Alternative Higher Education in Kachinland under the Shadow of Hierarchy

e.c. (anonymous)
Myanmar

Abstract

What do we mean when we say that a school is independent? This article, through a case study of non-state higher education providers in Kachinland, Northern Myanmar, looks at the ways in which these schools negotiate their place within both communities, states and economies. It is found that these alternative higher education (AHE) institutions cannot be reduced to any one logic of education or development and as such may be thought of as assemblages of multiple logics. This article thus contributes to the literature on alternative higher education institutions that are formed in opposition to the norms of the state and the ways they negotiate their position within networks of power and political contexts.

Keywords: *Governance, Education, Credentialism, Ethnicity*

Introduction

There is a growing need to understand social welfare as not merely the outcome of political settlements crystalised at the domain of the state but as the aggregate outcome of a variety of institutions (Wood and Gough 2006). Non-state welfare providers do not simply act as last resorts for individuals that the state has failed, but are also institutions that are serving and building their own legitimacy within communities. Within the academic literature, an over-reliance on state-based models of welfare and service provision has led to a profound ignorance of actually existing 'indigenous welfare phenomena' (Midgely 2023).

Nevertheless, while accounts of endogenous power are undoubtedly tempting, not least on a romantic level that sees marginalised communities fighting back against colonising powers, there is a need for caution. Social forms cannot be grasped as essential entities outside the relations which construct them (Campbell 2019) and may be better rendered as 'assemblages': 'multiple determinations that are not reducible to a single logic' (Collier and Ong 2005, p.12). This seems ever the more true in the contemporary world, where norms or practice relating to institutional welfare permeate at all scales, both domestic and international (Wood and Gough 2006). This article thus attempts to forge a middle path that acknowledges both the way that new non-state institutions are serving communities and their position in more complex webs of power relating to the state. The argument made here is that non-state institutions are more than simply 'filling in the gaps' where the state has failed, but are valuable sites of education, cultural reproduction and may be essential to future development. While there would be few who would disagree, at least ostensibly with such a statement, the previous round of educational development in Myanmar in the 2010s was largely centred on building capacity for state institutions. This article thus contributes to a literature that makes valid and valuable the institutions outside the state for future development discussions.

This article's primary data is based on two sets of interviews with managers of alternative higher education (AHE) in the Kachinland region of Myanmar, institutions run by civil society groups, not under direct control of either the state or the regional para-state regime. While in many respects AHE resembles private education colleges, there is also a strong sense of social and cultural reproduction embodied within curricula and institutional practice. Thus, alternative stands not only for the institutional position vis-à-vis the state, but the ways in which new forms of educational practice manifest.

In 2021, I conduced formal interviews with managers of two Kachinland AHE institutions. The responses to those interviews form the bulk of my research output below. For the purposes of security, I have removed all names or specific reference to school curricula. The article connects and compares social theory to the practices and norms of the two AHE institutions. First, I provide a brief overview of the current state of education in Kachinland. Following, this I look at how AHE institutions in Kachinland relate to the state and how they relate to the institutions of the state, in terms of institutional position, competing value and learning practices. Thirdly, I look at the ways that AHE relates to the economy, exploring the wider context of economic shifts in Myanmar and Kachinland and how these institutions engage with this sphere. This is followed by a discussion on how the multiple logics at play shape educational strategies in relation to the market.

Kachinland

Myanmar's state higher education system is one of the most centralised in the world, with central government bodies making most executive decisions and individual universities having little autonomy in the content of their courses or staff hiring decisions (Nhkum 2020). While a period of reform in the 2010s brought new opportunities and an alleged political will for change, moves to make universities more autonomous were sluggish. Rather than decentralising power, reforms only appeared to shuffle power horizontally within the confines of the state (Zobrist and McCormick 2017). Outside the state system, however, 'para-state' regimes have developed their own systems of governance. Within these contexts the Myanmar state is often perceived as a 'predatory' and antagonistic institution (South 2018).

Kachinland is a region primarily located in Northern Myanmar and denotes a cultural geography associated with the Kachin people (Viirand 2015, p.43), an

ethnic group associated with Northern Myanmar and parts of Southern China and East India. Consisting of 6 sub-ethnic groups: Lashi (Lachik), Rawang, Jinghpaw, Lisu, Azi (Zaiwa), and Maru (Lawngwaw). The term is distinct from Kachin State, the officially designated administrative region of the Myanmar central government, in that geographically and politically it encompasses a wider scope, including parts of Northern Shan State as well as areas under KIO governance.

In Kachinland, recent estimates are 1,226 primary, 129 Middle, 107 High schools in Kachin State run by the Myanma Ministry of Education (MOE) (Central Statistical Organisation 2020) as well as the University of Myitkyina. However, the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) also have significant territory and state-like abilities, including an army, to uphold legitimate violence, taxes, and social services, meaning that Kachinland as a whole can be seen as operating under a realm of hybrid governance (South 2018). The KIO has somewhere between 162 and 200 primary and middle schools, with 1,200 teachers and 50 administrative staff (Speers Mears et al 2016. p.30; Lwin, 2019, p.277). Adding to the mix, there are also a number of community schools (known as Myusha Jawng) which are developing their own curricula (Speers Mears at al 2016). Furthermore, Baptist and Catholic religious based institutions have significant amounts of influence and the ability to fund community and educational projects (Viirand 2015, p.78). At the tertiary level alternative higher education consists of KIO's Mai Ja Yang College as well as a range of private colleges nominally independent from either the State or KIO. For the purposes of this article, I classify these independent colleges as belonging to a category of alternative higher education (AHE) in Kachinland.

State Relations

Institutions are not abstract containers but emerge and operate in specific time and space (Thelen 1999) and thus institutional policies are shaped by 'norms and legacies' (Opielka 2008, p.93). By focusing on institutions as they exist in different contexts, we can better assess how they are situated in idiosyncratic cultural forms. Within this article, 'culture' refers to both the disposition and the practices that structure and are structured by social life (Bourdieu cited in Smith 2020). In this sense, institutions are both the conduits for representation of individual and group preferences, (Immergut and Anderson 2008, p.348) and also the places where culture itself is generated and made tangible. Educational institutions serve a dual role, emerging from "a state of nature" (education as function) while simultaneously being 'socially embedded' (education as institutional representation) (Zysman 1994). For the AHE institutions, the content of their curricula corresponded to this dual role of function and representation.

While the AHE schools of Kachinland are nominally independent from the State's education system, independence is a complex subject to unpack. In the following section I lead with a discussion on the complex nature of the welfare mix and how the state has assumed a leading role within it, especially in education.

Welfare theory, especially from Western cultures, has often privileged the state as the primary provider of welfare. Wood and Gough (2006), in an attempt to go beyond the state-centric model, expand categories of welfare beyond the 'welfare state' to include 'security regimes' that describe the provision of welfare as a complex matrix of institutions from the state, market, civil society and household. The (in)security regimes framework calls for identification and analysis of institutions and their relationships within a 'universe' of scales

(Wood 2004, p.53) and thus is better placed to see how welfare is not necessarily congruent with nation-state borders, with provision coming from a variety of sources both domestically and supra-national (Bevan 2004, p109). Key aims of this article include understanding the way that different providers of higher education in Kachinland relate to each other and, given the permeability of norms and morality between institutions in a regimes framework (Wood and Gough 2006; Gough 2013), the way in which institutional practice is influenced by other nodes in the network.

Welfare can be understood as the aggregate output of an institutional ensemble and the differential power within that network. Even when ensembles are not wholly dominated by nominal state institutions, States usually assume a 'first among equals' role within networks of governance (Jessop 2016, p.185). While they may not have direct governing powers on the whole network, they can still cast a 'shadow of hierarchy' that continues to shape organizational norms from a distance (Mayntz & Scharpf quoted in Börzel and Risse 2010).

Such a dynamic can be seen in the context of education in Myanmar with the Myanmar government exerting a gravitational pull on schools that are nominally outside its command. This is evident, for example, at the end of secondary education with students needing to matriculate if they wish to continue on to university or tertiary education. In Kachinland, where there is a parallel secondary education system run by the KIO, this process can be complex. The friction between the MOE and the KIO education systems is tangible at the level of higher education and the antagonisms between the differing education systems are often a proxy for the intensity of the ongoing civil war between Myanmar and the KIO (South and Lall 2016).
In educational sociology, the credentialist school of thought argues that the instrumental value of schooling comes from the social value of being a

graduate. Graduation credentials are utilised as strategic tools to restrict and enclose certain jobs (Tholen 2017) and education is thus a 'ritual system' that initiates individuals to certain roles within society based on the rights that graduation certificates afford them (Meyer 1977), while pedagogy and classroom content are thus secondary to the credentials earned by simply attending and graduating (Collins 2019, p.254).

In the context of parallel education systems, credentialism enables centres of power to project their power at a distance, exerting a normative pull on 'autonomous' education systems. Since the resumption of hot war in 2011, the previous arrangement that allowed KIO high school students to sit government exams that allowed them to transfer from rural to urban schools has effectively been broken (South and Lall 2016a). At the university level, KIO graduates are likewise unable to access the central MoE universities. In response, the KIO-ED has attempted to forge links with institutions in India and China as well as setting up its own Mai Ja Yang National College as an alternative (Fishbein 2019; Jangma 2020).

The AHE institutions I researched accepted students from both the KIO and MoE systems. In previous years, owing to the valuable credentials of state-based (i.e. Ministry of Education) education, many students attending one AHE institution would combine their study with attendance at the local State University. According to one interviewee, this meant they would get the best of both worlds: credentials from the State University would be recognised in the national labour market, while the college would provide them with more refined critical thinking skills. The other AHE institution I researched tried to discourage such an approach and preferred their students to study solely with them.

The coup d'etat of February 2021, which saw the military once again take power in Myanmar, has in many respects strengthened the social capital of AHE, as communities seek alternatives and boycott central government institutions. It was noted to me that since the coup, the state-based credentialism of the MoE universities had all but collapsed in Kachinland and for many in the community, attending state universities was to be seen as an essentially traitorous move.

Even prior to the coup, both institutions were confident in their ability to build a parallel system of social recognition to the state. For both institutions almost all of their recent graduates were in employment in local NGOS, businesses and CSOs. Through dialogue and networking the schools had developed positive reputations among employers in the local and sometimes national community. For one school this had been a distinct strategy from the start, having recognised that their conscious decision to be an alternative required more than simply a new pedagogy but also creating new means of social capital for their graduates to gain access to labour markets. Furthermore, there were also connections being made with foreign universities, with the intention of future exchanges and co-operation.

The aim of AHEs was not simply to be independent, but to offer a new way of learning. Within AHE institutions in Kachinland, from both staff and students there was a clear consensus that the State education system is of low pedagogical quality (see also Khaing Phyu Htut et al., 2022) and that a major aim of the AHE schools was to provide a higher quality education. 'Critical thinking' was a key pedagogical aim in the institutions and there was a clear desire that education be something more than the rote learning associated with MoE institutions. However, one of the school managers noted that the State Universities at least provided meaningful technical knowledge to some students

(e.g. medical students) and it was the humanities and social sciences that was clearly lacking. In this sense, it was not generally the intention of the alternative schools to fully replace the State universities, at least at this stage, but there was a clear belief they could provide a better humanities/social studies curriculum and a more reflective pedagogy that would increase student's capacity in a way that the MoE could not.

This distinction drawn between the AHE schools and State higher education was not simply about the technical side of pedagogy, but in many cases came with a distinct ethnic narrative. When asked about the relationship of their school to the Myanmar State, one of the school managers began their answer with reference to 19th century discrimination against the Kachin from the Burmese monarchy. They then spoke of 20th century Burmese textbooks that labelled the Kachin as 'savages' and the growing creep of centralisation as Kachin community schools were nationalised and ethnic language teaching was prohibited. For this manager, the school represented part of a longer struggle for ethnic autonomy. This history of oppression continued into 21st century and managers from both schools expressed that they had had tentative hopes that the NLD government (2015-2021) would have enabled some form of reconciliation. Yet this ultimately ended with frustration as the NLD did not reverse the centralisation of previous military juntas, but seemed to increase it. It was here that strong ideals of ethnic autonomy and the right for Kachins to manage themselves in education were expressed. The interviewee who had spoken of Kachin history noted that they were keen for the curricula to promote 'indigenous notions of humanity' as well as local customs of governance such as local restorative justice systems that would never be taught in MoE schools. In this way, these alternative higher education institutions aimed to continue what Mart Viirand has identified as 'practice as a form of critique' in Kachin education (2015, p.272).

The relationship to external powers did not only involve the Myanmar state. The social studies curricula that the AHE schools used was influenced fairly substantially by foreign and mostly but not all, Western sources. English, seen as a gateway both to knowledge and work opportunities, was a key medium of instruction in the schools and a lot of the curricula, though not all, was from Anglophone sources. However, the managers that I interviewed stressed that this influence was indirect, and that there was a large amount of agency in the decision over the choice of curricula as well as the way it was adapted to suit the local context.

To summarise, while AHE institutions do not generally negotiate with the State directly, they must still interact with it, for it exists within the same political economy, even if its very existence is an implicit challenge to the State's market share.

AHE and the Economy

While the previous sections looked at how the alternative schools related to the state and other institutions, this section explores the relationship of these schools to the economic field. Maintaining the historical institutional perspective described above, this section sees the economic sphere as a dynamic and highly contingent.

When it comes to ideologies of education, 'human capital' is one that has come to dominate much discussion on education. Within this paradigm, the idea of knowledge and education as an investment in the self (Becker 1993) and so entry into higher education becomes a calculation based on expectation of higher earnings or opportunities and success becomes measured according to assets. Within this ideology institutes of higher education are presumed to take a responsibility for building human capital among certain populations, with the

theory of change being that the fruits of growth will eventually 'trickle down' to the most marginalised (see Naidoo 2011 for a critical overview). The difference between human capital and credentialism is that human capital still posits that there is a valuable substance to education and that the gains accrued by those with more education are not ritualistic, but the result of having higher capacities. Therefore, human capital theory also suggests that increased education brings a social benefit for countries (World Bank 2000; Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 2018) including overall economy output as well as innovation (Lundvall 2007; Boccanfuso et al. 2013, p.57), skills, and knowledge transfer (Hanushek and Wößmann 2007, p.20). Countries in the global south are encouraged, through the conditionalities of international development institutions to shift education from public needs to a market model that 'transform[s] human resources to match the labour market' (Rhoads et al. 2015, p.206-7; Ramrathan 2016)

Thus, the global division of labour within a system of variegated capitalism (Peck and Theodore 2007), implies a global division of education to service it. At the planetary level, this results in complex hegemonies countries at the 'periphery' are encouraged by normative frameworks developed by institutions such as the World Bank or IMF to focus their education systems towards practical and instrumental subjects rather than theoretical concerns, which are left to the 'core' northern countries (Mazrui 2004, Kamola 2013).

In practical terms of curriculum this means a reduction in humanities based subjects and an increase in 'vocational' subjects such as science, management, and entrepreneurial skills (Banya 2001; Luke 2010; Olukoshi and Zeleza cited in Kamola 2013, p.52)

In Myanmar the 2010ss played host to time, international consultants and INGOS that encouraged the MoE to align universities with ‘global’ and regional standards and an increased use of the rhetoric of ‘human capital’ in service of the state (Howson and Lall 2020), “‘channelling education, above all else, towards economic development”’ while marginalizing discourses that see education as a catalyst for social change (Heslop 2019, p.86). This process went hand in hand with an INGO-led development discourse that prioritised the Myanmar state and often excluded minority ethnic institutions in the creation of a ‘capitalist peace’ (Minn Tent Bo 2022).

While certain educational communities in Kachinland are orientating away from the State, the relationship to the field of economy is much more complex. The ceasefire period of 1994-2011 may have seen a reduction in hostilities between the KIO and the Tatmadaw, but in general has been characterised not as one of peace but one in which Kachin State found itself ‘invaded’ by business interests from China and Myanmar, with gold, jade, timber and hydropower among the resources exploited (Tsa Ji 2012). Many rural villagers, having sold their land to corporate developers, have either moved to limited amounts of wage labour or migrated in search of jobs or remain in more precarious existences (La Ring 2018). This damage to livelihoods through dispossession, accumulation and extraction have been seen as existential threats by Kachin peoples (Kiik 2016, p.222). Key to the process of ‘ceasefire capitalism’ is the way it has territorialised land as an object of capital and thus inscribed the authority of the State on it (Woods 2011). This territorialisation of the land is in contrast to the way rural communities in Myanmar have developed customary codes of local law around vital areas of land, such as Dum Bung Hka in Kachinland, that curate the ecological balance and maintain the resource for future generations (ECDF 2016 p.16). In Northern Kachin State in 2004, the regulations of the Hugawng Wildlife Sanctuary, a joint project between the central government

and US based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) for tiger conservation, prevented villagers from their livelihood of rice cultivation. Two years later, 200,000 acres, most of which was inside the 'reserve' was given to the Yuzana company for tapioca and sugar cane plantations (ECDF 2016, p.9). The ceasefire period also coincided with the rise of a 'black economy' of gambling, drugs and human trafficking (Nhkum Bu Lu, 2016). A heroin epidemic began and in 2009, it was reported that a majority of students at the State University of Myitkyina (run by the Myanma MOE) were heroin users, which many believed was a deliberate policy of the government to reduce traditional anti-government student activism (Kachin News Group 2009).

While the 2010s were characterised by many as a transition period towards liberal parliamentary democracy and an opening up of Myanmar to western economies, from the perspective of those in Northern Kachin State/Kachinland, the decade was characterised by the breakdown of a ceasefire between the KIO and the Military Tatmadaw and the seeming indifference or even active complicity of the civilian government to the suffering the war brought (Pangmu Shayi 2012; Naw 2019). This included the displacement of around 94,000 people from their homes who currently reside in IDP camps in Kachin State (OSHA 2021) with much of the once-occupied land being quickly appropriated for banana plantations for Chinese export companies (Htun Khaing 2018). The military coup of 2021 further antagonised the KIO who have aligned themselves, in some cases, with civilian People's Defence Forces (Irrawaddy 2021).

In the *longue durée* of global capitalism, we might see parallels with what is happening in Myanmar to 19th century Europe where industrialisation combined with agricultural reforms led to a 'draining of men from the surface of the land' resulting in a surplus of urban workers (Marx 1976[1867], p.848).

Yet Myanmar, in its own era of "explicit class consolidation" between an increasingly rich elite and an aspirational working class who hope that the fruits of 'development' will trickle down to them, has not seen enough new urban jobs. Thus the newly proletarianised have not been absorbed into the labour market (Prasse-Freeman and Phyo Latt 2018). In contrast to the classical stageist accounts of development that see development as a pathway (e.g. Rostow 1956) accounts of modern global capitalism posit that workers in the global South who go through the process of dispossession will never enter the formal labour market and instead enter a shadow informal economy destined to 'urbanization without growth' (Davis 2006; Sanyal, 2007). However, the informal economy is not always a subsistence zone outside of capital. Nowhere in Kachinland is this more apparent that the vast empire of jade mining, attended to by estimates of 400,000 yemase (Min Zar Ni Lin et al 2019). Yemase are itinerant jade miners, many of whom are migrants from other parts of Myanmar, who scavenge industrial mining waste in punishing conditions at constant risk of death due to landslides (Global Witness 2015; Fishbein and Aung Myat Lamung, 2020). Prasse-Freeman identifies this as a zone of necroeconomics, a labour arrangement where 'production is either indifferent to death, even functions more efficiently with a manageable amount of death, or cannot seemingly avoid the production of death' (2021, p.18). What is the role of education in this society? Does education service this necroeconomy of war, extraction and dispossession or does it offer an alternative?

Neither school had the resources to offer anything close to universal coverage when it came to higher education. Critically, we could posit that these schools, by concentrating, as mainstream higher education does, on a small strata of students, served only to rescue a few from the necroeconomy. Despite being able to place graduates at local schools and NGOS, there was still a growing

recognition that supply of meaningful and sought after jobs was not enough to match demand.

Therefore, while both schools had begun as humanities-based institutions, in recent years they had begun to offer specific programmes geared towards business or entrepreneurial skills. These programs were seen to be successful in placing students who had completed them into positions in local businesses. One school manager I interviewed saw this as an incipient developmentalist strategy that would eventually lead to a Kachinland economy that was more equipped to compete in the national and global stages. From one perspective this could be interpreted as an adoption of educational trends towards a more liberal agenda that prioritises entrepreneurial skills as a means of shifting responsibility onto individuals rather than social institutions (see Pellowski Wiger et al, 2012). On the other hand, entrepreneurialism can take on many forms, from locally to globally orientated, and within formal and informal economies (Baxter et al 2014). Informal economies are places that can hinder growth but also hold the potential for economic action embedded in social relationships (Carmen, 1996).

From the humanities side, graduating students were more likely to seek work in local NGOs and perhaps even international ones or even go onto further study in another country. One interviewee did note that a key objective was not just to supply the local job market but to actively shape it, being an active part of developing new industries and jobs. With regards to the issue of rural/urban divides in relation to the economy, it was noted that the lack of jobs in rural areas was indeed a problematic issue and that students who came from those areas didn’t always want to go back to those communities. Networks were being put into place that encouraged rural areas to act as satellites to the colleges,

gaining technical expertise in order to grow their own further education systems.

Discussion

This article has looked at alternative higher education in Kachinland through the lens of welfare institutions, culture, and economy and found that alternative higher education exists within a complex network of competing values and power centres.

To thrive, these institutions must do more than simply offer communities a better education, but must also be recognised as doing so by the wider community so as to offset the credentialism of the state. It was clear that schools took a mostly adversarial stance towards the formal arms of the State (e.g. the MoE), and that modern political situation had shifted this stance even further. Nevertheless, the relation to both the state and the economy were complex and not ones that institutions could easily extricate themselves from, if they even wanted to. Thus, the concept of assemblage, an 'unstable constellation shaped by interacting global forms and situated political regimes' (Ong 2007, p.5), that perhaps best describes their relation to the economy and the logic of capitalist development. Rather than seeing these institutions as followers or agents of any one logic of development and education, we must perceive the ways that practice must navigate multiple overlapping and often contradictory logics. Marxist-feminist scholars have identified the ways in which the household has a 'contradictory existence' in both serving capital and in livelihood reproduction (Mohandesi and Teitelman 2017; the same may be true of these schools. Existing within complex webs of power, these schools must negotiate huge disparities of power between themselves and the Myanmar State as well as with capitalist entities both locally and internationally that are dispossessing the

communities the schools are embedded in. Nevertheless, power never projects into empty space. For Mandy Sadan (2013), the metaphor of the fractal, a shape that whose complexity does not alter when we change the scale, offers us a rich worldview that sees those societies on the 'periphery' are as complex as the 'centre'. While this may seem obvious, it provides a much-needed adjoiner to theories that over-emphasise hegemonic power as an all-consuming replication device.

Human capital ideologies of education could be seen to offer an alternative accumulation strategy to the necroeconomy in that they promote the irreplaceable value of educated labour over the disposable bodies of accumulation. However with a local labour market in which formal employment opportunities are scarce, particularly at a level that university graduates would expect, there is the danger that education credentials lose their value. After all, what is the use of a credential if there is no way to use it?

While there are still opportunities for NGO and civil society work for graduates and a few scholarships to study abroad, courses in entrepreneurialism have become a way for alternative schools to offer a different pathway to students. However, even this may still be individual trajectories of a localised and limited managerial elite (cf. Ong 1987, p.6) and as such, represent education as a function of and for division of labour rather than the goals of community representation. If the agents of human capital see it only in terms of what the market demands, then the risk is that education focuses too heavily on employability and work skills to the neglect of the social functions (Gyamera and Burke 2017).

Yet while the ideology/logic of human capital was certainly present in the schools I researched, there was also a strong sense of community embeddedness

which saw that the ‘capital’ the schools produced was more than simply economic gain for individual students. Instead, the extra-economic value of Kachin culture, such as language, practices and knowledge, was affirmed and programs of study firmly incorporated these values alongside more market-focused skills.

Education, and by implication knowledge, is treated as a commodity within capitalism it cannot be reducible to this (Noble 2002). While certainly those at the alternative schools had developmentalist aspirations in providing a skilled workforce of workers and entrepreneurs, the achievement of these goals could only be valid if they reproduced Kachin culture as part of this process. To the educators within the Kachinland alternative colleges, these practices are not optional parts of education, but necessary components of reproducing the practice of being Kachin (or the other ethnicities that attend the schools).

Conclusion

This article contributes to the ways we understand higher education institutions, particularly those outside of direct state mandates. By seeing these institutions as complex assemblages within equally complex networks of power, we can appreciate the way in which higher education managers must navigate and negotiate a space for social reproduction and education growth.

The current Myanma State’s inability to serve anything but a ‘narrow social constituency’ (Jones 2014, p.167) had given AHE schools the role of administering the gap in the provision. Nevertheless, this is more than simply residual welfare and there is clearly a positive ethics at play as conditions for social and institutional norms emanating from outside the state are stronger in areas of limited or contested sovereignty (Börzel and Risse 2010). The development agenda of the previous decade had, however, chosen to largely

ignore such institutions, and instead, by focusing on the state as the ultimate arbiter, had, at times, reduced such alternative institutions to outliers, rather than valid expressions of community development. While the schools make up for what the State universities lack, they are also future-orientated, seeing themselves as part of a living community that aspires towards pedagogical autonomy and social and economic development. Summing up the twofold character of education, succinctly, one of my interviewees noted that the goal of their school was both ‘liberation from ignorance and liberation from oppression’.

References

Banya, K. (2001) Are private universities the solution to the higher education crisis in sub-Saharan Africa? *Higher Education Policy*. Vol 14. P.161-174.

Baxter, A., Chapman, D.W., DeJaeghere, J., Pekol, A.R., Weiss, T. (2014) "Youth Entrepreneurship Education and Training for Poverty Alleviation: A Review of International Literature and Local Experiences" In International Educational Innovation and Public Sector Entrepreneurship. Published online. p33-58.

Becker, G. (1993) *Human Capital. Third Edition*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Bevan, P. (2004) Conceptualising in/security Regimes. In Gough, I. & Wood, G. with Barrientos, A., Bevan, P., Davis, P., & Room, G. (eds). *Insecurity and welfare regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America: Social policy in development contexts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boccanfuso, D., Savard, L. Elvire Savy, B. (2013) Human Capital and Growth: New Evidences from African Data. *International Economic Journal*. Vol (27) 1. p.55-77.

Börzel, T.A., Risse, T. (2010) Governance without a state: Can it work? *Regulation & Governance*. Vol 4. P.113–134.

Campbell, S. (2019) Rendering Assemblage Dialectical. *Anthropological Theory*. p.1-20.

Carmen, R. (1996) *Autonomous Development. Humanising the Landscape.* Zed Books

Central Statistical Organisation (2020) *Schools, Teachers and Students by Level*. Available from http://mmsis.gov.mm/statHtml/statHtml.do

Collier, S.J. and Ong, A. (2005) Global Assemblages, Anthropological problems. In Ong, A. and Collier, S (eds) *Global Assemblages. Technology, Politics and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. Oxford. Blackwell.

Collins, R. (2019) *The Credential Society. An Historical Sociology of Education and Stratification. Legacy Edition*. New York. Columbia University Press.

Davis, M. (2006) *Planet of the Slums*. London. Verso.

Ethnic Community Development Forum (ECDF) (2016) *Our Customary Lands. Community-Based Sustainable Natural Resource Management in Burma*. Online.

Fishbein, E. (2019) Students in Kachin-controlled territory face education barriers. *Frontier*. Available at https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/students-in-kachin-controlled-territory-face-education-barriers/.

Fishbein, E. Aung Myat Lamung (2020) Kachin State's yemase jade miners and dealers demand a more equitable industry. Frontier. Available at https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/kachin-states-yemase-jade-miners-and-dealers-demand-a-more-equitable-industry/

Global Witness (2015) Jade: Myanmar's "Big State Secret".

Gough, I (2013) Social policy regimes in the developing world. in Kennett, P. (ed) *Handbook of Comparative Social Policy* (2nd Edition). Online. Edward Elgar.

Gyamera, G. O., Burke, P.J. (2017) Neoliberalism and Curriculum in Higher education: a post-colonial analysis. Teaching in Higher Education. 23 (2) 1-18)

Hanushek, E., Wößmann, L. (2007) The Role of Education Quality in Economic Growth. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4122*. World Bank.

Heslop, L. (2019) *Encountering Internationalisation: Higher Education and Social Justice in Myanmar. Doctoral Thesis*. Brighton. University of Sussex.

Howson, C. Lall, M. (2020) Higher education reform in Myanmar: neoliberalism versus an inclusive developmental agenda. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. Vol 18 (2) p.109-124.

Htun Khaing (2018) Kachin IDPs fear land grabs in the villages they once called home. Frontier. https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/kachin-idps-fear-land-grabs-in-the-villages-they-once-called-home/

Immergut, E., Anderson, K. (2008) Historical Institutionalism and West European Politics. *West European Politics*. Vol 31 (1-2). p.345-369.

Irrawaddy (2021) Myanmar Junta Forces and KIA in Fresh Fighting in Northern Myanmar. *The Irrawaddy*. Available at https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-forces-and-kia-in-fresh-fighting-in-northern-myanmar.html

Jangma, E. (2020) Myanmar's Kachin Take Higher Education Into Their Own Hands Amid Conflict. *Radio Free Asia*. Available at https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/kachin-education-03232020191944.html

Jessop, B. (2016) *The State: Past Present Future*. Polity. Cambridge.

Jones (2014) The Political Economy of Myanmar's Transition. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. Vol 44(1), p.144-170.

Kachin News Group (2009) Authorities feed on heroin epidemic in Hpakant. *Kachin News.* Chaing Mai. Available at: http://burmacampaign.org.uk/media/KachinHeroinEpidemic.pdf.

Kamola, I. (2013) Why Global? Diagnosing the Globalization Literature Within a Political Economy of Higher Education. *International Political Sociology*. Vol 7. P.41-58.

Khaing Phyu Htut, Lall, M., Howson, C, K. (2022) Caught between COVID-19, Coup and Conflict—What Future for Myanmar Higher Education Reforms? *Education Sciences*. Vol 12 (67).

Kiik, L. (2016) Conspiracy, God's Plan and National Emergency. In Sadan, M. (ed) *War and Peace in the Borderlands of Myanmar*. Denmark. NIAS Press.

La Ring. (2018) Accumulation by Dispossession and Local Livelihood Insecurity. A Case Study of Ruby Mining in Mogok, Myanmar. Consortium of Development Studies in Southeast Asia.

Luke, A. (2010) Educating the Other: Standpoint and Theory in the 'Internationalization' of Higher Education. in Unterhalter, E. Carpentier, V. (eds) *Global Inequalities and Higher Education. Whose Interests are we Serving?* Houndsmills. Palgrave Macmillan

Lundvall, B.- Å. (2007), *Higher education, innovation and economic development*. Paper presented at the World Bank's Regional Bank Conference on Development Economics, Beijing, 16–17 January.

Lwin, T (2019) Global justice, national education and local realities in Myanmar: a civil society perspective. *Asia Pacific Education Review.* p.273-284.

Marx, K. (1976) *Capital Volume 1. [English Translation]*. London. Penguin.

Mazrui, A.M. (2004) *English in Africa after the Cold War*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Meyer, J.W. (1977) The Effects of Education as an Institution. *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 83 (1). p.55-77.

Midgley, J, 2013, Social development and social welfare: Implications for comparative social policy', in P Kennett (ed) A handbook of comparative social policy, Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, pp 182–204

Minn Tent Bo (2022) Why the West's state-building practices in Myanmar are part of the problem. Frontier. https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/why-the-wests-state-building-practices-in-myanmar-are-part-of-the-problem/

Min Zar Ni Lin, Francesco Loiacono, Nan Sandi, Win Min, Marjanneke J. Vijge, Samu Ngwenya (2019) Artisanal Jade Mining in Myanmar. Livelihood Challenges and Opportunities. International Growth Centre.

Mohandesi, S., Teitelman, E. (2017) Without Reserves. In Bhattacharya, T. (ed) *Social Reproduction Theory. Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*. London. Pluto Press.

Naidoo, R. (2011). Rethinking development: higher education and the new imperialism. In R. King, S. Marginson, & R. Naidoo (Eds.), *A Handbook of Globalization and Higher Education* (pp. 40-58). (Elgar Original Reference). Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

Naw, S. (2019) *No time to lose: Burma 2020, the NLD and the Kachin Peace Process*. LSE. Available at https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2019/05/13/no-time-to-lose-burma-2020-the-nld-and-the-kachin-peace-process/

Nkhum Bu Lu (2016) A Woman's Life in War and Peace. In Sadan, M. (ed) *War and Peace in the Borderlands of Myanmar*. Denmark. NIAS Press.

Nhkum La San Awng (2020) Institutionalized Inequalities in Higher Education in Kachin State. Naushawng Development Institute.

Noble, D. F. (2002) Technology and the Commodification of Higher Education. *Monthly Review*. Vol 53 (10). P.26-40.

Ong, A. (1987) *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline*. Factory Women in Malaysia. State University of New York Press.

Ong, A. (2007) Neoliberalism as a Mobile Technology. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. Vol. 32 (1) pp. 3-8.

Opielka, M. (2008) Christian Foundations of the Welfare State: Strong Cultural values in comparative perspective. In Oorschot, W. Opielka, M. Pfau-Effinger, B. (eds) *Culture and Welfare State*. Cheltenham. Edward Elgar.

OSHA (2021) *IDP Sites in Kachin State*. Available from https://reliefweb.int/map/myanmar/myanmar-idp-sites-kachin-state-31-march-2021

Pangmu Shayi (2012) Silence is not all that Golden. *Kachinland News*. September 18th. Available from https://www.kachinlandnews.com/?p=22292

Peck, J., Theodore, N. (2007) Variegated Capitalism. Progress in Human Geography. Vol 31 (6).P.731-772.

Pellowski Wiger, N., Chapman, D., Baxter, B. & DeJaeghere, J. (2012). Training is the solution only if lack of training was the problem: A model of the factors associated with entrepreneurship training, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society, May 2012, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Prasse-Freeman, E., Phyo Latt. (2018) Class and Inequality in Contemporary Myanmar. In Simpson, A., Farrelly, N., Holliday, I. (eds). *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Myanmar*. Online. Routledge.

Prasse-Freeman, E. (2021): Necroeconomics: dispossession, extraction,

and indispensable/expendable laborers in contemporary Myanmar, The Journal of Peasant Studies. p.1-31.

Psacharopoulos, G., Patrinos, H. (2018) *Returns to Investment in Education. A Decennial Review of the Global Literature*. Online. World Bank Group.

Ramrathan, L. (2016) Widening Access Through Higher Education Transformation: A Case Study of University of KwaZulu-Natal. In Shah, M. Bennett, A. Southgate, E. (eds) *Widening Higher Education Participation. A Global Perspective*. Kidlington. Chandos Publishing.

Rhoads, A. R., Torres, C.A., Brewster, A. (2015) Neoliberalism, Globalization, and Latin American Higher Education. In Zajda, J. (ed) Second International Handbook on Globalisation, Education and Policy Research. Netherlands. Springer.

Rostow, W. (1956) The Take-off Into Self-Sustained Growth. *The Economic Journal*. Vol 66 (261). p.25-48.

Sadan, M. (2013) *Being and Becoming Kachin. Histories Beyond the State in the Borderworlds of Burma*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Sanyal, K. (2007) *Rethinking capitalist development. Primitive Accumulation, Governmentality and Post-Colonial Capitalism*. New Delhi. Routledge.

South, A. (2018) "Hybrid Governance" and the Politics of Legitimacy in the Myanmar Peace Process. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. Vol 48(1), p.50-66.

South, A. and Lall, M. (2016a) *Schooling and Conflict: Ethnic Education and Mother Tongue-based Teaching in Myanmar*. Online Asia Foundation.

Smith, M. K. (2020). Pierre Bourdieu on education: Habitus, capital, and field. Reproduction in the practice of education, *the encyclopaedia of pedagogy and informal education* Available at https://infed.org/mobi/pierre-bourdieu-habitus-capital-and-field-exploring-reproduction-in-the-practice-of-education/

Speers Mears, E., Rasmussen, P.E., Liza May Thet Thet Oo, Zaceu Lian. (2016) *Analysis of Education Services in Contested Regions of Myanmar. Myanmar Education Consortium*. Available at https://mecmigration.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/mec-contested-areas-report-july-20151.pdf

Thelen, K. (1999) Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*. Volume 2. 364-404.

Tholen, G. (2017) Symbolic Closure: Towards a Renewed Sociological Perspective on the Relationship between Higher Education, Credentials and the Graduate Labour Market. *Sociology*. Vol. 51 (5). p.1067- 1083.

Tsa Ji (2012) *Lessons from the Kachin "Development" Experience.* Online Kachin Development Networking Group (KDNG).

Viirand, M. (2015) *Ethnography of Schooling, Religion and Ethno-nationalism in the Kachin State, Myanmar: Dreams and Dilemmas of Change*. Social Anthropology PhD School of Social and Political Science. University of Edinburgh

Wood, G. (2004) Informal Security Regimes: Strength of Relationships. In Gough, I. & Wood, G. with Barrientos, A., Bevan, P., Davis, P., & Room, G. (2004) *Insecurity and welfare regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America: Social policy in development contexts.* Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Wood, G. Gough, I. (2006) A Comparative Welfare Regime Approach to Global Social Policy. *World Development*. Vol 34 (10). p.1696-1712.

Woods, K. (2011) Ceasefire capitalism: military–private partnerships, resource concessions and military–state building in the Burma–China borderlands. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. Vol 38 (4). P.747-770.

World Bank (2000) *Higher Education in Developing Countries. Peril and Promise.* Washington D.C. USA. The World Bank.

Zobrist, B., & McCormick, P. (2017). Primary and secondary education in Myanmar. In Lee Hock Guan (Ed.) Education and globalization in Southeast Asia: Issues and challenges (pp. 166– 194). ISEAS Publishing.

Zysman J. (1994). How institutions create historically rooted trajectories of growth. *Ind. Corp. Change.* Vol 3(1) p.243–83.

Author Details:

e.c. works in Myanmar.

For contact details, contact davehilljceps@gmail.com, Co-Editor of this journal