory occasions. Rangkla's research mirrors Dudley's (2011) finding at Karenni refugee camp in Thailand. Karenni refugees employ different methods and practices to make their camp life more bearable and habitual. Dudley reveals that through acts of material culture and processes of production and consumption (i.e. food and textiles) Karenni refugees "repeatedly perform the past, continually (re-)creating and sensorially (re-)experiencing it in the present" (751-752). Those experiences maintain continuity with their past and produce a feeling of being at home in the camps.

3.3.3 Historical/Temporal Dimension

As Terkenli mentioned, "home regions are culturally constructed and geographically and historically contingent" (1995:324). *Time* is one of crucial elements for home-making, which plays a key role as a vertical strand to bond the past, the present and the future together, through memories represented in the form of home place and daily practices of continuity and familiarity creating a feeling of "being-at-home" (Dovey, 1985: 43-44). Home-making is thus an ongoing dynamic process; home" cannot be produced at once; it has its time and dimension continuum and it is a gradual product of the dweller's adaptation to the world" (Pallasmaa, 1995: 133). Home essentially shows dynamic, fluid and varying relationships between people and place, which combines changes, stability, repetition and rhythm, linking the past to the future (Werner et al, 1985: 6). Therefore, including 'time' in the discussion of this conceptual framework allows grasping how 'time' is entwined with formulating, strengthening, amending or reconstructing Shan's perceptions of home and relationships with home places in various historical encounters.

Flynn (2007) claims that time and place are both significant elements to develop a sense of safety, wholeness of life, entrenched pre-existing networks and bonds and roots. All of the above may develop over generations, which contribute to a sense of home in a specific spatial area, and simultaneously create a deeper sense of belonging to a wider homeland. In the present day context lived locality may become 'home' through interaction of physical and social aspects of the place, thus linking the sense of home to socio-cultural and economic belonging and attachment. Participation within the socio-economic structures of the locality facilitated people to develop social relations, which contributed to a sense of belonging in the region, as did personal friendships and family networks. Therefore, the locality was considered an extension of the immediate home, so that the individual felt at home. This can be attributed to familiarity with the geographical setting, along with the experience of a secure sense of spatial identity (469-470).

Therefore, home places not only serve fundamental personal and societal needs, but

also as human and socio-cultural requirements, referred as material and symbolic characteristics for those who experience them (Terkenli, 1995: 324). These cannot be only seen in individual life histories (Paasi, 1991: 249); instead, they shape the 'identity' in a given spatial and temporal context (Antonsich, 2010b:124). In this vein, home region can also be a cluster of overlapping and ever-transforming personal and collective relationships. This concept supports the basic notion discussed by Altman and Gauvain "that homes reflect the dialectic interplay of individuality and society", especially their temporal dimension (1981:283).

Besides, the past or existing social ties reduce a sense of estrange and maintain continuity of experiences. According to Flynn (2007), family and friendship networks were the major support structure for majority of migrants. While travelling, migrants often moved or chose an area of resettlement along with the company of family and friends; they also relied on their support in the process. Moreover, mutual experiences of the past and shared experiences of displacement obviously made development of these wider migrant networks easier. Migration created some possibilities of employment and dwelling, and also provided an easier setting to rebuild their social support networks and friendships that had been disrupted or destroyed during displacement. The social ties offered a space where feelings of security and belonging were reconstructed amongst people with a 'similar' background. Rodger's (2008) research corresponds with Flynn's findings; in this study when some refugees crossed the border in to South Africa, the Mozambican men who were already working in South Africa began establishing networks of patronage by supporting newly arrived friends and relatives to enter the labour market (2008: 387). These bonds facilitated feelings of familiarity, security and belonging; moreover, they allowed connections with the past and offered a base for the future.

Furthermore, Hammond (1999) focuses on the Ethiopian refugees in a Sudanese camp, who resettled in Ada Bai, a different part of Ethiopia. She found shared experiences of refugee's life played an influential role in reconstruction of their neighbourhood networks during their repatriation. Through mutual experience of staying together in a

refugee camp for a long time their networks were fortified by the sentiments of being closely knit. These extensive 'kin networks' were re-interpreted as being far more intimate than to prior displacement, in particular during the absence of close relatives. As such, the new redefined kinship and social networks provided returnees some familiarity with their new 'kin' who had shared experiences; therefore, it was not necessary to return to their home places of origin. It is clearly evident that the ties between 'kin' and 'home' were alternatively defined by revising the connections between social relationships and physical place (238-239).

Hammond's findings mirror those of Nast and Pile's observations; in particular, networks can be understood to be "multiple, dynamic and productive of the always changing continuities that make up the proxemics of everyday life" (1998). Networks can also be seen as changing trajectories, mobilities and sites of interaction, rather than simply grids of power or just "fixed coordinates on a social map" (1998: 409). Furthermore, the extent of networks from any locality out to other regions using the vivid term 'hairy' gives the sense of entanglement(s) of networks where either the individuals feel at the centre of their world or they are not welcomed; in other words, being "in place" or "out of place" (Cresswell, 1996). However, these network entanglements may also provide a space for them to negotiate these relationships and further construct new places.

3. 4 Re-territorialisation: Home Territory as Translocal Lived Space

As mentioned earlier, Flynn (2007: 478) emphasises the existence of immediate social and personal relations are crucial to make a place as 'home'; in particular, they facilitate the reconstruction of and securing existing social, economic and ethno-cultural identities. The re-establishment of 'home' also needs a sense of spatial security, within which it can be extended out into the wider environment. As a result, home places may extend ties to larger surroundings, such as neighbourhood, community, town, nation or transnational social field. Therefore, the theoretical concepts of dynamic dialectical relationships of home-making should go beyond a given local context, and the scope needs to examine multiple connected places in wider socio-cultural and historical

contexts.

In order to understand the dynamics of place and multiple networks, I draw on Sack's (2004) notion of place-making as *weaving* which elucidates the idea of place as a 'loom'. This idea can be used to explore the changing status, power and meaning of territory and place (Brun, 2001: 16). It can help explore the ways in which Shan actively make sense of displacement in their everyday lives, along with discussing their translocal affiliation and how they (re)construct their translocal lived space -here, I call it 'home territory'- in multiple spatial scales and their connections. The home territory can be regarded as the space of interaction created through a variety of Shan engagements in translocality. I divide these interactions into three main dynamic dialectical processes of home-making: physical/spatial (i.e.everyday embodied practices, circulation, mobility), sociocultural (i.e. habitus, social ties) and historical/temporal (i.e. sense of continuality, connected with the past, present and future) dimensions.

Sack's theoretical framework clearly suggests that examining the structure and dynamics of a place can be a suitable instrument to understand the significance of place-making. It addresses our "existential concerns of permanence and change, and the development of daily rhythms and pulses" (2004: 244). In fact, the most natural way is to consider these elements of reality in terms of *weaving*, which brings up the idea of a place as something like a 'loom' (244-245). Sack's key point is:

> in making places, we are making something that possesses the structure and dynamics of a loom, helping us draw together and weave elements of threads of reality in new ways. There is then the loom (or the structure and dynamics of place), the threads (or elements of reality), and there is also us, the weavers (or place-makers) (2004: 245).

He further highlights the structure and dynamics of the loom and features of the weave. He asserts "all places have the same structure or loom-like quality consisting of three dynamically interrelated components (that work like the heddles and shuttles of a real

loom)', including the "in/out of place rules" (as the function of boundary), "spatial flows or interactions", and the "issue of surface and depth, or appearance and reality" (2004: 245). In addition, all three interconnected ways play a fundamental role in spatial causality while rules and flows create a weave that shape the landscape of a place. As such, making any place is constructing this dynamic interrelationship. He explicates at length that these three ingredients allow us to bring together elements of reality. The elements are like threads from three huge "spools or realms", each referring to nature, social relations and meaning that correspond with and strengthened by the configuration of the loom. Therefore, each place weaves together threads or elements; people use these three realms of meaning, nature and social relations to represent qualities of the self to strengthen the significance of link between self and place (2004: 246).

It is also important to note that the weave is not limited to one place but "a system of places", in particular to see places as nodes in a network and their interconnections within "the space of flows" (Castells, 1996). Sack's (2001) model provides a spatial and wider understanding of connections between multiple scales of places beyond one single realm, by exploring places weaving different strands of components together to show things flowing through space. Once places weave together, they create a context that allows articulating things (2001: 112) and form a 'translocal lived space', which is what I mention home territory. However, his theoretical framework ignores who is doing the weaving as it does not address why place matters. Therefore, he suggests bypassing who is in control. This suggestion could lead to a bias without considering the power relations, which permeate into designing institutional regulations in the society.

Whether mobility or displacement could contribute to the connections among places, in particular as dynamic movements (trajectories or journeys) overlap, interconnections facilitate to weave a net over different places and time periods. The net can vary or evolve over time as social relations change. de Certeau (1984) suggests an extra layer above the existing urban fabric made of countless trajectories of people on the move. This vivid image of lived layer co-existing with mainstream urban space

can be used in this research. I suggest that the home territory woven by displaced Shan can be seen as an extra layer on existing social relations in northern Thai borderland. It is the space that Lefebvre named 'differential space' (1991:52); it is the space of new cultural politics of difference within which people negotiate various relationships and further construct new places (Nast and Pile, 1998: 410-411).

It is important to notice that networks in this research do not necessarily need to be strong for the entire Shan society on both sides of borders to hold together. As Friedkin (2004) mentions, it may be in directly or indirectly connected by "paths of positive (weak or strong) interpersonal ties" (2004: 417), and only needs to be sufficient for Shan to coexist with other groups in their present dwellings. Besides, the social cohesion does not necessarily entail cultural and social homogeneity or establish social and political order without diversity and dissent in Shan society (Marc et al, 2012; Norton and de Haan, 2013).

Based on the above discussed ideas, I argue that home-making is also a journey for displaced Shan, where status is negotiated within external environment. The weaving of their home territory (re)creates the net of familiarity and security, even though this home territory is an extra layer on the land of 'Others'.

3.5   Concluding Remarks

The meaning of home often varies for every individual. As discussed earlier, a growing number of scholars suggest home is a plural and dynamic concept without a fixed definition. It often goes beyond a physical place and contains social and symbolic meanings, which underlie construction of personal identity or collective belonging and facilitate feelings of familiarity, coherence and safety. As such, some argue that home is not an essentialist concept; for instance, according to Blunt and Dowling (2006: 23) "home does not simply exist, but is made", and is "a process of creating and understanding forms of dwelling and belonging". Meanwhile, when an individual feels 'in place' or 'at home', it can be seen as a symbol of sentimental attachment to a place. Over time the sense of 'at home-ness' may create a deeper sense of belonging to a

wider home place, ranging across different scales from a neighbourhood, community, region, nation-state, or even translocal or transnational social fields.

In this sense, home-making is dynamic and ongoing process. In order to a further understanding of how mobility (re)shaping the relationships between displaced people and their home places and how homing practices may affect mobility, in this research places home-making in a wider context to explore the dialectical relationships in physical/ spatial, sociocultural and historical /temporal dimensions. Home places can be seen as the interrelationship between these three aspects which are closely interactive rather than completely exclusively independent. As Dovey (1985) argues, home is a representation of relationships that bond people and their world as well as a set of connections with people and places.

The 'place' in this research does not necessarily mean home of 'origin', a fixed location, whereas the construction of a sense of being 'at home' can also refer to the current provisional dwelling. Even though people in displacement or on the move, as Casey (1996:17) emphasises that 'we do always find ourselves in places', whether at 'home' or not. Therefore, in this research does not see displacement and emplacement as opposite two phenomena, while people continuously construct and make particular relations to places during their displacement or mobility. The process of constructing place affiliation may lead to both forms of home idea: the current dwelling as 'real' home and the symbolic 'ideal' home in the past. These two types may combine in a dialectical process for a basis of future home.

However, in mobility or displacement, a home place that refers to a sense of belonging may simultaneously create another sense of segregation to those who do not belong to it, while 'insiders' try to exclude those who are 'outsiders' or 'others' from their place. This involves the concept of *boundary,* which creates differences and similarities and often entwined with exercise of power. It is important to note under what conditions boundaries are set up and in what situations boundaries could be erased, so that they have fluid and dynamic significance and could be a signal for opportunity. Therefore, boundaries in some situations may also provide a chance to create a co-presence for

different groups to negotiate with each other.

In this research, I explore the dynamics of a place, and shed light on translocally connected places. Sack's (2001, 2004) notion of place-making explores how displaced Shan (re)construct their home region by weaving together three main threads of home across different scales of places and form networks of safety and familiarity to hold together the scattered displaced Shan. Over time, home-making is a process of re-territorrialisation and a dynamic change of people's translocal lived space beyond geopolitical boundaries. Therefore, based on these theoretical concepts, in this study I will explore the relationships between displaced Shan and their provisional marginalised 'in-between' places and see how they weave those places together as a net of security and familiarity through everyday embodied practices to (re)construct the region as their 'homeplaces' for their future generations.

In the following chapter will explore the relationship between the contested powers and the transformation of the Shan ethnoscape, from an historical angle to highlight how Shan's lives have been seriously affected and marginalised in the shadows of formation of the modern nation-states; also how their historical context and the cultural components (e.g. rituals, habitus, language and materiality, etc.) together with Shan's mobility (either voluntary or enforced) circulating among Tai community, have offered some familiar lived ingredients which, later on, have facilitated and secured the journeys of exiles as well as provided shelter for displaced Shan.

CHAPTER 4 Contested Territory and Shan Ethnoscape

4.1 Introduction: Territory and Contested Powers

"Tai people are always in flight during their lifetime. In the past, my father (a Tai Lüe) escaped from Chinese communists in Yunnan to Shan State, but unfortunately, now it is my turn to flee from Shan State to Thailand" (Informal interview, a Shan student who stayed in a Chinese boarding school 17-12-2012).

"My [maternal] grandfather joined the Chinese troops during WWII from Yunnan [in China] coming to Keng Tung [in Shan State], and after then many Chinese [did not return and] stayed in my hometown, they were always called by Shan people 'Ke dok hai' (Chinese stragglers). I only knew very few [things] about my grandfather; I did not even know where his hometown was [...] Also, I never met my father's family or relatives either. I only knew he could speak many different languages, including Hindi, Shan, Burmese, Lahu and English. My father mentioned to me that he had even served for the British Army as a cook, and followed the army to India, so that he could speak good English and write English well, but I always suspect he could not be just a cook" (interviews, 30-11-2012)

"In 1971, after I finished high school, I went to Laos because my brother worked for USA CIA   while Americans were based in Laos for the Vietnam War[34], so I stayed with my brother and worked with soldiers for airstrip for two years [...]Now I fled from Shan State and worked along the Thai-Burma border. Our lives are not stable; [we have] no good government [...]; who would like to stay in Thailand? Maybe only the young people who were born in Thailand" (interviews, 07-12-2012).

These comments, recorded in my fieldnotes, were made by an elderly informant who lived in a Shan migrant community. He self-identified himself as 100% Shan, but mentioned younger Shan under 25 years without talking about Shan State were 50 or 30% of Shan.

The life stories above not only show blurred ethnic boundaries of Shan which were discussed in chapter 1, but also reveal that as modern nation-states were created in Southeast Asia, they turned Tai-speaking people into transnational ethnic minorities spreading across different political entities. Meanwhile, the national oppression in Burma and China respectively led to the marginalisation of Tai-speaking groups in countries where they belonged and also led to their mobility. This has significantly

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[34] Leary, William M. (1999/2000). "CIA Air Operations in Laos, 1955-1974.", *Studies in Intelligence.* Winter 99-00 [Online] Available from: https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/winter99-00/art7.html. [Accessed: 12/03/2015].

transformed the meanings of border-crossing practices and further affected their lives over generations. Focusing on Shan states in Burma, people's lives in these states were interwoven throughout the history of entangled politics of the Shan, Burma, China and Thailand in particular from the mid-20th century onwards (Davis, 2006:92). Since the Burmese military seized power in the 1962 coup, Shan have been suffering from ethnic conflicts and human right abuses under the Burmese military junta. At the same time, the Tai groups (Chinese Shan) in Yunnan were also affected by the civil war in China between the Chinese nationalists and Communists, as well as by the Great Leap Forward in 1958 and the Cultural Revolution in 1966-1976 (see Panyagaew, 2008). Those great upheavals are seen as the greatest changes in Tai states and led to various Tai-speaking groups crossing borders to nearby areas for the next few decades. The national expansion in those countries led to similar ethnic turmoil on the borders of Burma, China, Thailand and Laos. Therefore, when Shan fled from their homelands, they encountered other Tai people from neighbouring regions or countries in similar situations, which further created a growing sense of shared oppression and provoked sharing a sense of Tai community.

In this chapter, to explore the relations between displaced Shan and their home places, it is necessary to trace the historical context and the current transformation of Shan ethnoscape in the Tai social world, as Terkenli emphasises, "home regions are cultural constructed and geographically and historically contingent" (1995:324). Without exploring the historical context, we may arrive at a de-contextualised view of the Shan's social world. Moreover, Redclift (2016) also argues that "defining the relationship between refugees and the nation-state has been a fraught historical process" (118). In particular, the historical context addresses the relation of the geopolitical landscape of militarily contested powers and Shan resistance, which is vital to the analysis of Shan's large-scale displacement after Burma's independence from British colonisation.

Regarding the state formation and its resultant impact on the flight of refugees, Keely (1996) notes that the creation of refugee is rooted in the geopolitical structure (1046), and further argues that the three bases of refugee flows - "multinational conflict", "revolution", and "state implosion" - have continually caused refugee movements in

the 20th century (1056). However, factors which precipitate forced migration can be more multifaceted and reveal complicated webs of causation (Benezer and Zetter, 2014:307), such as partition of India and Pakistan, ethnic genocide of Rwanda, environmentally induced displacement in Bangladesh, etc.; the factors can also extend to conflicts between states due to a growing rise of intensity of border disputes (Donnan and Wilson, 1999:3), such as Iraq and Kuwait, Israel and Lebanon, Greece and Turkey, Serbia and Bosnia and Croatia, etc. People could flee, be forced out or be made 'stateless' following the foundation of nation-state, with ethnic, religious or political reasons (Keely, 1996: 1057).

As the dominant model of global political organisation, nation-state plays a crucial role in the (re)production of the "manifestations of territoriality" (Keely, 1996: 1051) and makes efforts to control, banish or defeat "centrifugal otherness", in order to prevent movements or solidarity from ethnic others (Paasi, 1999: 69), so that multiple nations can be moulded in to one state under its control. However, this kind of state-centred territorialisation often occurs through violence in both physical and symbolic ways. It is apparently that Shan case is one example.

Therefore, chapters 4, 5 and 6 mainly focus on three themes, place (territory), mobility and survival tactics respectively, while Chapter 7 extends the concept of the cohesive network with translocal connections to link the three themes together. In this chapter, I draw on largely secondary data supplemented with some of my own empirical data from life histories, and divide it into two main sections: The first section shows during reign of adjacent empires how the Tai principalities struggled for their autonomy and shared a Tai brotherhood through a "tacit alliance" (Hsieh, 1995) while they were squeezed in the pre-colonial period. Meanwhile, the section also displays the relations between the Tai ordinary people and the rulers, to draw attention to the flexibility of sovereignty of ancient states and Tai's mobility.

The second section explores how contested colonial powers and formation of modern nation-states led to transforming the meanings of mobility as the borders turned from being bridges to becoming barriers. This has significantly affected the lives of Shan

people, border-crossing practices including encompassed kinship, monastic and trade networks, and increased vulnerability of Shan to manipulation and exploitation by national expansion, along with interplay of political powers during the prolonged anarchic period. In the following section, I look at the ruling system of Tai principalities in the pre-colonial period, in particular relationships between Shan states and other Tai principalities in neighbouring countries as well as how those Tai speaking groups struggled for their independence between adjacent empires.

4.2 Pre-colonial Period

4.2.1 Multi-Centred Tai principalities: "Consensus-Based Systems"

During the pre-colonial period, Tai societies were run by several independent principalities, based on fluid, "consensus-based systems" (Davis, 2006: 92). Those systems reflected both independence and interdependence of each Tai principality and showed diplomatic relationships between numerous capitals (96). Within these systems, they created alliances, split or reformed new partnerships. Although they paid tribute to neighbouring empires, these small kingdoms still maintained, to some degree, their own independent governance, as they were not fully incorporated into larger countries. They were also tied together by a range of aspects which allowed their interdependence: kinship, trade and monastic networks, which facilitated to create a multi-centred region (92-96).

As to the origins of the Tai, nowadays, this is still unclear, but some believe that Tai people originally emerged in south-western China as a distinctive ethnic group. Their migration was ongoing as they moved to new places where there were tender greens and clean water, but sometimes their movement could be very large due to wars, invasion or new immigrants from the north (Sai Aung Tun, 2009). There is an increasing consensus from various literatures that from the 12th century onwards, a unique Tai culture was emerging in the upland region that spanned across the modern territories of north-eastern Burma, northern Thailand, north-western Laos, and China's Yunnan

Province (Giersch, 2006:26). In particular, when Nan-chao[35] was defeated by the Mongol troops in 1253, a southwardly movement of the Tai people was instigated (Cadchumsang, 2011: 37; Sai Aung Tun, 2009). They followed the big rivers and their tributaries and came down from the mountains of southern Yunnan into Mao valley of the Shweli River to form a beachhead to migrate into Assam, Burma, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia (Sai Aung Tun, 2009:4). Meanwhile, since the Bagan[36] Kingdom (Bagan had been the capital of several ancient kingdoms in Burma) was conquered by the Mongol army in 1287, some Tai people were freed from the Bagan Kingdom so that the Tai kingdoms started to establish themselves as a number of small states (Coedès 1966:129-30, cited in Cadchumsang, 2011: 37). Sir George Scott's late 19th-century records list the major Shan states in the form of principalities. Among them there were 17 ruled by Shan princes (*saopha*), 17 governed by senior officials (*myosa*) and 8 run by hill chiefs (*ngwegunhmu*). In addition, Chao Tzang Yawnghwe (1987) mentions that there were 11 Shan states in Yunnan.

Even though there are some debates whether Nan-chao was a Tai kingdom or not (see also Leach, 1954: 36; Sai Aung Tun, 2009:8-12; Cadchumsang, 2011:35), in the ancient period several proverbs were revised and used to support Tai unity and the common good,and also to promote reviving the former glory and achievements of Nan-chao, which led to achieving greatness in the later kingdom of Muang Mao Long (a glorious and powerful kingdom of *Tai Mao*) in 13th century   (Sai Aung Tun, 2009: 14-15). Even during my fieldwork, I could often see the current Shan resistance force, SSA-S or the ex-Shan resistance army, like MTA, used Nan-chao and *Sao Sua Kha Fa* (the greatest Tai

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[35]According to Leach, Nan-chao is the empire of the Shan (Leach, 1954:36). But there are various disputes and challenges about Nan-chao was built up by Tai or its branch Ai-Lao (Ngai Lao). Sai Aung Tun (2009:8) mentioned that in AD 650 the Ai Lao rulers united and organised six Chao states into one powerful confederated state named Nan-chao. Nan-chao State was the creation of the Ai Lao (Ngai Lao) branch of Tai people. But some hold different viewpoints, they argue the name given in the list of Nan-chao rulers do not sound like Tai names, because the Tai had no rule for using the last element of the father's name as the first element of the name of the son. This argument does not have much merit, because such a system prevailed among Tai Mao or Dehong Tai in the past. They also used family names. Moreover, a check on the names on the list of Nan-chao rulers makes it apparent that the rule linking the names of the father and son applies only to a few, not to all the rulers (Sai Aung Tun, 2009: 12). But Backus (1981) reveals that the dialect spoken by Nan-chao leaders is *Lolo*, which is classified as a dialect in Tibeto-Burman language family (Cadchumsang, 2011: 35).
[36]Bagan was located in the dry central plains of the country, on the eastern bank of the Ayeyarwady River, 145 kilometres southwest of Mandalay.

ruler of *Muang Mao Long*) as symbols in different forms of pictures or statues to provoke Shan-ness and unify displaced Shan.

According to Conway (2009), the Tai *muang* (*mong) system* was widely used for the politics of inland Southeast Asia before 19th century. The rulers of *muang* were known as *saopha* which could refer to the Tai princes, or the chiefs dwelling in hills of exterior extents. A *Muang* could mean a township, a city or a state, which displayed a basic unit for a political and social administration, and functioned through "mutually beneficial relationships in defence, trade and social interaction" (31). Within this system, primary affiliations were to the village and township; however, they could also "form alliances, or split and re-ally in new federations" (Davis, 2006: 95). Based on research in Sipsongpanna, Hsieh (1995) addresses that in pre-modern period four Tai speaking groups, such as *Tai Yuan* in Lan Na (Thailand), *Tai Khün* (Shan) in Keng Tung (northeastern Burma), *Tai Lao* in Lan Zhang (Laos) and *Tai Lüe* in Sipsongpanna (Yunnan, China) often interacted with one another, both in interstate affairs and in prevalent contact. With similar speaking dialects, ordinary people freely moved back and forth. In particular when any of the four Tai states were attacked, they could flee to other states to seek refuge temporarily. It formed a kind of "tacit alliance" as "political unification" (306)*,* although these four states independently received different official titles from China, Thailand, Burma and Laos and also established their own regimes with numerous principalities (307).

There is evidence from one of the informants, whose grandfather was a *Saopha Muang Wan*[37] (a Tai prince of Wan state). He recalled that in the past, Tai states in both Yunnan and Shan State interacted closely and frequently, and most of them had kinships. The *Saophas* among those states usually held meetings regularly every year to share various affairs within their Tai states and discussed how to maintain their security and manage affairs under the control of British and Chinese rules. Both sides of the Tai states did not think they belonged to different countries, for themselves, they called those Tai who lived in Tai states Yunnan as *Tai Nüe* (which means Northern Tai, in

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[37] *Muang Wan* is one of the traditional Shan states located in Yunnan Province, China, different from the Chinese administrative units.

"upper course of the Salween River"; the Burmese call them Chinese Shan or Shan Tayok) and other Tai states in Burma as *Tai Tau* (which means Southern Tai, in "lower course of the Salween River") (see also Hasegawa, 1996: 84-86, cited in Michio, 2007: 188). The former refers to Shan in Yunnan of China, whereas the latter specifies Shan people living in Shan State of Burma and both usages are applied near the Sino-Shan border.

In order to maintain autonomous rights, some of these *Tai Nüe* states used to be tributaries to the Burmese kings. But after the delineation of the border between the British and the Chinese, all these states were conceded to China and a great number of *Tai Nüe* moved to Shan states of Burma (see the relationships of Tai tributaries in next section). The rulers of *Tai Nüe* could speak Chinese while the commoners stayed distinctively Tai and ethnologically belonged to the *Tai Long*, the largest Tai- speaking group in Burma (Sai Aung Tun, 2009: 24; see also Lebar et al, 1964:191). In 1949, when the battles between the PLA (People's Liberation Army) and KMT[38] (Kuomintang, Chinese Nationalist Party, also National People's Party) took place in China, many Tai royal families and their followers escaped from Yunnan for seeking refuge in their Tai brother states in Shan State of Burma.

For this kind of multi-centred Tai political system, Davis (2006:96) uses the metaphor of the "Indra's Net", from the Buddhist thinker Sivaraksa Sulak (1990) to see the capital of a federation as the centre of a spider's web, a hub on the network. He describes as below,

> a social model, "Indra's Net," that could be used here to describe the Tai system. Indra's Net is "a spider's web in which at each node appears a mirror which reflects all the other mirrors and vice versa indefinitely. In this way, each infinitesimal part encodes the entire whole within it [,]....a form of political organisation that emphasises....[i]nter and independence in which power is not centralised but exists equally in every node.....Relationship and connection between groups is thus vital" (Sulak, 1990:37).

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[38] KMT led by Chiang Kai-Shek lost the civil war against the Chinese Communists led by Mao Zedong in 1947. The former then withdrew to Taiwan with a number of his followers.

However, being squeezed between adjacent empires, the Tai states ceded multiple sovereignties to several larger empires at various times, including China, Lan Na[39], Siam[40] and Burma. They sometimes made alliances between some polities or through royal marriages. The power relations were based on the ownership of people rather than land; I will address this in the subsequent section.

4.2.2 Multi-Tributary Relations: Tactics of Independence

In the Tai *muang* system, relations mainly relied on political deals which were based on loyalty to a local ruler, who was committed to a more powerful overlord. This scheme in economic and social terms was bound by a tribute, a form of tax or various services, and an annual tribute ceremony to guarantee their allegiance. Conway (2009) took an interesting example as below to show the tactics Shan rulers used for dealing with relationships with China and Burma. Basically, the Shan ordinary people paid tax to the House of their local ruler, and the minor rulers paid to the senior princes or chiefs. Then the senior princes or chiefs paid tribute to China and Burma as tactics to appease them, in particular when they felt under threat. The Shan *saopha* were allowed to attend the Burmese court and sat in the order of precedence in front of the king. The senior Shan *saopha* were at the same status as Burmese Governors while the junior *saopha* were counterpart to minor Burmese officials. The tribute which they presented to the king was based on their wealth and power.

In contrast to partaking in the Burmese court, the Shan *saopha* tributary to China went to *Muang Meng*, a Shan principality in Yunnan, to receive their tribute dress through the Governor of Yunnan rather than the Chinese court. The tribute dragon dress and silver seals stamped with Chinese characters, symbolised power and holiness. In return, the northern Shan *saopha* had to offer a large amount of silver, gems and all kind of goods as well as provided manpower, artisans and military support in time of war. When the Shan *saopha* wore the Chinese tribute robe, it was a symbol of authority and

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[39] A northern Thai Kingdom between 13 and 18 centuries means "Kingdom of Million Rice Fields", and its last capital city was Chiang Mai.

[40] Thailand's old name

showed their ties with China. Sometimes a tactic was used by the Shan rulers as they owned two sets of tribute dresses, so they wore on state occasions, as appropriate. There were Chinese and Burmese representatives at some courts who kept an eye on the Shan and reported back to their governments (Conway, 2009: 31-34).

Sometimes the Shan principalities tolerated Burmese occupants due to threats of invasion from adjacent *Siam*, but in some cases they also resisted Burmese authority, particularly when Burmese army was concentrating on conflicts elsewhere or when demands from Burmese tributes were beyond their means, they might appeal to China. In order to avoid drawing China into their disputes, the Burmese king often amended their demands. However, the Chinese and Burmese often required more manpower than the Shan were prepared to send and when their targets were not met they invaded Shan territory, using the slightest provocation as an excuse (Conway, 2009: 33). Therefore, in addition to paying a great deal of tribute, sometimes these Shan principalities were forced to send their heirs to the Burmese court, including their daughters, sisters, or nieces to be queens or consorts of Burmese kings (Cadchumsang, 2011: 39). Moreover, Shan s*aopha* also enlisted hill dwellers to help protect them from Burmese and Chinese invasions. Sometimes they used guerrilla tactics. However, they could not be relied on as permanent allies in this situation of fluctuating power relations (Conway, 2009: 34).

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, many Tai states were embroiled in the wars launched by Lan Na and Siam in their battles with Burma. It was a time of significant movement, mostly forced resettlement of war prisoners and traders, including Tai in eastern Shan states (Conway, 2009: 34) and *Tai Lüe* in Sipsongpanna (Panyagaew, 2008: 309). In fact, Lan Na was a kingdom of one of the Tai-speaking people (*Tai Yuan* or *Khon Muang*, who live in Northern Thailand), and it once enlarged its power and territory over parts of present Shan State, Burma, Sipsongpanna in Yunnan Province, China and Luang Probang in Laos (Ongsakul, 2005: 53). But later on in the 18th century, when Lan Na became Siam's tributary state, it was suffering a serious economic crash and manpower deficiency. Following the defeat of the Burmese by the Siamese, in order to

re-establish Lan Na, the ruler of Lan Na[41] sent an army into the eastern Shan states and removed thousands of people, who were forcibly marched to Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang and Nan for resettlement, so that they became part of the Siamese state (Panyagaew, 2008: 309; Yasuda, 2008:48; Conway, 2009: 34).

Except for those early settlers of war immigrants, Pawakapan (2006: 30), citing Ratanaporn Sethaul (1989: 65-66), pointed out that in the 19th century those Tai traders who moved between the Shan states and northern Thailand often travelled "to Chiang Mai via Muang Fang [north of Chiang Mai] or Mae Hong Son and a number of Shan settlements were established in those areas, particularly the latter which came to be a predominately Shan place." Consequently, Chiang Mai became a home for local *Tai Yuan*, *Tai Khün*, *Tai Lüe*, and *Tai Long* (Tai Yai, in Thai) as well as an intermediary trading post with many different kinds of markets, and long-distance caravan traders which were mostly conducted by Yunnanese and Shan traders who travelled between Yunnan, Lan Na and Burma (Ongsakul, 2005: 171-175; Yasuda, 2008:48; Conway, 2009: 34)[42]. The formation of Chiang Mai as home for various Tai speaking groups later become a shelter for displaced Shan in the post-colonial period, which I will discuss in the chapters 6 and 7.

4.2.3 Multi-Shared Circuits: a pan-regional bond

Beyond the political level of a multi-centred, consensus-based system, I focus on relations between individual Tai and their principal rulers to explore individual Tai's freedom of movement between *baan* (villages) or *muang* (states). I suggest that the frequent folk contact also facilitates to hold the independent states together as networks. Through a number of multi-layered threads of mobile figures within this region, it contributed to a shared culture. A significant feature was people's face-to-

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[41] King Kawila was appointed as the first king of Chiang Mai in 1782 to restore Lan Na (Yasuda, 2008:48).
[42]Therefore, the Shan had built close relations with the people of Lan Na and shared cultural and religious similarities with them. Some had settled down in Lan Na and were assimilated into local communities, while others traded and travelled back and forth between Tai states and Lan Na. In the pre-colonial period, there had never been obvious demarcation lines between Lan Na and its neighbouring Tai states (Ongsakul,2005: 171-175; Conway, 2009: 34)

face interactions, which encompassed kinship, monastic and trade networks. Such networks helped exchange information within those multiple nodes and in part created a multi-centred region.

Cited from Dodd (1996: 190), Davis (2006: 95) mentions that Tai have always organised themselves according to places, which is similar to Michio's (2007: 188) suggestion. Based on the views of ethno-historian, Hasegawa Kiyoshi (1996: 84-86), Michio points out Tai tend to have two methods of identification: one is through *muang* of birth, and the other is geographical. These notions facilitate an understanding of how Tai people are attached to their homeland, but I argue it did not forbid people to move. In fact, each Tai *baan* (village) was also allied together with a *muang* (township, city or state), so the primary affiliations were whether the home village or township could be fluid and co-exist, and even extend to a wider state. Hsieh's (1995) notion offers an alternative explanation on the phenomenon of Tai people's movement through *Tai Lüe*'s life practices. *Tai Lüe* people refer only to their "*chao phaendin*" (king), so that they could migrate among different *muang* (local principalities). The "*chao phaendin*" was the only significant symbol of their solidarity among the Sipsongpanna. He points out the general principle of egalitarianism among commoners in Sipsongpanna in regard to obligation to the '*chao*' (*saopha*), therefore every villager and each commoner was equal, because each household raised the same amount of money or crops for the *chao*, no matter where one stayed. Therefore, he argues that a village was only a residence and a place to do one's duty. In this sense, a person was not, necessarily and permanently, tied to a particular village, and could move back and forth freely, even though village was an important political unit (Hsieh, 1995: 304-306).

In folk circulations and contacts, trade networks and circulating markets contributed notably to this flow, enhancing the cultural animation of a multi-centred region (Davis, 2006: 95; Walker, 1999). According to Siriphon (2008), in the pre-modern period, Tai traders conducted trade in three main categories: "long-distance caravan trade", "short-distance trade", and "marketplace vending" (58). The first two forms of trade networks had significantly contributed to the shared regional culture. Later on the trade networks play an important role to facilitate Shan refugees or displaced people's

mobility across the border (details in chapter 5).

Long-distance trades were usually reserved for the s*aopha* family or some wealthy families due to the need for more investment in pack animals and trade products. Their assets were gained from agricultural lands and taxes offered by Tai commoners, such as rice or other agricultural products (2008: 59). Normally they travelled in groups for security reasons, so they often hired ordinary Tai to guard trading caravans, particularly professional muleteers and some those skilled in Tai martial arts. The traders preferred to have large houses to host friends or trading counterparts from other villages or towns and built large rice houses to keep enough grain for consumption of the host and guests throughout the year. This kind of hospitality was reciprocated when they traded to other places (Pawakapan, 2006:33). As to the ordinary villager Tai, they were engaged in short-distance trade to bigger towns and principalities occasionally in the dry season after the harvest to exchange goods. They usually travelled with a group of friends or relatives and loaded their products in small number of mules or cattle for a few days trip (Pawakapan, 2006:32-33; Siriphon, 2008: 60-61) These type of traders sometimes had specific skills, such as silversmiths, goldsmiths or blacksmiths or even *saopha*'s artisans, who travelled to various villages and sold their silver or gold Tai-style handmade products to other Tai villagers (Siriphon, 2008:61).

Monastic networks were another crucial network which added to this mobility (Davis, 2006). This horizontal monastic network bridged independent local Tai states and enhanced a pan-regional association through Buddhist practices. Monks used to have vital influence on the villagers, when they travelled to and from between different villages or townships either to study or convene; they made temples into forums for the arts. As "culture-bearers" between these centres, they also constructed a shared regional Buddhist tradition (Davis, 2006: 96). In addition, the temple-based school system also fostered numerous educated former monks across regional villages, who acted as community leaders. It created a shared-regional bond for Buddhist teachers and their students, including both religious and secular intellectuals, which could be mobilised for diverse purposes (96-97)

The Tai might not be invariably associated with their settlement; their continuous flow seemed essential to this system (Davis, 2006: 95). Their mobility strengthened multiple dynamic-shared circuits, which was based on their political and social systems, allowing flexibility of alliance or breakaways of political relationships between principalities and constituted both "monarchy" and "anarchy" with multi-dimensional paths and connections, so that Tai ordinary people were able to quickly adjust when they faced varying political and environmental situations (96).

4. 3 Contested Powers and Prolonged Conflicts

4.3.1 Colonial Period: Delineation of National Boundaries: Being a Buffer Zone

The present boundaries of the Shan State were formed largely as a result of the Shan's involuntary role as a 'buffer-state' during the 19th century competition between the French and the British who attempted to enter Yunnan to control the profitable China trade.

As mentioned during pre-colonial era, the Tai established numerous principalities; their *Saophas* managed to retain to a great extent of sovereignty, despite growing pressure from neighbouring empires. However, in the 19th century the situation became dramatic when the two main colonial powers, the French and the British, encountered each other in Southeast Asia. Burma was defeated by the British in the three Anglo-Burmese wars of 1824, 1852 and 1885, which made it a province of British India, and after the third Anglo-Burmese War in 1885, Shan states were claimed to be protectorate states because they used to be its tributary principalities since ancient times (Cadchumsang, 2011: 40). Lintner (1984) argues that another key reason why the British decided to compete with the French and kept them on the other side of the Mekong River was due to the trade routes between Burma and China which passed through the north-eastern Shan State territory. In fact, during 1700-1824, the British had sent numerous envoys through the East India Company to Burma and received reports on the China trade from upper Burma and the Shan states, which included two main trade routes to China: one was the 'ambassador's road' from Bhamo (now in

Kachin state), and the other was the legendary 'Burma Road' from Lashio in the northern Shan states to Kunming in Yunnan. On the other side, the French extended their sphere of influence over Laos in the east. Lying on the natural and rugged hills, a number of small Tai principalities were squeezed in between these two colonial powers (1984:404-405).

During the colonial period, the British and French representatives were confused by the *muang* and *tribute* systems. They knew little about the concept of areas of influence where local deals meant balance of power was constantly shifting; the Shan aimed to maintain a degree of independence. However, the Europeans wanted visibly clear boundaries drawn on maps with watersheds and mountain ranges, which acquired agreements from China and Siam. Hence, Sir George Scott led a British delegation to meet with the Siamese in 1893, French in 1894 and Chinese in 1900. Finally, Tai states were scattered and delineated into different countries. Some Tai *Saophas* lost their land; meanwhile, it implied the Tai *muang* system began to decline after one-thousand-years of its implementation (Conway, 2009: 34-35). Sai Aung Tun (2009: 203) demonstrated how Tai states had been partitioned into pieces and allocated into different larger regimes:

> The Shan people suffered the loss of their territories whenever there was war. For example, after the defeat of Myanmar in the Anglo-Myanmar war in 1824-26, the Ahom Shan dynasty together with Assam had to be given to British India. Again after the defeat of Myanmar in the Third Anglo-Myanmar War in 1885, the whole of the Shan States became colonies of the British, and the Shan territories of Keng Hung, Hsiphsaungbana[43], and Mong Lem were ceded to China, the State of Keng Cheng to France, and Chiang Saen to Thailand. Mover, the Tai Neu territories in the areas of Dehong or upper Than Lwin Like Nantien, Kang AI, Chanta (Santa), Lungchuan or Mong Wan, Mong Mao, Chefang, Mangshih, Luchaing, Mengpein, Lasa, Husa, Kungyu, Mongtine, and Wanting were absorbed into China (Sai Aung Tun, 2009: 203).

Later on, during World War II, particularly the Second Sino-Japanese War between 1937 and 1945, with the overthrow of the British in 1942 some Shan states fell into the hands of Japan. Shan states became 'gifts' for Japan's diplomatic strategy to obtain alliances with Thailand and Burma. Due to the Burma-Japan Treaty of Alliance, the Shan

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[43] Sipsongpanna, in Yunnan Province, China.

territories of Keng Tung and Mong Pan were assigned Thailand, and in 1943 the remaining territories, the Wa States and the Karenni territories transferred to Burma. Until 1945, Keng Tung and Mong Pan were reunited with Shan State, when Thai army returned to Thailand, followed by the surrender of Japan (Sai Aung Tun, 2009: 205).

When the Japanese occupied Shan States during the World War II, in the period 1937-1945, political unease increased in this region and the British and Chinese regime drew the frontier, which obstructed trans-local trade. Invited by the British, the KMT troops were sent off by Chiang Kai-Shek[44]'s commanders in Yunnan and fought against the Japanese Imperial Army in the Shan hills (Lintner, 1984: 406; Siriphon, 2008: 51). Assisted by the Allies, the KMT government built Burma Road to fight with the Japanese empire. Burma Road was used by the Allies to send weapons and troops to China, replacing the older trade routes, which transformed market cities into transit stations and battalion posts (Siriphon, 2008: 51). As a result, the Allies troops and the Japanese forces took turns bombing Shan towns and Shan States were in ruin and turmoil (Lintner, 1984: 406)

It is obvious that the rivalry between colonial powers partitioned Tai states to incorporate into different larger nation-states. The notion of Westphalian sovereignty of nation-state had been applied in this region, as the outcome of arbitrary diplomatic decision, military accidents and colonial interests, regardless of the existing balance of areas of influence between multi-centred states and their adjacent empires. At the same time, it transformed significantly the meanings of human mobility and the lives of people in this region.

During the British colonial period, British policy-makers developed two different management systems. The Shan states belonged to the Frontier Area which was populated by ethnic groups of Shan, Salween, Karen, Kachin, Karenni, Chin and others, while Burma Proper was essentially inhabited by other groups from Burma, Arkan, Mon, and Delta Karen (Heikkila-Horn, 2009:151). Regarded as part of Frontier Areas, the

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[44] The Nationalist Chinese regime was one of the Allies during the Second World War.

Shan states were no longer identified as Burmese tribute states (principalities) but eventually united with Burma Proper and under their control. At the same time, the Chinese authorities also labelled the Tai in Tai states of China as one of minorities in Yunnan (Conway, 2009: 35).

In such situation, the partitioned Tai groups felt trapped at marginal frontiers of different nation-states; however, the networks of human flows, commodities and cultural ties were not arbitrary, but based on the historical context and ethnic and religious ties in trans-locality. Therefore, the national boundaries were far from forbidding their movement, and their continuous practice of moving could be seen as their own 'way of life' for various purposes, as van Schendel (2001) reveals, the "border turned neighbours into citizens of different states . . . often these neighbours entertained work relations with each other. They had to devise ways to continue these relations, or create new ones" (398). Therefore, some evidences of how they revive and (re)construct extended networks and social ties by using the temporary 'in-between' places during their displacement and migratory along the Thai-Burma border will be presented in chapters 6 and 7.

4.3.2 Post-Colonial Period: Becoming a Battle field

Since their independence from the British in 1948, the Shan State has not had any peace; instead the situation turned a buffer zone into a battlefield. Shan State was led from a buffer zone to a battle field due to two significant occasions: one was breach of historic Panglong [45] Agreement from Burmese military regime and another was retreatment of KMT forces from Yunnan, China into Shan State. The historic Panglong Agreement is the key document to address post-colonial relations between frontier people and the central Burmese authorities, which was signed by General Aung San and the leaders of the frontier people[46]. However, when the Burmese military regime seized power in 1962, there was no space for frontier peoples to express their opinion

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[45] Panglong is a Tai muang located in southern Shan State.
[46] Except Karens, they later resorted to armed struggle against the Burmese government.

peacefully. Therefore, it led many non-Burmese ethnic groups to fight for their rights and freedom.

During World War II, in 1942, Japan had extended its sphere of influence into Shan States and temporarily got rid of the British. Soon after, General Aung San who previously was supported by the Japanese forces[47], realised Japan was only interested in a "puppet regime" in Rangoon and did not truly want to give Burma independence. He and others[48] formed the Anti-Fascist Organisation (AFO, later, called the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, or AFPFL) allying with the Communist Party of Burma (CPB). Both groups joined hands with the British Force to fight against the Japanese until the Japanese's surrender in 1945. Thereafter, the British came back to re-occupy their former colony. In 1947, when India was going to be granted Dominion Status within the Commonwealth and Burma had been Britain's additional possessions in India, Some Burmese nationalists were intending to obtain independence from the British, while the leaders in the Frontier Areas were trying to maintain their rights of autonomy. Aung San and other AFPFL leaders visited frontier areas and tried to get support for a united, independent Burma (Lintner, 1984: 406-407).

In 1947, a number of Shan *Saopha*s from several states as well as Kachin and Chin representatives signed the momentous Panglong Agreement with General Aug San and other Burmese leaders for joint independence from the British, with an agreement to form a Union on an equal basis. Political and economic autonomy, democracy and human rights for the non-Burmans[49] were based on the spirit of the Panglong Agreement. Therefore, the federal Shan states in the British colonial administration

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[47] When Second World War began, Burmese nationalists hoped the war would give them a chance to get independence from Britain, but they needed money and support from a foreign power in order to form an army. The Japanese agreed to give military training to some young Burmese nationalists. In 1941, just one year before the Japanese invasion, a group of thirty young Burmese, known as the 'Thirty Comrades', had secretly left Burma to get military training from Colonel Suzuki on the Japanese controlled Chinese island of Hainan (Lintner, 1984: 406).

[48] These 30 young Burmese nationalists formed the Burma Independence Army (BIA), which later was called the Burma Defence Army (BDA), then the Burma National Army (BNA), then the Local Burmese Forces (LBF), and finally the Patriot Burmese Forces (PBF).

[49] Burman (Bamar, or Burmese), who live primarily in the Irrawaddy basin, are the dominant ethnic group of Burma (Myanmar); they speak the Burmese language, which is the official language in Burma.

became Shan State of the Union of Burma. A Union Constitution became known as the 1947 constitution, concluding an approval of the Right of Secession to the Shan State from the union after a ten-year period. However, on 19 July 1947, the news shocked the nation that General Aung San was assassinated, along with seven other state leaders, including two Shan *saophas*[50]. By then, the right to partition was rejected by the central government. The most drastic change was in 1959 when the Shan saophas[51] were elicited to hand over their hereditary powers whether in or out of Parliament. In 1962, General Ne Win seized power in a military coup, and put hundreds of government and political leaders into jails and the long tyrannical military rule commenced and remained for half a century (Henderson et al, 1971; the Shan Human Rights Foundation, 1999; Cadchumsang, 2011; Yasuda, 2008).

In the early 1970s, a popular song, *The Promises of Panglong*, which was written by Dr. Sai Kham Leik[52], appeared to describe feelings of the Shan towards the aftermath of the Panglong Agreement and subsequent incidents. He was inspired by a cartoon in an old Tai Youth magazine, published in 1961 about a Shan youth climbing the statue of Aung San and checking his pockets inquiring where the promised Panglong Agreement was[53]. This song was celebrated by Sai Hsai Mao, who sang and recorded it in Thailand, and sung at different events during Shan festivals.

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[50] Sao Sam Htun and Saopha of Mong Pawn.

[51] Among them was the Shan leader, Sao Shwe Thailke who was the first President of the Union of Burma. His youngest son was shot to death during a military raid on his house (Yasuda, 2008: 55).

[52] Dr. Sai Kham Leik is a famous Shan songwriter who used to be a Physician has written several hundreds of songs in Burmese, Shan and English, and also an important promoter of Shan culture. 'Panglong Agreement' is his most cerebrated song among Shan since 1971.

[53] 20th November, 2012: Songwriter: 'Panglong Agreement' inspired by cartoon. [Online] Available from the website of S.H.A.N (Shan Herald Agency for News): http:// www.english.panglong.org. [Accessed 18/12/2014].

Panglong, where are you?

We'd just like to know if you had taken the Panglong Agreement away with you.

Hey, what are you looking for?

Search thoroughly!

(cartoon from Tai Youth Magazine, 1961 annual issue)

Figure 4. Panglong, where are you?

The Panglong Agreement

*A free homeland for the Tai
This, we agreed on at Panglong
The vows and promises so
solemnly made
And now, though it has never
been told
By whom the promises were
broken
We know who betrayed whom
But the Tai have always been true
Where are the vows and
promises of Panglong
Have they all gone, I wonder, with
Aung San.*

(translated and citied in Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 101)

Besides, at the end of 1949[54], due to the assault from the Chinese Communist forces, the KMT troops from Yunnan crossed border entering Shan State (Lintner, 1984: 409), and sought refuge in the Shan mountain areas, particularly including Kokang(Guogan), Vieng Ngun, Muang Loen, Muang Hsu, as well as Keng Tung neighbourhoods (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 102). In early 1950[55], two KMT forces, remnants of the 93rd Division and the 26th Army[56] and General Li Mi's 8th Army, arrived in the southern Shan States and encamped themselves in the mountain areas adjacent Muang Hsat near the Shan-Thai border (Lintner, 1984: 409). Once, they also had occupied a border town at the junction of four countries, Tachilek (opposite to Maesai, Thailand) (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 102). Therefore, the eastern Shan State was constructed and transformed as their spring-board for fighting back to Yunnan (China) (ibid: 112). During the time KMT entrenched in the Shan State, some men at frontier areas were recruited by KMT and obtained military training; hence, the number of KMT soldiers

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[54] The date Lintner (1984: 409) recorded KMT's retreat into Shan State was in October 1949 is slightly different from KMT's inner historical report (in Chinese version), which mentioned 28th Feb. 1950.

[55] Linter (1984: 409) mentioned KMT forces arrived near Mong Hsat in January, but according to KMT's inner historical report, they retreated into Shan State on 28th Feb. 1950.

[56] According to KMT's inner historical report, it was recorded as the 26th Army rather than the 26th Division.

increased from about 1,700[57] to 4,000 between early 1950 and April 1951, while by the end of 1953, it increased to 12,000 (Lintner, 1984: 409). Alongside some hill-tribe men (from Wa and Lahu tribes), the KMT forces also enlarged *Tai Nüe* and *Tai Lüe* recruits from both sides of the border (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 102). Meanwhile, an airstrip in Mong Hsat was built during the war and reconstructed as an air base to transport arms ammunition and medical supplies (Lintner, 1984: 409).

According to one informant's recollection, his grandfather was one of the *Saophas* in a Tai state of Yunnan and also the captain of the KMT forces. After the Chinese Communist's takeover in 1949, his grandfather supported KMT and fought against the Chinese communist party. Therefore, along with the KMT, armies retreated to Shan State in 1949 and his father took his family to the Shan State. According to Panyagaew (2008), when KMT were fighting against the People's Liberation Army (PLA), many *Tai Lüe* royal families and their followers followed the KMT troops to the Shan State, particularly to Keng Tung and Muang Yong, while other groups in southeast Sipsongpanna fled separately to Muang Singh in Tai state of north-western Laos. Also many *Tai Lüe* families crossed the border and came further to resettle in Mae Sai, in northern Thailand (Panyagaew, 2008: 310). During this period, the KMT sought support from Shan princes of Shan State through the Tai rulers of Yunnan and Kokang, but ended up without further result due to their different purposes as KMT's plan for 're-conquest of China' (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 102, 145-146).

The existence of the KMT troops in Shan State became an excuse for sending more Burmese army to Shan State to expel the KMT forces. But the efforts were unsuccessful, which led U Nu government to raise this issue at the United Nations General Assembly in 1953 to require the KMT force to leave the country. Due to the U.N. response and the cooperation of Thailand, thousands of KMT soldiers were withdrawn to Taiwan[58] at the first retreatment in 1953 (Lintner, 1984: 409-410), and around four thousand at

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[57] According to KMT's inner historical report, there were about 1500 soldiers in early 1950.
[58] According to the KMT's historical report, the first retreatment was of 6750 soldiers between November 1953 and May 1954.

the second retreatment in 1962[59]. Therefore, in total over 11,000[60] of KMT soldiers and their families were evacuated to Taiwan[61] by a special aircraft between 1953 and 1962. However, unofficially, some of the KMT soldiers remained on Shan soil as stragglers, including those who later got involved in the complex relationships with Shan resistance movements (section 4.3.3).

During KMT's withdrawal from Shan State, there were many Tai who left for Taiwan with the troops, not only the ruling elite and the Tai noble family members, but also a significant number of Tai women who had married with /were married to. The inter-marriages with Tai women or other ethnic women took place when KMT forces entrenched Shan states a couple of years before their retreat to Taiwan. One aged informant in a Shan migrant community said:

> "Some parts of Shan State supported the KMT troops, perhaps for trading, and another due to poverty in remote Shan villages, because only very few people were rich, as they saw the KMT troops coming with guns so they expected the KMT officers to be rich. Therefore, some males joined the KMT troops and many females got married to the KMT officers or soldiers. I heard the KMT offered high wages for recruiting soldiers. I wanted to join but I could not speak Chinese… My wife's aunty got married with a KMT officer who did not return to his homeland or go to Taiwan, but stayed in Shan State. I sometimes heard some old ladies in the village saying that they regretted not marrying KMT soldiers before. If they had done so, they wouldn't need to escape from being oppressed by Burmese, so they might have had a better life, not like now, they are old and still have to run and escape from home" (Interview on 07-12-2012)

During the period of the KMT occupation, more Burmese army units were sent to the Shan State to cope with the KMT, so that the Shan was squeezed between these two forces. However, the poor behaviour of Burmese soldiers created anti-Burmese feelings and Burmese army was also seen as a foreign occupation by the locals (Lintner, 1984: 411). At the same time, the government of U Nu experienced disturbances provoked

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[59] According to the KMT's historical report, the first retreatment was of 4406 soldiers between March and April 1962.
[60] According to KMT historical report, total retreatment was 11,156, 6750 at first retreatment in 1953 and 4406 at second retreatment in 1961.
[61] In fact, unofficially some the KMT forces remained on Shan soil as stragglers. They organised into merchant-warlord armies—ex-KMT 3rd and 5th Armies—and got involved opium trade with Laos and Thailand as part of the clan network of overseas Chinese merchants.

by the communists and PVO[62]. Soon after that, the civil war led to chaos across the country (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 111). As Chao Tzang Yawnghwe (1987) points out, various ethnic rebel groups emerged in Shan State against the Burmese regime:

> The Shan State had its share of rebels, in particular Kachin mutineers, Karen rebels and their allies, the Pa-O of Southern Shan State[63]. Those rebels for a time held various Shan towns such as Lashio, Hsenwi, Kutkai, Muse, and Namkham in the north, and others in the south including the capital, Taunggyi. In addition, the while Flag and leftist PVOs (the People's Volunteer Organisation) were active mainly in areas bordering Burma, from parts of Lawksawk up to parts of Muang Kung, Hsipaw, and even Namsan (citied in Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 102).
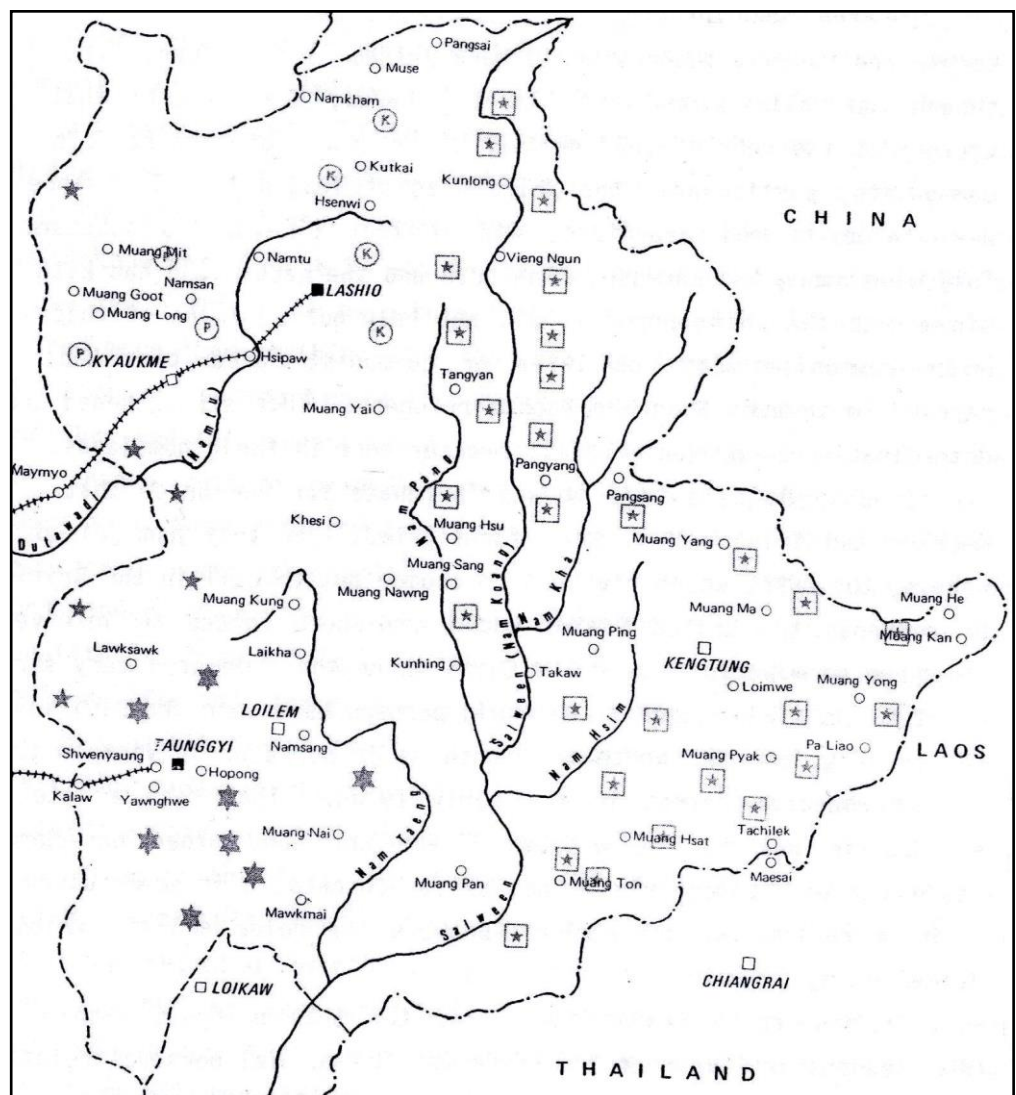
Map 4.1:   Positions of Shan Rebels and KMT forces in Shan State (1949-1951)
★ BCP (Burmese Communist Party) or   While Flag communists now known as CPB

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[62] PVO originally was the AFPFL's army, but after Aung San's death it leaned more and more towards the communists. (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 111)

(Communist Party of Burma)

✸ Pa-O rebels allied to the Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO)

Ⓟ PVO (People's Volunteer Organisation)

Ⓚ Kachin army mutineers and rebels under Captain Naw Seng

★ KMT (Chinese stragglers under General Li)

Source: Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 103

As a result, the 1962 coup and acceleration of battles pushed the Shan State into a status of anarchy. Civil wars merged with various army forces, the KMT, Burmese military force, the Shan resistance groups as well as other ethnic rebels, which had thrown Shan State into a battlefield and made its progress impossible (Lintner, 1984: 418), so ordinary people had to find their own ways for survival in such chaotic situation.

4.3.3 War Politics and Shan Resistance

Within such anarchy and chaos, more and more people turned to those who urged armed resistance, which consisted of impetuous patriots, self-styled messiahs, even recruiters for ex-KMT warlords; moreover, considered armed insurgence as their only option (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 115)

In May 1958, the first Shan rebel group called *Noom Seik Harn* (the Young Brave Warriors) originated from Muang Ton[64] and was led by Saw Yan Da (alias Sao Noi), a Shan (*Tai Nüe*) from Yunnan. At that moment, some university students joined him particularly when the Burmese army began its operation against the Shan nationalist movement. In 1959, the Tangyan battle stirred a revolt, which was launched by a well-known Wa police officer's descent, with a band of Wa fighters as well as some university students, including members of *Saophas* families (Lintner, 1984: 413). Soon after that, some small bands sprang up, led by head villagers, ex-policemen, adventurers and even monks (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 116). Later on, in 1964, the Shan State Army (SSA) was organised by merging Shan State Independence Army (SSIA), Shan National United Front (SNUF) and Kokang Revolutionary Army[65] (Lintner, 1984:

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[64] Information from interviewee Saw Yan Da's cousin.
[65] A local armed force of the Chinese-dominated Kokang state.

416). Since then, the history of Shan resistance movement turned over a new page. However, complex war politics has always haunted the Shan resistance movement, mostly due to financial backing for their armed struggle against Burmese military regime. Therefore, I highlight how these Shan resistance groups negotiated, allied or split with different actors, including the KMT troops, Burmese military regime and the other communist party (CPB).

According to Chao Tzang Yawnghwe's (1987) memoir, the 1962 coup not only devastated the reform progress, but also led the Shan State towards socio-political anarchy. Meanwhile, an economic vacuum was added due to the operation of Enterprise Nationalisation Law in 1963 and the Socialist Economy Protection Law in 1964[66] by the new regime; both made the situation worse and caused economic breakdown in the country (122). Whether in Shan State or Burma, the economic downfall triggered a serious shortage of all kind of products and goods, which heightened cross-border trade controlled by the ex-KMT (124). In such a situation there were only two options for Shan rebel leaders: one to dislodge or impose control over these alien and exploitative elements, or to submit. Many preferred the latter, because they were in no position to fight against the ex-KMT merchant-warlords. However, in such an arrangement, Shan resistance groups could only obtain limited amounts of military supplies (e.g. weapons and ammunition) and some financial support from the ex-KMT to continue their struggle against the Burmese military regime. This situation trapped them as supplementary divisions or front organisations in the interest of ex-KMT groups and their counterparts. Therefore, during this socio-political and economic vacuum when Shan armies or Burmese military needed ammunition trade, whatever money or profit was made went into the pockets of warlords and merchants in Thailand, Laos, Burma and Hong Kong (126).

Opium Politics and Burmese Ka Kwe Ye (KKY) policy

After the KMT retreated to Shan State, along with civil war, the devastation of the fields

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[66] That is, demonetising of 100 and 50 kyat notes and making all private trade and businesses illegal.

had ruined the traditional rice-based economy. Some farmers were forced to be porters for government troops, while some left their paddy fields to work on opium poppy fields which were the only feasible cash crop to grow. According to Lintner (1984), opium was legal but only allowed in some certain deep mountain areas in the east of the Salween River, in Kokang and Wa states before World War II. The *Saophas* could collect taxes on opium, but this was strictly regulated by local and British authorities under the 1923 Shan States Opium Act (410). During the British colonial period, poppy had been cultivated particularly by hill-tribes, but after the 1962 coup and KMT's occupation, a growing number of poor Shan farmers also engaged in opium farming (417).

In order to obtain financial support for military purposes, opium became an important source of income for resistance groups. It had been already well established at the beginning of the resistance movement and brought in cash for the rebel bands (417). Their role was limited to tax poppy growers, buying agents and sometimes to escort caravans passing through their territory to the border for an agreed fee or by direct involvement in trade (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 55; Lintner, 1984: 418). Therefore, money from opium trade facilitated their armed struggle against the Burmese troops and they could also use opium in exchange for guns, ammunitions, medicines and other necessities. The degree and form of involvement varied within groups (Lintner, 1984: 418)

Due to the expansion of communist military activities in Shan State, the Burmese Army suffered high casualties. In 1963 the Ne Win regime began to use a typical policy of "divide and rule" to acknowledge local warlord groups as the Ka Kwe Ye (KKY), "home guards" or "self-defence" forces, owing to their shortage of martial and financial resources to defeat the resistance groups and to control areas. Thus, the local militia groups were offered the right to use government controlled roads and towns in Shan State for opium smuggling and cross-border trade with Thailand and Laos, in exchange for combating the communists and other rebels. Any rebel group surrendering would be given KKY status (Seekins, 2006: 234; Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 23, 127; Lintner, 1984:421). Obviously, this policy gathered support of local communities in the Shan

State, and to counterbalance Shan rebels. In particular, opium could accrue huge profits as it was exchanged for bars of pure gold in the border town Tachilek, and the area gained the name 'the Golden Triangle'.

At the border, the KKY bought consumer goods which they carried back as a return cargo. They would often bribe Burmese Army officers with some of these goods to facilitate trade. The relations built upon the opium trade were of total anarchy, with a number of armies ambushing and betraying each other (Lintner, 1984:421). Consequently, the two kings of the Golden Triangle, Lo Hsing-Han and Khun Sa[67], became well-known KKY commanders in the early 1960s, and by late 1960s, more than 50 KKY groups had been organised. The KKY policy brought a decisive change that led to an internal division in Shan State. However, this policy was abandoned by the Ne Win regime in 1973, who announced the actions of KKY forces illegal. In 1989, when the resistance armed groups signed ceasefire agreements with the SLORC, the approach resembled the KKY procedures as the ceasefire groups were engaged in trade or business. As a result, both policies boosted the drug trade and led to an expansion in the drug economy (Seekins, 2006:234).

The Communist Party of Burma (CPB) expansion and Shan State forces

Since end of 1968, the CPB, backed by the communist Chinese, began operation from its bases in China. By mid-1970s, it had become a new strong force adding to all the conflicts already in existence in Shan State (Jirattikorn, 2008:203).

As far as the SSA was concerned, it was in a tricky political situation whether to build an alliance with the CPB or not, in particular the aims and ideology of both groups were different. On one hand, the CPB was an opponent of the SSA at political and ideological level; on the other hand, the CPB could sit in the same boat with the SSA with regard to practical matters, because the CPB was a rival of the Burmese government and often

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[67] Khun Sa (Shan name) was a Chinese Shan, whose Chinese name was Chang, Chi-fu. The Loimaw KKY later evolved to the Shan United Army (SUA).

combated Burmese military forces seriously due to Chinese communist's support (Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 129). In particular, after a split within the SSA itself, the right-wing which was led by *Sao* Gon Jerng (alias Mo Heng, a co-founder of SSA) moved away (Jirattikorn, 2008:204) and crossed the Salween River with 1,200 followers to Thailand joining with the 3rd army of the ex-KMT to seek protection and establish its base close to the Thai border in 1968 (Smith 1999: 334). In 1969, *Sao* Gon Jerng established the Shan United Revolution Army (SURA) at Piang Luang near the Thai border (Jirattikorn, 2008:203).

The SSA lost Gon Jerng, under pressure from the Burmese, unlike SURA in close association with the former KMT 3rd Army, or SUA which evolved from the KKY of Loimaw (萊莫山). The left-wing of SSA did not control Thai-Shan border and the trade routes. This pioneer Shan resistance group did not have the resources to bring unification of all Shan armies. Therefore, they allied with the CPB to obtain unlimited Chinese weapons through the CPB and controlled most of northern Shan State (Cowell 2005: 8, cited in Jirattikorn, 2008:203-204; Chao Tzang Yawnghwe, 1987: 123-124). In 1971, the SSA renamed the Shan State Progress Party and Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA). Until 1989 the SSA fought against the former Burmese military regime. However, following the collapse of their Chinese-backed ally - the CPB, the SSPP/SSA agreed to sign a ceasefire with the Burmese government in 1989.

Besides, in 1985, Sao Gon Jerng merged his SURA forces with Khun Sa's SUA (the Shan United Army) and the joint force under the name Tailand Revolution Council /Tailand Revolutionary Army (TRC/TRA) was renamed Mong Tai Army (MTA) in 1987. After Sao Gon Jerng passed away, Khun Sa was the leader of the MTA. However, the situation suddenly changed after MTA surrendered to the Burmese military junta in 1996; the Burmese military, *Tatmadaw*, started to control the area and human rights violations became widespread. In late 1999, those ex-MTA soldiers who refused to surrender renewed the SSA-S (Shan State Army- South). They followed the leader, Yawd Serk, and settled around the border; since then the border camps have become a refuge and shelter for displaced Shan who escaped from their homelands.

4.3.4   Reshaping Geopolitical Status

In this vein, the resistance groups and their political bodies have replaced the roles of traditional Shan *saophas*, working as a 'quasi state' to govern Shan states and control border areas (also see details in Section 7.3). This was after the *saophas* were forced to hand over their powers to the central Burmese government, particularly in 1962 when the military junta took power. As Grundy-Warr and Wong (2002:98) have shown, along the border it was the resistance groups that collected taxes and profits from cross-border trade, not the central government. Thus, tracing back the geopolitical history of Shan states, the status of the Shan has changed from 'multi-centred Tai principalities' governed by the *saophas* in the pre-modern era, to 'a buffer zone' in the formation of a nation-state and then later to become 'a battle field' in the post-colonial period controlled by the resistance groups.

In the pre-modern period, the geopolitical status of the Tai principalities was characterised by their 'shared Tai brotherhood' through a "tacit alliance" (Hsieh, 1995) and multi-tributary relations to seek their survival and autonomy from the neighbouring empires (i.e. China, Burma and Siam). Thus their geopolitical history could be seen to be tied to China, Burma, Thailand and the later colonial powers from the West (in particular, the British and the French) in the changing global political system. The Shan have been regarded as a buffer zone between different contested powers. The political system of the modern nation-state has effectively "silenced" multiple pre-modern sovereignties of Tai states because they did not show clearly on the modern map (Thongchai, 1995:96, cited in Grundy-Warr and Wong, 2002: 98), as if they never existed. Those pre-modern states were instead subsumed within the Shan State of Burma.

Meanwhile, the fixed national borders have also led to transformed meanings of mobility as the porous borders turned from bridges to become barriers with the increase in militarisation and border regulations in the last few decades, human networks, kinship and trade interactions became politically partitioned (Grundy-Warr, and Yin, 2002:98). Daily practices of considerable cross-border flows which used to be the features of pre-modern period could be easily classified or labelled as illegal or illicit

as mentioned in chapter 5.

At present, the Shan resistance groups, together with other ethnic political organisations, have continued seeking for the possibility of autonomy with some kind a federation. Therefore, the geopolitical landscape of Shan State apparently displays the contested powers and negotiation between multiple and overlapping militarily sovereignties and interwoven ethnic resistance.

4.4   Concluding Remarks

From the history of the Shan, this chapter has highlighted three main themes: the first is connections and disruptions, which sees the delineation of national borders as a crucial demarcation point to divide the Tai states into different nation-states; the second is power and resistance, which shows negotiations between national or international powers and response of oppressed Shan principalities; and the third is centre and periphery, which maps Shan within Tai history and examines how contested powers affected the Shan's lived spaces and socio-political systems over time.

Firstly, I argued that the Tai Muang systems have multi-centred Tai principalities which maintain balance of power among states through "consensus-based systems" (Davis, 2006: 92). It not only illustrates political alliances between Tai principalities, but also their interactions with neighbouring empires to show flexibility of sovereignty of ancient states and the Tai commoners' freedom of movement. However, a radical break of these relationships was caused by rivalry of colonial powers which had partitioned Tai states and incorporated them into the space of different nation-states. The ambiguity of borders has been harnessed, created obstacles (legal or illegal) for cross-border practices and identified possession of environmental resources. This has forced Shan State into a territorial arena, along with different political and economic purposes.

Secondly, the process of contested powers shows the negotiations between national or international forces and the response of the oppressed Shan states. This involved multiple levels of powers which came together and crossed over the Shan State, and

brought chaos, conflicts and disrupted Shan people's lives. Shan's struggles for survival not only included dealing with national expansion from the Burmese regime, but also handling external forces with different levels of control of resources and access to power. The complex and uneven powers created multiple and complicated relationships of political alliance or breakaways between Shan resistance groups and other actors, which significantly affected Shan's modes of living over generations.

Thirdly, drawing national borders is not simply marking statehood on maps, but it implies the structures of control and order (Baud and van Schendel, 1997: 222) as well as intervention of powers. Simultaneously it breaks the meaning of place and transforms the meaning of cross-border practices. Therefore, in this thesis I aim to provide an account of local views to show their voices in order to know how Shan's lives have been transformed in response to the oppressive powers; re-centring Shan's marginalised position is necessary. Their history cannot be seen as marginal which used to be dismissed or suppressed by central national history and "lies at the extremity where the nation-state ends" (Horstmann and Wadley, 2006: 18).

Besides, although the national borders were set up, the porous Thai-Burma border to some degree still existed. Approximately 2,400 km of the border and far from the national centre, the control by central government was comparatively limited. The Shan used various mobility tactics to cross the border, which will be further explored in chapter 5, in particular escaping from human rights abuses and due to forced relocation to seek refuge or safer places. This situation reveals that border is not a "fixed entity" (Horstmann and Wadley, 2006: 19), but can be perceived, defied or (re)constructed at various levels. Meanwhile, in the course of their mobilities, Shan carried with them shared historical context, ancient ties and cultural components, such as rituals, habitus, languages and material cultures. These characteristics may have offered some symbolic or familiar lived ingredients which, later on, facilitated and secured their journeys of exiles; I will discuss these in subsequently chapters 6 and 7.

CHAPTER 5 Displacement and Fragmented Journeys

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 describes the dramatic socio-political change brought about by contested colonial powers, formation of modern nation-state and prolonged civil wars. Chapter 5 further illustrates how national oppression, forced relocation and border area development led to Shan internal and international displacement. As noted in chapter 4, transregional mobility is not a new feature of Shan's lives; however, mobility is an inherently political process (Cresswell,2010; Massey, 1993: 61) and involves the operation of power; including being evacuated, rejected or permitted as well as coming, going and staying. Therefore, it is not simply an act of individual choice; meanwhile, different groups of people may have distinct relationships to mobility (Massey, 1993:61).

As Cresswell (2010: 21) stresses, "a tourist and a refugee may experience a line of a map linking A and B completely differently". This refers to some key questions: Who is moving? Are they free or forced to move? What kind of mobility shapes the relations between people and places? People engage with places through mobility in diverse ways. Therefore, mobility can constitute various concepts, as Hage suggests to construct a whole "social physics of socio-existential mobility" to clarify various forms of mobility instead of using one single term to standardise all kinds of mobility, which could lead to the bias making travelling of tourists equate with dislocation of refugees (2005: 470). In this sense, mobility is a flexible concept, meaning different things for different people at different times.

Many scholars highlight the impact of national boundaries on the lives of people at the frontier and the transformation of their trans-border mobilities. Thongchai (1994) describes national boundary as "a 'fence' and rigid line that cuts off the relationship and creates differentiation and separation on both sides of the border" (cited in Yasuda, 2008: 26), and human networks which traversed across the borders for a long period of history by significant movement, various loyalties, kinship structures and trade

interactions that became politically partitioned (Grundy-Warr, and Yin, 2002:98). Drawing on Tapp (1990), I argue that sovereignty of the modern nation-state also "increased strategic importance in terms of the power relations between different states" (149). The state classifies much of the trade and human mobility as 'illicit': economic trade phenomena regarded as 'smuggling' while human movement became 'refugee' movement and people labelled as 'illegal immigrants', rather than free movement of agents and merchandises which were supposed to be features of the pre-colonial period (149-150).

Therefore, chapters 4, 5 and 6 mainly focus on three themes, place or territory, mobility, and survival tactics respectively, while Chapter 7 extends the concept of the cohesive network with translocal connections to link the three themes together. In this chapter, it is mainly based on empirical data collected through displaced Shan's life histories, supplemented with secondary material of key historical contexts about four-cut policy (Burma Issues, 2002; BERG, 1998; Smith, 1991) and border area development (Bowles, 1997; CIDKP, 2000; South, 2008). The subsequent section highlights the serious consequences of conflicts that led to large-scale internal and cross-border displacement. Whether voluntary or enforced, mobility involves a series of political processes. Displaced Shan's "fragmented journey"[68] implies access to mobility was not equally open to everyone (Grabska, 2010: 137) and simultaneously challenges the notion of a 'borderless', 'deterritorialised' global world. Moreover, the narratives of informants' experiences of homeland were mingled with their tactics of practice and feelings about the conflicts. The conflicts in their homelands, forced labour and journeys of displacement and exile became their mutual experiences and memories. This not only shows their sentimental and nostalgic attachment to Shan State, but also highlights feelings of loss due to disruption of their homes and possessions. In particular, due to social, political and economic upheaval, the security of life in Shan State was challenged, which was the immediate disruption of their (comparative) stability of living in their home places, led to massive displacement and their decision to move.

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[68] I borrowed the term "fragmented journey" from Collyer, Michael's (2010) work, entitled 'Stranded Migrants and the Fragmented Journey'.

Moreover, my data also shows how different political entities, diverse military actions and Shan resistance movements have affected mobile lives amongst intergenerational Shan. It suggests that War and conflicts often changed gender roles, division of labour and tore families apart. When their homelands became battle-fields, they had to (in)voluntarily offer themselves as soldiers or workers in the army or share duties, which often led to what I describe *mobile fatherhood* or *missing brotherhood*

The following sections highlight the impact of military-forced relocation led by the Burmese military regime against the SSA-S and regional development-induced displacement.

5.2 Narratives of Home Places and National Oppression

As noted in chapter 4, a growing number of resistance groups were formed after Burmese military seized power in 1962. In some areas of Shan State, numerous army forces moved back and forth and required different resources, ranging from manpower, money, rice to livestock from villagers. The memories of homelands mostly are referred to daily practices of coping with different armed forces, of hiding in the surrounding jungle, or to the experience of forced relocation and insecurity in Shan State. Meanwhile, the narratives of displaced Shan also illustrated their nostalgia, which remained fragrant homelands with broad rice fields, abundant resources and beautiful scenery. Some recounted how many cows and animals they possessed and how broad rice fields and gardens with various vegetables they grew, so they could be self-sufficient with exchange and barter within the rural-economy. Some simultaneously grumbled their skills could not be applied in the foreign land due to lack of legal status for residence and freedom of movement as compared to previous lives in their homelands. Here their homelands have been dramatically changed and their nostalgia does not necessarily mean their desire to return. Those experiences in the homelands will be explored in the following sections

5.2.1 Four-Cut Policy: Forced Relocation in Counter-Insurgency

Although the conflicts and fighting continued in Shan State for several decades and lead to displacement from numerous villages, there was no massive displacement and border-crossing movement into Thailand (SHRF, 2003:4). However, the situation changed in 1996; massive displacement opened new migratory routes. Since 1974, the Burmese military had introduced the notorious 'four-cut' counter-insurgency strategy that was designed to cut four essential links, namely food, finance, communications and human resources between the resistance groups and their families, villagers and local communities (Burma Issues, 2002: 2; Grundy-Warr and Wong, 2002: 101-102).

This strategy is far from unique in Burma and has long been used in a variety of guises as a policy against revolutionary struggles (e.g. the Spanish relocation of the Cuban population during 1895-1898; the French approach against rebellions for settler colonisation during the 19th century) (Sutton, 1977: 294; Sutton and Lawless, 1978: 332). It has also been used to create 'new villages' against Communist forces (e.g. the British military policy in Malaya during 1949-1954), or applied for independence struggle in Indo-China (e.g. the French policy of *regroupement* in the 1948-1949 Indo-China war; the American policy of 'strategic hamlets' in Vietnam in the early 1960's). Afterwards, the strategy was practiced again by French military in Algerian war of independence during 1954-1961 (Sutton, 1977: 285; 294). Likewise, the four-cut policy launched in Burma was essentially influenced by this concept and indebted to the 'new village' concept developed in Malaya and the 'strategic hamlet' programme in Vietnam thus proving to an effective approach to combat insurgency. This operation in Burma, together with categorisation of zones resulted in civilians being forcibly relocated to isolate the insurgent troops from people. A consequence of this operation was the area that was dissected into three regions designated by three colours according to the "intensity of fighting" with resistant groups (Tangseefa, 2006: 415-416), as Martin Smith describes:

The map of Burma was divided into a vast chessboard under the Tatmadaw[69]'s six (later nine) regional military commands and shaded in three colours: black for entirely insurgent-controlled areas; brown[70] for areas both sides still disputed; and white was 'free'. The idea was the each insurgent-coloured area would be cleared, one by one, until the whole map of Burma was white. For the black 'hard core' areas and brown 'guerrilla' zones, a standard set of tactics was developed. (Smith, 1991: 259)

Grundy-Warr and Wong (2002:102) also explain how the four-cut policy was put into practice. The local *Tatmadaw* commander chose 'black' and 'brown' rebel areas (particularly 'black' areas were seen as the 'free-fire' zones), declared them as forbidden zones, and then gave orders requiring all villages in those zones to relocate to the military controlled 'strategic hamlets' (*byu hla jaywa)*. Villagers who failed to comply were seen as insurgents and shot on sight (101). In order to defeat the operations of resistance groups and cut off their civilian support, a law was enacted forbidding all contact with the insurgents; a new light infantry division was set up (BERG, 1998:22). The Burmese military army often destroyed abandoned villages, in particular confiscating or demolishing food stores and burning houses and farms, and even laying mines (Grundy-Warr and Wong, 2002: 102). However, Tangseefa (2006) argues that, this colour category is misleading because military-led violence still took place in different zones, including the 'white' areas (416).

Most interviewees mentioned that forced mass relocation of villages intensified in Shan State particularly after January 1996 when the Leader of MTA, Khun Sa, surrendered to the Burmese military regime. The remnants of MTA soldiers who refused to follow Khun Sa's surrender left the MTA's headquarters and moved to central and southern Shan State. When the Burmese military tried to trace those ex-MTA soldiers, the troops intensively launched a four-cut campaign and relocated over 300,000 commoners in over 1,400 communities from their homes to relocation sites, especially in the central Shan State, to prevent villagers from supporting the remnants of ex-MTA (as the later formed SSA-S, Shan State Army-South) (SHRF, 2003:4).

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[69] The Burmese military is officially known as *Tatmadaw*.
[70] There are also defined as grey zones in *Burma Issues* (2002), 12 (4):2.

During forced relocation, many villages were burnt by Burmese military subsequently leading to human rights abuse. Those who moved back to their original villages or worked on farms once caught outside the relocation sites were killed, tortured or raped. In such a situation, villagers could not make a living on their original lands, and were often forced to work for the military without pay. People thus fled from their home places into jungles or other districts or states and hundreds of thousands of villagers ended up fleeing to Thailand. According to SHRF's (1998) estimation, by May 1996, around 20,000 refugees fled to Thailand and by May 1998, it increased to 80,000. In June 2002, SHRF and SWAN estimated the fugures had reached over 150,000 (SHRF, 2003: 6). This massive displacement and mobility was significantly different from past pre-modern mobility (see section 4.2) and was unprecedented with its forced nature and scale.

A 60-year-old village head in a Shan migrant community recalled his life in his home place, while we were sitting in a thatched hut in front of his current house. He mentioned in 1996 after MTA surrendered, the Burmese army burnt down their villages, so they had to flee. Prior to his flight, he was arrested by Burmese army, because soldiers suspected that he had helped Sao Yod Sert[71] and the remnants of the MTA forces to flee. The Burmese army traced Sao Yod Sert and his followers and forced those villages along the way to move elsewhere. He had relatives living in northern Thai area, so after he was released, he and his family decided to flee to Thailand. When he spoke to me, his wife pointed to the size of the mat (about 2m x 3m) on which we were sitting, and said when they arrived in Thailand 7 people slept together in such a small place. In the past, they had farms and everything, a better life than living in Thailand. However, when they escaped, they only brought a few things they could carry.

A 61-year-old female informant in Shan migrant community recalled the beginning of her journey of relocation as follows:

> "At that time, about 17 or 18 of our family members were being relocated together; we moved to Lai Kha and rebuilt a house for 8 years. We lost everything,

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[71] He did not follow Khun Sa's surrender and took 300 his followers fled to the north.

including land and animals, but we were afraid to return to take them back. My cousin and his friends returned to take their property, but on the way, my cousin's friend was killed. Some people lived in the jungle near their villages, when Burmese military were not there, they returned to collect things from their home. They dug a hole to store crops in the forest to keep food[...]In the past, my uncle had over 200 buffaloes and cows, but afterwards he only had 20 left, some buffaloes and cows were killed by others or went missing. I also lost many buffaloes and cows, because I had about 100 buffaloes and cows, but 70-80 were missing or killed, so I only sold 20-30 and the rest were small cows, I gave 2-3 new-born cows to other people. When we lived in the town, it is difficult to find a place to feed buffaloes and cows" (interview, 04-01-2013).

Another 23-year-old man at LOI Camp recounted the situation in his hometown as:

"In our hometown, there was still some warfare. We always tried to hide wherever we thought was safe. If the Burmese military came asking for rice, chicken, buffaloes, the whole village had to prepare. The only thing we could do was to try hiding when there was a fight, and then returned after the fight finished. We had not moved to other places, because we did not know where to escape until 1998. The Burmese military asked us to relocate, half of the villagers from Lai Kha and half from Loi Lem moved to build temporary huts in an assigned area near Lai Kha, 5 hours walk. During 3 years, we moved around to wherever we could find jobs. We went to work secretly because there were not many jobs in the newly relocated site. Sometimes I also went back to our village to grow tea for sale. Many people lived in the new relocated site, but without jobs" (interview, 07-07-2012).

Another youth shared his experiences, along with other SSSNY students; their stories were issued by SSSNY in 2008, entitled 'candles in the dark'.

"When the sun came up from behind the hill, it was hot season; the cows and buffaloes woke up and went into the field to gather food. The nature and river surrounding our village were beautiful. Most of the villagers in our village were farmers who planted vegetables and rice to feed the families every year in rainy season in the Shan State."

"March 1996 to June 1998 was a terrible time in our Shan State. We received orders from the SPDC that we had three days to relocate to town......After three days they would kill every person if they saw people there........I will never forget that day; SPDC soldiers took men from the village to carry their heavy bombs. If these men couldn't relocate or went slowly, they were beaten with feet and guns. Some women were abused and tortured by the soldiers. I did not know what genocide and violation meant at that time. After moving in to town, our village was burnt, everything was gone. Then I cried because our house was burnt, which had been built forty years ago, before my dad was born" (SSSNY, 2008: 103-104).

One youth described his family's suffering and questioned how war and conflict seriously impacted on civilian lives,

> War brings only sadness, death, conflict, loss, and separation from one another. My family has gone through hell. Who starts war does not matter. What matters is the effect it has on the civilians. My family was almost killed by the Burma Army's bombing in 1996, and again in 2002 by Burma's army shelling and burning our villages (SSSNY, 2011: 17).

Besides, I also heard some voices from many ex-MTA soldiers who recounted their feelings of disappointment and hopelessness in post-1996. A medic in a Shan migrant community recalled:

> "In 1996, as Khun Sa surrendered, it happened both politically and secretly because there were lot of people with guns. You know, it was dangerous, so they did it secretly. I felt like I had lost my life and my hope; we could not depend on anyone. After then, I lived in a small village in the jungle where my wife's village was near Muang Nong, and I changed my life from a soldier to be an ordinary person. Life was too hard. I dedicated most of my life to the army. I did not want to show my face to my father. Because of the Burmese 4-cut policy, we could only stay there for 2 or 3 months and had to be relocated. But I did not move with others to a relocation site, about 15 miles away. At that moment, 300 soldiers rearranged the Shan Army, because some Shan soldiers rejected to surrender, and some commanders recruited those soldiers, so I learned how to form a strong army, what action to unite and we knew who were villagers and how to work with communities[…]about 400 remnants with guns could not stay in one place so we move around in the central Shan State in hidden villages, those villagers became IDP […]At the beginning of 1998, I went to the Shan State to set up a mobile medical team to provide medical treatment to villagers and provided service to hidden people" (interview, 12-07-2012)

The narratives above mirrored different dimensions of individuals' lives in Shan State. However, they were not few; many displaced Shan experienced similar situations. Being deprived from their lands and livelihood, continuously under suspicion of supporting resistance groups and suffering human right abuses, the socio-political system collapsed during the conflicts. The frequently forced relocations further resulted in livelihood insecurity. The costs fell heavily on the ordinary people. Meanwhile, boundaries between ordinary people and resistance groups were blurred, and their lives were distorted, which I will discuss in section 5.3.2.

There is lack of research focusing on people's lives at relocation sites in Shan State; most information was collected from those who fled from relocation sites and shared their suffering during their earlier stay there. In spite of that, the narratives of displaced Shan still showed that the four-cut policy in Burma was merely to serve political and military purposes rather than create new livelihoods or protect civilians. A similar strategy as a policy of *regroupement*, a "scorched earth policy", was adopted in Algeria during 1954-1961 as noted earlier; it was launched by the French military within forbidden zones (Sutton, 1977:285). Sutton (1977) emphasises that the relocation policy not only had devastating impact on the pastoral component of traditional economies in Algeria, including massive livestock lost, in fact, considerable resources were destroyed by bombing and large-scale of forest area was affected; it also resulted in far-reaching social impact.

However, in Algeria the civilians at relocated sites could access limited health and educational services; partly the purpose of relocation was to protect civilians although the main aim was to prevent them from assisting the guerrillas (Sutton, 1977: 287-288). In particular, by the end of 1959, the policy changed. The French tried to construct better-sited *centres* (renamed as 'new villages') with enduring materials and certain basic facilities, which afterwards were used as a propaganda to support France's actions in Algeria (Sutton and Lawless, 1978: 333). These positive consequences were barely to discover in the Shan case. Moreover, the campaigns undertaken by the Burmese military junta in the villages of "forbidden zones" or even around relocated sites were often accused of human right abuses, forced labour and ethnic cleansing, particularly by using rape against women and girls as a weapon to threaten civilian people, as mentioned in a report issued by SWAN and SHRF in May 2002, *License to Rape: the Burmese Military Regime's Use of Sexual Violence in the Ongoing War in Shan State* (SHRF and SWAF, 2002).

The use of this policy was military coercive, inhuman and violent, so it merely showed the attempt of political and military control to monitor civilians and defeat insurgents. As Callahan (2000) stresses, military objectives are only one aspect of the overall pattern of forced relocations.

5.2.2 Development, Social Changes and Displacement

Apart from forced relocation, the military-led border development projects in 1996 also induced large-scale displacement. In 1997, the Burmese junta regime, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), changed its name to State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) after it experienced a boycott by the international community due to its conflict against civilians and involvement in human rights violations. It started to talk about free-market policy but meanwhile, continued to fight against the civilian population under the name of *border area development*. Not only thousands of border villages were cleared out or damaged, but also places, livelihoods and self-esteem of people as well as their good customs have been undermined under the flag of development plans (CIDKP, 2000:6). In the name of *regional or area developments*, the lands and farms of civilians were taken away by the military without any compensation (ibid: 2).

Moreover, in the name of conducting development programmes the Burmese military have been building roads and bridges to provide easier and quicker access to its frontline troops (CIDKP, 2000: 7), in particular logging tracks going through deep forest areas with the most valued natural resources which used to be controlled by ethnic insurgents (Grundy-Warr and Wong, 2002: 100). The junta also cooperated with foreign investors in a wide expansion of military business worksites, where large number of civilians were forced to work (CIDKP, 2000: 7), without pay, food or access to medical care (Bowles, 1997). According to Ganesan and Kyaw Yi Hlaing (2007:200), in the name of border development programme, *Na Ta La[72]*, "the government has built over 5,000 miles of roads, over 800 bridges, 46 dams, over 1,000 schools, nearly 400 hospitals and health centres, and various other infrastructure asserts" (citied in South, 2008: 51). Callahan (2007: 43) also pointed 65 percent BADP (Border Area Development Programme) budget goes on road building, but most hospitals and schools lack of proper equipment (citied in South, 2008: 51). According to Lambrecht's (2004)

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[72] The Border Development Programme, initiated in 1989 (the year of the first ceasefires) and renamed in 1992 as the Ministry for the Progress of Border Areas and National Races (or *Na Ta La*) (South, 2008:51).

assessment of *Na Ta La* publications, it pointed out that "people's (often non-voluntary) contributions compromised over 70 percent of the total market cost of 'rural development projects'" (cited in South, 2008: 51).

It is obvious that border development was often interwoven with direct military operations. Therefore, numerous villages were conscripted or forced to arrange rotas for each household to share duties as military's requirements to assist in farming, military-related projects or development projects (e.g. building roads or railways). The civilian people had often been treated as a free human resource, including men, women and children. In some areas women became village patrols or night vigils to give advance notice to men to escape or hide in the jungle preventing them from being forced to carry guns and ammunition or carry out any other military work. Some men fled to other places or crossed borders into Thailand; the transformation of gender roles and division of labour in family were dramatically changed in the course of conflicts and mobility (see also section 5.3.2).

A 45-year-old female informant from Keng Kam, who lived on the farm in Northern Thailand for over 17 years, recalled her life in the homeland, while we were sitting in a bamboo hut located on the broad field under the shining moon with dark surroundings, where the small hut was bright with a smell of Shan specific condiment- *Tua Nao*[73]*.* On the wall in their sitting room, they hung a photograph of the Thai King and Queen to show respect and loyalty. The informant mentioned that in her village forced labour request from the Burmese military had already taken place few decades before she was born. However, the Burmese military's attitude changed dramatically after the 1990s.

> "In the past, there was no hitting, no killing, no force and no conflicts, however, things changed, in 1997, more conflicts happened. The Burmese military forced us to relocate [...] Burmese needed our land, if we did not move away, we would die. The military gave us three days to move. For me, it has been 11 years since I took turn (shared the duties) to work for the Burmese military. Usually each time there were 70-80 people from nearby villages to help carry weapons and provide food for the military. Sometimes on the way, some people could not stand it and

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[73] The uniquely Shan pantry staple, *tua nao*, is made of fermented soybeans and is round, flat, thin and brown disks, so that it is also called "*tua nao CDs".* Some Shan informants always said, "*Wherever there are Shan there are tua nao".*

died or got sick; if someone tried to flee, they would get shots. Each household had to offer one man to share the duty. If there was no man in the family, women had to join other works, such as building roads, or some kind of development projects" (interview, 09-01-2013).

The development projects brought forced labour issues, but also had negative impact on natural environments and led to social issues. Some informants mentioned their homeland suffered serious environmental destruction and social changes. A 53-year-old female informant who lived in SUAN Camp recalled the enormous changes in her hometown. Her home place was located in the beautiful mountain area with abundant natural resources. When she was in her hometown, she was a nurse and had a proper salary to feed her family. However, in 1990, things changed dramatically, when people found a precious stone, Ruby (red colour diamond) in her hometown. An increasing number of outsiders and companies had flowed to excavate the Ruby. The price of commodities was rising, so she had to quit her job and opened a small shop but still could not afford her families' living cost. Meanwhile, drug and alcohol issues were brought in and spread in her village, so their lives became worse; in particular, some people became drug addicts, including her husband. In 2001, she took her family and left home to a border trading village to find other work opportunities. Unfortunately, they encountered fighting at the border village and finally ended up as a refugee in border temporary shelter (interview, 11-04-2012).

The drug issues which I noted earlier in chapter 4 illustrate how different army groups were involved in Shan State have become a serious social problem in present-day of Shan State. Many informants raised drug issues and social change in their homeland. These also became some crucial factors that influenced their decisions on whether or not to return. A 20-year-old young man living at SUAN Camp mentioned he was worried about the situation inside Shan State where drug smuggling was rampant. Many young people were addicted to drugs. The Burmese government allowed some people who once paid taxes to keep guns and own their own defence forces. It was a tragedy for Shan State. His narratives echoed with a village head in a Shan migrant community in North Thailand. The village head recounted that,

> "After 2000, many people in Shan State used drugs. The Burmese army and the Wa ethnic group came to Shan State; most officers had nothing to do but had big business of Heroin. So far I have returned to my hometown 3 times; in my village there were 3 shops in a 35-household village sold 'Yaba' (Thai: ยาบ้า, literally 'madness drug'). Burmese polices and soldiers were happy to help them sell drugs. The police got 100,000 Burmese Kyat per month from people who sold drugs. Meanwhile, those who sold drugs also had to pay other fees to the committee. Besides, the police also used drugs. One police officer who was in charge of Burmese ID card application in our village used drugs. If someone wanted an ID card, they just paid him money to buy drugs" (interview, 04-01-2013)

The narratives above showed that the emergence of small local powers was acquiesced by the junta. When they regularly paid tax or bribe, the government could turn to a blind eye to drugs trade issues. The Burmese military had employed a similar idea to the KKY scheme to recognise local militias as 'self-defence' forces, in order to defeat the resistance groups and reduce warfare against the military regime (see section 4.3.3). Here the power of businessmen and the right to form their own home guards was again granted by the junta. Some would go beyond control and misused their power or abused privileges.

A Shan soldier in a LOI Camp mentioned he escaped from his hometown because he was suspected by some businessmen who thought he assisted Thai border police to destroy their cross-border drugs trade due to his frequent border-crossing practices. Those businessmen who owned guns and guards tried to catch him, so he fled and joined the Shan army in 2003. He recalled deterioration of drug issues in ex-headquarters of MTA, Ho Murng, a border town near northern Thailand in his own words:

> "After MTA surrendered, many people came to Ho Murng area to do drug trade and businessmen were allowed to own guns. One gun could be bought for 10,000 or 20,000 Thai Baht. In the past, when MTA was in charge of Ho Murng area, the drug could only be sold to foreign countries, but prohibited in Ho Murng. However, after MTA surrendered, the Burmese government did not care about it, what they cared about was taxes, so the drug started being sold in Ho Murng. Once the businessmen paid taxes to the Burmese government, they could do anything. One tablet of drug was 25 Baht and drug trade became legalisation, so taking drugs was very common, almost everyone could do it, it was just as popular as smoking cigarettes. Some might take 3 or 4 tablets per day, or even up to 7 or 8 tablets, so if they did not have enough money to buy drugs,

they would even steal" (interview, 29-06-2012)

He further mentioned his encounter with a male drug addict and his family who sought survival in the remote jungle inside Shan State. As a Shan solider, he frequently moved around the area; once he met a family in the jungle— a couple with their four children (12, 9, 7 and 3 years old respectively). They were looking for tree bark for sale. They could sell 5 Baht/per kgw and the whole family could find 200 kgw of tree bark per day to earn 1000 Baht. They still lacked money to buy rice. *"Why? Because the porter vender came to sell goods as well as drugs"*, he said. The father was a drug addict, so most of the money was spent on drugs. He displayed the photos and showed me the video that he took while the father was using drugs in the corner of the house with his back turned. The photo of the drug was a box of medicine for headache called 'Phenol A Coffee Powder' (Chinese:『阿咖酚散』, A Ka Fen San). The drugs were in the box of medicine, with a picture of a man touching his forehead depicting headache. In addition, a couple of photos showed how he used simple utensils to take drugs. He made a hole at the bottom of the plastic bottle with a straw, and put drugs in it and used fire around the hole, it then formed smoke inside the bottle, so he could take drugs through the straw. Another kind of drugs was taken by using aluminium foils from cigarette cases to insulate heat and later consume it through a plastic bottle.

His narratives illustrated constant environmental and social deteriorations broke down social order and led to dramatic changes in people's lives. Along with environmental issues, drug issues made the lives more challenging in Shan State and increased insecurity and uncertainty of the civilians. On the other hand, people in such a variety of contexts endured till they could no longer accept, and then decided to leave and hoped to recreate a better life elsewhere.

5.3 Narratives about Journeys of Exile and Displacement

Leaving one's homeland, either by force or voluntarily, means leaving the house and possessions behind and heading to an unknown and uncertain future elsewhere. There are several patterns of mobility taken by the Shan: some obeyed the military's order to

relocate sites, some fled to other places in Burma, some hid themselves in the jungle or fields or further in to IDP camps secured by the Shan resistant groups (see Map 5.1); yet others moved to neighbouring countries. However, such mobilities comprised a variety of routes and journeys made in one or mixed forms of forced relocation, (in)voluntary movement and risky exile. These movements included those straight from villages to IDP camps, farms and factories in northern Thailand, and others with a stopover in the adjacent jungle, villages or towns as part of their displacement for a few days, months or years before approaching border camps or crossing the border into Thailand.
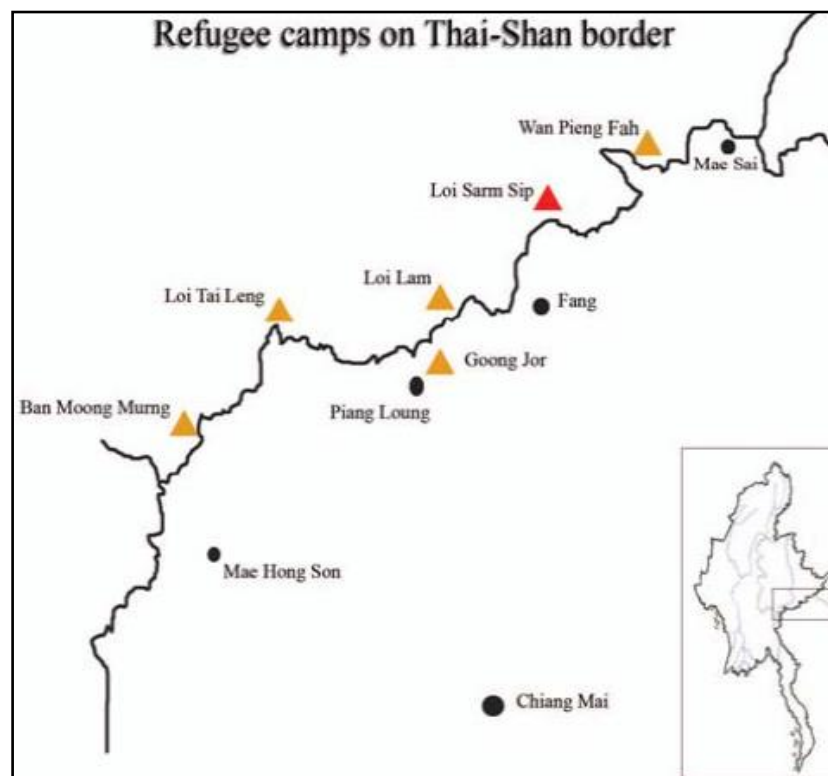
Map 5.1: IDP and Refugee camps along the Thai-Shan Border
Source: SWAN (2009: 25)

Nevertheless, certain things that most displaced Shan had in common were that their memories of journeys generally referred to the harsh terrain (e.g. jungle, mountains, rivers, wild animals, rain, mud, etc.), physical difficulties of walking long distances in such environments and potential risks (e.g. military incidents, landmines, diseases, starvation, injury, death). In particular, some journeys could not be made through a shorter route so that they made fragmented journey. In order to avoid encountering or

being noticed by the Burmese military forces, they often took roundabout ways or moved in the dark. Their narratives were filled with constant movement from one place to another and the duration of journeys varied from a few days up to a month or even longer, depending on the destination, distance and resources. Meanwhile, transportation varied from place to place. In some areas people travelled all the way on foot, while in other areas they were able to take bamboo rafts or get lift in a truck, yet others paid brokers to arrange their journeys. Besides, some families moved together, while others left at different timings (e.g. some family members stayed put to look after the house and property and later arranged for family reunion), but some separated at different locations.

Map 5.2 illustrates three main crossing points used by Shan refugees at relocation sites to flee into Thailand. One route was to cross the border from Tachilek of Shan State to Mae Sai in northern Thailand, second route was across into Nong Ook or the mountains west of Fang district in Chiang Mai Province and third route was from Ho Murng into Mae Hong Son province of Thailand.
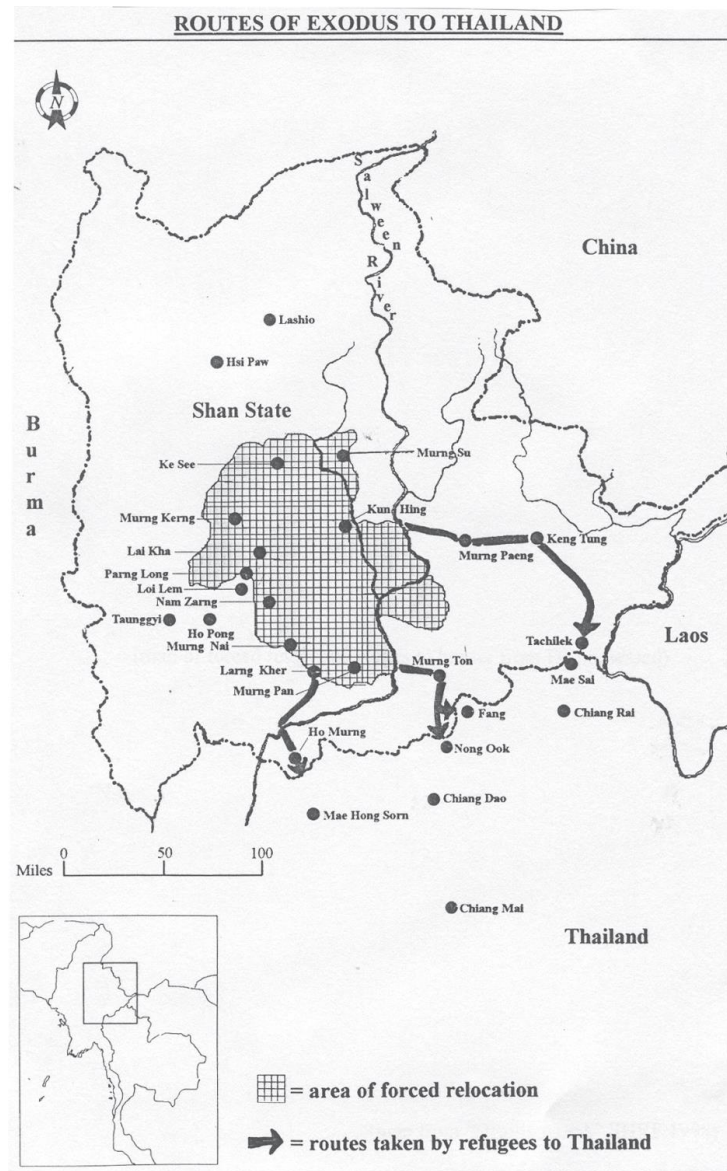
Map 5.2: Routes of Exodus to Thailand

Source: From "Dispossessed," SHRF 1998, adapted by the Shan Human Rights Foundation (2003:5)

5.3.1 Bodies, Tactics and Hidden Journeys

The narratives on journeys of exile closely refer to their fear, anxiety, sense of loss,

hunger, scarce goods, frequent mobility, hidden tactics and physical difficulty of mobility. Due to the flow of different kinds of information and lack of reliable data during prolonged conflicts, people chose certain ways to decide whom they could trust. Therefore, some followed their relatives, acquaintances, traders or brokers, resistant groups to make their way to the border areas which they thought would be safer, while others accompanied monks.

Many displaced Shan escaped their homeland with relatives; a 41-year-old female interviewee from Keng Tong living in a Shan migrant community is one such example. After her father passed away when she was nine, her mother engaged in trade and took her along while moving around to avoid conflicts. When she was 16 years old, she was tired of moving, but fighting still carried on. Whenever a dog barked at night, they would become alert and frequently checked out for Burmese soldiers. She could never sleep well at night and always prepared a small bag with a few clothes, so she was ready to run away at any time. Finally, she decided to escape from the insecurity of her home place and sought jobs elsewhere; she left home and followed her relatives to Northern Thailand as many other displaced Shan migrants did. She was the only child in her family remaining alive; her seven brothers and sisters had died due to exposure to diseases and lack of appropriate medical treatment. She recalled the journey of her leaving home. The day she left, it was raining, and they walked in the jungle during the night. Inside her bag, except for a few clothes, there was nothing else. She used a bamboo hat and her clothes as a tent. She described herself like "a bird huddling up inside the thatched clothes" in a dark and freezing night. She walked with nine people for one month to Thailand; sometimes they walked empty stomach because they could not light the fire to avoid drawing attention of the Burmese soldiers (interview, 05-01-2013)

Some left their homeland with Shan soldiers, in particular young persons or children; the former were recruited as soldiers or trained as medics and community health workers, the latter were seeking to study at Shan national schools in the IDP camps. A 26-year-old male interviewee who lived in the LOI Camp originally came from Keng Lom. He was an example of several hundred Shan youths and children who followed the

Shan soldiers to camps for studying. He recalled that when he was 11 years old in 1998, all villagers in his hometown were forced to move by the Burmese military to a town near Salween River. They built huts to stay for 3 years, and it was difficult for him to attend school. He had to feed cows and found firewood to sell in the nearby town to earn a living. At the age of 13, he heard about the SSA camp through some villagers who had connections with Shan soldiers. Once some Shan soldiers dressed as civilians came to recruit people, he heard the conversation between his parents and villagers about the Shan national school. Eventually, five children from his village went with a group of Shan soldiers together with another ten children from different villages. He recalled that it was a long trek in the jungle and they had to wade through the Salween River.

> "Some areas were dotted with landmines so we had to be guided by the local villagers. The most dangerous area was in Muang Pan, we had to continue removing our footsteps so there was no trail left on the places we passed through. In some areas, we could only move at night, it was an awful fleeing experience that I wouldn't like to remember" (interview, 11-07-2012)

Meanwhile, some displaced Shan who escaped from their homeland were guided by brokers or traders. A SSSNY youth wrote his cross-border experience with a 'silenced' and 'invisible' journey, issued in 'candles in the dark'.

> When I arrived near the border, I had to walk for 5 hours from a small village to Nong Aok. There was a guide who led us walk to Nong Aok[74]. There were 50 people walking together. There was a child in the group of 50 people and the guide said that we had to give the sleeping pills to the child because it would not be safe for security. We did as the guide told us. The guide fed four sleeping pills to the child. After we had walked for two hours, we arrived in the jungle and the child started to cry. We walked separately. The child cried and cried, we couldn't go forward so the guide took us back to the village. The guide forgot the way so we lost our way in the forest. So we had to sleep in the forest for a night. I thought I would never see my parents again (SSSNY, 2008: 109).

In addition, as noted in section 4.2, monastic networks were one of the contributions to translocal mobility, which enhanced a pan-regional association through Buddhist practices. Therefore, some left Shan State while they were still novices or monks, so they followed monastic popular routes across borders. In particular, in Shan State,

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[74] Nong Aok is also translated as Nong Ook in different sources.

people regarded monks as educated persons. Ordinary people as well as border guards respected monks. In the Buddhist world, monks could more freely move around and easily cross national borders without much disturbance. As mentioned earlier, northern Thai temples traditionally had close connections with Shan temples in the eastern Shan State or Sipsongpana in Yunnan, so that monks among these three countries interacted often and frequently travelled back and forth. To be novices or monks in the Shan State, they had more possibility to be sent to Thai temples. Some informants who were ex-monks went with Thai monks and followed Thai customs while crossing any checkpoints in Thailand. When monks moved about, they often travelled with new robes, candles, posters, scriptures, books, amulets, cassettes, and videos, so these objects circulated quickly around passer-by villages. Davis (2006:103) used an interesting metaphor, *kula* exchanges, to describe the circulation of Shan's stuff which created flows of "network of relationships" which 'formed one interwoven fabric' (Malinowski, 1961 [1922]: 92). Even though in the prolonged conflict, such activities still continued.

A 31-year-old Shan officer and soldier was one among those who crossed national border while being a monk. He was a monk for over 10 years. While he was still a monk, he moved amongst different temples to study in both Burma and Thailand: Hi Paw, Yanggon, Tachilek, Chiang Rai, Bangkok, etc. In 2006, he followed some Thai monks who visited the temples in Tachilek of Shan State and invited him to receive donation in Chiang Rai. At that time, he was looking for another temple to stay for his further studies, so he used his Burmese Monk ID card to cross the border with a purpose of a short visit. After entering Thai soil, he wore a Thai orange robe and shaved his eyebrows to facilitate his travel within Thai territory. He further explained to me that there was a historical precedent for the custom of Thai monks shaving their eyebrows.

> "Why only Thai monks shave their eyebrows? When the ancient period, Thailand and Burma had battles, the Thai capital Ayutthaya was under siege by the Burmese soldiers. The Burmese sent some soldiers as spies who dressed as monks to enter Ayutthaya and collect intelligence. Aware of the infiltration, the Thai monks were ordered to shave their eyebrows to catch the spies. Apparently, when the Burmese spies followed suit and returned to the Burmese court, they were also conspicuous for the Thai spies in Burma to be able to identify them"

(interview, 04-07-2012)

The narratives above showed life of flight containing obvious and potential risks, difficulty, insecurity and uncertainty. Numerous life stories bear similar witness of harsh and poor conditions during journeys of hiding in the jungle and living in fear of being grasped or killed by the *Tatmadaw*. Journeys lasted for days, months or even protracted years and decades. However, it reflected their negative need to get away from the intolerable situation in their home places, and also a positive and complex set of expectations to make changes to their trapped lives. With this intention, they bore physical arduousness and risks to flee. Horst and Grabska (2015) analyse ways in which refugees and displaced people navigate in situations of radical and protracted uncertainty and deal with realities. They stress that during conflict, one of the contributions to uncertainty is the environment — where people are threatened by violence, loss or even death — filled with contradictory or unreliable information. Meanwhile, another contribution to uncertainty relates to "unpredictability of future" (4). As Boholm (2003) emphasises, "uncertainty has to do with what is unpredicted in life, the odd possibilities and irregular occurrences"; he further highlights uncertainty can also imply "recognition of change and awareness that states of affairs are not static; they can alter drastically; for better or worse" (167). Therefore, in order to have certainty, people attempt to find balance and journey towards acceptable lives within such a limited situation.

Frequent cross-border movements back and forth in both directions brought information and stories they often became important source of information for Shan. , It was not easy to verify this information as it could be "easily coloured by fear and /or hatred" (Horst and Grabska, 2015:4). The obtained information influenced people's decisions to make way to somewhere safe or border areas, particularly Shan soldiers, local heads village who often visited Shan border camps for meetings, as well as traders or monastic monks who frequently crossed national borders. The pre-existing and ongoing multiple cross-border movements created translocal networks, which provided Shan a direct or indirect sense of being a part of 'rowing in the same bamboo rafts' in an "imagined community" of Shan (Anderson, 1983). This to a certain extent

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helped reduce the displaced Shan's sense of uncertainty of future. Grundy-Warr and Wong (2002) highlight that those shared experiences of forced relocation, violence and fear, of "hiding and running" and of "journeying to the border", have facilitated to construct a new historical sense of "togetherness" (109).

James C. Scott's (2009) recent argument is about those ethnic minorities living in the mountainous region of the Southeast Asia (Zomia[75]), who consciously choose to live in remote areas where state powers are unable to reach and control. The tactics can be seen as an act of state avoidance, so as to prevent from being subjected to the states' predatory behaviours, including recruitment, enslavement, heavy taxes, forced labour and warfare. He further points out that those tactics used by the highlanders to maintain stateless comprise geographical dispersion in rugged mountain terrain, mobility of agricultural practices, flexible ethnic identities, and preservation of an oral culture that allows them to reinvent their histories and genealogies as they move between and around states. I argue that this notion of strategies of state-avoidance is not used in the case of displaced Shan. To assert the idea of antagonism as the Shan's strategy is to ignore the existing historical fact and socio-political system of Shan. In fact, their interactions with other polities are on a regular basis that date back to the pre-modern era. Their relations with ancient empires, contested colonial powers and neighbouring modern nation-states have varied across the Tai social world (see also discussions in chapter 4).

The adaptive strategies of physical flight to the upland can be seen as part of "making and managing relations with states" as Josson (2012:166) argues, rather than simply regarding is as staying outside the state's reach. In particular a series of negotiations and a recent ceasefire agreement have been discussed and signed by Shan resistant groups with the Burmese government (see also chapter 4 and 7). Meanwhile, a proper legal status is also one of the main issues for displaced Shan to negotiate rather than to remain 'stateless'. In present-day, 'antagonism' is not Shan's main concern and

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[75] A mountainous region in Southeast Asia, comprising of parts of Burma, Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand.

cannot benefit them to move freely between and around states, as displaced Shan have been suffering a harsh situation due to their lack of adequate juridical status so that getting trapped 'in-between' places of nation-states (see chapter 6). Their mobility and tactics for survival and struggles are precarious and limited, which are never the same as for those with citizenship.

5.3.2 Distorted Life and Dispersed Family

Except for dangers of hiding and journeys of flight and exile, conflicts and displacement also resulted in distorting the life of soldiers and dispersing families in Shan society. Therefore, when the Burmese military launched the 4-cut campaign to cut off the insurgent groups' support from the civilians, who were the so-called 'rebel groups', it was not easy to clearly separate the resistance forces from the civilians.

In narratives of life stories of displaced Shan, many informants referred to their family members who had been deployed for military duty, in particular male family members, often including my male informants themselves. According to the findings from my field interviews, there were generally three ways in which Shan households were directly or indirectly involved in military services: forced conscription, voluntary recruitment and compulsory enlistment. At times, the lines between each category were blurred. The first category, forced conscription, was usually launched by the Burmese military, which often led young boys to be sent away by their families to be novices in temples or to other neighbouring countries (e.g. Yunnan or Thailand). The second category, voluntary recruitment, often took place among children or youths for a variety of reasons, such as nationalism, revenge, contribution, brotherhood, study, or being orphaned, etc.

The second category, voluntary recruitment, often took place among some children or youths with a mixture of various reasons, such as nationalism, revenge, contribution, brotherhood, study, or being orphaned, etc. The third category, compulsory enlistment, was conducted by the Shan resistance forces, particularly during the period of MTA, each household who had more than 3 men who had to offer 2 men to military services, including young boys. The Shan army came to villages with a soldier-recruiting list for

each household in MTA controlled areas in Shan State; some informants joined the army as substitutes for their younger brothers who were on the list. If they were too young to be soldiers, they were sent to schools[76] which were set up by the MTA. In post-1996, numerous schools, namely Shan National School, were continuously set up by SSA-S/RCSS, particularly after the ceasefire agreement in 2011.

Due to the scarcity of education resources inside Shan State, education opportunities attracted many boys and some girls to the IDP camps which were attached to the Shan army camps. Shan national schools in the IDP camps had become well known for Shan as a place offering free education and accommodation for orphans and students as 'boarding schools' secured by Shan Army forces. Boys recruited to the camps were often regarded as 'students' rather than 'child soldiers'. Some parents considered it as a good chance for their sons to access education in the camps and at the same time to avoid their recruitment into Burmese military force. However, these boys had to leave home for several years or even for over a decade. A 25-year-old male teacher in a Shan national school had lived in LOI Camp for over a decade since he decided to attend school at the camp when he was 13. Because of the ceasefire agreement signed by SSA-S/RCSS with the junta in November 2011, he made his first return visit to Shan State to see his family in March, 2012. He mentioned that his family could not recognise him at the first glance after 12 years of separation.

> "I went to Kali to visit my sister first for one night. At the beginning my sister could not recognise me, because she did not expect I would visit her so it was a big surprise. Then, my sister took me back home. Even though I was born there (a village with 52 households), but on the way to visit my family, I could not recognise anyone in the village which had newly-built houses and my family also could not recognise me at the first glance" (interview, 11-07-2012).

Many of his friends and students in the camp also had a similar life. Some families decided to move as a unit to a camp for children to access education. Although the future was full of uncertainty, a 33-year-old lady emphasised her will to be with her family after several years of mobility, "*gan yu gan gin*" (staying together and eating

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[76] Because the leader of the MTA, Khun-Sa, was a Chinese –Shan, so he set up Chinese schools in MTA's bases in Baan Hin-Ted (now renamed as Baan Thed Thai) and Hong Mueng.

together, in Shan language), and "*kao ot gan*" (moving in or out together, in Shan language) (interview, 04-01-2013). However, even though thousands of young people were attracted or sent to the Shan national schools, some parents remained sceptical about their children being sent to frontline after their studies. During my fieldwork while I stayed in the national school, I met a few students' families coming to see their children. I was impressed meeting two families: a mother brought her 15-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son to the camp and left them with her relative who was an official of SSA-S/RCSS. However, three weeks later when the mother returned to take her children back since she was worried her daughter might be sent to be a female soldier after her study due to a rumour (fieldnotes, May, 2012). Another family came a long way to visit their son who had just finished his studies but continued to stay there and was being trained as a media worker. They came to confirm whether he was trained as a media worker or a soldier (fieldnotes, July, 2012). In such a situation, most households were more or less immersed in the military recruitment or had some relationships with Shan resistance groups: it was hard to clearly delineate the boundary between these reasons.

In addition, the prolonged absence of sons and brothers was very common in Shan families; young boys left home for soldier recruitment, boarding schools or temples for several years and were away for prolonged periods (another type of young people access camps for medical training as community health workers or medics, which explored in section 7. 3). Meanwhile, prolonged war-time also further distorted normal lives of soldiers who were withdrawn from civilian life and had a profound impact on family division of labour; in particular, the long-term absence of father or parents due to military deployment or relocation was experienced by many families. In the LOI Camp, many men voluntarily joined the army without informing their families or used the excuse of seeking jobs in Thailand. Some lost contact with their families due to difficulties in making contact in remote areas or stayed in the jungle for a few years, while some were wounded and remained in the army camp.

One day at a noodle shop in LOI Camp, I was meeting a friend, SSA-S/RCSS officer, for tea. He would always keep his left hand in his pocket; I remembered that his hand was

injured. At the army camp, I very often saw people who had lost their hands; even the third leader of Shan armed groups had lost one of his hands, which seemed to be a symbol of their braveness and sacrifice to the Shan State and their people. No one would discriminate against the fellow comrades who had lost their hands. Later on came a young soldier, who was carrying a backpack, he looked like he had just come out from the jungle. He mentioned that he had been walking alone for three days and four nights to reach here. "*That was a soldier's life; He walked in the jungle by himself for three and four days, amazing, isn't it*? ", my friend said to me (fieldnotes, June, 2012). The hardships of soldier's lives are seen as a heroic symbol in the name of nationalism; and the sacrifice of soldier's normal life is regarded as braveness.

Another Shan officer /soldier who used to be a monk for many years finally resigned and joined the army. He thought that "*as a monk you cannot do anything to protect yourself, so how can you protect your land? [...]I don't support fighting, but I support defending our country*". Therefore, he became a soldier, and then in 2003 he went to the front line for four years. He recounted his harsh jungle life as below:

> "On the front line, we had to sleep, eat, and do everything in the jungle. We slept under trees, but once in a while, we could stay in a village. Whenever we encountered the Burmese army, we had to fight. We had to be careful all the time, because if you lose the game, you die. I stayed in the jungle for years. Sometimes we did not see other people for two or three months. I had to get up in the early morning, around four or five o'clock, and call all the soldiers to get up. Sometimes we didn't have time to take off our shoes for three or four days, and sometimes we had to go a day or two without food".[77] (interview, 22-07-2012)

He mentioned that in his family he and his other brothers joined army: one of his brothers joined the army of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) and two others joined the Shan State Army. One of them died in the fighting against the Burmese Army. When he was young, there were three groups fighting in his hometown: the Shan Army, the Burmese Army, and the CPB. He frequently saw fighting between the Burmese Army and the Shan Army inside and outside the village, so his family never had much time to

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[77] It was cited from a print-out interview report from a media, which the interviewee handed to me in 22ⁿᵈ July, 2012. Due to the confidential reason, I did not mention the name of the media, because there was some concrete information of the interviewee on the report, including his name.

stay in the village, they had to run into the jungle for safety, just as many other villagers did.

A couple of years ago, he got married and left his wife and newborn daughter in Chiang Mai for security reasons, and he stayed put in LOI Camp. While he was talking to me, his laptop screen showed the photos of his wife with his lovely daughter. It was very common for high-ranking Shan soldiers to separate from their beloved families and leave them in certain villages for security or with other family members, which I refer to as 'mobile fatherhood', existent but absent. Many interviewees mentioned being in similar situations. A 35-year-old Shan man in SUAN Camp recounted his own experiences during his childhood, "*my father was a Shan soldier and my mother had to cook for the Shan leader. When both of them worked for the army, I felt I was an orphan……we had to live by ourselves. My father was away and my mother went to work in the day time and returned very late, so our brothers and sisters had to be independent and took care with each other.*" (interview, 19-04-2012)

Many interviewees displayed their mobile fatherhood or absence of a parent in their families. As a 33-year-old soldier's wife stressed, "*in Shan State, men could not live at home, maybe in forests or mountains*" (interview, 04-01-2013). Therefore, this situation is not only spatially fragmented but also temporally distanced. Owing to "loss of daily contact with family" (Hondagneu–Sotelo and Ávila, 2000:288), the mobility and physical separations had dramatically changed civilians' family structures and had prolonged effects on family relationships leading to transformation of motherhood. But this situation seems poorly understood and has a limited research base. In particular, as Rodriguez and Margolin (2015: 24-25) mention, existing literatures on deployment and migration have developed within different disciplines using different methodologies, which led to the practical obstacles and challenges to conduct research on the issues of families experiencing parent absence, and suggest the value of cross-disciplinary research and of integrating across literatures. Although not all families worked in the same way, but how these dispersed families maintained, developed or negotiated their emotional bonds and coped with absence of other family members reveals family separation can certainly change the dynamics of family relations and

family ties play a crucial role in mobility and displacement experiences. I will pursue this further in chapter 6 and 7.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

As noted in chapter 4, in the pre-modern era upland Burma was characterised by multi-centred principalities with cultural interpenetration of political systems, along with multiple tributary relationships to neighbouring empires. The sovereignties of numerous states were often fluid and overlapped. Therefore, flexible translocal mobility was a common feature for Shan prior to the era of fixed line boundaries. This dramatic change turned the formerly porous paths into filters to restrict cross-border mobility. Therefore, mobility involved a series of political processes and controlled by state powers in modern day. A notion of the world as 'boundless' and 'deterritorialised' cannot be used to explain the Shan's case, and is unable to capture the reality of people's lived experiences, in particular those struggling with and suffering from forced displacement or relocation.

With the expansion of national power in the post-colonial period, warfare, forced relocations, forced labours and the dangers of journeys of hiding and exile became displaced Shan's mutual experiences and memories. Their mobility, relocation, displacement and constraint were entwined with one another. It is hard to define their mobility as voluntary or enforced. In particular, such issues caused them to leave home places which were always interwoven with military, political, economical impacts and social changes; they also exacerbated the situation of widespread insecurity, destroyed rural economy and environmental destruction. Moreover, the planned and coerced relocation was merely associated with the attempt of political and military control to monitor civilians and prevent them from supporting insurgents.

Life of displacement and exile was full of uncertainty and contained various risks, dangers and difficulties in the chaotic context of wartime. However, mobility is not simply a pessimistic tactic to avoid harm and oppression but rather an optimistic choice to seek a better life. This does not necessarily mean a strategy of state-avoidance or

antagonism as James C. Scott (2009) argues. In the pre-modern era, Shan states were ruled under traditional *saopha* political systems. Even though these systems were destroyed after the independence of Burma from the British, when the leaders of the Shan states were forced by the military junta to hand over their hereditary powers, the Shan resistance groups somehow replaced *saopha*'s roles in their controlled areas whereby they collected taxes from merchants and obtained supports from villagers in lieu of protection. Therefore, the tactics of fleeing to upland can be seen as part of negotiating their security rather than preference of being stateless' Antagonism cannot enable them to move freely across national boundaries in the present-day. Without security or legal rights, either internally or transnationally, they may move from one conflict-affected place to another, in particular by facing some rules concerning mobility and immigration policy.

In addition, during the prolonged war, some families get broken on the way and some family members were died or lost in the conflict. The prolonged conflicts caused familial and social relations being changed and negotiated; in particular, gender relations have been reconfigured in the absence of men for military deployment. Many men have withdrawn from civil life and lead a protracted and distorted life, which also results in the prolonged consequences in the transformation of motherhood as well as familial functions. This also echoes Kabachnik's notion et.al (2010:317), 'double displacement', in both place and time. Numerous life stories in this research bear witness of insecurity as well as radical and protracted uncertainty in spatial and temporal aspects.

Horst and Grabska (2015) analyse ways where refugees and displaced persons navigate situations of radical and protracted uncertainty. I suggest the decisions which the displaced Shan made and tactics they used were to navigate within the contexts of conflicts and risks and meanwhile to (re)create the possibility of a new life, even though the process of moving around is not process about which the displaced Shan have total control. In order to return some extent of certainty and security, seeking a kind of patronage relations for protection during their displacement and mobility is very common, such as fleeing to IDP camps for seeking refuge in Shan army-secured areas,

crossing national borders to Thai side and being hosted by monasteries, hiding and making a living in Thai farms or factories, being integrated into existing Shan villages or migrant communities and followed by someone they could trust to make their journeys, etc. Those survival tactics were to not only avoid violence but also find a balance of their life and further looking for a better future.

This kind of social support network plays a crucial role as the "informal safety nets" (Devereux, 1999:13), which can be traced back to Scott's (1976) influential book *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*, that illuminates subsistence-oriented agrarian societies in a multifaceted support networks. It offers a minimum subsistence and a margin of security, based on the norm of reciprocity. Scott (1976: 11) calls these the 'moral economy' which includes relations between *patrons* and *clients* or between rich and poor in times of hardship, which can be seen in the structure of village reciprocity. Therefore, how do displaced Shan cope with radical and protracted uncertainties of the present and the future and for their lives and home-making projects will be explored in chapter 6 and 7.

CHAPTER 6 Placing the Displacement:

Status, Relations and a Sense of 'Home'

6.1 Introduction

After analysing a variety of causes— such as mixtures of military enforced relocation, development-induced environmental deterioration and social insecurity— that led to internal and international displacement of Shan, this chapter 6 extends to further discuss uncertainty in prolonged displacement. It addresses a series of tactics on how displaced Shan cope with their precarious present and future in socio-cultural dimension to repair disruption to their home places, to keep their own 'way of life' and to gain re-control over their lives, in particular facing 'unknown' or 'instable' settings.

In discussions of the humanitarian crisis, research often focuses on the legal, political and institutional facets, while the roles and responses of displaced people are always overlooked. In particular, key literature highlights issues of state sovereignty and responsibility, the UN mandates and humanitarian concern related to security and access; the abilities of displaced people are often neglected (Vincent, 2001; Bonwick, 2006).

Since the last decade, the issue of coping mechanisms among those displaced has gained more attention from scholars. Numerous researches have stressed the significance of recognising and supporting the rational strategies of displaced people, especially those that protect themselves from jeopardy and maintain their security and dignity (Blaikie et al, 1994; Vincent and Sorensen, 2001; Bonwick, 2006; Jaspars et al, 2007). Many case studies also show most displaced people are far more than just ensuring their physical safety and incorporate some social statuses into their strategies during their displacement (Blaikie et al, 1994; Le Billon, 2000; Cusano, 2001; Jaspars and Shoham, 2002; Korf, 2003). They have demonstrated diverse strategies of displaced people to develop concepts and capture ways in which they cope with their radical and protracted insecurity. The terms: survival strategies, protection strategies, self-protection, subsistence strategies, coping strategies, self-help/self-reliance strategies,

livelihood strategies and response strategies have often been used interchangeably (see also Vincent, 2001), although there are still some differences in their meanings and scopes, to clarify the differences between them is not my purpose in this research.

Moreover, some scholars try to distinguish the concepts of tactics from strategies while discussing power relations, identities and the politics of everyday life. For example, de Certeau asserts resistant operations of everyday spaces as tactical, and tries to distinguish the tactics of the weak from the strategies of the strong (1984: xix-xx; 35-38). He argues that resistances are more often composed of the materials and practices of everyday life rather than the more apparent modes, such as rallies, rebellions, demonstrations and so on. His views are consistent with James Scott's (1985) viewpoint. Scott's *weapons of the weak* is also a crucial milestone that illustrates how the powerless or marginalised enhance their agency and increase control over their lives by means of everyday forms of resistance against their subordinates and during oppressed positions. Some research on issues of violence and conflicts in battlefields often employed this notion referring to coping mechanism of civilians to tactics rather than strategies (e.g. Honwana, 2005; Utas, 2005).

However, some scholars, like Vigh (2006), argue that the distinction between tactics and strategies is problematic. Vigh (2006: 135) contends, "the conceptual pair has its major limitation as it is a generalisation providing a simplified picture of the complexities of social navigation and terrains", and further argues "seeing strategy as acts of the powerful and tactics as acts of the weak disregards the fact that a terrain is an intrinsically multilayered phenomenon containing a multitude of negotiations of power". I agree with Vigh's (2006) argument that the binary distinction between tactics and strategies is oversimplified and the dynamics of power relations has been disregarded. However, there is no denying that such a dichotomy offers a basic tool to analyse how oppressed people respond and resist against the dominant and subordinated situation. This category somewhat shows two-dimensions of strategies with interactions within the power relations. The two modes should not be seen as mutually exclusive and separate categories but flowing continuums, in order to facilitate a better understanding of coping mechanisms.

Vigh (2009: 420) adds a third dimension "a spatial form of movement" to his exploration of concept of "social navigation" to show "the way we move in a moving environment" that is instable and unsettled. By using "navigation" as the metaphor for practice, the term literally means 'to sail' or "to sail over and go by sea". It "designates motion within fluid and changeable matter", which is different from the way we move "in fields and landscapes". Although he criticises de Certeau's tactics-strategies distinction, he combines the concept of navigation with de Certeau's notion and re-interprets that "strategy is the process of demarcating and constituting space" and "tactics the process of navigating it" (Vigh, 2009:424). The concept of navigation has been widely employed in anthropology and other social sciences, in particular how people navigate uncertainty, cope with the conditions of severe dispossession, escape from oppression and move to a better position (e.g. Howana, 2005; Korf et al, 2010; Ryan-Saha, 2015; Utas, 2005; Vigh, 2006, 2008, 2009).

The notion of social navigation is inspiring and allows discussion of how people navigate uncertainty in radical and protracted displacement. Meanwhile, the features of "seascape" imply a multidimensional and dense dynamics of social changes and multiple forces, some of which may change dramatically while others may be rather calm (Vigh, 2009: 429-430). However, there are three points that this analytical tool fails to account for clearly. Firstly, it fails to address when people choose to stay put while others choose to flee from conflict and crisis (Horst and Grabska, 2015:12). In addition, by using the metaphor "seascape" to imply the uncertain and instable environment and show dynamics of the settings with the actual interactions with "moving environments", it fails to address the changes of adding the temporal factor on the consequences of resistance over time. Thirdly, it simply explains how people actively react to radical or prolonged changes of the environment rather than addressing how people's practices could also make changes of different forces. By using the natural phenomenon (e.g. waves, wind, current, stars, etc.) refers to influence of multiple social forces (e.g. conflicts, violence, social structures, economic crisis, unemployment, etc.) which cannot capture the social reality of interplay between agency and social forces.

Although place is not as fluid as seascape to address the uncertain environments, it is still an open and ongoing production rather than a 'fixed' landscape (see chapter 4). Therefore, to understand the dynamics of place and how displaced Shan actively make sense of their displacement in their everyday lives, I draw on Sack's (2004) idea of place-making (see chapter 3) in terms of 'weaving'. I use the term 'shuttle' to demonstrate how displaced Shan go through their uncertain circumstances and reclaim status and certain degree of control on their lives against their protracted displacement. I divide this application into chapters 6 and 7 respectively, with the former that I explore displaced Shan's tactical survival practices of dual life (see chapter 6) and with the latter that I account for translocal affiliation and how displaced Shan (re)construct their translocal lived space (see chapter 7). Like the concept of social navigation, 'social shuttle' adapts an "actor-oriented" perspective (Korf et al, 2010:387) to explain how displaced people shuttle through various instable terrains of conflict and violence as well as deal with their situations of radical and protracted uncertainty in their everyday practices. In this sense, although it is not to deny displaced people's vulnerability, but to see their active role rather than view them as passive objects or 'victims' (Brun, 2001: 18; Utas, 2005: 426).

Sack's (2004) theoretical framework clearly suggests that examining the structure and dynamics of a place can be a suitable instrument to understand the significance of place making. I suppose the longitudinal threads (the warp) as a series of policies rules, social forces and strategies of the powerful, etc., while the lateral threads (the weft) as various elements of reality in different dimensions (e.g. rituals, habitus, languages, education, wealth, etc.). People were seen as 'the weavers' and the shuttle, which is a holder carrying threads across weft yarns of the loom while weaving, as the shuttle is thrown or passed back and forth through the shed, crossing between the yarns of the warp; this can be seen as everyday practices or tactics of the weak. In particular, the way the weft yarn passes over the top or under the warp shows the weft-faced satin with threads of the warp and weft interwoven with each other; this can be regarded as tactics of (in)visibility of displaced people. This interaction creates dialogical relations between the displaced and the powerful. To address the displaced Shan's tactics of

(in)visibility, I use the idea of Goffman's (1959) frontstage and backstage practices to display how displaced Shan have lived a dual life to negotiate their subordinate positions and cope with uncertainty and insecurity in the protracted displacement.

Therefore, chapters 4, 5 and 6 mainly focus on three themes, place (territory), mobility and survival tactics respectively, while Chapter 7 extends the concept of the cohesive network with translocal connections to link the three themes together. In this chapter I focus on a variety of tactics that displaced Shan use to 'shuttle' their disrupted past, precarious present and uncertain future in the socio-cultural dimension. I divide the chapter into three sections: firstly, I examine how displaced Shan deal with their statuses in displacement to feel right, including the citizenship or ownership (e.g. possession of property or land; right for driving licence). Secondly, I explore what could provide the bridge for home-making to link their past loss of homeland and possibilities of the present dwelling and how displaced Shan have lived a dual life to negotiate their subordinate and oppressed positions. Thirdly, I address how displaced Shan make home by inhabiting the grounds of the present. They make the new space (in-between place) a meaningful place, like 'home' and create homeliness through a variety of neighbourhoods and further construct kin-like relations to maintain social cohesion.

The following section will explore displaced Shan's marginalised status and how displaced Shan deal with their vague status and negotiate their social positions.

6.2 In-Between: On the Margins of Legitimacy

> "The bridge and the main road belong only to the one who holds a card, but we go along the waterways and make a circuitous path", said a Shan Youth at LOI camp (fieldnotes, July, 2012).

The status of displaced Shan varied based on their temporary residences and time of their arrival. Various academic research on the movement of people between and within nation states invariably use legalistic and governmental frameworks to categorise populations. When conceptualising and presenting academic work, researchers often differentiate between populations using official terminologies: internally displaced peoples, refugees, forced migrants, asylum seekers, migrant

workers, undocumented peoples, stateless peoples, irregular migrants and so on; all imbue particular status. In reality it is still hard to categorise the Shan as the boundaries between different terminologies are blur; they could be grouped into more than one category, depending on their locations or their diverse reasons to move.

In addition, the basic notion of category of insiders or outsiders is rendered on the national demographical categories, such as citizens and non-citizens, as Sibley (1995: 77) argues a country often attempts to maintain the "purification of its territory" However, sharing a 2400 km border with Burma, Thailand has been hosting diverse ethnic groups who arrived on Thai soil in different periods. In particular, since the post Second World War geopolitics of the region has caused much change and led to various types of migration on the border of Thailand. Therefore, the official categories are more complex than academic terminologies. Border surveillance was established to cope with penetration of a range of groups along the Thai national border.

In early 1970s, according to the Thai National Act in 1965 (1992 amended), the categories of minority immigrants were created and standardised by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the National Security Council into 16 types[78] of status to officially define and control those who live on the border or illegally enter Thai soil, including hill tribes[79] who have lived in Thailand for generations (Pongsawat, 2007). But according to a joint project RTG (Royal Thai Government) cooperated on with UNESCO and NGOs, the Citizenship Manual was issued in 2008 stating the legal system for coping with stateless highlanders who sought to deal with their statuses, including 18 types of

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[78] According to the Bureau of Registration Administration, Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior, the 16 types of minority groups are: 1.Vietnamese Immigrant (the card itself is White with a Blue Rim), 2. Members of the *Kuomintang* Army Battalion 93 (White), 3. The *Haw* Refugee (Yellow), 4.The Independent *Haw* (White with Orange Rim), 5. Ex-Malayan Communist Party Insurgents (Green), 6. *Tai-Lue* ethnic group (Orange), 7. Laotian Refugee (Blue), 8. Nepalese Refugee (Green), 9.Displaced Person Who Has Burmese Nationality (Pink): before 9 March 1976 seeking asylum, 10. Refugee with Thai Origin from *Kong* Island, Cambodia (Green), 11. Illegal Migrants from Cambodia (White with Red Rim), 12.The *Yumbri* Tribe (Blue), 13. Displaced Burmese Immigrant of Thai Origin (Yellow), 14. Illegal Immigrants from Myanmar (Orange and Purple): With Permanent Address (Orange); Staying with Employers (Purple), 15.Highlanders (Blue Card) and 16. Community of Highlanders (Green with Red Rim) (Pongsawat, 2007).

[79]The official indigenous hill tribes are *Karen, Hmong, Yao (Mien), Akha (Ikaw), Lahu, Lisu, Lawa (Lua), Khmu* and *Mlabri;* Other non-hill tribe highlander are Burmese*, Shan,* and *Mon*, among others, who illegally came to Thailand prior to 3 October 1985 (Pongsawat, 2007: 178-179).

identification cards. This category distinguishes those groups from Thai citizens. Without being granted full citizenship, each group is registered and assigned its own colour card to signify entitlement status. Different types comprise different regulations on rights and obligations, in particular restrictions of working in a government sector or owning assets (e.g. land, car or motorbike).

As compared to Thai citizens, one of the key differences is that these different groups are only allowed to stay in designated areas and unable to travel freely to other districts or provinces without an official permit. However, as I tried to inquire from the staff working at the district office about any written information on regulations or laws for Shan to apply suitable identification cards or relevant documents, they responded there was no such written information (or perhaps he had no idea). Therefore, village headmen would assist in disseminating updated announcement to migrant communities. All the relevant information was given as verbal statements and could vary in different narratives, which created more confusion and grey areas for negotiation. As a result, many displaced Shan hold different identification cards, such as *Displaced Person Who Has Burmese Nationality* card[80], *Highlanders* card[81] (blue) or *Community of Highlanders* card[82] (green-with-red-frame), with both temporal and spatial confinement.

In 2004 (B.E[83]. 2547), according to the Central Registration Bureau, the Thai regulation on issuing identification cards for people without Thai nationality underwent a vital change. All previous styles of identification cards were standardised to the present pink-colour card. Accordingly, the legal status of different groups would be only classified in relation to their 13-digit identification numbers (UNESCO, 2008: 92). This classification serves to specify which laws and regulations apply to various ethnic or minority groups. It could facilitate to alleviate problems of legal status, but it still means

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[80] Displaced Person with Burmese Nationality card: for those who came to Thailand before 1976 issued in 1978.
[81] Highlander ID Card (Blue card) during 1990-1991: for two groups-nine hill-tribe groups and other ethnic groups from Burma-Shan, Kachin and Mon.
[82] Community of Highlanders card is also called Highlander Survey Card (green-with- Red- frame) issued in 1999.
[83] The Thai Buddhist Era is the official calendar in Thailand.

a long process to obtain citizenship. In 2008, Thai authorities started working on another ID card for Burmese migrants, the Living-card with a validity of 10 years (white). However, it was still limited in some certain areas, such as Wieng Hieng, Chiang Mai, etc., for those who entered Thailand in 2000 (B.E. 2542). The card was issued to relatives of Shan, who had not yet recorded their arrival in Thailand [84]. A recommendation letter from the village headman was needed as proof of residence[85]. Therefore, village headmen were endowed with privileges to decide Shan's application for legal status.

By holding different ID cards, displaced Shan were categorised into different statuses. When they filled the gap created by lack of available workers on the Northern Thai farms or factories, they suffered from the *"stratified otherisation"* (Lan, 2006:16). This limited ("partial[86]") Thai citizenship (Pongsawat, 2007) has not only complicated class stratification of Thai society, but also intensified Shan's feeling of being *out of place* and their position as a subordinate class. It has not only caused a rupture of past relations of siblings with Northern Thais, but also created new boundaries as they settle in Thailand. Nevertheless, they continue to make efforts to negotiate the paradoxical Thai policies and other constraints.

In order to escape from being trapped in legal ambiguity and to reconstruct continuality, displaced Shan seek to obtain a better card to retain their mobility and relations with the past. Most who do not have any Thai ID cards have tried to apply and hold at least one kind of cards, including the new pink card[87], the Travel Card[88], the Senior card[89], an Alien passport, the Thai citizen ID card and so on. While some displaced Shan have eventually obtained identification documents for themselves and their family members,

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[84] The type of Living-card is regarded by Shan as the lowest value identification card without right to own motorbike and driving licence.

[85] *Burma News International* (2008) on 25th June 2008. "Thai authorities begin work on ID cards for Burmese migrants".

[86] In Pongsawat's (2007:142) research, he raises the idea of 'partiality' to "resolve and transcend the notion of 'duality' of structure".

[87] The new pink card with 13-digit identification numbers.

[88] Travel card is used only for traveling to participating in activities and meetings in other districts or provinces.

[89] The Senior Card is for the elderly adults over 60 year-old

still many paid several application fees but received nothing. Dealing with undocumented stateless status is often one of main issues in many displaced Shan' everyday lives. There were a couple of stories from my fieldnotes illustrating such experiences.

A 51-year old male who lived at the camp said,

> "I have tried to apply for ID cards four times since I have stayed here. The first time I paid 700 Baht to apply for a Displaced Person Who Has Burmese Nationality card (pink), the second time I paid 3,000 Baht for applying Living-card (white), third time I paid 500 Baht for Senior card, and fourth time I paid 800 Baht for Travel card. I did not get the former two cards and only got the Senior card and Travel card. However, although I got the Senior card, I was reminded of not using this Senior card because I was less than 60 years old; I only used the Travel card once" (interview, 27-02-2012).

His daughter added, in their family, only she and her mother were issued Highlander Cards but by coincidence.

> "When I was a child, we still lived in our home place (a border Shan village in Shan state). One day I was sick; my mother took me to Thai side (a border town) to see the doctor. On the way, we saw a long queue but we did not know what it was for, so we went to the clinic straightway. When we were on the way back, we saw only few people and told that it was for applying for an ID card. My mom's friend helped us to register for ID cards, so my mom and I got ID cards but other family members did not obtain one. Finally, my mom and I registered with a Thai surname. Later on, when my elder sister got 10-year card (white) due to assistance from the Thai border Shan school, she registered with my grandfather's name as her surname. Therefore, my family had different surnames. Meanwhile, in my family, only my father did not get any ID card. He only has a Travel card. Most of my father's relatives who came earlier to Thailand had 6-year card (Highlander Card), and their children also had Thai Citizen ID cards "(interview, 27-02-2012).

Besides, some Shan youth mentioned that sometimes their 10-year (white) card would be 'locked' unexpectedly and they had to pay extra fees to the district office to 'unlock' it. A 20-year camp youth said:

> "The limitation of my life at the camp is 'unable to move', which is the problem for my education, when I have to go somewhere, but it's difficult for me to move, e.g. for studying SSSNY in Chiang Mai. When I was heading for Chiang Mai to study, my 10-year card was locked by the Thai authorities, so I had to wait for

several days to get a travel permit and each time I had to pay 2,500 Baht for unlocking the card. I paid twice, in total 5000 Baht, because the card was locked and could not work" (interview, 23-04-2012).

However, still some youth managed to obtain the card and were eventually granted Thai citizenship,

> In the morning, while I was chatting with some villagers in SUAN Camp, a young Shan monk came, who used to live in the camp with his grandmother but moved to the monastery when he became a novice. He greeted everyone and happily mentioned that he had just got a Thai Citizen Identification Card, so after that he was granted as a Thai citizen, and he could freely move anywhere he likes. He told us that he used to hold a living-card (white, 10-year card), and at that time his mother paid a huge money for that. However, at this time he said that he had found a website on how to apply to be a Thai citizen, so he did not pay a lot of money and the procedure did not take long. The news seemed to make everyone excited, and the Thai ID card was passed on to everyone. A girl mentioned that she really wanted to get a Thai ID card for her freedom of mobility, so she quickly wrote down the website address and said she would start working on that (fieldnotes, January, 2012).

Their narratives showed that paradoxical Thai Policies towards Shan left spaces for negotiation of their legal statues, but exposed them to be exploited by local officials due to corruption or bureaucracy. Sometimes the process had various obstacles, such as language barriers or insufficient documentary evidence to prove entitlement (e.g. a birth certificate for hospital). Moreover, another new policy strengthened the complexity of identification. With the large population flow from Burma due to the political changes in 1988 and other illegal migrant workers from Laos and Cambodia, in 1992 the Ministry of Labour of Thailand created a new registration category (Pongsawat, 2007: 166). Since then, Shan new arrivals were grouped into new migrant workers category; they could only be granted temporary permission to stay districts in their workplaces. In addition, this system depended on the employer to control the workers, and once they changed their work place to a different district, they had to apply for permission from the district office. This system was a kind of spatial regulation which imposed boundary controls and created vulnerable and cheap labour.

Those who did not have a Thai Identification card but only a temporary residence ID card regarding the Thai Civil Registration Act, *Tor Ror* 38/1 (under Section No. 38

paragraph)[90], could apply for the renewal of permits; they were also required to apply for or extend their migrant worker cards (valid for six years). In June 2004, Thai policy allowed migrants and their family members to obtain a temporary residence ID card (*Tor Ror* 38/1); this was in order to break the linkage from the employers to migrants and allow them to have some certain degree of freedom to change employers[91]. Principally, the overall registration fees for entering the NV (the National Verification) system in order to become a legal migrant costs around 3,800 Bhat, including work permit (1,900 Baht)[92], health examination (600 Baht), health insurance (1,300 Baht/person/year), which were to be renewed regularly[93]. In reality, however, migrants have had to pay to have a temporary Burmese passport since 2009 (valid for three years, with a 2-year visa) that could only be used in Thailand rather than other countries. They also had to pay service fees and transportation fees to broker companies who helped them make their application. Therefore, each migrant worker may pay around 5,500-10,000 Baht or more. For migrant families, if each family has two or more people (including their dependents of working age), they had to spend at least 10,000 Baht on all the required expenditures. In particular, relevant fees have changed regularly over time when the Thai policies on migrant management and the required documents changed. Although, their average daily wage rate was between 120-200 Baht, mostly, they got 150 Baht per day. Therefore, it is a huge burden on them to work for their family's living costs, housing, and expenditure on documents.

Since November 2013, the Ministry of Labour in Burma has announced new rules about issuing ordinary passports to Burmese migrants in Thailand. The purpose of the new policy is to resolve the irregular and undocumented migrant workers' issues, and move them to a more permanent and legal status; in this way the ordinary passports are used to replace the temporary ones, which are only valid in Thailand, and are the same as

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[90] Tor Ror 38/1 is a special form of civil registration that offers aliens permission to stay temporarily in Thailand, issued by the Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior.

[91] Source: Policy review on Mekong Migration Network (MMN) website: http://www.mekongmigration.org/?page_id=80/ [Accessed: 27/10/2014]

[92] Work permit application fee, Baht 100: Work permit cost, Baht 450 if less than three months; Baht 900 if less than six months and Baht 1,800 if less than one year.

[93] Duration of work permit: one year and total cost: 3800 Baht for renewal; 4250 Baht for those who hold Tor Ror 38 but no permit (Implementation of May 2005)

those issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in Rangoon[94]. However, these policies vary frequently and can confuse displaced Shan and contribute to an endless circle for Shan to make repeated payments to obtain legal residence on Thai soil during their stay, thus making them vulnerable to exploitation, as *Card Slaves*. Even though Shan may hold legal documents, those displaced have been still restricted to some certain works[95], mostly low-paid, low-skilled jobs such as farm wage work or construction work, as factory workers or domestic workers in Thailand. Such jobs are full of uncertainty, so their entire lives appear to be a series of temporary jobs.

Besides, in order to distinguish migrants who may have entered legally or illegally, according to the Thai civil registration act (2008), the Household Registration regulates registration for migrants with the temporary right to reside in Thailand. According to *Tor Ror* 38/1 (Thai laws, section no. 38), the district or local registrar "shall issue a household registration for persons without Thai nationality having been permitted to stay temporarily and those having been giving leniency for temporary residence in the Kingdom of Thailand" (UNESO, 2008: 149). However, sometimes obtaining household registration is also based on timing and fortune. While Shan family members scattered in exile arrive in Thailand at different time periods, it could lead to some family members registering into different families, so in the documents they may belong to different families. In order to get household registration, some Shan registered in the same family with their friends. In the context of Thai laws and regulations, the nature of kinship relations may change and kin could be created and documents fabricated. A 55-year old female Shan woman who lived at SUAN Camp revealed,

> "When I made a 10-year card (Living-card, white card), my family were listed under a Chinese family for Household Registration. I heard that applying for ID

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[94] Source: The Irrawaddy news on 16th October, 2013: "Burma Migrants to Start Receiving Regular Passports". [Online] Available from:http://www.burmanet.org/news/2013/10/16/the-irrawaddy-migrants-to-start-receiving-regular-passports/ [Accessed: 27/10/2014].

[95] In 2009, Thai labour ministry prescribed colour codes employment cards under the forthcoming registration for workers from Burma, Laos and Cambodia to different of their sort of works, e.g. Blue card for fisheries, green card for agriculture, yellow card for construction, orange card for seafood factories, grey card for domestic work and pink card for general work. Also, workers holding pink cards are available to get access 19 types of work. All the workers would be only appointed after Thai citizens fail to apply. Source: Hseng Khio Fah (2009). *Shan Herald Agency for News*: 8th June, 2009. [Online] Available from: http://www.shanland.org/ [Accessed: 27/10/2014].

card registered together with Chinese family would be much easier than with Shan and also involve less possibility of being cancelled. Therefore, our Chinese friends listed our names in their family list" (interview, 19-04-2012).

In her case, her tactics of registering her family into a Chinese household, a category that she considered as holding a more powerful image of a migrant, was used to avoid some unexpected troubles from local Thai authorities. The paper somewhat cannot fully show the real family structure, but the reality of displaced Shan's need and tactics of reducing risk.

On the other hand, some displaced Shan also hold a Burmese card or return to Shan state to apply for Burmese citizen ID cards. Very few Shan also tried to obtain Chinese citizen ID cards. Whether holding Thai or Burmese ID card, once they have cards from both sides of borders, they could retain some freedom and maintain social relations in both sides. In recent years, with political changes and a swing towards democracy in Burma, there has been some mention at the border town opposite to Mae Hong Son province, that Burmese citizen ID cards are being issued. The news has attracted some displaced Shan or even Thai citizens in Mae Hong Son to apply. Some Shan mentioned that as long as they had money and could find any relatives or friends in the border town, who were willing to put their names on the family list, they could get Burmese citizenship to move freely back and forth across the border. Some revealed they used their friends' Burmese citizen ID cards who passed away during the fighting, while others used their friends' Thai Highlander cards. Once they used their friends' cards, they also used their names when they passed through checkpoints. However, some risked returning to their home places to apply for ID cards, like a 20-year old Shan youth who has been away from Shan State and lived in an IDP camp over 10 years took risk to return to his home place in 2012 to apply for his Burmese ID card. Finally, he made it and also applied for a migrant worker card to travel freely in Thailand. He explained,

> "in Burma if you have money, to apply for ID card is easier than in Thailand". However, he still wants to get a Thai migrant worker card, which could allow him free travel in Thailand for 6 years. He told me that his Thai friend would help him, just simply by proving he is an employee. His status would become Shan migrant worker, but the migrant worker card may cost him 4,000-5,000 Baht" (fieldnotes, May, 2012).

> Two months later, I met him at a Shan rest house[96] in Chiang Mai when he came to apply for his documents. He was so excited to tell me that he got a 6-year migrant worker card. This year he successfully obtained a Burmese Citizen Identification Card and also a 3-year temporary Burmese passport. At present he has a migrant worker card of Thailand. He said, "I have become a truly freeman now". He further stated, when he got the Burmese ID card, he proudly showed it, "I am no longer an undocumented stateless person, and I can freely visit any country in the world. I also can travel all over Thailand without any obstacles" (fieldnotes, July, 2012).

Therefore, to escape from being trapped in legal ambiguity and to maintain the continuality of their lives, displaced Shan seek to obtain a better card to retain their mobility and relations. Initially, obtaining identification cards is based on *instrumental purposes* rather than to change their identity. In particular, obtaining identification cards also refers to the relations between rights and duties of an individual. In order to settle their uneasy hearts, displaced Shan gamble between regulations for a better status. Under this varying system, those groups in different categories retain, to a certain degree, a transitional status. This means that some are still likely to be granted full citizenship at the discretion of Thai authorities. The classification system is contradictory and subtle so it leaves substantial grey areas for negotiation.

Apart from coping with their legal status, next section explore how displaced Shan have lived a dual life to negotiate their subordinate and oppressed positions in their everyday lives.

6.3 A Dual Life? The Tactics of (In)visibility

Displaced Shan seek to retain a sense of continuity in their everyday lives, which ties with their past in the homelands through rituals and habitus in their protracted displacement. To some extent, they make efforts to create a feeling of rightness and heal the rupture between the past and present that forced migration and stratification have created. In particular, from the narratives of informants, 'homeland' is often

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[96] Shan rest houses are offered by RCSS spreading in various cities or towns where many Shan gather for those Shan who need a short-stay for medication or transit.

referred to where they were born or come from. It also the place where they can enjoy, practice their own culture, tradition, speak freely and study their own language peacefully. Once a place offers a friendly environment for their cultural and ritual practices, people feel more at-home when they have some good memories with family and friends together. They may have turned a strange place to a familiar 'quasi future homeland'. Therefore, they start to make the environment familiar, even when the environment is not what they would have chosen. As Dudley (2010:143) emphasises, the practices of dynamic, embodied and emplaced rituals, which ties people and their environment together, are particularly important for displaced people.

During the Shan's protracted displacement, Shan temples play an active role as the main centre for Shan to maintain their rituals in everyday lives. They are not only trans-border hubs for monastic travel, but also an umbrella to host displaced Shan, a centre of education, a harbour to host their wandering hearts, a place of nostalgia and a centre of belief and culture. Shan temples are one of the important spaces for Shan to gather and be who they are without constraint. Hence, they always said, "*wherever Shan reside, there is a Shan temple*". No matter in the IDP camp, the refugee camp, or migrant communities there must be a Shan temple, with some Shan monks to conduct cultural rituals. Besides, each household also has a Buddha altar placed high on the wall in the major living area to receive guests (Tannenbaum, 1995: 57) and a place-spirit of the house compound at the entrance to the house proper even in displacement. Displaced Shan follow the Buddhist calendar; their lives being closely tied with the cyclical nature of annual rituals and festivals. In each village or community there is also a fenced compound, a small house which contains an altar for Cadastral Spirit: *Tsao Muong* (the lord of the country), as Tannenbaum (1995) points out, its role is "to protect the village from danger, keep out evil forces, prevent trouble during festivals, and generally preserve the well-being of all the human and animal inhabitants" (Tannenbaum, 1995: 49).

The rituals and festivals also create an important connection beyond temporal and spatial boundaries of Shan's past way of life; in particular, through crucial Shan festivals, such as the Buddhist Novice Ordination (*Poy Sang Long)* or Shan New Year, etc. The

celebrations take place in various Shan villages and migrant communities in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son provinces. Shan culture is integrated by Thai authorities as part of Northern Thai customs to attract foreign tourists, such as famous *Poy Sang Long* ceremonies, therefore, to some extent, Shan people themselves have become a cultural resource within Thai society. In such events, Shan always enjoy attending ceremonies as they provide a space for displaced Shan to perform as Shan, so they wear traditional costumes or buy products with Shan symbols, such as Shan bags, T-shirts with the flag, a map or Shan scripts, and also buy some CDs or VCD of Shan songs or films. Meanwhile, there is always a stage set up in the temple for traditional Shan cultural performances, and anther stage for a youth band to play Shan pop music. Whoever likes to sing could step onto the stage to sing with other Shan audiences and dance together, regardless of their voice or intonation. They can draw audiences' attention and win a warm applause, without fear of anyone.

However, festivals and rituals are not just connections to the past or against the rupture of displacement, but also play a vital role as a kind of re-interpretation and collective satire, which was infiltrated through action drama or songs to express their pain and transform their collective experiences. These experiences became a crucial element of social cohesion. Ferguson's (2009) research on Shan Buddhist novice ordination was based on a community of former Shan insurgents and their members. He discusses how social conditions push the expectations of the ritual beyond its traditional meaning. He argues that in the ritual's juxtaposition of merit-making with rock music, an atmosphere is constructed that gives the occasion greater force and much social meaning to marginalised Shan people.

> A few men start to dance in front of the ensemble, clearly, and intentionally, in the view of the Burmese soldiers…He concentrates on his dancing, but the amusement of shouting, almost growling, at the Burmese soldiers in front of all of his friends has overtaken his emotions and his wide grin is one that he cannot retract for several minutes. While doing such a thing would be ludicrous in any other context, the fact that it is Poy Sang Long time, the emotional charge, the collective effervescence, enable the Shan to taunt the soldiers on the other side of the crevasse from behind the symbolic cloak of the Buddhist ritual (Ferguson, 2009:70)

Thus, embodied ritual practices in the Shan's displaced context could heal disjuncture for continuality, soothe their pain and release the emotions. As McGreevy (1990) also points out that, "people who enter the spirit of this festival…not only transform the appearance of [where they live]; their actual experience of [this place] differs from that at other times of year. For the duration of the festival, the world becomes a different sort of place" (McGreevy, 1990: 33, citied in Dudley 2010: 115). Besides, Cohen (1991: 204) also highlights, joking and laughing could also serve as "tension-release mechanism" for individuals and "allow the participants to reinterpret experiences, share in mutually reassuring communication, and provide solidarity and support by transforming individual experiences into collective experiences". His viewpoint could also be applied in other collective gatherings, activities or events, such as Shan cultural groups or army groups who designed and performed some satirical dramas on Burmese soldiers' abuse. Burmese soldiers became object of joke for Shan; this could have a similar influence to soothe their pains. Once during the 65th Shan State Resistance Day[97] at the IDP camp, Shan resistance soldiers gave a performance on how they bravely fought with the Burmese and rescued civilians. Audiences were laughing with their vivid and exaggerating expressions.

> In the morning, all the camp villagers and students were heading for and gathering together at the venue for the cerebration of Shan State Resistance Day. It was raining, wet and slippery on the muddy hilly roads. We wore raincoats and some carried umbrellas, walking along with the crowd. When we arrived at the venue, the big ground, there were many people waiting. Shan soldiers performed an episode on how Burmese soldiers bullied villagers, grabbed anything they wanted, took the livestock and collected taxes from villagers. They were beating those who could not afford to or meet their requirements until they painfully lay on the ground and groaned. Then the beaten villagers were arrested and locked in the jungle hut. Next episode showed Shan soldiers were approaching the jungle hut and trying to rescue arrested villagers while it was getting foggy which made fighting more realistic and nervous. They attacked the Burmese army and showed their braveness to fight with Burmese soldiers. Finally, they rescued the villagers and released them, followed by bombing the hut and ended up with audiences' unanimous applause (fieldnotes, May, 2012).

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[97] Shan State Resistance Day is often interchanged with Shan State Army Resistance Day or Shan State People's Resistance Day.

In the course of the performance, those who vividly acted the role of Burmese soldiers made the crowd laugh repeatedly. What was the significance of this laughter? As Ferguson (2009: 70) argued, "this kind of happiness, euphoria, transcendental state—effectively a kind of emotional excess—is one that is infectious. The collective acts of the ritual continually amplify the magnitude of these feelings amongst the revellers". It also implies the "weapon of the weak" (Scott, 1985), which shows how oppressed Shan enhanced their agency and increased control over their lives by means of everyday forms of resistance.

However, such festival ceremonies may be one of the very few exceptions where displaced Shan could step on the "front stage" (Goffman, 1959) for cultural promotion with spotlight and wear traditional costumes with Shan symbols in public. After the festivals finished, people had to get back to their routines; their 'Shan-ness' became *invisible* in the cities. Displaced Shan usually keep a low profile and erased their features or markers in the Northern Thai mainstream society. Some of them without legal documents had to resign their cultural identity and speak Thai language to avoid any troubles. In spite of this, ritual performances in front stage areas and offstage practices cannot be completely divided as separate, and sometimes the boundary was blurred. Perhaps they never really leave the stage, and front stage performance could freely turn out to be the backstage platform for satire on the oppressors, and the backstage area itself could also be a platform for daily resistance as Scott (1990) would call, a kind of "hidden transcripts". According to Scott, in the backstage discourse and masked resistance tactics – "rumours, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes" - among various manners of communication, can be "hidden transcripts" which act as critiques of the powerful (1990: xiii).

The tactics applied by displaced Shan in their everyday lives are to protect themselves and seek survival. On one hand, they provide mutual support within Shan communities and promote Shan culture which has been integrated into North Thai local culture by the Thai authorities to promote tourism. On the other hand, in order to hide from official detection, they tend to keep a low profile within the mainstream Thai society, particularly in big city bazaars. As I visited a big bazaar in Chiang Mai with a Shan

interpreter who showed me how to distinguish Shan porters from Thai porters, I noted some observations as below,

> Here many Shan porters gathered with their own trailers at different entrances of the market, waiting for wholesalers who would like to hire them to collect various kinds of merchandise. The passages of the bazaar were too narrow to trucks and any transportation, so that hand-pulled trailers could be a better option to gather their products. However, it was often a starting-point to create tension between Shan and Thai porters while Thai porters felt they were deprived of job opportunities and also faced competition of low-wage Shan porters. Therefore, in order to be hired, some would inform neighbouring police for patrol, so that Shan porters had to make their escape from the bazaar temporarily. Additionally, there were also some shops or stalls owned by Shan in the bazaar. However, when the customers asked in Shan language, the vendors always replied in Thai to avoid troubles from the police. Since nearby gold shops always hired police for security, to prevent being recognised as Shan, the vendors mostly spoke Thai (fieldnotes, December, 2011).

Besides, many displaced Shan who had Buddhist tattoos (*sam* ya, literally 'pigment tattooing') on their arms or bodies are in a dilemma, because bodily tattoos became a distinguishing marker of Shan-ness. In Shan culture, the designs and patterns of tattoos were believed to have different functions, including to protect people from any harm caused by warfare, animals or evil spirits, to make others admire, to reveal strength and a sign of manhood, or something to make bodies aesthetic and also to be regarded as medicines (Cadchumsang, 2011: 102-103).Some Shan ex-soldiers mentioned to me that these tattoos could prevent their bodies from getting hurt from enemies, while other civilians mentioned their tattoos were made by monks to avoid evil spirits or promote good relationships. Once Shan moved to other urban areas or non-Shan villages, those bodily tattoos become a stigma. Some revealed they had tried to erase bodily tattoos or wore long shirts to cover them, when they worked or travelled to other urban areas, such as Bangkok or Chiang Mai. They often suffered discrimination in cities when people saw tattoos and recognised them as Shan. A youth at camp mentioned to me,

> "When I was young, I saw the elderly had tattoos on their bodies. I let the monk do it for me, but now I feel it is useless and looks dirty. I want to erase it, because when I went to Chiang Mai, people could easily tell that I come from Shan State. I had to wear long-shirts to cover it even when it was very hot and I was always worried about encountering Thai police" (interview, 11-07-2012).

Here the life stories show as Lupton's (1998) suggests that, body is seen beyond the

naturally given product of human biological composition particularly people decorate and change their bodies through various means of tattooing, surgery, body-shaping, etc. and it also consists of diverse implications in accordance with mutual sets of meanings which classify and differentiate between people.

Moreover, spatial practices as tactics of negotiation are a common experience for displaced Shan, whether they hold a legal document or not. Many without legal documents may stay far away from main roads to avoid Thai police patrols or try to go along roundabout tracks to avoid passing through checkpoints or encountering Thai police. However, some who hold an identification card and try to apply for travel permits may spend a couple of days waiting for their permit since the district office only allows a certain quota of people to travel out of the district per day. Thus, some may risk going through the secret route without any legal document. Even though some may travel with a travel permit, sometimes they still could not avoid the border police's interrogation.

> When I took a Thai bus ('*song tiao*') to Chiang Rai, the bus stopped at a checkpoint, the Thai police came and looked at everyone's face. Suddenly he asked a young man sitting in front of me to show his ID card or any legal document. As the police saw him showing a piece of paper, the travel permit, rather than an ID card, he asked him many questions, such as the purpose of travel, who he was going to visit and how long he was going to stay, etc. No one was further questioned by the police except him. As the bus continued to head towards Chiang Rai, he remained silent until he met a middle-aged Shan lady getting in the bus. He started talking with her and complained in the Shan language about his previous experiences of encountering the Thai police's interrogation. He wondered why the police only checked his documents among six passengers, so both of them started sharing their viewpoints about Thai police (fieldnotes, December, 2012).

For displaced Shan, whether holding legal documents or not, many feel some degree of insecurity. Therefore, encountering police's cross-examination has become a commonly shared experiences.

Apart from travelling experiences without a sense of security, for some displaced Shan, 'home' is not a private and secure place where no one can enter without permission,

even for those who hold both parts of the legal documents. Some Shan migrants mentioned that they had to separate Thai identification documents from Burmese ID cards (if they have both), and hide their Burmese ID cards from being found by Thai police to avoid trouble. Those living in the refugee camp had to hide their other Thai cards (e.g. highlander cards), because they were not allowed to hold any Thai identification when they registered in an unofficial refugee camp. Some Shan once mentioned when the Thai police came and checked Shan refugee camp by surprise, their Thai ID cards had been found and confiscated. Therefore, 'home' place can not only be seen as backstage area, but also turn out to be front stage area subject to interrogation and search by Thai police.

These stories show circuitous mobility is one of displaced Shan's tactics to make themselves 'invisible' to protect themselves. They use this method to continue their freedom of movement against geo-political control. These spaces of checkpoints or the immigration customs (cross-border bridges) rather than the *non-places* argued by Augé (1995), or even their 'home' places have become an arena between symbols of state power and the secret tactics of displaced Shan. Therefore, whether front stage or offstage practices have formed shared experiences for displaced Shan, and even though they may come from various places of origins due to diverse links with the past in Shan state or nowadays temporarily live in different places along the border. Hence, they could easily transform their individual experiences to collective experiences based on embodied practices, which are now interpreted collectively and juxtaposed to form a coherent climate for the dispersed Shan.

6.4 Constructing a Sense of at-Homeness

> "Living here without roots is just like living with a tie which could be cut off, so we would be expelled at any time", said a Shan youth at a temporary shelter near the Thai border (fieldnotes, April 2012).

Apart from tactics of negotiating legal statuses for residency and of circuitous movement, re-building relations with new environments and making home by inhabiting the grounds of the present are also ways to re-construct a sense of 'at-home' and 'rightness' for displaced Shan. From the narratives of my informants, 'home' is

often referred to   a sense of safety, peace, dependability, freedom, love and where they take rest, share and spend time with beloved family.

> "Home means where we share our time with family".
> "Home, is a place where I feel safe and free. The place where I can feel the true love from my beloved family."
> "Home for me is the place where the people I love are, so home for me doesn't mean Burma nor Shan State only."

It implies both physical and symbolic meanings, but does not necessarily refer to specific place (i.e. Burma, Shan State or Thailand). Home here is fluid, and can be made and remade through everyday practices. Sense of security and safety as well as the existence of familial relations are fundamental for a place to be 'home'. The notion of Ahmed et al (2003) on the term *home* is very helpful to explain Shan's case. They question the idea of home as pre-existing migration and argue that homes are "always made and remade as grounds and conditions (of work, family, or political climate, etc.) change" (2003:9). As Brickell (2012: 227) further offers an alternative approach and calls for working on "critical geographies of home" (Blunt and Dowling, 2006: 22) as a way to understand politics of home and to revise "a more complex and fluid understanding of the home which emerges from deliberate or unintentional disruptions to home places and sentiments at different scales and times". Therefore, I suggest home-making in displacement is a dynamic, continuous process of becoming, which connects the past and the present, as Dudley (2010: 165) emphasises "a sense of place familiar in the past is both continued into and recreated in the present". Thus, I explore how displaced Shan negotiate different contrasting experiences to make the new space (in-between place) *meaningful* (Hammond, 1999) and *familiar* (Dudledy, 2010), like 'home'.

The situation of displaced Shan who dwelled in displacement, without land ownership, is different from those who are entitled to travel around freely without security and (il)legal concerns. As mentioned earlier, sense of security is one of the fundamental elements to have a sense of being 'at-home', as Flynn (2007) points out: the existence of immediate social and personal relations is crucial to a place being 'home', in particular they facilitate the reconstruction and securing of existing social, economic

and ethno-cultural identities. The re-establishment of 'home' needs a sense of spatial security, with which 'home' can be extended out into the wider environment (478). Therefore, in order to understand how they re-create homeliness, I explore their connections to the neighbourhoods, including accessing lands and building partnership within their communities or beyond. Meanwhile I address how they (re)construct sentimental attachments, "closer-knit" (Hammond, 1999) of kin-like relations, to tie them together, which contribute to overcoming the othering environment, reducing sense of insecurity and strengthening their social cohesion. It is involved not simply a question of how to maintain their ways of lives, but also about how they co-exist with other locals or hosts temporally or permanently. The following sections, I focus on their home-making in different bases.

In LOI Camp, in order to facilitate positive relationships and co-exist peacefully with the Thai authorities along the border, the Shan resistance group eliminated some drug factories owned by other drug traders in a deep mountain area and transformed it into their stronghold and made this restricted mountain area a *home* for numerous soldiers' families, displaced Shan and orphaned children. Besides army training camps, they built houses, cultivated lands, established a clinic, a temple and a school as well as an administrative office to deal with various affairs and maintain their social, economic, cultural and political practices. Initially the camp was divided into different zones (named by numbers, such as zone 1, zone 2, etc), which always reminded camp residents that they temporarily dwelled in an army camp. One of exceptions for the previous IDP area near Thai outpost was often called '*wan mai* (new village)'. This 'new village' was established in 2000 and consisted of around 50 households to retain its village-like life style and weakened its image of an IDP area. However, in 2005 and 2011 the Thai authority continued the policy of requiring those displaced Shan who inhabited the Thai side to move to Shan side (informal chat, 05-06-2012). They gathered together and located on the mountain ridge on the way to the new site of the clinic and meanwhile the newly resettled site was integrated into previous military divisions of zones, and the previous IDP area was renamed as 'bo 4 (zone 4)'. However, in daily life, villagers still call the previous IDP area as 'wan mai' rather than by zone number (informal chats, 04-07-2012 and 20-07-2012).

Although living in this area, camp residents have been restricted by camp regulations, including limitation on their physical mobility, duration of electricity use, time for retiring in the night as well as telecommunication control to contact outside places, nevertheless, more households have started rebuilding their houses by using more permanent concrete and cement construction materials from Thailand to replace temporary thatched huts. Meanwhile, in recent years, the camp has set up a few telephone stalls managed by Shan soldiers for civilians to make contact with outsiders. Some interviewees mentioned they had not contacted the family that they had left behind since they moved into camp until 2011; this was when the ceasefire agreement was signed by both SSA-S and the Burmese regime.

Moreover, a radio broadcast station was also set up to propagate information, covering various topics such as political issues in Burma, health care, human rights, Shan culture, history, world news, SSA-S discipline or RCSS policy as well as various ethnic music. Many households do not have TV sets, so radio broadcast is the crucial media to give updated news about their home places and for entertainment. Besides, even though they live in the camp, they still maintain their daily ritual practices. Having a monastery is very important for the camp in which many ceremonies are held. Also, each house including residence of soldiers and officers has a Buddha altar for morning and evening prayers, which articulates the IDP camp as "more of a place to live rather than just somewhere to be in limbo" (Dudley, 2010: 37).

The similar transformation of nature into social space also took place in SUAN refugee camp. Over 10 years' displacement, hundreds of displaced Shan who got a permit from the ruling abbot of the border Shan monastery have transformed a mango garden belonging to the monastery to be their 'temporary shelters' and also gave it a Shan name meaning 'happy hill'. After that, those displaced Shan started their new lives in Thailand. Living within the 'happy hill', they set up some regulations for all the villagers to follow and maintain as a self-managed community. The household is the basic unit, and the whole community is divided into 6 formal groups to share all the camp duties together, including donation distribution, serving the temple or supporting other

nearby Shan villages' religious activities. Cooperation is the basic theme of social relationships within the camp.

Besides public affairs, people also work together in house-building (or upkeep), weddings, childbirth, funerals and religious ceremonies, but each household has its own group of people who come to help and whom it goes to for help. This kind of labour-exchange group is informal and often composed of relatives, friends and neighbours who live closer to the household, but also includes those who they depend on in all important affairs of life. This labour-exchange group reveals one of the most important social and economic ties in the Shan community. The mutual divisions of labour make villagers' lives exceptionally busy, but also foster a comradeship of facing mutual risks and difficulties together, in particular as many came from different border villages. As Hammond's (1999: 239) research on the Ethiopian refugees who were resettled to Ada Bai found their mutual experience of having stayed together in a Sudan refugee camp created the sentiment of being a "closer-knit" community. These extensive kin networks were re-interpreted as being far more intimate than to that prior to displacement.

The camp residents further build a quasi "patron-client" relation (Scott, 1976) and partnership with neighbouring northern Thai villages, most of which are existing Thai Shan villages and other ethnic groups or Chinese villages[98]. Besides being hired as wage labour to fill labour gaps in neighbouring villages, Shan also share some religious works. When any Buddhist festivals or events are held in other villages, the camp Committee assigns some groups of camp villagers to assist with tasks such as meal preparation or other affairs. Mostly the camp Committee does not reject such requirements; one of the key reasons is to preserve Shan culture for merit-making (Shan culture is deeply rooted in Buddhist beliefs) and to maintain good relationships with neighbouring villages. Meanwhile, in the regular meetings at camp, the Committee often repeats an announcement regarding camp individuals' behaviour outside the camp to remind camp members they should not behave badly to risk letting nearby villages stigmatise

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[98] The Chinese villages are KMT (Kuomingtang) 3rd troop's families and their descendants.

the whole camp.

> Once, a couple of camp teenagers had a quarrel with nearby Chinese youths on the way back to camp, so the camp commander took them to visit headman of Chinese village to sort out the tension. The camp commander explained that individual behaviours might affect the relations between camp and nearby villages, so he had to avoid the conflict expanding. And, also even they heard the rumour that there might be one person at camp using drugs, in order to avoid this information affecting the reputation of camp, they held a meeting to warn the whole camp members that everyone at camp had duty to maintain the reputation of camp. Otherwise, they might get pressure and requirement from the Thai authorities to leave the Thai soil (fieldnotes, March, 2012).

Like the Shan living in SUAN refugee camp, numerous Shan migrant communities name their new settled neighbourhoods rather than zone numbers. The land of the Shan neighbourhood where I was located was lent by a northern Thai monastery and it used to be a forest governed by the Department of Forestry. While huge numbers of Shan refugees escaped their home places and crossed the border to the Thai side, the Thai head monk of the monastery bought the land and had an agreement with the officers in the Department of Forestry to allow Shan refugees to settle down temporarily in 2000 (interview, 04-01-2013). Therefore, those Shan who were assigned the land to build their own houses had duties to secure nearby forest and assist some religious events in the temple. They could be left free to use the land but had no right to register it under their names and could not sell it officially. Later on, more Shan arrived and gathered near this area and in private they signed contacts with some big landowners to access land unofficially and build their houses. Most Shan who came from the same village or area of origin often gathered in the same neighbourhood.

Finally, Shan migrant communities expanded up to 5 zones under the administrative system of a nearby northern Thai village, without formal names, but a few households started to obtain their own postal addresses. They named different zones based on the relative locations with a nearby temple or the feature of neighbourhoods, such as 'the new village with a big tree', 'the foot of the temple hill', 'the lowland of temple hill', 'the back of animals' habitat' and 'ethnic group's village'. Each zone was required to offer 3 to 5 volunteers to get training and assist in promoting knowledge of hygiene and health widely or survey some diseases. These zones formed a network of Shan migrant

community in the area to share different duties including religious occasions or sub-district activities. As Seamon (1979:16) mentions, as people move away from home to the 'unknown' places in the end these may become familiar, so that the notion of home can be seen as an expansion of "unknown-turned-familiar" (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001:80). This area formed a (relatively) familiar environment for displaced Shan, in which they could freely wear Shan traditional costumes, promote their culture and maintain religious rituals in their everyday lives.

The process of naming place is often involved in the power of politics; in particular what is being named, or interpreted by whom? As Jess and Massey (1995: 134) emphasise power is "involved in naming places- who gets to put what on the map and how". Those names displaced Shan gave to depict their surroundings when they arrived at those new places and developed the connections to them. Those places are not yet officially shown on the Thai administrative map, but have been popularly used in Shan's everyday life. Over time, numerous Shan migrant communities have been integrated into the Thai local governmental system and few of households have obtained their postal address. Therefore, the significance of temporal factor in the process of home-making cannot be ignored.

Compared to LOI camp, SUAN camp and northern Thai Shan migrant communities, big cities offer more job opportunities and attract many Shan youths from different border areas to seek better jobs. However, some might keep a low profile gathering at various construction sites or scattering in different cheap flat-let in different corners of cities, while others might move into existing Shan areas near Shan temples. The neighbourhood of Wat Papao (Papao temple) in Chiang Mai is one of the crucial Shan communities. Behind the temple, there is a Shan migrant community. Within the community there were some Shan shops with signs in Shan script, including restaurants, dressing and groceries selling Shan books or goods from Shan State, which all create a sense of 'homeliness'. Even those Shan who scatter and make themselves invisible in various corners of cities still make best use of their temporary flat-lets as a crucial hub for cultural representation. One of my fieldnotes read as follows to show the daily life of displaced Shan in their flat-lets:

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During the Shan New Year in November 2011, I was invited to stay with my Shan friend at her cousins' flat overnight. It was my first time to enter Shan migrant workers' place. This flat had one bedroom, one bathroom and one sitting room. During the night, one male relative and their nephew slept on the ground of the sitting room and five females including me slept on the ground of the bed room, although it was a little crowded but it was clean and tidy. In the early morning of next day, the elder cousin of my friend moved to lie down on the floor of sitting room near the radios and TV set while the male relative and their nephew had gone to work. After then, she started listening to Buddhist Sutras. While we joined her, she started to play VCDs of Shan songs regarding Shan State and some songs with films referred to Burmese military's human rights abuse inside Shan State as well as Burmese students' protest and the demonstration at the year of 1988, including part of film about Aung San Suu Kyi. And also there were some songs recorded from the previous events about previous few years of Shan New Year, in which some singers were former Shan soldiers or political activists. My friends further showed me their tickets for the Shan New Year ceremony at a northern Thai temple. They looked forward to attending this event because their favourite former Shan soldier singers were performing at the temple (fieldnotes, November, 2011).

Their daily practices straddled in two worlds and maintained their temporary residence as 'home' which created "a private climate of comfort to facilitate the expression of their cultural differences without 'bothering' anybody else" (Morley, 2000: 52). Morley (2000) further cited Thomas' (1997) work on Vietnamese diaspora in Australian homes stating, the "home remains the key site for the expression of a Vietnamese cultural aesthetic. It is also seen as the only space in which one's actions are not entirely regulated by others" (2000: 52). Thus, as Thomas (1997) puts it, despite the constraints imposed by state authorities, for these migrants the home" is the key site in which these displace people deal with the sense of loss that has accompanied leaving their original homeland" (cited in Morley, 2000: 52).

In addition, those who arrived in cities without their family's company may form an intimate relation of *quasi kin* with other displaced Shan. In particular within Shan culture, they use kinship designation and describe to outsiders, such as *luang* (uncle), *pa* (aunty), *bi* (elder sister or brother), *nong* (younger sister or brother) in Shan society, which also strengthens such kind of *quasi kin* sense of homeliness and closeness as newly *extended* family bonds in their displacement. Cohen (1991: 201-203) made a

similar finding, when she focused on how non-white female domestics respond to oppressive employment; she found both legal and illegal live-in domestics in white households in Canada drew on external resources to fulfil their need for companionship, social approval, affection, attention and economic cooperation by creating their day-off **"weekend home"**, and family-like bonds and ties. However, these 'family' relationships often consist of same-sex friendships organised around sharing rental space, which is not the situation among Shan migrants. Among Shan migrant society in the cities, this kind of *quasi kinship* often comprises various forms and includes members in different age groups.

Thus, at the beginning of my fieldwork, the *quasi kinship* often confused me about their *actual* relations with each other. One of my interviewees, a 32-year old Shan youth who came to Thailand in 2002, one day got an emergency phone call from his friend and mentioned that his 'brother' without a legal document was arrested by the Thai police, so had to rush to the police station to rescue him (fieldnotes, December, 2012). After then, I contacted him to know how things went on. He mentioned that the youth was not his 'real family', but he was considered 'family' as long as he was part of *Tai Yai* (Shan) people. Therefore, he negotiated with the Thai police in the name of 'brother' of the arrested Shan youth and paid some money to release him. Once I visited his rented house, his house hosted three other members, including an 80-year-old man who used to be a well-known Shan politician and a girl who was the relative of the elderly person, and another Shan youth. He respected the elder and called him 'father', the girl 'younger sister' and the Shan youth 'younger brother'. He explained the elder and the girl came for a short-stay (few months) because the elder needed medication in the hospital near his place. Whenever they needed a place to stay, he hosted them as his family. While he talked to me, he was cooking breakfast for his 'family'. I looked around his sitting room; on the wall he had hung some photos of Shan politicians or Shan organisations' posters. During my short visit, another elderly man came who was one of the ex-politicians whose photo was on the wall (fieldnotes, December, 2012).

This kind of story is not unusual. In one of the Shan schools for migrant workers, some migrants also developed this kind of quasi-kinship with their senior Shan teachers.

Some students often came to cook at school and have meals with senior teachers, while some invited senior Shan teachers to represent as 'father' replacing their real parents at home places to preside at their weddings, or new born baby celebrations. Some students lived at school considering it their 'home'. A small room with a single bed and a cot hosted four Shan youths. They took turns to have a rest, while two of them worked night shifts. The school offered Shan migrant youths a 'home-like' atmosphere and a site to practice Shan culture. Many youths voluntarily gathered to practice Shan dances and other performance for festivals and events, so that they also create relations like brotherhood for emotional sharing to cope with their loneliness and ease some frustration and stress created by their work places or the dominant Thai society. Thus, the school also played a vital role of being a big 'family' for displaced Shan in the city. This kind of quasi- kinship was not only seen in cities, but was also common in LOI Camp, particularly among those who came alone for studying, teaching, military services and medical trainings and shared dwellings. This construction of quasi-kinship also responds to the dispersed family issues, to rebuild new relationships and social ties replacing scattered extended family to support each other.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

Mobility is inherent within Shan history. However, the conflicts and forced relocation dramatically changed their lives and disrupted their relations to home places. Mobility remains, but due to the creation of nation-state and the border control they have been subject to, it had to change different forms. Apart from artificial curtailment caused by the violence and forced relocation in Shan State, the vague Thai state action of limiting Shan's mobility also strengthens the disjunction of translocal social ties, which leads to uncertainty of protracted displacement. This situation creates an arena between displaced Shan and the states, in particular within rapidly changing geopolitical circumstances. With political change, economic hardship and social insecurity, displaced Shan continue their struggle to deal with an uncertain and disturbed everyday life in their protracted displacement. Uncertain environments, however, also create various relations, so that potential opportunities and the contested arena co-exist, which allows displaced Shan to negotiate their status through tactics.

My findings show that the decisions displaced Shan made and tactics used were to overcome their constrained present and to repair disjunction in their lives, and continue their way of life to (re)create the possibility of a new life. In order to return some extent of certainty and security, they have lived a dual life to cope with their subordinate positions, transform the liminal situations and make current dwellings as their 'home', or at least quasi-home. On one hand, they create *home away from home* through habitus and rituals, which do not simply play a role in connecting to their past against the rupture of displacement, but also have a healing function to express their pain and sense of loss. Meanwhile, they construct sentimental attachments to support one another in the protracted displacement (Goffman's "front stage"). On the other hand, they still keep a low profile and use a means of tactics to circumvent power (e.g. a roundabout way for 'hidden' or 'invisible' journeys), to negotiate it (e.g. under-the-table application for ID cards, or paying bribe), or to make best use of it (e.g. rituals, cultural, festivals, etc.) in their everyday lives in response to the social and political issues (Goffman's "back stage"), which is a way they could retain some certain degree of freedom and regain control over their lives.

In such a situation, displaced Shan are actors in their lives, but rather as tactical agents engaged in search for security and re-establishing certainty socially for themselves and families, unlike those who own citizenship could freely travel and enjoy their membership (citizenship) and ownership. In this vein, they face a straightforward question of 'Otherness', living in the places controlled by the host. For how long people inhabit in one place could be regarded as 'locals'? In the case of Shan, initially, obtaining identification cards is based on instrumental purposes as a 'tool' or 'travel pass', with the intention of gambling between regulations for a better status rather than a symbol of changing personal identity or belonging.

However, as the citizenship or membership is often along with other rights, in particular ownership (e.g. possession of property, motor bike, house and land; right for driving licence, etc.), a sense of belonging may change over time. Particularly, it may emerge as attachment to the current 'home', when increasing with length of residence in

prolonged displacement. When displaced Shan in the migrant communities started obtaining their 'home postal address', it reveals the gradual changes the relationships between displaced Shan and their provisional dwellings. The similar findings can also be seen in some research studies (e.g. Gurney, 1997; Giuliani, 1991; Sixsmith and Sixsmith, 1991). An increasing accumulation of practices and memories in the current place may create possibilities for transforming practices and memories as crucial elements to sustain a sense of belonging. Moreover, Ryan-Saha (2015) examines numerous strategies and practices that represent life resumption after displacement and finds 'repossession' contributes to personal recovery and to the construction and consolidation of the British Bosnian diaspora. Therefore, adding the temporal factor to analyse tactical practices in the protracted displacement is necessarily important. In this way, the relationships between people and material objects may partly comprise the basis of home (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011:519).

Therefore, wherever displaced Shan move, they try to recreate a familiar feeling in their present dwellings to make themselves *at home*. Different tactics they used allow them to negotiate their statuses, re-create neighbourhoods and re-construct kin-like relations, which reduce their sense of uncertainty, strengthen sense of homeliness and closeness, and bond them together during their displacement. Meanwhile, those everyday tactical practices may transform displaced Shan's collective experiences of 'shuttling' along the border, and then turn to be elements of their social cohesion.

In the following chapter, I will extend to explore how displaced Shan stretch their multi-layered networks to weave scattered Shan together and form their 'net of safety' as 'home territory' from translocal perspective.

CHAPTER 7 Actors, Constellations of Mobility and Home Territory

7.1 Introduction

Following the focus of Chapters 4 and 5 on place (territory) and mobility, chapter 6 explored how displaced Shan develop social tactics in response to difficulties in prolonged displacement. In chapter 7, I introduce the concept of cohesive networks with translocal connections to link place/territory, mobility, social tactics and cohesive networks, analyse ways that displaced Shan create in translocal lived spaces as their 'home territory' beyond geographical, political and cultural boundaries in of the midst of protracted insecurities and uncertainties.

As mentioned in chapter 6, a mixture of violence and forced relocation in Shan State, along with a vague Thai migration policy, has led to uncertainty of Shan's prolonged displacement. Furthermore, it has resulted in the emergence of a protracted phenomenon: displaced Shan stuck in limbo. Their provisional residences— border IDP camps, refugee camps, migrant communities on the margin of rural Thai villages or at the construction sites of urban areas— have marked their experiences of prolonged displacement. In this situation, displaced Shan orientate themselves to turn temporary dwellings into their 'homes' through home practices. Nevertheless, for displaced Shan, to negotiate a place as home is somehow determined by how the dominant institutional structures have regulated their rights to establish a home. Therefore, emplacing themselves is an important constant practice in displaced Shan's everyday lives.

I argue that displaced Shan's mobility practices constitute a strategy of creating translocal lived spaces that contribute to weaving their home territory during their 'double displacement'. I suggest that although displaced Shan live a marginalised life in those scattered and isolated areas, their liminal statuses and restricted locations do not necessarily preclude them from mobility. They maintain their connections with each other beyond spatial incarceration, and form a multi-layered constellation of social relations. This constellation of social relations can be regarded as displaced

Shan's fluid translocal lived space forming their 'home territory' beyond national borders. It is based on human-orientated perspectives and contrasts with the 'national territory' of state-centred policy. It creates an arena where actors negotiate their own interests (e.g. displaced Shan's home practices, the Thai state action, the order implemented by RCSS/SSA, the projects conducted by Shan grassroots groups and agreements made by the Burmese regime with rebel groups, etc).

I focus on how displaced Shan re-construct their home territory negotiating with other actors through three main dimensions, economic, socio-political and religio-cultural aspects through folk circulation practices, institutional efforts, as well as cultural and religious spheres respectively that link various localities and are interactive. Firstly, in folk circulation practices, translocal continuous mobility provides a set of social tactics to deal with livelihood issues. Secondly, institutional efforts, with various actors' involvement, play a key role to connect scattered Shan bases, which leads to translocal connectivity between both sides of the border and inside Shan State. Thirdly, cultural and religious spheres, which offer Shan emotional and spiritual security, as home away from home facilitate displaced Shan's translocal solidarity and their co-existence with ethnic others through understanding.

The multi-layered networks create familiarity, security and belonging amongst displaced Shan in provisional locations, allowing continuity with their past. They also provide a base for a possible future. The in-between areas could, thus, be recreated and extended as part of Shan 'home territory' through re-territorialising their translocal lived spaces.

7.2 Translocal circulation: folk routes and practices

As noted in chapter 6, due to their instability, both in terms of physical and legal status, displaced Shan lead a kind of 'dual life', to manage their way of life in the prolonged displacement. Their narratives of living 'neither here nor there' could indicate their liminal statuses. The discourse on transnationalism, which includes a sense of

belonging in origin and host country, cannot explain this perspective. In contrast, it "may paradoxically reinforce migrants' feelings of living in more than one country but belonging to 'neither' place" (Salih, 2002:51). As several displaced Shan, realise that return would be full of uncertainty, they make efforts to improve their legal status and seek possibilities to allow the next generation a new start and to keep their options open. The narrative of a 41-year-old female informant in a migrant community illustrates this feeling:

> "I have to think of it like a 'home', nowhere to go, so just think I can stay here. So far it has been almost 20 years […], but sometimes I could not feel it as a home, not like our homeland. I think I am old now, what can I do? I have no land for farming, what could I do? In Shan State, if we were old, we could grow something on our land to get money, but here is different from Shan State. But even though we have money to buy the land, officially we cannot own the land with our names. I am worried that both my sons have not yet obtained Thai citizenship. I am not sure [in the future] if they could buy the land by themselves, it depends on my sons, but now I am still worried (interview, 07-01-2013)".

Her account reveals that, despite the fact that occasionally in daily practices she might regard her temporary dwelling as 'home' and has a sense of being 'at home', the temporary situation is not bringing satisfactory livelihoods and also a priori compromising the aspiration and struggle to be somewhere else.

In order to seek better livelihoods, continuous movement is often the feature of some Shan's life experience. "*Wherever there were job opportunities, they went*", said a Shan teacher in a Shan migrant community. At the outset of my arrival in Shan migrant communities, I learned that most Shan migrant children's schools had closed, one was integrated into a northern Thai public school. One day, when the students were about to leave for home, a Shan teacher invited me to drive the students back home by school bus (*song tiao*). I took the school bus driven by the Shan teacher to the students' 'homes' on the farms. On the way, the school bus ran on the village roads, passing by northern Thai villages, Chinese communities, and continuing to the end of those villages; then it started delivering students to different fields. Children got off the bus and dispersed into a wide field, walking along the farm ridges until they disappeared

into the woods (fieldnotes, August, 2012). The Shan teacher mentioned that the big orange farms around the area mostly belong to the same big orange company. There were about 280 students in his school, mostly Shan migrant children; over 120 children lived on neighbouring farms. The dropout rate was high, because many students followed their parents, moving around between different farms. A 21-year-old Shan woman recalled her mobile life in her childhood,

> "When I was 9 years old, at the beginning of our arrival in Thailand, my mother and I lived in a village, but we lived in a warehouse ("Go Dawn") where migrant workers slept with lots of stuff rather than a proper room. My mother worked on orange farms with our relatives. We stayed there for 2 years and moved to work on garlic farms to peel garlic for selling in the market. However, working alone, my mother's daily wage was not enough to cover our living cost. After that, we moved with my cousin (son of my mother's elder sister), and lived on another farm to grow rice and onions for one year. One family worked for one farm, but the housing quality was not so good. When it was rainy, the rains would come into the house and made it wet. We had to dig a well for water, but the water was still not good, it had to be purified. I was not happy living there, because we lived near the main road. We were afraid of police coming to arrest us, because we did not have ID cards. However, in fact, during our stay, I never saw the police. Later on, my mother heard other people saying that there was a school providing education for Shan migrant children free, so she sent me to study there. One year later, we moved to another orange farm, not far from the previous place. We lived together with other people, about 4 or 5 families, on the farm for 4 years. There housing quality was better. I could go to school and met new friends. About 4 children or more near our place went to school, but they did not stay long and moved away to other places again" (interview, 13-01-2013).

In the narratives, continuous mobility was a kind of tactical practice for displaced Shan in the northern Thai rural area. This situation mirrors some scholars' notion that migration is a livelihood strategy (Stigter, 2006; Horst, 2006) to trade risk for security and seek a better livelihood. This exposes a feature of Shan migrants' familial lives: *home on the move*. They may circulate between different farms or factories for better wages and end up in the villages, in particular in existing Shan migrant communities. Houses on the farms varied from thatched cottages to cement houses, depending on the farm owners. Once they had enough money or were tired of moving around, they might try to rent houses near town or buy a house (in the name of their Thai relatives or friends) in a village, particularly with the elderly. Living on the farms is harmful for their health, due to the use of pesticides. Meanwhile, living in the village, could enable

more freedom and opportunities to find better jobs and odd jobs for extra income. This is a basic route of *mobile home* for displaced Shan.

The extent of their mobility sometimes goes across different scales of regions and circulates between IDP camps, migrant communities or existing northern Thai villages. A 61-year-old female informant originally from a village near Lai Kha in Shan State, who lived in a Shan migrant community, recalled her family's life on the move. Her husband used to be a Shan soldier for 10 years who moved to the headquarters of SSA-S but then passed away a few years ago. Both her daughters married Shan soldiers. Her first daughter followed her husband moving around in the jungles and different IDPs camps, until 2012 when her son-in-law resigned from the army. They then settled with her in the Shan migrant community in Northern Thailand. However, in order to stay in Thailand legally, they paid money to get a Burmese Passport and work permit. Afterward her son-in-law moved to Mae Hong Son to work with their relatives on the orange farm. Her second daughter worked as a medic until 2011 at a Shan IDP camp with her husband but left her child with the grandmother for schooling in Thailand, and then she continued travelling between the camp, Chiang Mai and northern Thailand to seek better jobs (interview, 04-01-2013). These examples are not unusual, yet a great number of displaced Shan migrants are unable to move into villages, and many resided on the farms or factories over a couple of decades, while their children were born and grew up on the farms or factories. The narratives also illustrate the uncertainty of their lives and statuses, and experience the situations from time to time of getting stuck, being idle or in limbo. Their decisions on mobility or immobility are interspersed with familial future projects to ensure their viable livelihoods and stability. Gradually they integrate into the Thai labour market.

Discussing migratory journeys of Caribbean families, Olwig (2007: 10) suggests many migrants learnt about possible migration destinations through their networks of relationships, which provided them social and economic opportunities and suitable approaches to access these places. In a similar vein, Shan mobility is based on their social ties. They move along the constellation of personal relationships that extend from one place to another. Portes (1995) points out that migration is "a process of

network-building". Therefore, mobility and immobility cannot be regarded as conflicting ends of the spectrum, analogous to the opposing notions of *fluidity* and *fixity*. This mirrors Schapendonk and Steel's (2014) research on Nigerian migration indicating migrants' freedom to move is linked to their free choice to stay at a preferred place. Hedberg and do Carmo (2012: 3) also emphasise that *fixity* is itself related to mobility and part of *mobility*. When people move to one place and continue living there, connections are established between migrants and remaining population at their previous place of departure. Therefore, migrants who decide to continue moving and who remain form a vital dimension of connectedness.

In this vein, every locality can be seen as "part of a network of places" (Stenbacka, 2012: 57) through connections between mobility and immobility. These connections facilitate feelings of familiarity, security and belonging amongst 'similar' people in new places. Mobility, as McKay (2007: 275) points out, may recreate "*'elsewhere'* as a part of *'home'* through the re-territorialisation of locality". Therefore, a place possesses both features of flows and situatedness: one is a "contact zone" (Pratt, 1992: 6-7; c.f. Clifford, 1997: 192) to be negotiated by people's encounters, while the other is part of a network of places connected to a broader 'outside'. Therefore, Shan temporary bases or places (e.g. IDP camps, refugee camps, farms or factories) are nodes of varying size in a constellation of Shan network. Each node forms an active contact zone in Shan movement within and beyond the 'in-between' area. According to Brickell and Datta (2011), 'contact' implies mobility and movement; it forms various crucial dimensions of connectedness between everyday spaces and other places, such as home (land), street, neighbourhood and city (Brickell and Datta, 2011: 13). Therefore, as the places offer, in various ways, a sense of homeliness and familiarity, whereby newcomers are surrounded by Shan speakers, signs, food and shops, migrants feel connected to places and give a sense of security and continuity. These practices facilitate displaced Shan to develop Shan-ness that grounds them in the face of difficulties during their prolonged displacement. They feel 'at home' in both material and affective ways. These mobility and contacts are not only a livelihood strategy but also facilitate knitting together those Shan provisional dwellings across space to cultivate a translocal lived space as their home territory in their prolonged displacement.

Accordingly, the ethnoscape of Shan lays testament to the area, which was transformed by various waves of Shan arrivals through cultural festivals, religious rituals as well as material culture and everyday practices, and it is enhanced as a unique Shan culture by the Thai authorities with touristic aspirations for the area. Moreover, the border Shan region plays some crucial roles for Shan, in particular as a 'logistic supporting area' for Shan displaced persons in camps, and a 'quasi homeland' for Shan migrants who move to work in other places (e.g. towns, or big cities). The functions of the border Shan region could be determined by the findings of the narratives of Shan interviewees. As I mentioned in chapter 5, it was quite common for Shan soldiers to treat border Shan communities as logistical areas in which they would leave their beloved family for security reasons; some sent their children to nearby villages where Thai boarding schools were located, to seek a better education (interview, 29-06-2012). Meanwhile, these kinds of logistical areas may also be homes-in-transit for those Shan who migrate back and forth to cities for better jobs, or to IDP camps for military service or study. A 19-year-old Shan youth, who resided in a North Thai farm for over 18 years, at the end of my fieldwork, was moving from the farm residence to an adjacent town and renting a room alone. After he moved to town, he thought of the orange farm as his 'home', and missed the place reminiscing:

> "My father returned to Shan State 2 years ago when my grandmother passed away, but he did not return. I had lived with my mother on the farm until she changed her work to construction sites in Saraphi with her elder sister who worked near Chiang Mai, I could not live on the same farm because I did not work for the farm owner. Therefore, I moved out and rented a room in town "(interview, 13-01-2013).

Many narratives indicated respondents made decisions like this youth's mother. They followed relatives or acquaintances to big cities to work on construction sites. The construction sites could never be their final *destination*, rather another kind of 'mobile' contact zone, depending on the duration of their construction works. My fieldnotes reveal the situation,

> On the evening of 10th February 2012, I went with two Shan teachers from a Shan Youth Power (SYP) to visit a migrant children's school at a construction site

near Paypa University in Chiang Mai. The construction site had been in place for over 10 years with numerous Shan migrant workers moving back and forth. Some workers had stayed over 6 years, while others had just arrived. However, the construction work around there was about to end, so those migrant workers would move to other construction sites. Therefore, when we visited this site, many migrants had left empty houses (fieldnote, February, 2012).

In urban areas, construction sites were scattered at many places and hosted several mobile Shan migrants and refugees. Besides, some Shan women worked as live-in domestics. Their working places were simultaneously their temporary 'mobile homes', also seen as temporary sites-in-transit. Those temporary places could become options for family's livelihood strategies. The narrative of a 57-year-old female Shan woman in SUAN camp revealed how displaced Shan moved between different Shan temporary bases and made their best choice for their livelihoods:

> In 2003, due to fighting, I contacted my relatives in Fang district, north Thailand. I went to Fang with my three children. We stayed there for a year and worked on orange farms. However, I got very low daily wages (men for 80 Baht per day but female for 60 Baht), so I decided to move to Chiang Mai to stay with my elder daughter for other jobs. I worked there for 3 years until 2005 until my daughter heard that I could be assigned a *'house'* in the refugee camp where many of my villagers from Shan state were replaced; so I moved to this camp and stayed for over 7 years. I am satisfied with my current living conditions, because I get a monthly rice donation from international aid and my daughter can send me money from Chiang Mai to feed the family; it also allows my younger son and my grandchildren to get education (interview, 19-04-2012).

It is apparent that these dynamic migrants' trajectories are nonlinear and multi-polar, and commonly engaged with more than two places. In this vein, their current dwellings might become transit places for the next destinations during the process of movement. A big city such as Chiang Mai, with a huge population of Shan, seems to be 'physically' far away from the border areas. However, symbolically, it forms an extension of Shan's 'home-place'. Therefore, temporary bases are symbolically and affectively part of a wide range of Shan trans-spatially connected sites. It echoes Schapendonk and Steel's (2014:268) remark that the migrants' trajectories do not necessarily occur as the traditional notion on the mode of "uprooting-movement-regrounding". These tactical practices increase integrating people and places into the constellations of networks, as Hedberg and do Carmo (2012:4) stress that "this translocal relation is recurrently

experienced throughout the numerous pathways that people repeatedly produce in space", and further challenge the conventional notion of regrounding displaced people with the bias of sedentary concept. Mobility is not necessarily violent place attachment and identity.

Apart from survival and economic viability concerns, displaced Shan's mobility has also been evoked by institutional efforts and religion factors. In the following section, I focus on how institutional facilitators have made translocal connectivity possible, in particular establishing linkages between scattered IDP camps along both sides of the Thai-Burma borderland.

7.3 Translocal Connectivity: Institutional Efforts

Institutional actor is one of the several facilitators contributing to translocal connectivity between IDP camps and other Shan communities along both sides of the border, which allows border camps to serve as critical 'nodes' within the network. In particular, RCSS[99]/SSA and other Shan grassroots organisations, such as SWAN and SYP play a key role in this linkage during prolonged displacement. This phenomenon of modern organisations is different from the pre-modern period. These organisations have legitimacy in Shan communities and are often well suited to reach hidden or vulnerable Shan IDP populations. In particular, along the Thai-Burma border, various sizes of Shan army barracks secure internally displaced Shan who have sought refuge in Shan army camps.

Apart from being the main resistance force securing along the border, the political body of Shan State Army-South (SSA-S), the Restoration Council of the Shan State (RCSS), worked as a quasi-government in charge of a range of administrative affairs including diplomatic relations, social, medical, cultural, agricultural as well as educational services to displaced Shan in the border camps and inside Shan State. The multi-dimensioned projects create specific social platforms for numerous grassroots groups,

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[99] RCSS takes the political role of leading the Shan State Army (SSA).

associations, NGOs and foreign donors to get involved, ally and work together. These institutional networks have been seen as the ways to access educational and training resources for the Shan. Therefore, I use the term "third-space sovereignty" (Bruyneel, 2007) to capture the fact that RCSS/SSA acts as a 'quasi state' that straddles the border. Its existence fundamentally disturbs the concept of fixed binaries of state and non-state, sovereign and non-sovereign in the modern nation-state. From the narratives discussed above, it is clear that in the absence of protection by the international agencies, Shan resistance armed groups play an important role both practically and symbolically; they provide protection and assistance to the vulnerable displaced Shan. This is different from management of other official refugee camps along the Thai border, which are governed by Thai authorities and humanitarian aid, following UNHCR mandate under its protection.

Numerous strongholds located in the deep mountain areas along the border are allied to each other and interdependent under the RCSS/SSA governing system[100]. The border IDP camps are not only makeshift homes to many displaced Shan, but also crucial nodes for border connectivity and a symbol of protection. A 33 year-old Shan man at a refugee camp on the Thai side revealed his ideas about the role of RCSS/SSA:

> "I was not sure whether Sao Yawd Sert[101] could bring peace for the Shan people or not, but no matter how, it depends on the Shan people[...]the existence of Shan soldiers could show Burmese military that Shan still have our [Shan] soldiers to protect us [...]. Fighting with each other never leads to a so-called 'win', that has been a historical lesson since ancient time. All I want is peace" (interview, 19-04-2012).

Another Shan youth from SUAN camp working in Chiang Mai added his views:

> "If we only fight with them [Burmese military regime] in a peaceful way, we could not win; if we only use force, we could not win either, because their [Burmese] people, their [Burmese] forces are larger than ours. But I cannot live without Shan State Army" interview, 23-04-2012).

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[100] SSA-S/RCSS has played a crucial role for negotiating and signed the ceasefire agreement with the Burmese military regime in November 2011 and set up some branch offices scattered inside Shan State and a couple of offices in Thailand. Moreover, they launched some official projects inside Shan State, which were part of the consensus within the ceasefire agreement.

[101] The chairman of SSA-S, Shan State Army-South

Some medics or community health carers, after they finished their training programme, were assigned to return back to their home places to assist in medical service or opted for further medical training in Mae Tao clinic[102] in Mae Sot in northwest Thailand. Two of my female informants who were nurses in the LOI camp were later assigned back to Shan State near the Shan-China border at the end of fieldwork (interview, 18-07-2012). Another informant's sister attended a training course in Mae Tao Clinic (interview, 21-07-2012), while a male informant had finished his training with the Free Burma Rangers (FBR)[103] and other trainings in Chiang Mai. He narrated what they had done with the FBR inside Shan State:

> As we joined Free Burma Rangers (FBR), we went to a 50-household Pa-long ethnic group's village near Ho Murng for one week, together with 16 FBR members and some Shan army and 3 *Khun Long*, the Shan elders with high reputation or position, of FBR as well as 3 foreign doctors. We went to conduct some activities, deliver clothes, give treatment to patients and take photographs. We did not go further because of fighting inside Shan State (interview, 07-07-2012).

Apart from accessing medical training, some seek educational opportunities (see section 5.3.1). Those who graduate from Shan national schools in camps have a 5-year duty to serve RCSS/SSA, IDP camps or Shan communities inside Shan State: they may choose between these options. After a ceasefire agreement in November 2011 signed by RCSS/SSA with the Burmese regime, some camp residents returned to Shan State for a short visit to their home places (see section 5.3.2). A main Shan national school

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[102] Mae Tao Clinic was founded in 1989 by Dr. Cynthia Maung, a Karen doctor, who fled through the jungle crossing the border to Thailand in 1988 after the military seized power. At the very beginning, most patients were young people who escaped the fighting, but the type of patient has been gradually changing to be Burmese migrant workers in Mae Sot in Thailand, and Burmese from Myawaddy and nearby areas inside Burma. Accordingly, the clinic treats 400 to 500 patients on an average a day, with about 700 staff members providing health services. [Online] Available from: http://maetaoclinic.org/. [Accessed: 27/10/2014]

[103] The Free Burma Rangers (FBR) were formed in 1997 during the time that the Burma Army's large scale offensive led to massive displacement and cross-border refugees. It is a multi-ethnic relief group and has trained over 250 teams since 1997, with 71 full time teams providing their relief services and active in most ethnic areas in Burma, including the Arakan, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Kayan, Lahu, Mon, Naga, Pa-Oh, Palaung and Shan areas. Their mission is to bring help, hope and love to the people in the war zones of Burma, in particular providing emergency medical treatment, food, shelter, clothing and human rights documentation. They operate under the protection of the ethnic resistance armies. [Online] Available from FBR website: http://www.freeburmarangers.org/about/ [Accessed: 27/10/2014].

in an IDP camp also started conducting a pilot educational project to send a team[104] to SSA controlled areas, to set up schools in rural villages (interview, 16-07-2012).[105] They departed silently without informing anyone under Shan soldiers' protection, due to security concerns.

Also, due to another Peace Agreement signed between representatives of RCSS and the Burmese military junta in May 2012, the Shan national school planned to send hundreds of volunteer students in Grades 5-10 back to Shan State, to assist Shan language-teaching projects during the school break (interview, 24-05-2012). Alongside assigning senior volunteers inside Shan State for educational projects, collaboration often took place between Shan national schools at different IDP camps scattered along the border. Meanwhile, this collaboration was also prevalent with cross-border practices between Shan IDP camps and opposite nearby schools in Thai villages, such as teaching or textbook support or students' cultural performance exchanges.

In addition, some Shan youths were sent back to Shan State by RCSS/SSA for special tasks or agricultural development projects. When I traced a 30-year-old male informant from LOI camp, who was allocated a certain duty and travelled across border to a border town in Shan State, I took a hidden detour to arrive at his office in a border town. I was hosted at the local RCSS office which could be seen as a site-in-transit for those Shan who were heading to different areas for their tasks. During my short stay, some youth passed through the office and stopped over (fieldnotes, December, 2012). Two of them were my students from the Shan national school at LOI camp. They told me that they had left LOI camp for the agricultural project in the border area. Besides, I also met another Shan media team heading for Chiang Mai; the youth were recruited by RCSS from both sides of border to join media training courses in Chiang Mai and possibly be based at the headquarters of RCSS/SSA. One Shan youth who came from

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[104] It was a team with two teachers and fifteen senior male students from Grade 6 to 10 from a Shan national school.

[105] The school principal mentioned that due to lack of schools in the countryside, over 80% children in could not attend school. Some schools in cities were Burmese schools, therefore, they planned to set up about 80 to 100 schools in the SSA-S controlled area. They had set up 15 schools in Keng Tung and Kho Lam areas, basically every 2-3 villages had one school but only one teacher to teach Shan language, Maths and English.

Nam Kam near Kachin State and the Chinese border had just finished his Bachelor degree in Shan State. His hometown was in the battleground between Burmese military force and Kachin State, so they suffered from fighting. One of his father's friends was a Shan soldier, so he often heard stories about Burmese soldiers' notorious behaviours. He wanted to engage in media work, so his father's friend suggested that he join the media team. He followed numerous Shan groups to Keng Tung and helped photograph the Shan New Year Festival. After the festival, he was waiting for an order to begin physical training for new soldiers in an army camp. Afterwards, he was to be assigned to a related department for media training (informal interview, 24-12-2012).

The cross-border practices showed that RCSS branch office was also a node of translocal network to host some mobile Shan on the way to their destinations. This resonates in another Shan soldier's account of the RCSS network along the border. He pointed out that at present there are five branch offices scattered in main cities on both sides of the border, which later would be extended to thirty-two sites. He said:

> "[...]as long as there are RCSS offices or Shan Rest homes,[106] I can move freely between those sites without spending money on meals and accommodation. Because I have signed the 25-year contract for Shan military service, I would work as an officer rather than staying in barracks for military drills. After finishing a four- or five- year service in one single site, I could apply to move to different branch offices, not always fixed in one place "(informal interview, 13-06-2012).

Apart from the involvement of RCSS/SSA in creating a network between border camps and inside Shan State, its collaboration with other Shan organisations extends the link to Shan communities in Northern Thailand or beyond. Some Shan grassroots groups particularly SWAN and SYP also have critical influence on Shan translocal connectivity. SWAN and SYP operate projects along the border from Thailand with a certain degree of independence and collaborate with a range of CBOs from both sides of the border. They play crucial roles in bringing outside resources, offer a range of services to displaced Shan, and sometimes cooperate well with the welfare wing of RCSS/SSA and

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[106] The Shan Rest Home works as a site-in-transit for hosting some mobile Shan who might need short-term accommodation for accessing medical treatment in a Thai hospital or waiting for transportation, either to the IDP camp or to any part of Thailand.

external donors.

SWAN was established by a group of Shan women in 1999 to address their needs during radical displacement. However, before SWAN was set up, informal networks were in place. Shan women in different locations had been active in addressing the needs of communities, such as health education and emergency assistance, particularly the needs of women and children. Since 1996, some Shan women had been working for Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF), the Migrant Assistance Programme (MAP)[107], and the Burma Relief Centre (BRC); whilst others launched cultural activities and issued Shan literacy textbooks along the border areas. Some were engaged in Women's Association of Shan State (WASS)[108] to preserve Shan culture and strive for women's rights (SWAN, 2009: 1-4).

In order to achieve more and address both practical and strategic needs of Shan women, a concrete network among them was formed. SWAN mainly conducts programmes, such as Information and Documentation, Crisis Support, Women's Empowerment, Health, Education, and Income Generation. It makes efforts to form partnerships and build solidarity to further promote the rights of the communities. It not only works for gender equality and justice for Shan women through community-based actions, research and advocacy, but also coordinates with other women's organisations working locally, nationally and internationally. In particular, it cooperates with other ethnic women's organisations from Burma, jointly establishing a women's network, namely

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[107] Initially, the Migrant Assistance Programme (MAP) was established by a team of migrants themselves. It started broadcasting daily health education programmes in Shan language on National Broadcasting Station of Thailand in 1997, and later extended daily shows in Karen language on both health and culture to reach more migrants. Furthermore, they set up an emergency house for migrants in need, and in 2002 MAP was registered as a Thai foundation with its name: Migrant Assistant Project Foundation for the Health and Knowledge of Ethnic Labours (MAP Foundation website, also see MAP publication: Migrant Movement 1996-2010).

[108] The Women's Association of Shan State (WASS) was formed on 5TH December 1993 by a group of women who lived in the Shan resistance army-controlled areas near the Thai-Shan border. The aims of WASS were to preserve Shan culture and to build alliances for promoting women's rights with women in other countries. The activities they conducted included holding assemblies for women in the communities, issuing newsletters, running a maternal and childcare centre, raising funds and conducing weaving programmes, etc. WASS ceased to operate after the MTA (Mong Tai Army) surrendered to the Burmese military junta in 1996 (SWAN, 2009:4).

the Women's League of Burma (WLB) (SWAN, 2009: 9). Meanwhile, it has recently become more engaged in ASEAN networks, becoming a member of Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy (SAPA) and working closely with Thai networks and regional networks (SWAN, 2008:8).

Not only SWAN, but also SYP[109] members have made efforts to support the needs of youth and children on both sides of the border. At the beginning, due to difficulties which Shan migrant children and young people faced while attending school in Thailand, SYP was set up in 2002 by Shan students and youths to facilitate educational projects for learning English, Shan language, mathematics, basic computer skills, health education and community development projects. They also operated as a communication platform to promote involvement in social and democratic development. Therefore, those Shan organisations form different layers of networks and approach different locations of Shan communities, which form a social safety net for displaced Shan along the border and inside Shan State to overcome precarious situation in their "double displacement".

Meanwhile, SYP found a media team named "Youth Power Media Project" in 2002, and they now issue "Youth Power Media Magazine"[110] bimonthly to provide information to Shan State, making up for lack of channels for people to access information focusing on youth issues in Shan language. Some organisations also established radio broadcast stations, such as RCSS and MAP,[111] or run broadcast programmes, such as SWAN and other organisations (e.g. Best Together Foundation at 93.5FM) in northern Thailand. Meanwhile, there are also some diverse radio channels which broadcast information both in Shan and Northern Thai languages. These programmes offer a space where migrant workers' voices and opinions can be heard by creating juxtaposed *air spaces*, with wide coverage of different locations along the border, permitting them to share

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[109] Shan Youth Power (SYP). [Online] Available from: http://www.shanyouthpower.org/. [Accessed: 27/10/2014]

[110] For each edition, 1,000 copies are printed and distributed to Shan State, Thailand, on the Thai-Burma border as well as along the China-Burma border: they are even sent to Shan overseas. [Online] Available from: http://sssny.org/. [Accessed: 27/10/2014]

[111] Migrant Community radio station was supported by MAP Foundation reaching out to migrant, ethnic and local communities.

their frustrations, happiness, feelings of nostalgia and belonging. Through these radio programmes, Shan migrants connect with home places and strengthen their emotional affiliation. The air spaces transfer Chiang Mai and northern Thailand as the 'home' for Shan at least temporarily. Therefore, they not only weave their home territory through their mobility but also create an 'upper layer' of home territory. Wherever they travel under those *air spaces*, they receive relevant information about Shan, 'meet' their 'own people' on the airwaves and share their feelings. This shows both symbolic and authentic existence of displaced Shan migrants.

However, while co-existing within the *air spaces*, different actors also take part in weaving Shan home territory by making use of media to promote and present their image to audiences on both sides of borders. In 2002, RCSS set up the Tai Freedom radio station[112], and its broadcast information not only covers a wide range of topics, such as health care issues, human rights, cultural themes, history, world news and ethnic music from Shan State, but also political issues in Burma, SSA discipline or RCSS policy as propaganda to construct Shan-ness and show their voices of struggle for nationalism to win support of Shan and Thai audiences

On the other hand, as Jiratikorm (2008:122) pointed out while enjoying the freedom of expression of Thai media, radio broadcasts are turned to the "transnational space". She argues the Thai state is not yet "in retreat and giving way to transnational processes" and the radio broadcasting sector is under the control of Thai government bodies[113]. In fact, the influence of Thai policies is omnipresent. The Shan radio broadcast programmes in Thailand have to play The Thai National Anthem twice a day at 8:00 am and 6:00 pm, the same as other Thai local and national TV and Radio channel, or speaker systems in train stations, subways stations, public parks, civic, government buildings and most public places. After Shan broadcasters finish their programmes,

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[112] Tai Freedom Radio could broadcast to an area of about 50 kilometres around the headquarters of RCSS/SSA, a relatively small area.

[113] According to Jirattikorm (2008), three major government bodies are "the Mass Communications Organization of Thailand (MCOT), the Public Relations Department of Thailand (PRD), and the Royal Thai Army Radio and Television (RTA). These three agencies own more than two-thirds of the airwaves nationwide" (116).

they play the Thai National Anthem. While the Thai national anthem is played, all activities in public areas stop and people stand alert to show respect (feldnotes, February, 2012). Meanwhile, the Thai National Anthem is also played in Thai schools at 8am every day. All students are expected to attend the gathering with two students raising the Thai national flag. Such situations simultaneously draw those migrants back to the reality that they are based on Thai national territory and still under the control of Thai geo-political body.

Different actors make use of a variety of media (e.g. posters, images, films and music etc.) to continue creating different symbols, which are often combined with ideology and power negotiations. Therefore, the air spaces can also be seen as an arena for different actors to negotiate power and as an 'upper layer' of home territory interwoven by different actors.

7.4 Translocal Solidarity and Co-existence: Cultural and Religious Spheres

Apart from livelihood strategies (the economic dimension) and institutional efforts in to develop an extensive network to bind scattered Shan communities along the border (socio-political dimension), this section focuses on religious-cultural perspective to see how displaced Shan re-construct familial and social ties through ritual and religious practices and negotiate their translocal lived spaces with other actors.

As mentioned in chapter 6, Buddhist monasteries often serve as the main hub for nearby Shan migrant communities. For instance, a Shan temple, Wat Papao in Chiang Mai, set up the Wat Papao Foundation with the aim of preserving Shan language and promoting Shan education, art and traditional culture. Other northern Thai (Yuan) monasteries, such as Wat Kutao, have offered Tai (Shan) Literature and Culture Society to place in the precinct since 1958, and allowed the society to hold Shan meetings and other traditional events since 2004 (Ritpen, 2012: 164). The abbot of the Buddhist monastery often acts as the central authority in promoting dialogue between translocal

Shan communities and northern Thai society. In 2012, the Taiyai[114] Education and Culture Association (TECA) was officially approved by the Thai authorities and held a ceremony for the opening of its new office on 19th August 2012 in Wat Kutao. It constitutes nine founding members from Chiang Mai, Fang, and Mae Hong Son across different regions along northern Thailand, including Thai Shan and displaced Shan migrants. When the ceremony for TECA took place, there were about 400 participants in total from different areas. These included TECA members from Bangkok, Lampang, Pai, Fang, Mae Hong Son and Mae Sai and other representatives from numerous Shan groups in Chiang Mai[115], together with numerous Shan migrants and Thai Shan joined the event.

While celebrating the successful approval, it is worth noting that the application was made on 16th July 2009, but it took time for close official scrutiny, until 30th March 2012 when it was approval by the Thai authorities[116]. This implied that a registered cultural associate could work more actively and hold activities in public but still had to find appropriate paths to navigate through state regulations. In particular, the Shan literacy movement—which concurred with a series of insurgences in response to Burmese political and cultural oppression after the 1962 coup, some Shan intellectuals and nationalists formed the Shan Literature and Cultural Committee (*Kaw Lik Lai Lae Fing Ngay Tai*) to preserve Shan language and culture. This is often been regarded as a means to construct Shan nationalism, by standardising Shan script based on the central Shan language (*Tai Long*) (Jirattikorn, 2008:67; Yasuda, 2008:104-105). In the 1990s, in some parts of Shan State, the Shan Literature and Cultural Committee embarked on campaigns to teach the Shan language outside of the Burmese educational system. Meanwhile, they opened summer schools for Shan children and adults to learn Shan script (Michio, 2007:195; Jirattikorn, 2008:67).

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[114] Shan are known as Taiyai or Thaiyai (Big Thai or Great Tai) in Thailand.
[115] *Shan Herald Agency for News* (2012). "Ceremony inaugurating Shan Culture Association in Thailand", on 27th August 2012. [Online] Available from: the S.H.A.N. website: www.panglong.org. [Accessed: 27/10/2014].
[116] *Shan Herald Agency for News* (2012). Application for Shan association in Thai approved. 30th April 2012; Taiyai Education and Culture Association. 20th August 2012. [Online] Available from: the S.H.A.N website: www.panglong.org [Accessed: 27/10/2014].

Such campaigns also stretched into university campus in Burma. Some informants mentioned they were inspired by participating in Shan cultural groups; when the situation became worse, some joined Shan armed forces. In addition, in Shan national schools or some places which play a crucial role in promoting Shan-ness, Shan culture was often re-invented and re-interpreted and history unified displaced Shan (Yasuda, 2008: 105).Moreover, according to Jirattikorn's (2008) study, Shan musicians facilitated spreading Shan language everywhere through their singing, even to those illiterate in the remote areas. In this sense, to promote Shan literacy movement and preserve culture can be closely linked to political ends and creating a collective Shan identity.

While monasteries serve as a centre of Shan communal practices, the festivals act as 'family hubs' to bring together dispersed Shan extended family members from different locations. When they fled from their homeland, their family members spread across numerous Shan communities in different districts or provinces in Thailand, so their social structure and social relations change (see section 5.3.2). However, the annual calendar cycle contains some significant Shan occasions designed to maintain their kinship ties, including *Poy Sang Long* (the Buddhist novice ordination ceremony), *Poy Khao Wa* (the ceremony of the beginning of Buddhist Lent), *Poy Ok Wa* (the end of Buddhist Lent), and *Pi Mai Tai* (Shan New Year). Those festivals are still celebrated on both sides of the border, which not only creates what Jirattikorn (2008: 129) described as "religious public spheres", but also provide opportunities for extended families and relatives to gather as well as for friends and visitors to take part.

Therefore, I choose two key festivals held in Thailand to shed light on how displaced Shan re-construct their relationships with extended family, Shan communities and the host society within and beyond spaces through ritual practices. The first case is one of Shan annual ceremonies— *Poy Sang Long* festival and the second is *Loy Gra Thong* festival — often regarded as northern Thai (Lan Na) festival to explore how ritual practices and social ties have been transformed and strengthened and new forms of embodied practices invented. Meanwhile, how they further deal with their subordinate statuses and negotiate their translocal lived spaces with other actors through religo-cultural practices will also be discussed.

Poy Sang Long Festival

Between mid-March and end of April, the novice ordination ceremony, *Poy Sang Long,* was held in different Shan locales, where they were scheduled for different days to avoid overlap. Therefore, I had the chance to follow a community-based Shan singing, dancing and drama group on their performance tour to different Shan communities, including a couple of Shan towns, such as Salapee, Mae Rim near Chiang Mai city, and Muang Na in Chiang Dao district, as well as Ban Kung Lum (Kung Lum village) and Piang Luang in Wieng Haeng district in Chiang Mai province. Due to their social connections across various Shan migrant communities, at different venues I could easily meet some Shan friends, monks or villagers I had known from Chiang Mai, Piang Luang, Fang, Pai (Mae Hong Son province), or other areas, and even from Shan IDP camps or a refugee camp, as they all participated in the festivals. Once I arrived at the venue of *Poy Sang Long* ceremony in Muang Na, a northern Thai village, I encountered a female elder who was the maternal grandmother of Shan youths I had known from SUAN Camp. She recognised me with a smile and held my hand to their *Sang Long* palace stalls (thatched huts made of bamboo). I was so surprised that she appeared in Muang Na. Then I met her granddaughter, grandsons and some youths from the camp and other families and relatives, about 20 people from SUAN Camp, Chiang Mai, and nearby Muang Na village. Her granddaughter explained because her younger brother who joined the novice ordination ceremony was a *Sang Long* this year, many relatives and friends came to help and share work for three days.

The ceremony was time-consuming and needed many extended families to take part. In particular, the *Sang Long* spent the entire time being carried around, and each *Sang Long* was assigned at least three family members to accompany him on his rounds, together with other people joining the parade to carry the offerings. After the ceremony, their family started a discussion to join *Poy Sang Long* in Chiang Mai to help another boy whom was sponsored by grandmother's son-in-law, so they tried to arrange young people on the entourage list to help. However, they were too tired to continue serving, especially as they did not know the 'boy'. After they returned to SUAN

Camp, two of those youths were designated by the camp commander, with a group of twenty camp villagers (in total 10 men and 10 women), to serve in a neighbouring village for another run, which was the requirement from an abbot in a nearby Shan temple. As a consequence, they served as *Sang Long*'s entourage team again, to help those boys who came from a remote border IDP camp without sufficient relatives (fieldnotes, March, 2012).

Therefore, the festival bonds together the scattered extended family to ensure its solidarity, where the family members share their own duty and also become aware of the interdependence of family. In particular, when they are in liminal statuses, the bonds of kinship are strengthened by these annual gatherings and rituals. However, those who do not have many families or close relatives to share the obligations seem at a disadvantage. Therefore, the abbot requires camp villagers to help. It is obvious that the abbots of the monasteries often act as the central authority. Camp residents put their trust and obedience in the monks. When the request comes from the abbots, the camp leader and committee ask the camp residents to cooperate. Although the solidarity seems to be based on kinship and it is often regarded as the essential foundation of home, the annual festival, like *Poy Sang Long,* has served as a significant regular occasion, not only for the individual Shan family, but for larger, scattered Shan communities.

Besides, Eberhardt (2009: 56) has offered an interesting viewpoint on the ritual of *Poy Sang Long*. He proposes that "the ritual cannot merely regarded as a rite of passage for boys, but also as a rite of passage of the adult sponsors of the ceremony (especially the women), which is also a major life event". Therefore, the ritual simultaneously attracts some merit-makers (patrons) to participate in the events. Those families who lack family members and close relatives to serve in the festivals may gain sponsorship from other patrons. Meanwhile, the local community also works as a whole to offer labour for preparation and service (e.g. food preparation), along with other nearby villages, with which they form a ritual network. Shan strengthen their sense of social solidarity through this festival and common rituals. Thus, participating in festivals becomes a sentimental pilgrimage, which strengthens family ties and builds

community solidarity.

Fafchamps (1992:158) also emphasises, "lineage, kinship, neighbourhood often are major axes of solidarity networks, but friendship and patron-client relationships also matter." Even though solidarity within the network is influenced by rituals and traditions, shared commitments between each participant are personalised and rely on trust. He further explains how rituals keep reciprocity alive through relationship between trust and interaction. By means of family festivities, friends' gatherings or social events, participants are reminded of their relative positions in their social networks, and by their interaction to build their trust. Therefore, in this course, ritual practices and social ties are created, transformed and weaved displaced Shan into cohesive networks.

The distinctive Shan festivals are thus enhanced by Thai authorities as tourist attractions in northern Thailand, which makes Shan culture visible in the mainstream Thai society. This simultaneously contributes to a growing number of ethnic *others* and northern Thais taking part in Shan festivals, which is quite apparent in *Poy Sang Long* festivals. Moreover, social relations and institutions in places where Shan settle are influenced and changed by a large-scale influx of Shan migrants. Taking Mae Hong Son as an example, realisation grows that Mae Hong Son is 'a Shan province', with greeting signs and airport posters in Shan style (see Tannenbaum, 2007:6; 2009). In many densely Shan populated areas, the local diet, language and style of architecture, as well as rituals and customs, are predominantly Shan. In addition, throughout Thailand, every Friday has become the school day to wear traditional costumes that depend on the ethnicity pupils belong to, so that wearing Shan traditional dress is encouraged and proper (Tannenbaum, 2007:7). In the name of promoting Thai local culture, Shan culture could be promoted as extracurricular activities in northern Thai schools: the rhythmic sound of Shan traditional drums, gongs and cymbals filled the air, along with Shan Peacock (*kinnari* and *kinnara*) dance in elaborate colourful peacock costumes with graceful and agile steps, may survive under the cover of promoting Thai local culture on Thai soil. Moreover, some Thai local authorities further invite Shan migrants in their regions to participate in their special occasions, in particular areas inhabited by

large Shan population.

Loy Krathong Festival

In one of my field-sites, the local Thai sub-district, which comprised 15 official villages with numerous Shan migrant communities and scattered Shan dwelling farms, held a special activity－a Beauty Contest, in *Loy Krathong* festival, with competition of Miss Noppamas (*Nang sao Noppamas*) and Miss Shan (*Nang sao Tai*) to honour *Pra Mae Khongkha* (the goddess of water, River Mae Khong). *Loy Krathong* is one of the most significant and popular traditional festivals in Thailand. It is often held in November, referring to the full moon night of the 12th lunar month in the Buddhist calendar. The term 'Loy' means 'to float', and 'Krathong' means 'small rafts or baskets'. The traditional Krathong is a beautiful lotus-shaped container, made from the bark of a banana tree and decorated with folded banana leaves in towering designs, usually containing a candle, three sticks of incense, flowers and some coins. It is widely believed that floating *Krathong* along the river originated about 700 years ago during the 13th century. It was created by *Nang Noppamas*, the favourite consort of a Sukhothai King named *Lithai* (Chadchaidee, 2013), to show respect and ask for forgiveness from *Pra Mae Khongkha* (the water goddess of River Mae Khong), for a year's supply and for people's use and polluting it.

Although there is no convincing evidence that the *Nang Noppamas* ever existed and some argue this is a new story, invented during the 19th century, the Beauty Contest (*Nang sao Noppamas*) has become part of the standard repertoire of *Loy Karthong* festivals throughout Thailand. In the case of this sub-district, five Shan ladies represented their communities to participate in the competition for *Nang Sao Tai* (Miss Shan), together with other fifteen Northern Thai ladies and fifteen little Thai girls (aged between three and five) vying for the title of *Nang sao Noppamas* (Miss Noppamas) and *Noo Noy Noppamas* (*noo noy* means 'girl'), respectively.

At approximately 6 pm in the evening on 29th November 2012, the nearby communities seemed full of a pleasant atmosphere of carnival. Shan villagers dressed up in

traditional costumes, gathering at the intersection outside the communities to take *Song Tiou* (Thai local transportation), preparing for the rendezvous of the beauty pageant. The evening activities began at 6.30 pm with the *Nang Noppamas* Beauty pageant gathering at the sub-district primary school, then marching to the venue. The bulk of the parade was made up of a magnificent array of floats and groups. Beautiful contestants dressed in traditional costumes graced gorgeously decorated floats in a very colourful parading procession, followed by their own village cheerleading squads. Along both sides of the main road was a large audience. It was worth noting that, of the Shan contestants, one lady came from the IDP camp on Shan side near the border, one from the farm area which I often visited, and one from Shan migrant community next to my place. Besides, there was a lady from a nearby northern Thai village, within which the Shan migrant community fell for administrative purposes, competing for the title of *Nang sao Noppamas*. Interestingly, she was a *lukern* (half Chinese and half Shan), but a Thai citizen. Meanwhile, another little Thai Shan girl whose father worked for the local Thai government competed for the title of *Noo Noy Noppamas* (Girl Noppamas). With these contests and village participants I met, I felt a sense of belonging as part of the communities participating in this occasion. Throughout the occasion, pick-ups, *Song Tiou* and motorbikes continued sending people back and forth. The sound of striking Shan gongs, long drums and cymbals were omnipresent.

In the beauty contest, it is apparent that individuals' kinship ties and personal relationships are like what Olwig (2007:11) described as "*the formation of particular constellations of relations*". However, the participants were divided into binary or various groups in the district official administrative rules. From the lens of Thai officials and legally, this tells us very little about the pathways of Shan's interwoven interpersonal relations, and translocal kinship ties in northern Thailand. This splendid night somehow revealed a climate of ambivalence either towards Shan migrants or the local Thai government officials, although the occasion was enjoyed by both participants and spectators. In everyday practices, Shan migrants are often portrayed as an exploitable cheap labour force; this particularly applied to those located near the border. Nevertheless, it was remarkable that a Shan contestant was invited by the sub-district Thai officers to join the beauty competition from the nearest IDP camp inside

Shan State, while others were invited from farms and Shan migrant communities.

Their presence in the Thai Beauty Contest made them visible on stage, which revealed a positive image of Shan migrants in the host northern Thai communities, even though their subordinate status did not necessarily diminish. The phenomenon of ambivalence mirrors Ferguson's (2009) finding on the *Poy Sang Long* festival's political implications in a former Shan resistance group-established community. Ferguson points out that the negative image of undocumented Shan migrants was replaced by the religious Shan participants who carried images of Thai Kings and Thai Queens, as well as Thai national flags, during the ritual that was approved by the Thai authorities. It created an aura giving the *Poy Sang Long* a certain kind of "sacred", "untouchable" status in blessing and honouring the Thai royal family and the Thai kingdom (68).

Each village had its own parade float and cheerleading squads to show their village characteristics and solidarity. The beauty contest functioned as an alternative space and spectacle, together with other Shan festivals, in which Shan could participate on behalf of their communities and represent Shan in the mainstream Northern Thai society. Miss Shan (*Nang Sao Tai*) became a symbol of cultural identity in the public sphere, which was admitted by the local Thai authorities to prove Shan's existence. On the other hand, distinguishing *Nang Sao Tai* from *Nang Noppamas* simultaneously implied the feature of 'otherness' of Shan rather than embracing them as part of 'Us', Thais. As the event attracted most Thai communities within the sub-district, including Shan migrant communities as well as Shan IDP camp, it also created a space for development of community spirit and brought together numerous scattered Shan communities in the neighbourhood.

This raises an interesting question: Why are ideals of feminine beauty celebrated in displacement as a central part of the cultural ritual? When the Shan ladies took this Beauty Contest to make Shan people visible, which does not only mean dealing with their subordinate status, but also shows a typical example where women's bodies are treated as central to cultural maintenance, not men. As Mayer (2000: 9) emphasises, "women as mothers and defenders of culture and national values". Shan identity and

self-representation are strengthened by Shan migrant communities and their host Thai society, which has again distinguished Shan from other northern Thai people to make Shan unique among ethnic others.

Therefore, viewed from a different angle, the ambivalence of the occasion cannot be explained as a gradual process of integration of Shan migrants into Northern Thai mainstream society, but rather a kind of co-existence by understanding Northern Thais. Furthermore, this newly invented event facilitated new forms of embodied practices of displaced Shan and strengthened solidarity within Shan communities and represented Shan collective identification with a shared feeling of belonging by an alternative way of commemorating and participating in Thai festivals.

7.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has explored how displaced Shan (re)create a multi-layered translocal lived space across diverse regions and stretch their connections between both sides of the borderland through three main interwoven dimensions: economical, socio-political and religious-cultural aspects such as folk circulations, mobility practices, institutional efforts and cultural and religious practices. It has revealed that, although displaced Shan are dispersed on marginalised regions, with a certain degree of spatial confinement under Thai regulations, such localities are still connected and function as nodes of various sizes in a constellation of networks, which comprise a crucial element of people's sense of security and familiarity.

The standpoint of home territory is based on the idea of translocal lived space. I explore it from human-oriented perspective rather than as a state-centred national territory. It comprises interwoven social relations rather than a fixed terrain. The overlapping social relations are strengthened through continuous mobility and embodied cultural practices. This home territory links their past, present and future, which is beyond the considerations of nationality. The translocal mobility is another tactical practices to ensure their sustainable livelihoods. This echoes what SUAN Camp leader mentioned, they would prefer to lead a normal life rather than officialising their

refugee camp, and also reflects on the fundamental purpose of obtaining ID cards rather than change their identity. Displaced Shan strive to secure their sustainable livelihoods and normalcy, instead of considering to live on national homes of 'ideologised' notion (e.g. returning to home of origin in Shan State).

The findings expose a variety of facilitators who play a crucial role in establishing linkages between inside Shan State and their present dwellings. The process of Shan's home-making has stretched beyond simply seeking to repair the disjunction caused by forced migration or maintaining their way of life, and is more actively involved in reconstructing social networks in the course of their mobility and immobility. Therefore, I suggest that mobility is in itself a dynamic process of building relationships, and home territory is a dynamic site of network of relations, rather than a static and bounded area; meanwhile, it is also a social space of negotiation with different 'Others'.

The facilitators contribute to survival of Shan cultural recovery in diverse ways: Shan culture may be re-invented or re-interpreted by Shan nationalists to unify Shan identity. It could be reconstructed and transformed on Thai soils for tourism as well as integrate into strategic national control for loyalty to Thai state. It could also be reproduced as cultural productions for nostalgic consumption or be created as an opportunity for merit-making (e.g. Sang Long's sponsors). Therefore, through these different styles and features of Shan 'culture', displaced Shan images could be distinguished from Burmese migrants. Through ritual and religious practices, the social ties of displaced Shan have been transformed and extended in different forms. They strive to find their way to shuttle through new contexts and make use of the stages in Thai festivals. The new forms of embodied practices have been created to negotiate their lived spaces with the host society and ethnic others.

In addition, through institutional networks, displaced Shan's mobility can be regarded as a means to access educational resources or necessary skills training and economic empowerment to contribute back to Shan communities and approach the vulnerable displaced persons living in hiding. On the other hand, institutional factor also plays a crucial role in facilitating Shan identity through prevailing re-interpreted Shan history

and spreading propaganda by use of mass media. When political intention combines with religious-cultural practices, religion could also turn into political resources, in particular when monks show against Burmese military regime and stand by the leaders of resistance groups, this strengthens the legality of resistance groups and unifies scattered Shan together. As Jirattikorm (2008:223) mentions, "cultural productions play an important part in SSA-S politics".

These three dimensions construct translocal Shan spaces, which forms multi-layered networks to interweave with Shan social relations. There is a well-known analysis of network from Deleuze and Guattari (1976, 1987) who have used the metaphor "rhizome", which is often used by migrationists to grasp the "complexity, dynamics and relationality of translocal connectedness" (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013: 377)

> Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states….It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion…. The tree is filiation but the rhizome is alliance…the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 21, 25).

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1976, 1987) the rhizomatic network is characterised as a decentralised, open and dynamic system. A rhizome takes a variety of forms and grows in any direction along with an underground rooting system. No matter which point you enter, one can remain connected in the rhizome. Therefore, its multiple entryways imply the system's multiplicity. They describe rhizome as a map, with its features of open and multiple entryways. However, the rhizomatic network addresses little about the external rules and restrictions and the interactions between actors and their surroundings. Meanwhile, the rhizomatic network fails to grasp the multi-layered connections. Based on my findings, I use the concept of 'weaving' to catch the dynamics of multi-layered and multi-nodal networks to shed light on the translocal notion of "situatedness during mobility" (Brickell and Datta, 2011:3) to highlight fluidity of social relations and interconnectedness of networks, and their extension and negotiation to a broader social world.

CHAPTER 8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This research sets out to explore the relations between home-places, mobility and cohesion networks through home-making of displaced Shan in limbo, to see how they negotiate issues of home during their displacement along the Thai-Burma border. The study has highlighted how displaced Shan remember, reconstruct and represent home-places they left behind and their physically fragmented journeys that led them from home-places to in-between border areas.

The study further reveals how Shan placed their displacement by repairing their social ties and (re)constructing a feeling of at-homeness. This refers to the issues of how they dealt with their status of *Stratified Others* in the socio-cultural perspectives. It demonstrates how the displaced Shan live a dual life with a series of tactical practices against their subordinate and oppressed positions. In this sense, it does not deny displaced people's vulnerability, but sees them as having significant control over their lives, rather than as passive objects or "victims" (Brun, 2001:18; Utas, 2005:426). This active role, as a tactical agent engaged in the search for security, highlights how migrants re-establish themselves and their families in society, differently from those who have citizenship and can travel freely and enjoy their membership (citizenship).

Finally, the study also examines how displaced Shan develop and maintain their social connections within and beyond their effective spatial incarceration. They create multi-layered constellations of social relations by 'weaving' social relations through space, creating translocal linkages. This constellation of social relations can be regarded as displaced Shan's fluid translocal lived space forming their 'home territory' beyond national borders in the face of their protracted displacement. This human-orientated perspective challenges the notion of state-centred 'national territory' to (re)construct Shan's place affiliation and create a base for their future generations.

Through the narratives of displaced Shan's life histories and their everyday practices, home goes beyond simply a home of origins; it is also the place where they seek refuge and practise their rituals, the workplace where they make their living and the base where they can weave dreams for their future. The narratives of their life histories portray the dynamic Shan society in transition, covering a wide range of historical and political junctures, and making connections between the spaces and times of the past decades since Burma's independence from British colonisation. They highlight the process and tactics of the displaced Shan's struggle for their survival along the Thai-Burma border and re-construct those in-between places as meaningful. As Fullilove (1996) argues, it also represents "the accumulation of many relationships and much history" (1519).

The following sections illustrate how my thesis has improved our understanding of making home in the radical and prolonged displacement in the case of the Shan. Initially, I elaborate three dimensions of home-making in the prolonged displacement (see Chapter 3), drawing together my key findings from the previous empirical chapters and theoretical contributions. Then I indicate the limitations of my research and explore the implications that this research offers together with different perspectives for future study.

8.2 Major Findings and Theoretical Contributions

The initial contribution of this research is that I draw on Sack's (2004) idea of place-making (see chapter 3) in terms of 'weaving' along with Goffman's (1959) frontstage and backstage practices to illustrate how Shan have lived a dual life to negotiate their practices of home-making and cope with uncertainty and insecurity during their radical and protracted displacement. I use the term 'shuttle' to demonstrate how displaced Shan steer through their vague situations (e.g. various instable terrains of conflict, violence and oppression) to regain some extent of control over their lives in displacement. The metaphor 'shuttling' back and forth through the shed, between the yarn threads of the warp, implies everyday tactical practices, which refer to displaced Shan's tactical practices of dual life - tactics of (in)visibility (see chapter 6).In the

following sections, I discuss in greater depth some of my research findings and the theoretical implications in three dimensions of home-making: physical/ spatial, socio-cultural and historical/ temporal aspects respectively (see chapter 3, three dimensions of home-making during the displacement).

8.2.1 Physical/Spatial Dimension

In this research, the displaced Shan have played an active role of tactical agents, whether during enforced mobility or voluntary movement, rather than being regarded as helpless "victims" (Brun, 2001:18; Utas, 2005: 426). It allows us to view how displaced people make a place home rather than seeing them as "constituted by their displacement" (Brun and Fábos, 2015:9) or in a "pathological state of being" (Brun, 2001:18).

Flexible translocal mobility was a feature of Shan during the pre-modern period. The used-to-be porous cross-border routes have been restricted after delineation of national borders. The concept of national borders in geopolitics has drawn lines to distinguish 'our' territory from 'others'. Mobility involves a set of political processes and controlled by state powers. The notion of a 'deterritorialised' global world cannot account for those who struggle with forced displacement or relocation. The fixed border of national territory is based on a state-centred idea, which often raises tension and incongruity with human-orientated notion of lived spaces. In particular, the stated-centred notion is limited with regard to citizenship rights and confronted with non-citizens of others, such as refugee camps are being "in" instead of being "of "the host countries (Doná, 2015:69). Therefore, this research provides a platform for dialogues between geopolitical and ethnographical dimensions. My research is constructed and based on the subjects of humans and their embodied practices within the environments they inhabit. Their familial, social and cultural ties go beyond the national territory and form an alternative translocal lived territory (chapter 7)

The findings show that in the face of radical or prolonged displacement, the tactical practices of displaced Shan were not only to avoid violence or conflicts, but also to seek

a better future. In the course of mobility, it may create many opportunities to build new relations and social ties. Diverse patronage relations could take place during their displacement, including seeking refuge in IDP camps which were protected by Shan resistance army, journeying with someone they could trust, being hosted by monasteries, crossing borders to Thai soil, securing livelihoods on the farms or factories, and being integrated into Shan communities. Therefore, their mobility is to not only seek protection, but also find a balance to re-obtain control over their lives.

This finding does not prove James C. Scott's (2009) idea to see mobility as a strategy of state-avoidance for seeking antagonism for Zomia inhabitants, which somehow has a little too romantic an association (see Chapter 5). Neither the Shan states' *saopha* system in pre-modern period nor the governing system of Shan resistance army forces (see chapter 4) nowadays supports Scott's notion. Their mobility can be seen as tactical practices to ensure their security rather than preference of being stateless. Meanwhile, antagonism cannot ensure freedom of movement across national boundaries in present-day, but a proper ID card or passport does. Holding a suitable ID card becomes a symbol of 'free to move and stay' and meanwhile implies 'insider' or 'outsider'. The vague Thai action practices create an arena for displaced Shan to negotiate their legal status with a functional purpose. However, this does not necessarily mean a symbol of shifting of personal identity, but to keep away from being trapped in legal ambiguity (see chapter 6) and retain some certain degree of freedom.

Citizenship (or membership) is often constructed through citizen rights; in particular, it is tied with the rights to land or property ownership. Without having a legal status implies their ownership has been denied or partially restricted during displacement. This in particular affects their housing issues. To access land is one way of breaking the stereotype image of their dislocation and uprootedness. As mentioned earlier, continuous mobility was a tactical practice to secure livelihood for Shan migrant communities in northern Thai rural area. They circulate between different farms or factories for better wages and meanwhile many end up in the existing Shan migrant communities to build their own houses in the name of their Thai Shan relatives or friends (see session 7.2). Moving away from thatched cottages in the fields to adequate

cemented houses in villages implies removing of the mark of displacement, which becomes a crucial starting point for a new life. As Brun (2015: 44) emphasises, "for many people displaced by war, home is believed to be somewhere other than the place of refuge, the place and dwelling they fled from…The material conditions, the location or social setting of the place of refuge may not be somewhere one would want to call home".

However, from a state-centred perspective, denial of land or property ownership is often regarded as a state strategy to prevent attracting more migrants flowing over into Thai soils, with their control over national territory. In such a context, displaced Shan still find their ways to cope with housing issues. After all, individuation and preservation are two of the four key features suggested by Iris Marion Young (1997) as the basis of making a place home. Meanwhile, a sense of homeliness may change over time due to extended length of residence or accumulation of everyday practices and memories in the temporary dwellings. The gradual change in relationships between people and their present dwellings can be proven when displaced Shan migrants in their provisional dwelling start obtaining the 'home's' postal address. On the other hand, this also reveals that housing conditions in migrant communities create an arena for displaced Shan to negotiate with the state power.

8.2.2 Socio-cultural Dimension

The findings have shown that displaced Shan scattered in various locations with diverse labels such as IDPs, refugees, migrant workers; they were not situated in discrete and isolated statuses, even though they were located near the border areas and marginalised by the mainstream society. They had repaired and (re)constructed their extended networks and social ties in the provisional dwellings. Those 'in-between' places to some extent have been created as a multi-nodal, translocal lived space and as a multi-layered safety net to hold the scattered displaced Shan. The provisional bases-IDP camps, refugee camps, rural migrant communities and adjacent urban areas-were interwoven together and further extend the linkages with each other and bond both sides of the borderland together. I highlighted three main dimensions: economical,

socio-political, religious-cultural aspects through practices of folk routes and mobility, institutional efforts and cultural and religious spheres respectively. I use Sack's (2001, 2004) concept of place-making by means of 'weaving' to catch the dynamics of multi-layered and multi-nodal networks to shed light on the translocal notion of "situatedness during mobility" (Brickell and Datta, 2011:3) and highlight fluidity of social relations and interconnectedness of networks, as well as their extension and negotiation to a broader social world. This resonates Brun and Fábos's notion of home which may be understood as "a process marked by openness and change" (2015:8).

The multi-layered networks comprise interwoven and overlapping social relations. These relations are strengthened through continuous mobility, institutional efforts and embodied cultural practices. The findings have explored a variety of facilitators who play a crucial role in establishing linkages between inside Shan State and their present dwellings. Therefore, I suggest that mobility is in itself a dynamic process of building relationships, and home territory is a dynamic site of network of relations, instead of being a static terrain.

The findings have challenged the conventional concept of fixed binaries, including centre and margin, state and non-state, citizen and non-citizen, refugee and non-refugee, legal and illegal and those legalistic and official terminologies. In reality, the boundaries between different terms are usually blurred. First, as mentioned in Chapter 6, I use 'third-space sovereignty' to capture the fact that RCSS/SSA acts as a 'quasi state' to govern styles of in-between places; these overlap partial territories of Burma and some networks within Thailand. This raises the issue of rethinking the concept of modern nation-states that is composed of territory, sovereignty and citizenship. However, this cannot completely explain and understand the political complexity of those provisional homes where the displaced Shan have been situated. Furthermore, it cannot elucidate the fluid status of displaced Shan's 'partial citizenship' in Thailand in pursuit of a better social status.

Second, the marginalised in-between places have turned out to be meaningful 'home territory' for the displaced Shan. This multi-layered translocal space spans over

northern Thai metropolitan areas, border IDP camps, refugee camps and migrant communities and extends to both sides of borderland, which makes the boundaries of the Shan's lived spaces between the central cities and the peripheral communities less apparent or even blurred. Each provisional base is part of this network beyond a presupposition of a centre-periphery dichotomy. Meanwhile, the periphery of northern Thais has turned out to be the lived centre of displaced Shan. Within those provisional bases, the border migrant communities often play different functions for the Shan, in particular as a logistical support area for displaced Shan persons in the camps, and as a 'quasi homeland' for Shan migrants who have moved to work in other places (towns, or big cities). Along with Shan circulations, cultural festivals, religious rituals, their material culture and embodied everyday practices have contributed to the formation of a Shan ethnoscape along the border, which is promoted by Thai authorities as *tourist attractions* for northern Thailand (details in section 7.4). In this vein, the centre-periphery dichotomy is incomplete in understanding the complexities of the locale and its connections to other locales.

Meanwhile, these findings do not support Malkki's (1995) research regarding formation of refugees' identity in western Tanzania by comparing two groups: camp refugees and town refugees. She disclosed that the "town refugees", living outside the camp, had different notions about national identity, history, home and homeland from those who lived in the camp. She mentioned the town refugees had not built a collective identity and integrated into the social setting of host communities with multiple identities in a dynamic "cosmopolitanism", contrasting with the nationalism of the former group (Malkki, 1995:156). In my research, in the light of the multi-nodal interconnectivity, absolute divisions between 'centre' and 'periphery', and between 'urban' and 'rural', have been blurred and displaced Shan' lives are characterised by translocal mobility. Those scattered places have served as crucial nodes for these translocal connections, which provides a further understanding of how places are constructed through the interplay and connections between mobility and situatedness.

In addition, the findings also lead to rethinking the concepts of 'mobility' and 'time' in place making, and show that the displaced Shan's mobility does not follow a linear

conventional order of "uprooting-movement-regrounding" (Ahmen, et al. 2003: 8). In particular, the displaced Shan have no land ownership in the current dwellings. Their migratory routes are nonlinear and often engaged with more than two places. They move along the constellation of networks, and their destinations may turn into transit places in the course of their mobility. The variety of their provisional bases can be seen as symbolically and affectively part of a wide range of trans-spatially connected sites. Therefore, this calls for a broader rethinking of the role of 'mobility' in relation to place making, which is not merely a survival tactic of going from one place to another, but also its function in constructing and weaving a dynamic home territory through the mobile Shan's embodied practices.

In this vein, the findings facilitate reconceptualising *home-making as a journey as well as a process of negotiating lived spaces.* Accordingly, home territory is made of numerous circular journeys. Their face-to-face interactions, information-sharing and embodied practices have extended the Shan ethnoscape and fostered wide social ties to fill the gap of disruption from homelands as well as transformed the local settlement patterns with co-existence. Therefore, to create a place like 'home', 'time' is also a key factor in this process. With accumulation of time, the material culture traits and Shan's habitus have strengthened the features of homeliness in the provisional places. Conversely, place affiliation has influenced Shan's decision to move while being in a precarious status.

8.2.3 Historical/Temporal Dimension

As mentioned earlier, 'time' is a key factor in the process of home-making. From the narratives of their life histories, the respondents portray the dynamic Shan society in transition, covering a range of historical and political junctures, and making connections between the spaces and time of the past decades since Burma's independence from British colonisation. They highlight the process and tactics of the displaced Shan' struggle for their survival along the Thai-Burma border and re-construct those in-between places as meaningful.

The findings have shown that the displaced Shan are experiencing a "double displacement" (Kabachnik et.al, 2010:317) in both place and time. The Shan are not only being displaced physically or spatially from their home places, they are also experiencing 'temporal' displacement. However, with accumulation of time, their 'temporary shelters' are becoming 'normal' status of their everyday lives. Those 'temporary' or 'provisional' dwellings may have offered them 5, 10, 15 or over 20 years' residency. The displaced Shan used a variety of ways to create neighbourhoods in which they reside, maintain rituals and create kin-like relations in their everyday lives. Their home-making in displacement has been a dynamic, continuous process of becoming; in particular, at the junction of imagined past, the unsecure present and the uncertain future. With the passage of time, those provisional dwellings as a marker of their displacement have gradually turned in to 'home'. Despite the fact that material conditions of the temporary dwelling do not bring satisfactory livelihoods, the displaced Shan still struggle to shift somewhere else. Mutual memories, lived experiences, the materiality and habitus may become ingredients for sense of familiarity and homeliness.

During their displacement, social ties could be reconstructed to replace the dispersed extended family ties (see chapter 6), while extended family ties could be repaired and existed in other forms through religious and ritual practices (see chapter 7). The relationships of co-existence with *ethnic others* or *the* host society could be invented through patron-client relationship or other rituals (see chapter 7). Therefore, I suggest that displacement cannot simply be seen as loss of place, but also a process of emplacement. Displacement and emplacement cannot be seen as exclusively opposite concepts. Home-making is a set of processes of dialectical interactions (see chapter 3).

My findings further show that in order to deal with unknown and uncertain settings, displaced Shan take future-oriented tactical practices to secure their sustainable livelihoods both during radical and prolonged displacement. In the course of their mobilities, shared historical context, ancient ties and cultural components (e.g. rituals, habitus, language and materiality) that Shan carried with them, have offered some symbolic or familiar lived ingredients that, later on, facilitated and secured their

journeys of exile. Meanwhile, translocal circulations for a better life in the northern rural areas are the feature of many Shan migrants' life portrayal.

Besides, by naming the temporary dwellings as normal villages, they maintained their way of life in limbo; in particular, by practising a variety of rituals and festivals, which do not just have functional connections with the past, against the disruption caused by the displacement, but also play a healing role as a kind of re-interpretation and collective satire to express their pain. Embodied ritual practice in Shan's displaced context can serve to heal the disjuncture for continuality, soothe their pain and release emotions. Through their religion and rituals, an important connection beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of Shan's past way of life is created.

The well-known concept of 'social navigation' has been widely used in studies of prolonged displacement to show how the displaced navigate through a moving environment and deal with their radical and prolonged displacement. It uses the metaphor "seascape" to indicate "multidimensional and dense dynamics of social changes and multiple forces" (Vigh, 2009: 429-430). However, this notion fails to take into account how people's practices could change different forces over time.

As a result, they weaved a Shan translocal home territory spanning both sides of the border to connect their original and current home places, and simultaneously (re)create their future 'homes'. Therefore, their home territory can be regarded as *a dynamic site of a network of translocal relations*, rather than a static and bounded area. Home-making and a range of connections with other dwellings in various localities shaped it. Meanwhile it was also a social space of negotiation with different others, which allowed continuity with their past and provided a base for the future. The in-between areas, thus, were (re)created and extended as part of the Shan 'home territory' through re-territorialisation of translocality.

8.3 Policy Implications

In recent years, the repatriation issue regarding refugees and displaced persons on the Thailand-Burma border has been raised. Since the beginning of 2011, a series of political changes in Burma have taken place, including the release of political prisoners,[117] electoral reforms,[118] and the signing of a set of initial nationwide ceasefire deals between most of the ethnic armed forces and the Burmese military regime, which has created a climate in which prolonged war and protracted refugee situation may come to an end. Soon after in May 2011, the Burmese President, Thein Sein, urged those "*who have been abroad for various reasons to come back home*"[119], and Thai and Burmese officials began talks on refugee repatriation.[120] In June 2012, the UNHCR also finalised its discussion paper on "Framework for Voluntary Repatriation" with a set of guidelines for preparation of possible refugee repatriation (Human Rights Watch, 2012: 60). This superficial prospect seemed to bring more uncertainty for refugees and displaced people along the border. They faced increasing pressure to return home,[121] in particular with cuts in aid by international donors who started shifting their funds inside Burma while refugees were waiting for an impending decision regarding repatriation.

Amongst the refugees along the Thailand-Burma border, the situation for displaced Shan has attracted relatively little attention, because they were not officially granted

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[117] According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma), more than 650 political detainees have been released since March 2011, but hundreds still remained imprisoned (Source: The Washington Post: "Burma is pressed to free remaining political prisoners", 21st August, 2012, [Online] Available from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/burma-pressed-to-free-remaining-political-prisoners/2012/08/21/5f2a46e8-e966-11e1-8487-64e4b2a79ba8_story.html. [Accessed: 21/08/2012].

[118] The electoral reforms allowed Aung San Suu Kyi's opposition National League for Democracy to run and win in the April 2012 parliamentary by-elections. See International Crisis Group, "Reform in Myanmar: One Year On," Update Briefing, 11th April, 2012; see also, "Burma: Ban Should Press for Lasting Reforms: Secretary-General's Visit Should Highlight Political Prisoners, Conflict Abuses," Human Rights Watch news release, 28th April, 2012, [Online] Available from: http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/04/28/burma-ban-should-press-lasting-reforms.

[119] Burmese President Thein Sein's speech was quoted by the state newspaper: the New Light of Myanmar.

[120] The Irrawaddy, on 24th July, 2014.

[121] Saw Yan Naing (2014), "Burmese Refugees Criticize Thailand's Push for Quicker Repatriation." The Irrawaddy, on 15th July, 2014

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a refugee status by either Thai authorities or the UNHCR. In particular, most stayed outside nine 'official temporary shelters' (refugee camps). However, this situation did not reduce Shan communities' concerns about the intentions of the Burmese government, who were planning to repatriate a group of displaced Shan living in a self-governing unofficial refugee camp in northern Thailand, even though there is no guarantee of their safety[122]. Meanwhile, many challenges remained unaddressed, including ongoing sporadic fighting, lack of a lasting ceasefire, unmarked mine fields, drug issues, abuse of civilians, forced labour and deficiency of crucial infrastructure, services and means for sustainable livelihoods. Therefore, many refugees could not fully trust the Burmese government and some suspected Burmese regime was attempting to obtain electoral support in 2015 - hence they were keen to deal with refugee repatriation and migrants' needs as their priorities.[123] Obviously, the process of peace has not yet achieved the stage for refugees to return safely.

Meanwhile, there seemed to be very limited opportunities for refugees and related community-based organisations to engage in preparation and planning of repatriation. Several Shan community groups issued a joint statement[124] to demand that full transparent repatriation plans should adhere to international guidelines, ensuring repatriation is voluntary and securing refugees' safety and dignity.[125] In the light of these concerns, the ideal 'home' for return should be constituted by some crucial elements to meet refugees' needs, which may be seen in different ways by different stakeholders. Moreover, holding different notions of 'home' may also lead to different policy discourses on refugee repatriation. Black (2002) argued in research on refugee repatriation to Bosnia-Herzegovina from European Union states since 1995 "the complexities of the concept of home are important to policies on the return of refugees" (128).

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[122] SHAN: Shan Herald Agency for News, on 9th August 2013.
[123] "Myanmar refugees nervous about NCPO chief's repatriation order", on 13 July 2014, Bangkok Post Sunday
[124] Human Rights Watch (2012: 61).
[125] SHAN: Shan Herald Agency for News, on 9th August 2013

My research has explored the displaced Shan's home-making whilst in limbo, and showed multifaceted concepts of home as well as the role of *mobility* in home-making. It may benefit different stakeholders to envisage the relations between Shan mobility and their hom*ing*, so they can be more aware of existing mechanisms of displaced Shan home-making in their everyday lives and rethink an appropriate and durable solution. After all, it cannot be ignored that displaced Shan have been making themselves at home in places where they are now, although these are temporary dwellings; they have reconstructed and accumulated their networks with host communities during the protracted decades. The policy-makers should consider the reality that return is not just a simple durable solution; it is not possible to send back refugees and then expect that all the ensuing issues could be sorted automatically. Simplistic notions of returning 'home' could be problematic in the case of displaced Shan.

Clearly, in this research mobility was not simply a survival tactic, but also a means to seek a better life (e.g. access to land, rights, jobs, services and resources). I suggest home-making is a journey to secure access to sustainable livelihoods, which refers to multi-layered connections and forms a multi-nodal safety net for displaced Shan, involving the interplay of dynamic political, economic and social changes as well as historical encounters. Therefore, 'voluntary' repatriation may take place spontaneously only at the time that refugees feel confident that there is a safe environment to return to and there will be the possibility to resume a normal life there (Human Rights Watch, 2012: 67). If repatriation could not meet the needs of the refugees, then *mobility* would continue. Similarly, as Aung San Suu Kyi suggested in 2012,

> "I don't think you really need to return refugees back because if conditions were right, the refugees would go back of their own free will"[126].

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[126] Aung San Suu Kyi's words were on 2nd June 2012 in the Burma Partnership short documentary, "Nothing About Us Without Us: Refugees' Voices About their Return to Burma", which was filmed and directed by Timonthy Syrota. [Online] Available from: http://www.burmapartnership.org/nauwu/ [Accessed: 19/12/2012].

Therefore, policy should address the demands of refugees and displaced people in a range of dimensions: physical (e.g. abode, land and place), functional (e.g. security, social, political and economic) and personal (e.g. emotions), otherwise *returning home* could become a problematic issue. In particular, long-term Shan refugees who have been displaced for a long time may not consider returning 'home'; those whose 'home' has been destroyed or occupied have no 'home' and they may have already become embedded in socio-economic networks within their host communities. In this research, many Shan informants revealed that they would not necessarily return home: they would follow their children's choices. Whether living in camps or migrant communities, most Shan children have attended Thai schools and learned according to the Thai national curriculum. They were worried that the education of Shan children would be most affected if repatriation took place, and that they would have to re-start their education[127] as beginners. Meanwhile, those Shan children who were born in hospital in Thailand, and who hold birth certificates, qualify to apply for Thai citizenship, also create an alternative option for the Shan's next generation future 'homeland'.

8.4 Implications for further research

After conducting this research, there are still some remaining gaps and limitations in the related knowledge. Here I simply demonstrate three dimensions for future research that could build on this research and fill the gaps. First, this research does not explore the gender issue regarding *mobile fatherhood and missing brotherhood* (in chapter 5) to address the impacts on the practices of hom*ing*. Second, this research does not attempt to explore the differences and relations between the existing Thai Shan communities and displaced Shan. This could further account for how long migrants have to stay at a place for them to claim it as their own home and also illuminate intergenerational Shan migrants' perspectives of hom*ing*. Third, this research does not include ethnic *others*' perspectives on home-making at each single site. Settling in the same place (e.g. Chiang Mai), how do different groups of inhabitants

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127 "Shans fear repatriation to Burma", *in DVB,* on September 12, 2013.

construct and interpret their experiences of home-making (e.g. Northern Thais, Shan and Chinese) through cultural material traits in the social-spatial context? This approach could bring a better understanding of the changes and transformation of place-making.

Regarding the first gap, gender issues, I mentioned in chapter 5 (section 5.3.2) that due to military recruitment and forced labour issues, many households were seriously impacted, in particular changing human resources of their familial structures and division of labour. The roles of Shan refugee warriors and their wives in home-making can be further explored in prolonged war, in particular how their normal civilian lives were dramatically distorted. How are gender relations during the prolonged war? How do men and women partake and share the responsibilities, when the family members have been dispersed to different places? Some soldiers' family members follow the army forces moving around in the jungles or settling in the army camps, while others may live separately with relatives or acquaintances in the neighbouring Thai villages for security reasons. In this situation, how do they construct their home on route while the whole family is on the move and being scattered and what are the impacts on the next generations? If we take it for granted those women may be silent victims or subordinate to men, this is an over-simplistic assumption. In the case of displaced Shan, men and women are the main characters and dramatically affected by war in various ways. In particular, while men joined the military service, many women took the main role of maintaining economic stability for their families during the disruption caused by unstable changes. Shan women not only became the buttresses of their homes, but also played a leading role in community reconciliation and reconstruction, such as contribution of Shan women's groups (i.e. SWAN, see chapter 7, section7.3). Therefore, gender relations within the society during war can open an avenue to re-examine some gender stereotypes.

The second gap relates to the influence of modernity on the 1.5 generation of displaced Shan's everyday practices in home-making and further explores how they negotiate shifts in the social space and relations with mainstream society. The 1.5 generation of displaced Shan in Thailand refers to young Shan generation who fled from Shan State

with their parents to Thailand as children, unlike their first-generation parents and second-generation Shan children, who were born in Thailand. The 1.5 generation can be seen as displaced Shan who are bilingual (Shan and Thai language) and bicultural (Shan and Thai culture) and arrived in Thailand during their formative period. Some may obtain education in the earlier Shan migrant schools (see section 7.3) while others may accept official Thai basic education. In particular, since Thai authorities started the project of "Education for All" in the early 2000s, most Shan migrant schools which were set up at the end of 1990s have been closed or integrated into the official Thai education system as branches of Thai schools. The crucial change in Thai educational policy has led to Thai language being the dominant 'must-learn' language for the 1.5 and second generations of displaced Shan. Some spoke Shan mixed with Thai or wrote Thai scripts better than Shan scripts. One of my informants mentioned that "*some of young generations under 25 years old never talk about Shan State, they are 50 or 30% of Shan*", while he also expressed how different experiences of different generations have affected their notions of Shan state.

However, when simply highlighting the impacts of Thai state action, the fact that displaced Shan have been active agents in making efforts to preserve the Shan language and cultural rituals in Thailand cannot be ignored. This also transformed some practices in their interactions with the Thais and fostered dialogue for their co-existence with the host communities (see chapter 7), which shows that the Shan cultural heritage may remain in a variety of forms on Thai soil. Exploring the difference in survival tactics between 1.5 generation and the first generation and underscoring how their new forms of contact link across other locales as future research may facilitate a comprehensive understanding of intergenerational viewpoints of homing as well as exploring changes of identity. This further research may bring new insights to explain the extent to which migrants are able to claim a provisional place as their own home.

Moreover, the third gap is the lack of perspectives on changes and transformations of home-places from the mainstream society in the host country, Thailand. In order to have a further understanding of a place with multi-dimensional perceptions of home-

making, there is a need to include a mainstream group (e.g. northern Thais) or ethnic others (e.g. Yunnanese Chinese, Aka tribe, etc.) who inhabit the same terrain, to explore how a place is simultaneously constructed from different perspectives by different groups through materiality of home. In chapter 2, I showed how the displaced Shan negotiated different power for their survival at the rim of Thai territory both in physical and symbolic ways, such as some specific urban spaces that were noted by Shan communities (i.e. Chiang Mai, Samkampaeng, Saraphi, Maetaey), and some provisional Shan dwellings on the border (i.e. IDP camps, refugee camps and migrant communities and Shan regions (i.e. Fang district in Chiang Mai province, Ban Thetai village in Chiang Rai province and Mae Hong Son province). In different periods, a place is constructed through diverse historical encounters, contacts and everyday practices of ethnicity. In chapters 6 and 7, I merely highlighted how the displaced Shan have been constructing their home terrain in provisional dwellings. Further research could underline the dynamic and different perspectives of home-making in one single place (i.e. a migrant city, town or village, etc.) and explore changes in the politics of space and interaction between ethnic others within it. This could facilitate a better understanding of the relations between migrants and the place in which they settle, with an extensive and multifaceted dimension of home-place making and interpretation (narratives and texts). Relations between migrants and home places may be studied through a range of possible themes, including the politics of everyday practices, place affiliation, sense of belonging, inclusion and exclusion as well as integration and segregation, and translocal connections.

8.5 Concluding Remarks

This research has drawn upon empirical work conducted among displaced Shan in limbo, who live in a different style of temporary dwellings along the border— an IDP camp, a refugee camp, a city and migrant communities—and revealed how people with the status of 'betwixt and between' negotiate their status, enlarge the social space and make their home-places during the radical and prolonged displacement. Meanwhile, it provided a further understanding of the changing and (re)constructing nature of people's connections to place over time through every day practices of home-making.

It explored the course of being displaced and situated through a framework of home-making to demonstrate how they maintain their way of life wherever they lived to construct a wider 'home' territory for future generations. These findings also help different actors to be aware of the existing reality of homing displaced Shan and allow rethinking related to policy or strengthening smart aid.

In the past decades, the displaced Shan have experienced a "double displacement" (Kabachnik *et al*., 2010:37) in both place and time. Although they were displaced physically or spatially from their homes in Shan State and are now experiencing 'temporal' displacements, I argue that displacement can also be seen as a process of emplacement. It reveals how Shan continuously (re)construct particular relations to new places during the protracted displacement, so they should be seen as ordinary people who desire to live a normal life. Narratives of their life stories regarding the process of their displacement and journey of exile, as well as every day practices in current dwellings, provide a more adequate insight to understand these Shan. They have tried to maintain their way of life through rituals and habitus wherever they lived, and the continuous and coherent everyday lived practices in their current provisional 'home' demonstrated connections to home-places where they fled from. This facilitates a deep understanding of the relations between places (territories), mobility and social cohesion. Their interplay indicated that although forced mobility may disturb people's attachments to their homelands, seriously disrupt interpersonal relations and social ties and dislocate people from 'homelands'; however, the current lived 'home' still can be re-connected to a broader 'homeland'.

Some features of this study shed a new light on the relations between mobility and home-making. Instead of focusing on a single confined place (e.g. a refugee camp or a resettlement site), I conducted multi-sited fieldwork in a variety of provisional Shan dwellings and explored the flows of a place and its connections to other places through people's mobility and situatedness. Interconnectivity of places was particularly crucial to the displaced Shan. The empirical findings allow us to rethink the dominant stereotype on temporary dwellings for people in limbo, such as IDP camps and 'refugee camps' with a de-historicised and de-contextualised image. Auge (1995) describes

these as 'non-place', in an isolated and temporary condition, for refugees or displaced people's survival needs. Since individual restricted areas along the border were not well controlled, Shan followed their own way of life by using tactics to protect themselves and re-obtain some certain degree of freedom of movement, based on their traditional lived territory in the pre-colonial period, even though external geo-political environments have changed.

The border areas played a crucial role in the lives of Shan. Those 'in-between' places turned into their provisional 'homes' in economical, socio-political and religio-cultural dimensions through their translocal folk circulation, institutional efforts and cultural and religious connections. Even though where they called 'home', they often bore witness to their status of displacement, and were also a symbolic marker of their inferior social status and liminal status. Their face-to-face interactions, information-sharing and embodied practices have been extending the Shan ethnoscape and fostering wide social ties to fill the gap in displacement from their homeland. Accordingly, those provisional locales of Shan have been woven together as symbolic and affective parts of a wide range of Shan trans-spatially connected sites. They constitute a wider 'home territory' to restore the rupture and bridge the gap between their current temporary homes and past homelands, as well as creating a (comparative) safety net for displaced Shan.

The 'home territory' was based on 'human-orientated' *lived territory* spanning national borders, and its use has shown the significant roles of *mobility* in (re)constructing 'homelands'. Obviously, in this research mobility was not simply a survival tactic, but also a way to secure access to sustainable livelihoods (e.g. access to land, rights, jobs, services and resources). Therefore, home-making is a journey as well as a process of negotiating lived spaces. It further transforms the local settlement patterns which co-exist with societal others, involving some crucial factors which make a place 'home': physical (e.g. place and origin), functional (social, cultural, economic and secure dimensions), emotional and personal (e.g. familial and social ties, networks). It cannot be ignored that 'home' of displaced Shan has been transferred, their affiliations to home-places changed and their 'homelands' re-territorialised over time. The 'in-

between' places have been re-constructed as a 'future homeland' for next generations, even though they have an ambiguous status. While being aware of the existing mechanisms of displaced Shan's home-making in their every day lives, this research can further help examine repatriation policies for refugees and displaced people, so that different stakeholders are able to find a durable solution.

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