

Making Sense of Mail Order Brides

Study of an Actor Oriented Approach in the case of Mail Order Brides
among a Chinese Community in Singkawang, Indonesia



RDS 80433

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August, 2010

Preface

This research is written as a final part of my study to obtain a Master degree in International Development Studies at Wageningen University, the Netherlands.

In relation to my specialization in Rural Development Sociology (RDS), I have chosen the research subject in the area of social actors in development sociology under the light of an Actor Oriented Approach. This research aims to study the current practices of mail order brides among a Chinese community in Singkawang from the perspective of social actors, on their involvement, interaction among them and how these facts and relationships gives better understanding on the practices from the sociological point of view. This research took place in Singkawang, West Kalimantan that located in one island in Indonesia called Borneo and well known as a Chinatown Indonesia.

This research is under supervision of Professor Leontine Visser who has extensive research experiences in Indonesia. The process of this research, start from the making of the proposal up to the written of the final thesis has been through the discussion with her and have her approval. She also received the final thesis that needs to be discussed with me, approved and marked by her and the second reader.

Wageningen, August 2010
Niken Puspita Rini

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my warm gratitude to Prof. Leontine Visser for her kindness and sincere willingness to be the supervisor of my thesis. In the 1st year study in Wageningen, I had my first discussion with her on my thesis topic, when I took her class of Sociology of Rural Transformation, and she responded well. In her busy and tight schedule, she has been guiding me and providing me with constructive feedback and confidence, until I managed to complete the whole works.

I also thank to all my friends and new friends in Singkawang where I conducted the fieldwork. Friends from Wahana Visi Indonesia - Feiliki, Supriadi, Pak Thomas, Eni and Rini - who offered so much help to give access to my respondents, provided space and connection in their office. To my new friend, Nam Jiu, for his warm welcome and sincere help on linked me to Chinese family in Singkawang and introduced the other side of wonderful Chinese culture.

My earnest appreciation goes to my family, especially my husband - Domdom Sianipar - who truly supports me from a distance with his continuous prayers, and my lovely little daughter - Anya Dominique - for her truest understanding – letting me pursue my study far away from home. Equal gratitude also goes to my parents and sister for their support in prayer.

Finally yet importantly, greatest gratefulness goes to the Owner of my life, the One who makes my dreams come true in His time, my Lord, best friend and my Saviour - the One who carried me throughout the troubled waters – my Jesus Christ.

Abstract

In modern days, slavery-like practice still exists in more various and ingenious forms and known as human trafficking. Mail Order Bride believed as one of the forms that a woman may fall into a human trafficking practice. In Indonesia, this practice widely known occurred among *amoi* or a Chinese girl in Singkawang with Taiwanese man. The practice has been years developed, and assumed as a ticket out of poverty.

With the use of an Actor Oriented Approach as a methodological tool to understand the practice at a micro level, this research attempts to place the issue of mail order brides from the eyes of social actors involved in the practices. Furthermore, how they perceive toward the mail order brides divided under the category of insiders and outsiders. Long history of Chinese's people migrated to Singkawang brought the culture and belief that influencing the emergence of the mail order bride in which many people believed as an ethnic marriage.

Relatively, Chinese Singkawang and Taiwanese are culturally, socially and linguistically similar. The differences are only in terms of poverty, infrastructure and economic development. Socio demographic change in Singkawang has created a market for profit seeking marriage agents. It grows and matures and made more people into the market, then it creates socio networks of individuals that gradually transformed by agents in pursuing profit. Parallel with that the socio demographic change in Singkawang Chinese community together with the knowledge process within *amoi* Singkawang has made the number of incidents steadily decreased.

This research expectantly can give a valuable contribution to a better understanding on providing innate insight of the motivation and socio-economic position of the *amoi*, middlemen and others engaged.

Keywords : human trafficking, mail order bride, actor oriented approach, social actors, insiders and outsiders, Chinese Singkawang.

Table of Content

PREFACE 1

ACKNOWLEDGMENT..... 2

ABSTRACT..... 3

TABLE OF CONTENT 4

CHAPTER I..... 6

RESEARCH BACKGROUND..... 6

 1.1. HUMAN AND CHILDREN TRAFFICKING..... 6

 1.2. WHAT THE RESEARCH IS ABOUT..... 7

 1.3. ORGANIZATION OF THESIS..... 7

CHAPTER II..... 9

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUE, CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATION 9

 2.1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS 9

 2.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 9

 2.3. THE USE OF AN ACTOR ORIENTED APPROACH 10

 2.3.1. *History of AOA* 10

 2.3.2. *An Actor Oriented Approach*..... 11

 2.3.3. *Social Actors*..... 11

 2.3.4. *Human Agency, Knowledge and Power*..... 12

 2.3.5. *Advantage and disadvantage of Actor Oriented Approach* 14

 2.3.6. *Actor Oriented Scheme* 15

 2.4. INSIDER AND OUTSIDER 16

 2.5. UNIT OF ANALYSIS 17

 2.6. METHODOLOGICAL INSTRUMENTS 17

 2.7. DATA ANALYSIS 17

 2.8. TIME FRAME 17

 2.9. INFORMANTS 18

 2.10. INFORMATION GATHERING STRATEGIES 18

 2.11. SOURCES OF INFORMATION 18

 2.12. SITES OF THE STUDY 19

 2.13. CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATION 19

CHAPTER III..... 20

WELCOME TO SINGKAWANG 20

 3.1. CITY OF SINGKAWANG..... 20

 3.2. CHINESE SINGKAWANG..... 21

 3.2.1. *History of Chinese people in Singkawang* 21

 3.2.2. *Chinese Culture* 24

CHAPTER IV 26

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MAIL ORDER BRIDES PHENOMENA 26

 4.1. HUMAN TRAFFICKING AS MODERN SLAVERY..... 26

 4.2. INDONESIA AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING 31

 4.3. HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN WEST KALIMANTAN 34

 4.4. MAIL ORDER BRIDES..... 35

<i>The Women</i>	39
<i>The Men</i>	39
<i>Fraud and Abuse</i>	39
CHAPTER V	40
SINGKAWANG MAIL ORDER BRIDES	40
5.1. LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES OF OUTSIDERS	40
5.2. LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES OF INSIDERS	43
<i>Case of Sisi</i>	43
5.2.1. Mail Order Brides Process	48
<i>Case of Ami</i>	50
5.2.2. <i>Amoi</i> and driven factors.....	53
5.2.3. Potential husband and drag factors.....	58
<i>Case of Afung</i>	59
5.2.4. Administration papers and Role of Government Officials	60
5.2.5. Financial advantages.....	64
5.2.6. Agent and Middleman	65
5.2.7. The Network of Mail Order Brides Singkawang.....	69
CHAPTER VI	70
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	70
6.1. LOOKING BACK TO THE ANCESTOR AND LONG HISTORY OF DISCRIMINATION.....	70
6.2. SOCIAL VALUES – GENDER, POVERTY AND LIVELIHOOD.....	72
6.3 LONG TIME MIGRATION NETWORK WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	73
6.4. LEGAL VS. ILLEGAL.....	75
6.5. MODERNITY, BODIES, GLOBALIZATION AND MAIL ORDER BRIDES	77
6.6. STIGMATIZATION OF THE RETURNED GIRL - EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION	79
6.7. COMMODIFICATION OF SINGKAWANG AMOI.....	79
6.8 CONTESTING DISCOURSES – OUTSIDER VERSUS INSIDER.....	81
6.9. CONCLUSION	82
RERERENCES	84
APPENDIX I. SINGKAWANG TOWN MAP	94
APPENDIX II. LIST OF QUESTION	95
APPENDIX III. LIST OF RESPONDENTS	97

CHAPTER I

Research Background

1.1. Human and Children Trafficking

In 21st centuries, the term of trafficking has been worldwide known and happens to be a ghastly word. In the past, people recognize this practice as slavery, where people being sold and brought into physical pleasure or labor. Indeed, this practice is very ancient. Nowadays, this slavery-like practice still exists in other various and ingenious forms acknowledge as human trafficking. Hence, it generally regarded as modern day slavery. Various literatures refer the practice as one of the greatest challenges of our time (Danailova and Belser , 2006).

United States Trafficking in Persons Report in June 2009 stated that trafficking is a multi-dimensional issue and has a broad global devastated impact. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2009) in the report underlined that *"...human trafficking is modern slavery, worldwide crime that brings suffering not only to those who are trafficked but also the families they leave behind."* Statistics recorded that millions of people around the world still suffer in silence in slave-like situations of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation from which they cannot free themselves (US Trafficking in Persons Report, 2009).

Report from UNODC in the same year reported the number of human trafficking case is growing rapidly, and mostly involved women and children as the most vulnerable victim. In worldwide, almost 20% of the children are very vulnerable to trafficking. In some places children are the majority, and it can add up to 100%. In South Asia alone, it is estimated that some 150,000 persons are trafficked every year, while in US every year nearly 300,000 children are at risk to trafficking but an estimate of 500,000 incidents is not reported, which has made US the number one destination for child trafficking in the world (Muhammad, 2009).

Wright (2003) argues that human trafficking is an effort to fulfill demand of cheap workers conducted by a system of the syndicate. Thus, it is not easy to find out the human trafficking activities because the problems are very complicated, and it is more likely to be conducted by a system of syndicates, nationally and internationally (Latifa and Noveria, undated). There are little attentions from the government as well, as they are part in the business that makes fighting it all the more difficult (Salem, 2008).

Trafficking of women and children takes many forms. Just as the international definitions of trafficking recognize a boarder spectrum of abuses, so does Indonesia, as Warren puts it *"...there is a growing recognition that many previously accepted forms of exploitative labor, child labor, recruitment practices into the sex industry, and servile marriages may in fact be forms of human trafficking, and infringements on the human rights of the individuals"* (Warren, 2004 p.1). These will be elaborated in the next chapter.

As for servile marriage, it can take a form of mail order brides. It is another frontier in the global struggle against contemporary slavery where women and children are exploited in multiple ways (Stepnitz, 2009). Through Mail Order Brides (MOB), a woman who has been

promised a marriage and family, end up into forced domestic and sexual servitude and forced labor because she is legally bound to her 'employer' (husband or marriage broker). She added, those women have a vulnerable immigration status because of this arrangement and cannot access public funds, community support, vulnerable in law, possibly cannot work outside the home and not often can speak the local language (Stepnitz, 2009).

1.2. What the research is about

As a form of trafficking is various and very broad, this research mainly focused on mail order brides. As a case study, this research will take the case of mail order brides among a Chinese community in Singkawang that generally occurred between *amoi* – the term used to refer to a Chinese girl from Singkawang - and Taiwanese men.

Even though this not a new phenomena but people in Indonesia do not have high attention and concern on the issue. This study aims to analyse phenomena of mail order brides among a Chinese community in Singkawang, Indonesia from the perspective of social actors with the use of an Actor Oriented Approach as a methodological approach. Various studies had been carried out to study about the case. However, this research will primarily focus on *amoi*, how her life and society representing the reality toward the case of mail order brides.

This research is a descriptive – explanatory research that aims to see the current practice and the dynamics process of mail order brides in Singkawang from the eyes of social actors involved in order to contribute to better understanding of the reality.

1.3. Organization of Thesis

This thesis comprises of six chapters. Chapter one provides the background of the research, what the research is about and how this thesis organized in writing.

Chapter two provides the methodological issues involved in field work and data collection. This chapter briefly discusses methodological implications of the research to understand the nature of the research, how data collected, the unit analysis of the research and the approach used for data collection. The use of an Actor Oriented Approach (AOA) as a methodological approach is elaborated to give a logical way of thinking of how the research problem, research question and research methodology are inter - correlated. It starts with the research question, the methodological tools, AOA details as a methodological approach includes brief history, the main components in Actor Oriented, the advantages and disadvantages of the approach as when it uses as a methodological approach. Furthermore, a scheme of AOA is provided to give clear and simple discernment. The analysis of the research will make use of insiders and outsiders perspective, thus a brief description of insiders and outsiders also elaborated in this chapter.

Chapter three expands socio demographic of Singkawang municipality where the research took place. A short explanation of Chinese society and its culture also elaborated in this chapter to provide the local context and situation and basic understanding on the main research problem.

Chapter four discusses human trafficking based on literature reviews to provide critical contextual background of mail order brides in the worldwide context. It comprises four main sub chapter namely human trafficking situation at the global level zooming into the

contemporary situation in Indonesia. Furthermore, in later sub chapter more detail of the human trafficking situation in West Kalimantan is discussed. Last sub chapter discussed about the specific form of human trafficking – mail order brides in which mainly occurred in Singkawang, a municipality in West Kalimantan province.

Detailed elaboration of mail order brides in Singkawang is discussed in chapter five. In contrast with the previous chapter, this chapter provides information obtained from data collection during field research. This chapter divides into two main sub chapters and elaborates the discourse of mail order brides from the perspective of insiders and outsiders. Three cases of *amoi* in mail order brides presented along with its social circumstances in which represents the social reality.

Last chapter presents the discussion from the cases and literatures review under the light of sociological perspective such as gender, livelihood, modernity, commodification and issue of the legality and network chain. At the end of the chapter, a conclusion has made to wrap up the discussion and to answer the general research questions. The chapter explains theoretical and practical implications of the main findings for further debates regarding the mail order brides practice among a Chinese community in Singkawang.

CHAPTER II

Methodological Issue, Constraints and Limitation

2.1. Research Questions

Phenomena of mail order brides in Singkawang has taken place since 1980s and booming in 1990s. The number of incidents gradually decreased in the following years (Rio, interview 2010). This research is an effort to endow with the present situation of the practice from the eyes of various categories of social actors. The question put forward is how they perceive and understand mail order brides practice in Singkawang within the broad frame of human trafficking.

This study tries to contribute for better understanding of the phenomena from sociological point of view by providing an overview and description of the motives, perceptions, and knowledge on the case from various categories of social actors. It based on the social reality represented by social actors and use an Actor Oriented Approach as a methodological tool to see and understand the phenomena.

The general research question of this research is *“What is the current practice of mail order brides among a Chinese community in Singkawang under the light of an Actor Oriented Approach?”*. The current practice refers to the practical present situation, how does it work, who is involved in this practice, how the relation among the social actors emerged, how the social actors perceive the phenomena from two opposite actors as insider and outsiders of the case. Further, those two different discourses among insider and outsider will be contested to understand the gap among them.

The abovementioned general research question elaborated into six specific research questions namely:

1. How social actors interact and influence on the emergence of mail order brides?
2. How the network of social actor involved in mail order brides started?
3. How the issue of power contributed to the emergence of mail order brides?
4. What is the role of poverty and gender in supporting mail order brides?
5. What is the role of social values in supporting mail order brides?
6. What is the role of agency and the knowledge process over the years to come to the current situation?

2.2. Research Methodology

This thesis is a descriptive - explanatory research. As de Vaus (2006) explained in his book, the descriptive research mainly indicated by *‘what is going on’* question while explanatory research indicated by *“why is it going on”* question. Given the research questions discussed above in the previous chapter, this research goes between descriptive and explanatory research to explain the how questions, while descriptive research used to explain the *‘what’* questions.

From the perspective of inquiry mode (de Vaus, 2006 p.22), this research is typical qualitative and quantitative research. Besides focus on understanding current situations of mail order brides phenomena from social actor’s point of view, this research will also be looking at

specific secondary statistical data obtained from literature review and fieldwork. Since this research is addressing the case of mail order brides among a Chinese community and no control over the events from the researcher. Therefore, this research also can be categorized as case study research (Yin, 2003).

Moreover, as a tool to understand the issue this research used an Actor Oriented Approach. This approach helped to figure out as Long said, the operating unit in micro level, regardless of the macro structure. What do people as insiders understand toward mail order brides contesting with what people understand as the outsiders. Conflict of those two different discourses elaborated in chapter five under sub chapter three.

2.3. The Use of An Actor Oriented Approach

This chapter elaborates the approach of an Actor Oriented to give a clear picture and how this approach is fitted to this research.

The actor oriented approach is based on the idea of ‘social interfaces’ whereas under such a framework, every situation is conceived of as an ‘arena’ in which various actors play out their struggle with whatever means they have at their disposal in order to reach their own goals. Those actors can be local groups within the society with different interest, or outside groups that make use of resources, or it can be a government and non-government institutions that may also be to some extent in competition with each other or even individuals that have their own agenda. Therefore, different actors have different powers and means, thus it is necessary to consider particular conditions and environment in which they occur when identifying the actors (Skutsch, 1996). Subsequently, this approach is concerned with mapping the network or chain based on the relationship and flows of information as what Biggs and Marsaerts said, to provide a basic for reflection and action (Biggs and Marsaert, 2004). These ideas and tools are not new. However the systematic application of this approach by social actors within the case of mail order brides is still not common as far as the researcher understands.

2.3.1. History of AOA

This theory in fact, is more to an approach to study sociology and anthropology. It is not new one but nowadays scholars and researcher assign their thinking to a better and compelling approach to meet the continuous changing of the social world. The birth of actor oriented approach, from the view of Long (2001), started in the late of 1970 in the paradigmatic world of research as a counter point to structural analysis in development sociology. They did not call it actor oriented approach, but essentially it is a relatively similar application of actor oriented type of analysis. It began when social changes divided into two components of work namely macro and micro. Macro work deals with large scale structure and trends while on the other hand, micro work studies the nature of change at the level of operating or acting unit (Long, 2001). In his former book, Long stated that “*A number of general theoretical studies dealing with issues of structure, agency and the link between the so-called “micro” and “macro” phenomena have appeared*” (Long and Long p. 4, 1992).

The structural models of development or studies at macro level is based on the structural models of development generally frame their analyses in terms of concepts drawn from modernisation theory and structural or institutional perspective based on some variety of political economy analysis. On the other hand, studies at a micro level allowed us to provide detailed accounts of different response to structural conditions and to explore the livelihood strategies and cultural dispositions of the social actor involved (Long, 2010). Thus, Long

believed these contributions motivated a more vigorous approach to the understanding of social change stressing the central role played by human action and perception. Furthermore, these approaches *“range from transactional and decision making models to symbolic interactionist and phenomenological analysis. It enables different response to the similar social circumstance or phenomena from different social actor yet the situation appear relatively homogeneous”* (Long p. 13, 2001)

2.3.2. An Actor Oriented Approach

In 2001, Long used case studies and empirical studies from Africa and Latin America and nourishing the approach called as “Actor Oriented Approach” (Long, 2001). He stressed that *“all forms of external interventions necessarily enter the existing life worlds of the individuals and social group affected, and they are mediated and transformed by the same actors and structures* (Long p.13, 2001). Thus, he argued that social change can be understood by internal and external factors as it formed by those factors that interplay and have mutual perceptions. Long assumed this theory begins with the simple idea that different social form developed under the same or similar structural circumstances. Social actors attempt to come to grips, cognitively, emotionally and organizationally with the situations they face (Long,2001).

Actor Oriented Approach set its main focus and concentration on the role of social actors. This interest is based on the conviction that *“although it may be true that certain important structural changes result from the impact of outside forces, it is theoretically unsatisfactory to base ones’ analysis on the concept of external determination”* (Long p.13, 2001). It is obvious that this approach put the focus on the centrality of actors and the emphasis on the fact that circumstances or interventions are actively processes by heterogeneous social actors who have information and strategies in their dealings with various relationships (Long, 1992). Otsuki in her dissertation (2007) argued that Long’s approach focus on agent who allow us to grasp the reality at the field level and understand the dynamic process at the micro level, and it shifts attention focus from structures at a micro level.

It is very useful for us to examine the difference and deviation between the desired and actual outcome. Long argument is *“...many structural changes have been caused by the impacts of outside forceoutside intervention, no matter what form it takes, can exert effect only through their influences on the world where the individuals and collectives live. In this process, external factors would be coordinated and switched by internal structures”* (Long p.14, 1992).

2.3.3. Social Actors

It has been mentioned above, Actor Oriented Approach focused on the role of social actors. In a simple way, social actor can be defined as any agent such a group of people, an individual, and organized group, which does the social action. However, they are not just ordinary people or group of people in the community but social actors are the *“thinking agents”* who capable of strategizing and finding space for maneuver in the situation and manipulating resources and constraints (Villarel, 1992).

Moreover, the social actions taken by the social actors can be intentionally or/and unintentionally, interactive and un-interactive or pragmatic and symbolic, thus analytically a social actor’s action can be understood as socially constructed and strategically arranged, habitually or physiologically repeated (Otuski, 2007). In addition, she stated that social actor’s action can be carried out through individual or collective actions, organized and disorganized actions.

Actors shape their collective action is represented by others and actor themselves through social events and interactions in which intertwine with each other. The importance of the elements of interaction also emphasized by Touraine that *“actors ... are not defined by their conformity to rules and norms, but by a relation to themselves, by their capacity to constitute themselves as actors, capable of changing their environment and of reinforcing their autonomy”* (Touraine p.5, 2000).

2.3.4. Human Agency, Knowledge and Power

At this point, we understand that the key issue in development thinking is human agency, power and knowledge are strong correlated in this approach. The notion of agency refers to the ability of people to change the circumstances where they live in, in the context of a social world. It is interesting to read in the sociology dictionary that in many pre modern cultures, God is the ultimate control of every living thing, hence very little agency is possible. Nevertheless, according to Sociology Dictionary, in modern science *‘laws’* are said to regulate all human behavior; hence human agency has much more room.

Similar with this, Long (2001) argues that human agency assigns to the individual actor the *“capacity process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion”* (Long p.16, 2001). Long also refers this human agency as a social actor who poses *knowledgeability* and *capability* under circumstances of limited information, uncertainty and other constraints. Human agency that compound concept of knowledge, ability, social blending and relevant actions, the people’s action that influence and shape themselves, and others and their explanation on all things (Long, 1989). Giddens (1984) refers this knowledgeability and capability as two critical elements of agency and Long highlighted that the elements of human agency must be translated culturally in order to be fully understood. It is important to examine how *“agency is differently constituted culturally and affect management of interpersonal relations and the kinds of control that actors can pursue vis-a-vis each other”* (Long p. 19, 2001).

Additionally, Clegg (1989) stated that human agency is made of social relationship and can be realized only through it. The establishment of individual’s networks and connection decide it. Consequently, strategic alliance or manipulation on social relationship and connections is required in order to achieve effective human agency.

Giddens (1984) underlined that human agency has an attempt to solve problems, learn to intervene in the flow of social events around them and to a degree they monitor their own actions, observing how to react to their behaviour and taking note of the various contingent circumstances. Hence, agency is embodied in social relations and can only be effective through them. As Long said, it required the ability to influence others or to pass on a command – that entail power issue – in which use of manipulation of network through social relations is possible in order to pursuit the goal (Long, 2001).

The concept of human agency thus based on the assumption that individual’s experiences as agents are the basis for the discipline, it built in people’s experience (Smart, undated). He added, according to Dawe, at the same time, it built an active relationship, communicating and in conversation with the life around them, and articulating the experience they both watched and lived.

The second element in Actor Oriented Approach is knowledge. Arce and Long (1992) argues that knowledge is established by the ways people categorize, process and assign meaning to their experiences and emerges out of a complex process involving social, situational, cultural and institutional factors. It related to the human agency as a fundamental property that allows actors to construct socially the world they live in (Arce *et al.*,1994). Moreover, Long added that knowledge is built from the commitments, accumulated social experience, and culturally acquired dispositions of the actors involved (Long, 2001).

In everyday life, people are dealing not only with a multiplicity of social actors but also with multiple realities that are possibly conflicting socially and normative between the group members who have different interests, values, and experiences result to discontinuous configurations of knowledge. Hence, knowledge processes, are embedded in social processes which imply aspects of power, authority and legitimation. Moreover, he argued that they are likely to reflect and contribute to the conflict between social groups and lead to the establishment of common perceptions, intentionalities and interests (Long, 2001).

Knowledge can be transferred intentionally and unintentionally by imposing other or not. The process of knowledge dissemination, what Long believed more to the transfer between individual or group instead of creating a join knowledge. *".....the process of knowledge dissemination involves the transfer of a body of knowledge from one individual or social unit to another , rather than adopting a more dynamic view that acknowledges the joint creation of knowledge by both disseminators and users"* (Long p.175, 2001). He added the knowledge dissemination can bridge the gap between of what so called familiar and unfamiliar things caused by an interpretative and cognitive process.

Knowledge is related to power. What Foucault believed that knowledge is a form of power, however knowledge can be gained from power, producing it but not preventing it. Through power, people can make use of knowledge and creating its own field through it. Thus he believed that power and knowledge are connected. *"Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true.' Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, 'There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations* (Foucault p.27, 1977 in Hall, 1997).

Long emphasize Foucault' statement of knowledge and power, that knowledge encounters struggles between actors who aim to enroll others in their 'projects', force them to accept meaning based on what they believed with the aim to winning them. These struggles focus around the fixing of key points that have a controlling influence over the exchanges and attributions of meaning (Long p.20, 2001).

Actor Oriented Approach introduced the idea that power configurations are "depicted in terms of the idea of interlocking actors' projects made up of heterogeneous sets of social relations imbued with values, meanings and notions of authority and control, domination and competition" (Long p. 242, 2001). Hence, power "is to be seen not as fixed property, or as a possession of any particular actor, but rather as a consequence of micro-social negotiations" (Arce *et al.* p. 170, 1994).

Foucault believed that power exists everywhere and comes from everywhere, and was a key concept because it acts as a type of relation between people, a complex form of strategy, with the ability to secretly shaping another's behavior. However, Mason (2010) argues that Foucault did not see the effects of power as negatives that exclude, repress, censor, mask, and conceal, but rather, as a producer of reality in which it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. *“What the importance that it always lies in the effect that power has on entire networks, practices, the world around us, and how our behavior can be affected, not power itself”* (Mason p.1, 2010).

2.3.5. Advantage and disadvantage of Actor Oriented Approach

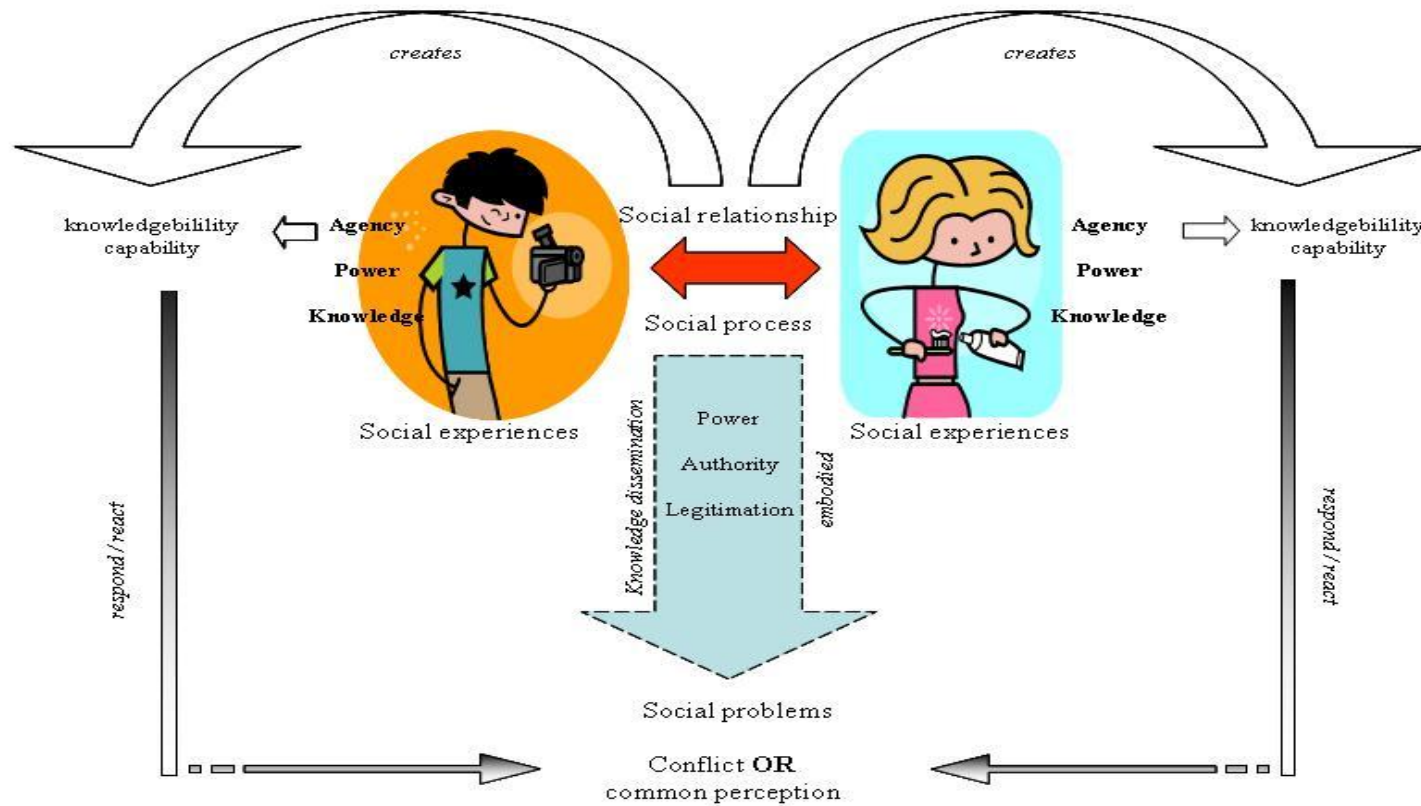
As this approach is emphasizing everyday life of people in their social world, for the methodology it uses a systematic ethnographic to capture particular people's lived in the world and having life experience. Long believed that it is an advantage of this approach that *“it aims to grasp precisely these issues and understanding of the social life ... the response, lived experiences of the variously located and affected social actors”* (Long p.14-15, 2001). Since we would like to understand the everyday life of particular community - in which it includes the process by which images, identities and social practices are shared, contested, negotiated by the various actors involved - hence ethnographic approach believed as the best way (Long, 2003).

However, despite the valuable contributions of actor oriented approach some critiques also pointed out. Harriss (1998) refers the main weakness of this approach is that it is “so ‘micro’ that analysis of wider and longer run patterns of social change” are not referred in this approach. Moreover, he said that *“the underestimation of the restrictions that usually rural people face when they are actively ‘negotiating and struggling’ over knowledge and meanings, and over the institutions in the context of which they operate”* (Harriss p.6, 1998). Booth (1994) suggested this approach requires special focus to the relationship between the actor themselves and the structure around them at a different level. However, he admitted in reality it is very difficult that to access the specific contribution of the actor oriented approach to understanding rural development practices and policies (Booth, 1994).

Furthermore, in attempt to analyse the social problem, we cannot separate micro and macro as those inter correlated, thus Actor Oriented Approach could not provide comprehensive solutions toward any social problems but limited to provide descriptive reality at the micro level.

Given the abovementioned explanation I believed it is suitable to use the approach for this research to give clear and better pictures on the specific case from the perspective of social actor at a micro level. To understand how they perceived the practice, how they react upon it (capability), the knowledge process that influences the future decisions (knowledgability) and how power relation during the process is.

2.3.6. Actor Oriented Scheme



2.4. Insider and Outsider

An Actor Oriented Approach as elaborated above allows us to study social problems at a micro level of society. When looking at the social problem, the society itself divided into two main groups in which they look at the problem in two different opposite ways. Crow (2001) noted that such division is existing in all communities and societies, and known as insiders and outsiders. He added that the distinction between them has been continuing presence in community life. Moreover, he quoted from Billington that *"the insider and outsider distinction are between those who belong, part of "us" in the process and those and those who may be experienced as foreign or alien"* (Crow p.30, 2001), in which I called it as spectators.

Haris (1990) in Crow's argued that the distinction between insiders and outsiders is difficult. The problem of the dichotomy occurred when confronted by the awkward cases that abound. He also put the question raised by Glass (1962) about outsiders, 'Outside what?' still applicable. Moreover, he argued that according to Willmott's (1986) analytical separation of community's spatial, social structural and symbolic dimensions suggests that an individual can be simultaneously 'inside' community relationship according to some criteria and can be 'outside' by others. Thus, he believed that the complexity of ambiguity and fluidity of the boundaries around the insiders and outsider mean they can be contested. As he quoted from Billington *"the relation between insider and outsiders raise issue of how they managed social differences. The boundaries might be very vague since community boundaries constantly in the process of reproduction or realignment."* (Billington et al. p.171, 1998).

Merton (undated) in his article of *Sociology of Knowledge* also emphasized the distinction between insiders and outsiders in the context of social structure that; *"Insiders are the members of specified groups and collectivities or occupants of specified social statuses while outsiders are the non members."* (Merton p. 21, undated). He argued that in structural terms, we all are both insiders and outsiders, one can be a member of some groups that derivatively not of others, and once can be an occupant of certain statuses. Therefore excludes from occupying another similar status. However, he also added that one must not only be one in order to understand one or one must be one in order to understand what is the most worth understanding. Therefore, given the vague distinction between those twos, Merton put it like this *"Insider and Outsiders in the domain of knowledge, unite. You have nothing to lose but your claims. You have a world of understanding to win"* (Merton p.44, undated).

The relations between insiders and outsiders, as Crows (2001) argues, raise an issue of how social differences are managed. The impact of globalization makes communities vary and open, and people can be easily mobile geographically, as a result, it creates insiders and outsiders. Albrow (1997) in Crows' argued, *"ideas such as community boundaries will be constantly never acquire a final meaning, given that it will be constantly in the process of reproduction or realignment"* (Crows p. 31, 2001).

Nevertheless, among the same group itself, different opinions are very possible. This can be seen in the case of this research that presented in the following chapter where one under the category of the same group has different ideas on looking at the case.

2.5. Unit of Analysis

Unit analysis of this research is social actors. We can simply define a social actor as any agent such a group of people, individual and organized groups that do the social action. While the operational definition of social actor can be defined as their action, involvement, interactions go about in the case of mail order brides.

In this study, the key social actors are *amoi* and Taiwanese men. (*Note : amoi term refers to a Chinese young girl in Singkawang, who normally unmarried*). This research took place in Singkawang, views from Taiwanese's perspective does not take into account. Perspective from other social actors will also be analyzed to have a balance view, and they are *amoi* family or relative, peer group, another ethnic groups, local government, non-government organization, and middleman.

2.6. Methodological Instruments

Combinations of methodological instruments of qualitative and quantitative research were used iteratively. To address the qualitative part of this research the researcher used two methodological instruments namely literatures review from related articles and publications, and key informant interview using semi structure questionnaires as primary data. Field journal from the researcher is used to enrich the analyses. As part of quantitative method, some statistical figures will also be used to make the analysis more logical.

Secondary data collection obtained from various resources with makes use of internet and library such as reports, journal, books, articles, assessment or survey report, and respective websites. During fieldwork, secondary data also obtained through visits to local government and non-governmental offices in Singkawang include statistical data to reinforce the whole analysis.

The interview is an in-depth interview using key informant method and semi structured questionnaire in which more access to *amoi* and middleman can be obtained. This research is a stand alone independent research as a final task to obtain a master degree of Rural Development Sociology in Wageningen University.

2.7. Data Analysis

Results from the interviews were transcribed and based on the narratives together with field journal the analysis will be made. A certain scheme of coding developed to distinguish which part of the narrative attached to certain meaning. The classification helps me to answer the research questions. In order to increase the internal validity, triangulation of information, sources and methods is necessary (de Vaus, 2006) whereas in this case, for example is asking the same question to different respondent and by using different methods.

2.8. Time Frame

This research took place in Singkawang municipality for about two months period started from late of January up to late of March 2010. In February, people of Singkawang celebrated Chinese New Year and Cap Go Meh festival (15th day after New Year), and a week prior the two celebrations, people busy preparing the festival.

2.9. Informants

In principle, the informants of this research are social actors who generally involved in mail order brides. Informants refer to people in the field and considered as a resource person. Selection of informants was made based on their understanding and involvement of the issue. A number of *amoi* selected for the case study, and they had to be *amoi* that experienced mail order brides. They might come from different stages of process, proposal, marriage, or living in Taiwan and return to Singkawang for any sort of reasons. Family or relatives are also interviewed to have their view on the case.

Local government officials were selected based on the criteria of relatedness to the issue. In this case, head of the sub village (RT), village and sub district from the area with a high number of incidents. Similar to non-government organizations, they selected based on their focus and main activities such as pro women and children organizations, and Chinese culture organization. As this phenomena merely occurred among Chinese family, view of people from different major ethnics in Singkawang was also obtained to have balanced views.

Given the abovementioned, there are two types of informants in this case. First, social actors who considered as insiders, and secondly social actors considered as outsiders. In the beginning I made categorization of social actor in which later identified them as insider or outsider based on their knowledge and experience on the issue of mail order brides. Please see Annex. III for detailed informants.

2.10. Information gathering strategies

Information obtained through two different ways of data collection. Primary data collection obtained through the key informant interviews using semi structure questionnaires comprises of a list of questions as interview guidelines composed with key topics formulated beforehand according to the objectives. Interview might carry out through a formal and informal way. Secondary data obtained through related agencies and institutions, and they include the online and printed media namely journals, reports, statistics, news, etc.

First contact made to a friend who lived in Singkawang in which later linked to a person who could help me to get access to *amoi* and family. Another person who can help to get access to local government officials and local NGOs. Both persons were my main contacts in the field and I worked closely with them.

A person who helped me to make contact with *amoi* and family is native Chinese people; apparently he has broad network and relationship to middle and lower class of Chinese community in Singkawang. While another one worked in one of the local NGO in Singkawang, who has a broad network to local government staff. Just like a snowball, from my two main contacts, more people revealed as eligible informants.

2.11. Sources of information

Different sources of information were accessed both printed and e-documents, namely local government and NGOs documentation and studies, college thesis research reports, local media news, articles and reports, and published journals.

2.12. Sites of the study

Sites of the study were selected based on statistical data and information from the main contact with criteria of high-populated Chinese family village. While for local government institutions and NGOs were based on the criteria of its involvement to this issue such as community empowerment, cultural related, women and child focus.

2.13. Constraints and Limitation

The methodology of this research requires very intensive social interaction. As the study is mainly about social actors, understanding their socio and cultural context hence is very critical. Investigating people's actions, motives, background, social interaction has enormous methodological implications. Qualitative field research entails interacting with people and going where the action is, understand people by following them into different social situations, seeing them resolving problems and discussing what is happening.

Experiencing of everyday lives of people is challenging and dynamic process. The research might have influenced by both researcher and researched. *Amoi*, the family and other social have their own hidden agendas in the interactions and personal interests in which influences the understanding of the situation. Sensitiveness of the issue, thought of foreigners to the researcher apparently influences how 'far and deep' information shared.

Individual backgrounds, experiences of both parties and different cultural repertoires of the community also influence the quality and dynamic of social relationship. These cultural repertoires, as Long puts it, are built up over time and different part of the repertoires are performed before different sorts of public.

Related to cultural differences, use of language is another challenge. Each ethnic has their own local language that they use in everyday life among them. Not all people could speak Bahasa Indonesia, especially old generations. Otherwise, they speak Bahasa Indonesia with their own dialect in which sometimes difficult to understand or have different meanings for some words. The way they were framing their views, intentions and actions are closely influenced by their culture and language skill. This influences the understanding of actual situations too.

The research could be longer than this to obtain mutual understanding with the 'researched' and more in-depth information. However, time limitation is inevitable; hence, within the period length of time, the study is making use of combination methodological techniques. Semi ethnographic method combined with literature review from former studies was used to enrich research analyses.

CHAPTER III

Welcome to Singkawang

3.1. City of Singkawang

Singkawang is the second largest city in the province after Pontianak - the capital city. It is well known as a city of temples since many temples or *Tepekong* spread all over the town. Name of Singkawang derived from *Tengkawang*, however Chinese people pronounce it as *Shankouyang* – from the word *Shankou* which means in front of a hill and the word *Yang* which means ocean or sea. This explains that Singkawang town lies between the ocean and hills (Suardi, undated).

Previously, Singkawang was part of Sambas district (1959), however the district expanded into three new district namely Sambas, Singkawang and Bengkayang. In 2001, Singkawang officially registered as a new independent district in West Kalimantan.

Geographically, Singkawang area mostly hilly lands with approximately 504,000 km² and currently divided into five sub districts namely South Singkawang (4 villages), East Singkawang (5 villages), North Singkawang (7 villages), Central Singkawang (6 villages) and West Singkawang (4 villages) Singkawang, it make a total of 26 villages. Located around 145 km in the northern part of Pontianak, it close to the border with Eastern Malaysia in Sarawak. It occupied around 0.34 % from the total area of the province. Biro Pusat Statistic (BPS – Central Bureau of Statistic) recorded Singkawang inhabited with 178,939 inhabitants in 2008, however the new statistic noted of 209,777 inhabitants (SIAC Online from Population Administration office dated February 2010) with a sex ratio for male and female is 53:47.



Picture 1 . Downtown of Singkawang

As has been mention previously, Singkawang well known as a city of temples and regarded as Chinatown in Indonesia given its majority population is Chinese descent (45%). The second majority is Malay follows with Dayak, Madurese, Batak and Javanese. Information from BPS revealed that population census never carried out by ethnics; however, we can

estimate it by its religion. It is well known that Budha and Konghucu most likely associated with Chinese people. Based on the data, it shows 39% of the population, however one respondent mentioned the actual number of Chinese in Singkawang is more than what is documented (Rio, interview 2010). Almost 90% population in West Kalimantan is Chinese descent, whereas most of them lived in Singkawang (Heidues, 2003).

Therefore, besides Indonesian language, Chinese Singkawang commonly uses Chinese dialect of Hakka. They still practice their culture in any ceremony or official events, and the culture seen as the closest to the original tradition of Chinese people (Fujian) which making Singkawang known as the Indonesian Chinatown.

Singkawang also acknowledged as the centre trade of the province. However, service sector is the main income for the inhabitants followed with agriculture and trading. Chinese ethnic predominately owns economic sector while other ethnics work in the agricultural sector in villages. According to statistic, 34% of the population engaged in sector services such as hotel and restaurants while 22% of population work in agriculture especially food crops such as paddy, corn, cassava, cucumber, string beans and some fruits such as pineapple, banana, durians, rambutans, papaya, sawo and avocado and animal husbandry such as chicken, ducks, pigs, cows and goats. Besides they do plantation such as rubber, hybrid, coconut, pepper, cacao, coffee and gloves and fisheries for both marine and inland. In addition, 17% of the population works in the trading sector.

For the human trafficking, Singkawang has a large number of incidents and well known as the area of selling girls to marry from Taiwan, China, Malaysia and Singapore, but the most is from Taiwan through mail order brides system (Waren, 2004). Satrini who worked as an activist in *Forum Komunikasi Pekerja Sosial Kota Singkawang* or Communication Forum for Social Worker in Singkawang stated that from the past two years, there are hundreds cases and the number is steadily increased each year (Antara News, 2008). Moreover, she believed poverty is the main cause of family allowing the girls married by the Taiwanese.

3.2. Chinese Singkawang

3.2.1. History of Chinese people in Singkawang

History of Chinese people in Singkawang is closely related to the history of their first arrival in West Kalimantan province. There are many literatures with different version indicating the first date this ethnic stepped on to the province. Heidhues (2003) in her book about the history of Chinese ethnic in West Kalimantan also indicate these difficulties of revealing the first migration of those people in the province.

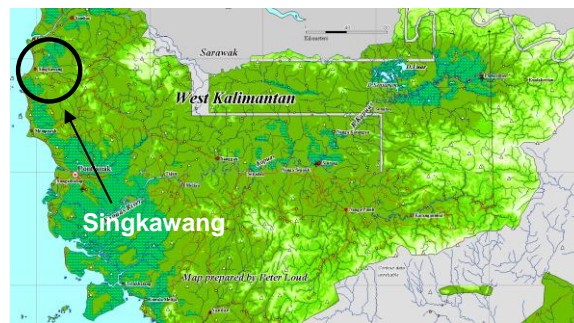
According to Wang Gungwu (1997), the first coming of Chinese descent to South East Asia started when traders and seamen from the Song Dynasty in 960-1276 AD. Another resource stated earlier which was in 2nd – 4th century when Chinese seamen underway to southern sea and in 13th century they stopped in West Kalimantan. It indicated with bowls, ceramics and pots with Chinese motif from the Ming Dynasty in 13th century. Moreover, in 1292 AD troops of Khubilai Khan has stopped over in Borneo Island.



Picture 2. Indonesia



Picture 3. Borneo Island



Picture 4. West Kalimantan

Those facts emphasized by another source which stated that the first Chinese in Indonesia was a Budha priest named Fa Hien in which he stayed in Java in 413 AD. However, according to ancient Chinese history, Chinese people migrated to Indonesia was at the end of Tang Dynasty, and their first stopped was Palembang during Sriwijaya kingdom. From that on they travelled to Java and built trade relationship since 13th century and large number of traders came to Indonesia during Ming Dynasty. Another source believed those traders from Chinese already in West Kalimantan since 3rd century and stayed there in 6th century,. However the great migration to West Kalimantan was occurred in 18th century.

Gayus in his book (2002), stated that first Chinese comer in Singkawang was Lo Fung Pak in 1776 AD while other sources noted it was Admiral Cheng Ho in 14th century had landed in Sungai Raya, Bengkayang district. Those who came to Singkawang were mostly men worked in gold mining in Montrado. The next migrant brought their families with them and later they change their nationality to Indonesia while remain using their own local language – Kek in their daily conversation. Those who live in town normally can speak Bahasa Indonesia, but those who live in rural areas that rarely travel out from their place are only speaking Kek. They live exclusively within their own group and seldom have contact with other ethnics (Rio, interview 2010).

They came and migrate to West Kalimantan in three different purposes namely invitation from Mempawah Sultanate, invitation from Sambas Sultanate and they came as their own will (Alqadrie, 2007). Those who came by its own will, according to Heidhues (2003) was for gold mining, and they compete with local people namely Malay and Dayakese. Chinese people as newcomer work more effectively, and they started to open the farming in lower place as more water for their plantation.

Another source says that Chinese people came to West Kalimantan as a mediator between kings from sultanates in Kalimantan with Dutch government. They helped in pooled and

distributed forests products. In 16th century, gold mines were found in Sambas and Mempawah and triggered more Chinese people to migrate. They then formed their own settlement with their own state according to Chinese tradition. Its number grew rapidly and exhorting the local people (Dayakese) to rural areas. In the end, those people assumed their settlement as a new independent state apart from Dayak monarchy (Gayus, 2002).

In China, there are five top ethnic families recognized namely Man, Mung, Hui (mostly are Moslem), Cang and Han (the biggest). Han was the most ethnic family group migrated to Indonesia includes Hok Kien, Hok Chia, Theociu and Hakka or Khek (Gayus, 2002). He added these Chinese people who migrated to West Kalimantan mostly came from Guangdong province in southern part of mainland China was from Hakka ethnic and small numbers of Hok Kien ethnic from Fujian province. Two Chinese ethnics dominated in West Kalimantan are Hakka and Theociu which come from the same family - Han. Those two speak the same language, which is a language from southern part of China. Theociu generally lived in town and work trading, while Hakka people mostly lived in rural hills, work as miners, agriculture, small traders and generally regarded as poor people.

Hakka people have been known among Han family as tough people with distinct language. They most likely lived exclusively within their own group and willing to work hard in mining and agriculture. They had been socially labeled as *“orang kampong dan miskin”* or poor rural people in their origin place in China as well as in South East Asia. In fact, those Hakka people lived in West Kalimantan mostly lived in rural and they remain poor, contrastingly striking with common Chinese people in Indonesia who lived in cities and economically prosper (Heidues, 2002).

Therefore, it explains the reality of Chinese people living in Singkawang which generally deprived comparing to other Chinese people in Indonesia. Most of Chinese people in West Kalimantan are small trader, shop owner, farmer and fishermen. Official Statistics on the number of poor Chinese families could not be obtained since the survey from government was carried out based on the residential rather than ethnicity. However, information obtained from all respondents stated large number of Chinese family still live under the poverty line especially those who live in rural and remote areas. One local NGOs in Singkawang, FOKET or *Forum Komunikasi antar Ethnic Tionghoa* (Communication Forum among Chinese community) once conducted a survey in the year of 2000 revealed the number of poor family in Singkawang was 42,000. This emphasized with data from BPS, huge gap between minimum of living cost comparing to minimum wages indicated low level of prosperity in the community (BPS online, 2010).

Table 1. Chinese ethnics in West Kalimantan in 1930

Chinese Ethnic	Number in person
Hakka	38,313
Teochiu	21,699
Kanton	2,961
Hok Kien	2,570
Others	1,257

Source : *Pembinaan Masyarakat Keturunan Cina di Kalbar : Salah Satu Aspek Komunikasi Politik* by AB Tangdililing (1993)

Hok Kien ethnic is economically dominant though they are relatively smaller than others in terms of the number. They are good in trading and mostly lived in central and eastern Java, and northern part of west Sumatera, while Kantonese generally expert in business skill and worked as shop owners, restaurants, and hotels (Lumbuun, 2002).

In his book, Heidhues (2003) argued Chinese people widely known as the most predominant migrant group in Indonesia. Two third of West Kalimantan population lived in Pontianak and Chinese district, around 90% of the inhabitants are Chinese descent and “...*this number relatively remain the same in current situation*” (Heidhues, 2003 p.3). Chinese district refers to areas from northern Pontianak along a coastal up to Sambas and border of Sarawak, along the river valleys up to tens of kilometers down to rural areas. However, another source noted Chinese descent only 30% from the total population in West Kalimantan, yet this remains a large number comparing to Central and Eastern Kalimantan in which only 5% from the total population (Lumbuun, 2002).

3.2.2. Chinese Culture

Wertz (2010) argues that Chinese culture strongly influenced by Confucianism. The Chinese through the philosophy of Confucianism learned social order and community behavior. It influenced the Chinese culture mostly in the domain of government and family life. Relationship between parents and children including their rights upon each other were influenced by the values that they learnt from Confucius. Hence Confucianism in many people in Indonesia known as a way of life instead of religion in which many aspects of culture that reflect the influence of Confucianism, and this includes choosing a mate for their children (anonymous, at <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk> , 2010)



Picture 5 . Tepekong or Chinese temple of Kong Hu Cu belief

As common in traditional Asian families, Chinese culture based their family structure on the patriarchal lineage and hierarchal relationship. Confucius teaches responsibility moves from father to son, elder brother to younger brother and husband to wife. Role of women more in the passive way and expected to nurture the well being of the family (anonymous, at www.family.jrank.org viewed on May 15, 2010).

Related to this patriarchal lineage, as Lee *et al.* (1994) and Lin *et al.* (2003) put it in Xie and Zhu (2009), apparently parents prefer sons over daughter as the return to the investment in the former is better. Greenhalgh (1985) added they are willing to sacrifice daughter’ schooling to exchange for greater family income to be invested in sons’ education. However, in the same article of Xie and Zhu, as Brinton and Lee (2001) argued, the strategy can also be

modified if parents perceive the high utility of education in the marriage market, regardless of its utility in the labor market for daughters.

Albeit the role of women in Chinese culture has changes over the years, the rural women are still restricted by old tradition that limits her freedom. Access to education and growth in employment are hindered due to gender bias and an old perspective (anonymous, www.kwintessential.co.uk, 2010). Apparently, it also happens in most of Chinese families in Singkawang, the role of the women largely restricted to their homes. They were taken as a liability until they reached the age of marriage that normally still young, when they were given away to someone else for marriage.

In old Chinese traditional culture, a phrase of *Cung Nan Ching Nie* – or literary means “Man Heavier and Women Lighter” has been known among Chinese people in Singkawang, indicates that men are more important over women (Robertus, interview 2010). If a family does not have a son, they prefer to adopt a son from the closest relatives or from family within their clan. Men regarded more valuable as they are the one who perpetuate and ensure the survival of the family clan. Moreover, to have plenty of children was believed could bring good luck, hence many rural Chinese families have children in average of five or a family could have 11 or 18 children. People in Singkawang were associating of having daughters with US \$, just because they can get money out of it (Rio, interview 2010).

Lee (2005) explained in Chinese society, a man could have as many wives as possible. It is also possible his wife is a teenager while the husband much older than her. It was common that poor families sold their young daughters to richer families for the reason of, they were earning money and get rid of a useless female in the family. It was socially accepted that parents arranged marriages for their children, and very common that young people have the first look of their spouse at their wedding, no introduction process between them. It is acceptable for a groom to cancel the marriage if he found the bride not virgin anymore. Nowadays, as Lee (2001) puts it, matchmaker business is all flourishing as people find it more difficult to find their true love.

CHAPTER IV

Human Trafficking and Mail Order Brides phenomena

This chapter discusses about human trafficking and mail order brides based on the literatures review with aims to provide a background of the research zooming in from international context to specific case of mail order brides in West Kalimantan province. Description of human trafficking at present day situation is needed to provide background and context at the global level. In the later chapter, stories obtained from the case study discussed based on the perspective of insiders and outsiders.

4.1. Human Trafficking as modern slavery

Numerous articles refer trafficking in person as a form of present-day slavery. This simply because millions of people in the world living in debt bondage that forced them to labor in fields, factories, streets, or prostitution, living in fearful and under pressured by their employers whom most of the time threatened their life or their family. According to Solidarity Center Organization (2010), it is caused by an entire range of conditions and issues namely lack of awareness, economic inequality, weak law enforcement, and cultural factors that can lead workers into forced labor, sex work and exploitation, virtual slavery as a domestic worker and other forms of trafficking.

Trafficking could happen to men, women or even children of all ages, but the women and children are the largely majority of victims, as they are the most vulnerable. They trick victims with promises of employment, educational opportunities, marriage and a better life. *"They are forced to work as prostitutes or to beg in the streets, fearful of the consequences if they fail to earn their daily quota.....they are often held far from home with no money, no connections and no way to as for help."* (Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, 2009 page 1).

Furthermore, Hillary (2009, p.1) believed this practice as a modern slavery and a crime that spread in all over the world. It is a crime because the victim is not only those who are trafficked but the families and relatives they leave behind. She added *"It weakens legitimate economies, fuels violence, threatens public health and safety, shatters families and shreds the social fabric that it is necessary for progress...and it is an affront to our basic values and our fundamental belief that all people everywhere deserve to live and work in safety and dignity."*(ibid)

UN Office 2006 report noted 161 countries identified as affected by human trafficking, whereas 127 countries known as countries of origin, 98 as transit countries and 137 as destination countries. As a country of origins, Indonesia is under category of medium while considered low as a transit and destination country. *(Note: countries may be counted multiple times, as one country could be as source, transit and destination area).*

Human trafficking is the third most profitable criminal activity after drugs and weapons. Its total revenue from all types of trafficking activity worldwide estimated up to 9.5 billion US\$ and more than 40% attributed to brothel industry. Nevertheless, ILO reported much more that each year profit generated from this industry are 32 billion (ILO, *A global alliance against forced labor*, 2005).

Frank E Loy (2000) – an undersecretary of State for Global Affairs - argued it is extremely difficult and complex task to calculate the number of victim in trafficking activities, due to the “hidden” nature of trafficking, the invisibility of victims and high level of under-reporting. However, the numbers of incidents keep increasing, and it started growing in the early 1990’s. Given the complexity of gathering the statistic, the report estimated around 600,000 to 800,000 men, women and children are trafficked across international borders each year. Out of this number, 80% are women and 50% are children enforced to commercial sex industry (citing from Miko, 2002).

Moreover, it makes women very vulnerable as they expose to have serious physical internal injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, permanent damage reproductive system, experience a tenfold risk of contracting HIV, and having post traumatic stress disorder. Children who are victims of trafficking are more than twice as likely to have serious mental health problems, including clinical depression, personality disorders, dissociative disorders and exhibit suicidal tendencies. (*National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking Facts, undated*).

Then, what is trafficking? Each category of actors has different interpretations and gives different meaning in trafficking because it encompasses a complex range of problems and sensitive issues depending on their individual or organizational perspective (Rossenberg, 2004). In the past, trafficking was considered as the forced movement across international borders, focusing only on this aspect and movement of women only. However, recently the definition grows broader, it covers *“the movement of persons (includes children) with or without their consent, within a country or internationally, for all forms of exploitative labor, not only prostitution and servile marriage, thus broadening the definition to encompass a much wider range of issues and abuses”* (Wijers & Lap-Chew, 1999: 23-45 in Rosenberg, 2004 p.11).

Tina (2009) in her article Human Trafficking – Putting An End to It argues the global right’s definition of trafficking is “an act of getting someone by any means and putting them to forced labor or service, slavery, prostitution, manufacturing or other industries, including domestic service”. The term of human trafficking refers to the non-consensual recruitment, or movement, of a person for the purpose of exploiting his or her labor (United Nations, 2000). In detail, the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), a supplement to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, include the following definition of trafficking :

(a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in

subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

(d) "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

From the above statement, it can simply define the trafficking from its 3 elements, namely:

- **The Act** (What is done) : recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons
- **The Means** (How it is done) : threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim.
- **The Purpose** (Why it is done) : for the purpose of exploitation, which includes exploiting the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices and the removal of organs.

Moreover, according to UN (2000), an action can be considered as trafficking if one condition from each of the three categories above is met. If one of the means above is employed, then consent of the victim becomes irrelevant. As for children, consent becomes irrelevant with or without the above means.

Hence, in other words, it is not only about generating profit from any migrant labor, but human trafficking has a strong focus on migration with the use of deceptive or coercive movement of a person with intent to put that person into an exploitative situation (Molland, 2010).

Various actors played in trafficking business and involved in various stages of the process. They refer as trafficker or people who do the trafficking of people and they are often depicted as a part of a transnational criminal organization (Rosenberg, 2004). This may be true in some cases but in other cases, traffickers operate independently even others are come from their communities. Some of them may be directly involved in the trafficking or sometimes not even be aware of it. We can note various categories of people and organizations involved in trafficking of women and children include the recruiting agencies, brokers, village leaders, family, friends, neighbor, brothel owners, marriage broker and even government officials (Rosenberg, 2004).

There are numerous factors identified as the drivers of trafficking. From poverty, low education to cultural and gender background includes women's role, children's role, power and social order, bonded labor, and early marriage. Some governments believed to contribute to the increased number of incidents and encourage labor migration to be an effective tool of poverty alleviation from the remittance brought by the migrants working abroad. The other governments encourage workers to migrate to their countries because migrants as providers of cheap labor can supply services, build infrastructure or make their export industries more competitive in the global marketplace (Solidarity Center, undated).

Trafficking, however, occurs when migrant workers have no access to legal and safe migration. Thus, government plays a critical role for countering the trafficking. However, the

corruption and bribes cultures in government offices make more difficult to countering the trafficking. In addition, low budget on countering program indicates the lack commitment from the government (Davis, 2004).

Besides factors of sending countries, there also factors from destination countries that make people migrating. At least there are two main factors that pull people leave and work abroad namely economic boom in the destination area or country that brings job opportunity and hope of a better life, and increase demand of cheap labor to work in several sectors as a consequence of economic boom (Misra and Rosenberg p. 37, 2004).

As it has been mentioned above, trafficking closely related to migration as involve movement of people. Office To Monitor and Combat Trafficking (2008) reported, the theme of migration is often heard in reporting on trafficking in persons. However trafficking is not merely the movement of the people but includes the exploitation and control of a person through force, fraud or coercion. Hence, migration is just a form of trafficking.

Migrant workers are of potential of fall to trafficking, due to the nature of their work. If they are forced to migrate through unofficial channels, they are more vulnerable and often targeted by traffickers, agents, and employers who want to exploit them. As Misra and Rosenberg (2004) suggested exploitation and trafficking can take in various stages namely recruitment, pre-departure, transit, destination and return.

Misra and Rosenberg (2004) reported that people migrate generally for work as/in domestic helper, entertainment industry, service industry, factories / plantations / constructions, begging and drugs dealing and servile marriage. This believed, due to a low education most of the people often work in informal sectors that exclude them from rights and benefits afforded to formal sector workers, and it makes them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. They worked in many different areas nationally or internationally including worked as caregivers to elderly, nannies and housemaids.

Most of the domestic workers are often subject to many forms of exploitation, including as reported by The Tjoet Njak Dien research in 2000 in three major cities in Indonesia (an NGO working with domestic workers in Yogyakarta in Misra and Rosenberg, 2004 p. 61) :

- Long hours, limited time off
- Wages far below minimum wage
- Withholding of wages
- Restricted freedom of movement
- Physical and psychological abuse
- Sexual harassment and rape

Wickramesekera (2002) said since it occurs in private homes in which unregulated by public authorities, it makes difficult to detect for domestic workers. If we looked at the condition of domestic workers, it make sense to compare to slavery – poor working environment, poor remuneration, long working hours, no access to social security and deceived by false promises of agencies (Wickramesekera p.18-19, 2002 in Misra and Rosenberg p.61, 2004).

Migrant workers who generally promised to work in the entertainment industry as singers or traditional dancers yet ended up as commercial sex workers. They are told that they will work as dancers and are trained in different types of dance for the period range from one to

three months (Kurniawan & Santosa, 2002 in Misra and Rosenberg, 2004 p.96). They go on tourist visas that normally do not entitle them to work legally in the country. In fact, they did not work as cultural dancers but rather at nightspots where their tasks ranged from serving food, dancing, sitting with guests to having sexual relations with clients (ibid, p.97).

This is similar to migrant workers who promised to work in the service industry. Generally they were promised to work as waitresses, dishwashers, cooks but ended up in exploitation such a long working hour or as commercial sex workers. They come from the same background that has low education, improper documentation hence they are very vulnerable to trafficking (Misra and Rosenberg, 2004).

Numerous countries have cultural traditions that led to servile marriage for many women. Misra and Rosenberg (2004) believed they subjected to servile or forced marriage may become vulnerable to or end up being victims of trafficking. There are varieties of factors that may contribute to the particular nature of a servile marriage, and four commonly recognized types of servile marriage widely practices today namely :

- *kidnapping and sale of women for marriage*

in some cultures, it is common for rural women to be kidnapped when they travelled away from homes and forced into a marriage. As an example, in China rural area that experienced shortage in women, families will go outside to procure a wife for their son. (Wijers & Lap-Chew, 1999: 75-76 in Misra and Rosenberg, 2004 p.104). In Indonesia, there is a cultural and historical precedent for this practice that still uses ritual 'kidnapping' as part of the courtship or marriage process (Misra and Rosenberg, 2004).

- *forced or arranged marriages*

In some countries, this practice also regarded as a cultural tradition, although it may not be as prevalent today as it was in the past, but still it continues to some extent, especially among rural communities (Berninghausen & Kerstan, 1991; Neihof, 1992; Williams, 1998 in Misra and Rosenberg, 2004 p.104). Even in some cases, arranged marriage is regarded as a common practice. However, as young women become more educated and seek work outside home, they are delaying marriage and even in some cases refusing to accept marriage arranged by their parents. (Williams, 1998: 9, 289, 291, 299 in Misra and Rosenberg, 2004 p.105).

- *pretend marriages*

This type of marriage can also be known as fake marriage in which the wife does not meet the husband until they brought to a place to meet her husband to be, but then she is forced to work in a factory or sold to another man or brothel. (Wijers & Lap-Chew, 1999:79-80 in Misra and Rosenberg, 2004 p.105).

- *mail order bride system*

This system of marriage is given to refer to the similarities with the system of buying goods online through a mail order catalogue. Through a simple search via google.com, it discovered about 635,000 sites for mail order brides. Generally, they market women as potential wives but none advertised potential husbands for women. These women normally are come from developing countries such as Eastern Europe and Asia and marketed to men from more developed countries. Albeit many marriages through this system are successful and happy, there are numbers of cases of physical abuse and violence or slavery like practices where the wife is bought simply for the provision of domestic work and sexual services (Wijers & Lap-Chew, 1999: 81 in Misra and Rosenberg, 2004 p.106).

To summarize the above explanation, the chart below can give clear picture of human trafficking, extrapolated from different sources :

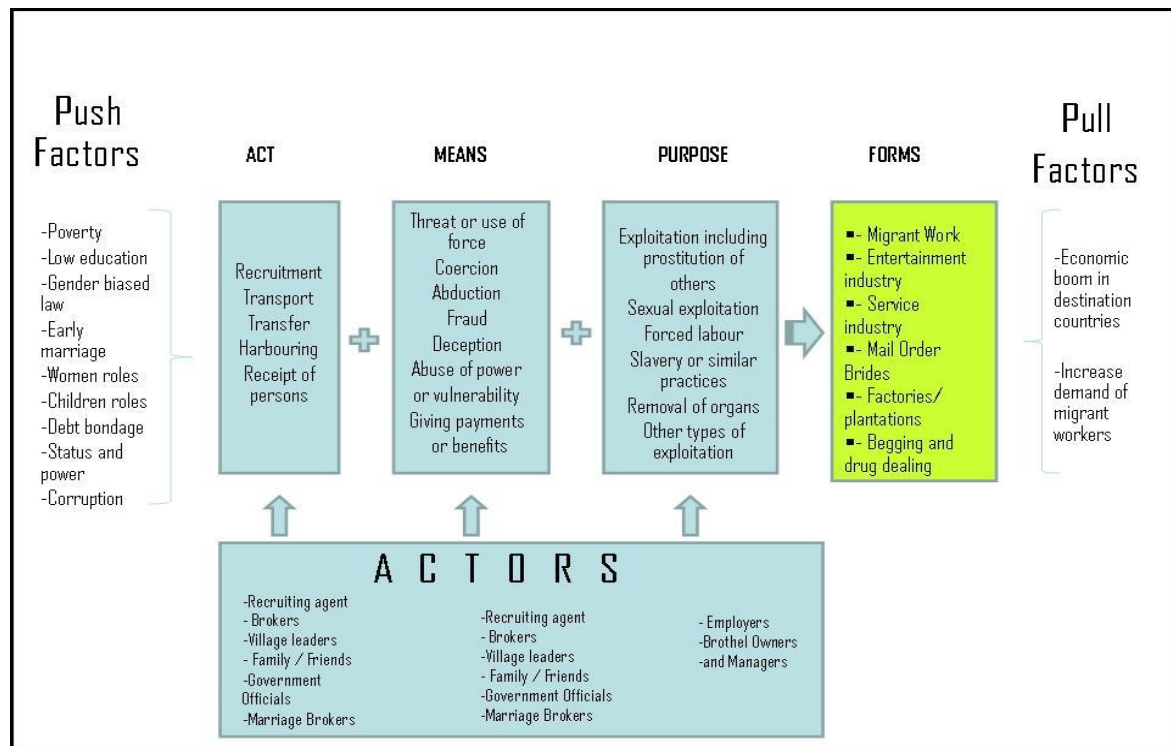


Figure 1. Framework of Trafficking Process by Niken Puspita

4.2. Indonesia and Human Trafficking

According to US Government Human Trafficking Report (2006), Indonesia is on the category of Tier 2 Watch List means that number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or significantly increasing. The report stated, Indonesia has been primarily a source country, and even as a transit and destination country of human trafficking especially for women and children due to widespread poverty, unemployment and low perceived worth of women and children (especially girls) in the traditional Indonesia society, weak rule of law enforcement all contributes to Indonesia's trafficking problem. Moreover, countries under the category of Tier 2 watch lists presumed the government does not fully comply with TVPA's (Trafficking Victim Protection Act) minimum standards. However are making significant efforts to comply with the minimum standards and commitment to take additional future steps to combat trafficking.

Domestically, there is extensive trafficking within Indonesia from rural to urban areas, particularly for sexual exploitation and involuntary domestic servitude. Internationally, Indonesia emerged as a large source of women workers for a number of relatively prosperous countries in Middle Eastern and East Asia. Huge number of migrant workers who work overseas as domestic servants, working in entertainment and service industry are subjected to exploitation and involuntary servitude. In Indonesia, many of the manifestations of trafficking are considered as accepted practices so that they are not regarded as an exploitative conduct as acts of trafficking (Rossenberg, 2004).

Verona (2008) in her article in Jakarta Post stated, according to UNICEF report, it estimates around 100,000 women and children in Indonesia are trafficked annually for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, to countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Hong Kong and the Middle East.

The extent of trafficking in Indonesia has been difficult to estimate due to the hidden nature of trafficking and different methods of data collection (Dasgupta, 2005). However, below report recorded a decreased number of trafficking incidents within the period of 2001 to 2005.

Table 2. Cases of Human Trafficking in Indonesia Years 1999-2005

Year	Total (number of Cases (Reported))	(Number of Cases) Submitted to the Public Prosecutor's Office	Percentage (of Cases Taken Up for Prosecution)
2001	179	129	72.07
2002	155	90	58.06
2003	125	67	53.60
2004	43	23	53.48
2005	30	8	26.66

Source: quoted from Task Force for National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Trafficking in Women and Children (2006, p.35 from Dasgupta (undated)

The report suggests that statistic data above cannot be used as a basic form to conclude declined number of trafficking incidents as many cases that do not merit prosecution for various reasons is also on the rise. Dasgupta (undated) stated for the year of 2005, based on compilation report made by Solidarity Center/ICMC, across 17 provinces in Indonesia, identified at least 130 trafficking cases involving around 198 traffickers, 715 trafficked persons but only 62 of the cases were taken up for prosecution. He added, another source from IOM (from March 2005 to July 2006), they helped returning more than 1,200 survivors of trafficking where by 89% were women, 23% under age children, 57% were engaged as domestic workers and 80% had been trafficked abroad.

Kim Warren (2004) noted, as like in many countries in Southeast Asia, trafficking of women and children in Indonesia takes many forms. The most commonly recognized sectors are as a migrant worker (domestic helpers, housemaids, nannies, etc), working in the entertainment industry, service industry, factories, servile marriage that ends up with working like slave, prostitution and exploitation.

Factors that make women and children in Indonesia vulnerable to trafficking are complex and interwoven. The economic boom in destination countries or urban areas, and increased demand for female migrant workers to do domestic works is one of the factors that dragged women and children migrating. Indonesia is the most favorite country of migrant worker

among destination countries, as they *“tend to know less about their rights, do not speak English like their Filipina counterparts (therefore are easier to take advantage of), less often on report complaints and violations, have less support from their Embassy or Consulates, and can be paid less than migrant workers from other countries”* (Rossenberg p.45, 2004).

Hugo (2001) in Rossenberg (2004) mentioned that the number of Indonesian women migrating to work overseas has steadily increased since the mid of 1980's. According to Ministry of Manpower, around 90,000 per year of people migrated through government official registration. The number is highly increased to 435,000 in 2000 with 70% are women. However, it was acknowledged that a lot more people including underage children migrated were using informal and unofficial channels that increase the number of the case significantly. Generally they work in the informal sector namely domestic work, restaurant, factory, plantation, construction and entertainment industry. They are normally at risk of trafficking from different stage of the process from recruiting to pre departure processing, while working and upon their return home process, vary from the illegal fees, debt bondage, long working hours, fear of sexual harassment and abuse, unsanitary living space, etc (Rossenberg, 2004).

Similar conditions also occurred to in-country domestic workers. Some studies reported over 25% of domestic workers in Indonesia are under 15 years old (Susilo and Soeparno, 1993:9; YKAI, 2001:1 in Rossenberg, 2004) while another study even reported more the underage children are over than 50% (Blagbrough, 1995:15 in Rossenberg, 2004). The tradition of sending girls to the house of relatives or family has been accepted as a normal practice in many places in Indonesia, thus in consequence it makes lack of recognition of the exploitative nature of work specifically for children. (Habsyah et al., 1995: 1; ILO/IPEC, 2001: 30 in Rossenberg, 2004).

School participation in Indonesia as one factor to prevent trafficking is low. Almost a quarter of school aged children are most likely not able to continue their education to secondary level, and most of it are rural girls that have slightly access to education in comparison to girls in the city and to boys generally (CBS, 1999; Welfare Indicators, 1998 in Irwanto, undated.) The number of drop out children from school is also very high that over 40% of children in rural areas have dropped out of school when they reach 16 years old. In consequences, the literacy rate of children in rural areas are significantly lower that makes them are more prone to trafficking. In addition, practice of early marriage in many provinces in Indonesia believed has driven girls out of school.

One study reported that over 30% of girls and women were married when they were 16 years old or younger. In most of the cases, the young marriage is associated with higher prevalence of divorce. According to Supas 1995 (Irwanto, undated) for example, divorce rates of marriages 10-14 years old (9.5%) was twice as high as those of marriages age 15-19 years old (4.9%). Generally the divorced young girl tended to take a risk to the cities or abroad to get better job opportunities to survive but unfortunately most of them tempted to merge to commercial sex industry (Irwanto, undated).

The driven factors lead to human trafficking as listed in the previous chapter also understood as driven factors of trafficking in Indonesia that put women and children at the highest risk. Cultural and historical background believed as the dominant factors to understand the huge number of trafficking incident in Indonesia. Apart from that, lack of

awareness and low commitment from the government is believed to have made the case more complex and problematic (Rossenberg, 2004).

Traffickers or people who do the trafficking are often portrayed as a part of a highly organized transnational criminal organization (Rossenberg, 2004). This may be true in some cases but in other cases, traffickers are not part of organized criminal groups, some operate independently even others are respected members of their communities. However, *“many of them are and some may be directly involved in the trafficking but not even be aware of it”* (Rosenberg, 2004 p.20). She listed the various categories of actors involved in trafficking in Indonesia, from the recruiting agencies, agents, government officials, employers, brother owners and managers, marriage brokers, parents and relatives, and even husbands.

4.3. Human Trafficking in West Kalimantan

West Kalimantan known as a sending, transit and destination area for human trafficking. This due to demographically borders with East Malaysia (Sarawak) whereas recognized as a porous border, a significant amount of illegal migration occurs from and through West Kalimantan to Malaysia particularly Entikong and Pontianak as holding areas to process false and fake document for Indonesian migrant workers (Misra and Inggas, 2004)

The province is situated in Borneo island as one of four provinces with Pontianak as a capital city in which situated exactly on the equator. This province has a population of approximately 3.5 to 4.1 million people and is the most populated among the other four provinces in Kalimantan. Four major ethnics exist are Dayaks, Malays, Chinese, Bugis, Javanese and Madurese. (Asian Human Rights Commission, 1997). Dayak as the indigenous tribe of Kalimantan makes up about 40% of the population followed by Malay who originated from Sumatera and Sulawesi. The province is also known as the highest concentration of Chinese descent in Indonesia, where 35% live in Pontianak and 70% live in Singkawang. Most of the people in West Kalimantan maintain their livelihood from agriculture, manufacturing, trade, hotel and restaurant industries. Nevertheless, compare to other provinces in Indonesia, West Kalimantan is below the average of other Indonesian provinces in terms of income and limited access to safe water and health care (Misra and Inggas, 2004).

Given the socio-geographic situation of the province, make the province vulnerable to trafficking. Significant number of migrant workers from within the province and throughout Indonesia often housed in Pontianak. Most of them are women who being recruited to work as domestic helpers in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia. Transit house in Pontianak had been reported as a place of exploitation and abuse. Agents and traffickers can easily use the border in Entikong as a transit route and holding area for trafficking victims from all over Indonesia due to simple prerequisite document in the immigration office whereas they can falsify passports for underage children (Misra and Inggas, 2004).

For in country trafficking, normally women and young girls from Java shipped to Pontianak to work in the sex industry in Pontianak. It also a transit place to traffic to other places such as Batam. While for international trafficking, West Kalimantan is high sending areas for migrant workers from the districts of Landak, Sanggau, Bengkayang, Sambas, Singkawang, Mempawah, Ngabang, Sintang and the city of Pontianak. As a transit area West Kalimantan is a popular route for traffickers. It is recorded over 500K Indonesian crossed through the gateway of Entikong-Taebedu and more than 16,000 through other borders in West

Kalimantan in the year 1999-2000 (data from Immigration Office - Coalition of Indonesian NGOs, 2002 in Misra and Inggas, 2004) as the route is easily accessible by public bus. As for Singkawang, it is known as sending area of young girl to Taiwan for servile marriages. This will be elaborated in the next sub chapter.

4.4. Mail Order Brides

As it has been mentioned above, trafficking of humans can take the form of mail order brides. However, mail order bride can be referred to many practices. Charsley and Saw (2006) refer this practice as transnational marriages that mainly based on commonalities of religion rather than kinship or ethnicity. Nevertheless, as for the case of mail order brides, they said transnational marriages can take place across both ethnic and religious. Wang and Chang (2002) in their publication in International Migration Journal indicated this practice as part of the international marriage that took form marriage brokered through ethnic ties, mediated by mediating agencies. They refer this practice as an example of cross border marriages.

Nevertheless, the term mail order brides can simply be defined as a woman brought from another country to be married to someone who usually more financially developed. However, this label is considered offensive by some definition (Encarta Microsoft Definition). In United States, this practice becomes an industry where women's names, pictures and biography presented in the brochure or on the internet. The agency that promotes this practice prefers the term as international correspondence service. (Scholes and Phataralaoha, undated).

Some literatures refer this practice similar with servile marriage and other refer as a channel or tool of servile marriage (Stepnitz, 2009). She argued that *"servile marriage referred to any situation wherein a woman is in a marriage that is either legally binding or sanctioned by her community in such a way that she has no reasonable possibility of asserting that the marriage is invalid, and wherein a woman is held in domestic and/or sexual servitude that defines her role as a wife"* (Stepnitz p.4, 2009).

From the homepage of Feminist Sexual Ethics Project (2010), servile marriage deemed when a young girl or woman has no right to refuse to be entered into a marriage. For the arrangement, this girl or her family generally was given in exchange for money or other payment as an exchange. In some cases, those are forced to marry with men to become sexual and domestic slaves. It also said that United Nation's Conventions and Article I of the Supplementary Convention in 1979 listed this as "a practice similar to slavery".

"(i) A woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind; (ii) The husband of a woman, his family, or his clan, has the right to transfer her to another person for value received or otherwise; or (iii) A woman on the death of her husband is liable to be inherited by another person."

This practice has become worldwide and generally occurred between men who come from relatively wealthier than those of the prospective brides. The women were marketed primarily from Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America advertised on the site primarily for men from industrialized countries from Western Europe, Japan, China, United States, and Australia (Wijers & Lap-Chew, 1999: 81 in Rossenberg, 2004 p.106). Many Asian and Russian brides' appeal generally she will supposedly be content to be a 'traditional' wife

who is willing to be subservient to her husband. The local women typically are modern and career women that he cannot mold into his vision of the perfect wife, hence they preferred to seek poor, vulnerable, much younger women whom they can dominate (Sebastian, undated).

He added, the process of mail order brides is various. Normally agencies advertise through a website for the potential brides and publish them just like a “shopping cart” or commodity to be sold or it could be via inter country agencies in sending and destination countries maximize the use of modern technology such as a cell phone, internet, and web cam, etc.

In case of Indonesia, mail order brides can be categorized as trans border marriage as INDIES or Institute for National and Democracy Studies (2007) reported. They classified trans border marriage in Indonesia into three features, first is the marriages between Moslem women with the Arabic tourists or temporary inhabitant; second is the marriage between Indonesian women with expatriates; and third is the marriage between Indonesian-Chinese women with the male from abroad, especially from Taiwan.

According to INDIES (2007), those three features of trans border marriage in Indonesia were illegal, however the Indonesian government has never legally forbidden these practices. In fact, that phenomenon was based on and legitimized by the conservative views on women and marriage institutions. A statement of “being married is better than being prostituted” often hears in Indonesia.

Marriage of Indonesian women with the male from abroad especially Taiwanese, most likely occurred among a Chinese community in Tangerang, Banten and Chinese community in Singkawang, West Kalimantan. A Chinese community in those two areas are significantly in number and culturally distinct from other Chinese communities that economically well off (INDIES,2007).

There are three aspects of visible discrimination on the phenomena of mail order brides among Chinese community in Indonesia, which are they are women, they are poor and they are Indonesian Chinese. First discrimination is “*because they are women*”. Women’s issues in Indonesia are strongly related to the basic structure of Indonesia’s society. They are very vulnerable politically, structurally and culturally. Many women are the main income earners in their households. If a family needs income, a woman may decide to leave her family and migrate for work in order to send home income to sustain them. Even if the current situation of women’s role in Indonesian changed much, some restriction remains still and dominated by mainstream and conservative-feudal interpretation of women (INDIES,2007).

Second discrimination is “*because they are Indonesian-Chinese*”. Historically, “Indonesian Chinese” communities are like the “third citizen” in Indonesia (“first citizen” is army and their families, “second citizen” is common people and not Chinese). For years, the Indonesian-Chinese lived in multilayer of discrimination and restriction. Although some restrictions were abolished by the Indonesian government but the cultural effect and ‘cultural perception’ on Indonesian Chinese that caused by those restrictions still continue until now. In their report, Indies stated according to census in the year of 2000, estimated around 1,739,000 Indonesia Chinese that lived spread in almost al regions in Indonesia with

a significant population inhabited in Bangka Belitung, Java, West Kalimantan, North and South Sumatra and South Sulawesi (INDIES,2007).

Table 3. Indonesian Chinese demography

Total Population	1,739,000 (2000 census)
Region with significant populations	Bangka-Belitung, Java, West Kalimantan, Sumatra, South Sulawesi
Languages	Hokkien (Min Nan), Hakka, Tiochiu, Mandarin, Indonesian, etc
Religion	Buddhist, Confucianism, Christian, Muslim
Related Ethnic Group	Han Chinese

Source : INDIES report (2007)

Chinese in Indonesia is well known as a well off community. This is due to limitation and even banned of Chinese community from all aspects of life except the economy and industry. Thus, they focus on that sector and become remarkably successful. In contrary, it opened the opportunities for government and military officials to charge them much more from regular and normal cost and bribes them, then bribes and corruption became a normal practice. The local people or *pribumi* accused Chinese Indonesia damaging the state and social system but conversely they experienced unfairly by the government that much more pro toward the local people (INDIES,2007).

Third discrimination is “because they are poor Indonesia Chinese”, that makes the more vulnerable. According to Indies, most of Indonesian Chinese still live in poverty (there is no statistical data based on ethnic), and a sample of the poor Chinese is China Benteng who lives in Tangerang, Banten and Singkawang, West Kalimantan. Unlike the ‘Rich Indonesian Chinese’ (that still have opportunities in economy and industry), their access to the formal economic activities is very limited. Mostly the poor ‘Chinese Indonesia’ enter the informal sectors and some were become criminal (involve in drug producing or trafficking, women’s trafficking, prostitution, gambling, etc). As other poor people in Indonesia, the poor Chinese-Indonesian communities did not have enough access to the government social’s services, economic productive forces, educational and health services. Poverty among the Indonesian-Chinese gave a sufficient condition that facilitated the mail-order marriage. INDIES (2007) indicated that this poverty culture which stimulated people to live abroad as they believe they will get better life by a marriage with the foreigners. Marriage to

Taiwanese men assumed as a ticket out of poverty for most of the Chinese girl, but for the other, the practice can also be the same as they can take benefit in this industry as agency, middleman or helper for the administration purposes.

Mail order bride has been years developed as a mechanism to escape from poverty. INDIES (2007) argued that the practice as a survival mechanism of poverty culture, as the way to have decent life abroad. Their research of the practice in China Benteng, Tangerang revealed that the practice had started 7 years ago when some widows pioneered to marry older Taiwanese were successful in send money to the family in Indonesia. The story spread all over the *kampung* and triggered other women to do the same.

Similar with Indonesian Benteng Chinese, this practice is also popular in Singkawang Chinese community, West Kalimantan. Chinese-Indonesian women marry with men from Taiwan as prospective husbands. Protection Project for Taiwan (2008) reported that Taiwanese men will prefer to get their brides from Singkawang due to similar culture with Taiwanese.

Table below shows a number of visas issued for migrant partners or whosoever that marry with Taiwanese. Indonesia is in the 3rd list after China and Vietnam with total number of 20,425 for six-year periods of 1994 – 2000. The figure does not tell the origin of migrant partner from Indonesia, however it apparently they are ethnic Chinese from Hakka clan. (Wang and Chang, 2002 p.109)

Table 4. Residence Visas Issued for Migrant Partners

Year	Country							Total
	Thailand & Myanmar	Malaysia	Philippines	Indonesia	Singapore	China*	Viet	
1994	870	55	1,183	2,247	14	7,885	530	12,784
1995	1,301	86	1,757	2,409	52	9,180	1,969	16,754
1996	1,973	73	2,085	2,950	18	9,349	4,113	20,561
1997	2,211	96	2,128	2,464	50	8,951	9,060	24,960
1998	1,173	102	544	2,331	85	10,528	4,644	19,407
1999	1,184	106	603	3,643	12	13,046	6,790	25,384
2000	1,259	65	487	4,381	3	15,769	12,327	34,291
TOTAL	9,971	583	8,787	20,425	234	74,708	39,433	154,141

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bureau of Consular Affairs, various years; for 1994-1998 data, see Wang 2001; for 1999-2000 data see Ministry of Foreign Affairs available at <http://www.boca.gov.tw/announce/index.html>.

*The total number of Chinese migrant partners from November 1988 to February 2001 was 88,411.

The Women

Generally women involved in the practice are poor young women even underage girls. They come from poor family and very low education or even never goes to school for the entire life (Rosenberg, 2004 ; Irwanto, undated ; INDIES, 2002).

The Men

The prospective husbands come from Taiwan and Hong Kong, but the majority are Taiwanese men. They also come from middle lower class in their country, generally above 30 year old, even in some cases 50 or 60 year old. They seek young women and girls from other areas as they cannot afford to marry women in their own country due to “expensive dowry” and considered themselves of not marketable and not attractive. (Rosenberg, 2004 ; Irwanto, undated ; INDIES, 2002).

Fraud and Abuse

Underage girls are trafficked to Taiwan to work in prostitution and most of the case the girls were not aware of the real purpose of the trip to Taiwan and end up engaged in this kind of work. Some girls who have become wives through this process end up in successful marriages, others have reported working like a slave in the home of her new husband and his parents, with long hours, no salary, and not treated as a member of the family. In some of the more notorious examples, the women are actually forced by their husbands into sex industry or sold outright to a brothel (Rosenberg, 2004).

Although not all cases of mail order brides end badly, many cases involve underage women, and falsification of documents. Most marriages facilitated through brokers in the community in Singkawang, with marriage ceremonies taking place in Indonesia. In some cases, upon arrival in Taiwan, the bride’s citizenship changed – sometimes without her knowledge – making her return to Indonesia should she run into trouble, quite difficult. From the same report, it is also known that Taiwan is primarily a destination country for trafficking in women and children. Victims are trafficked from mainland China, Myanmar, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam (Rosenberg, 2004 ; Irwanto, undated ; INDIES, 2002).

CHAPTER V

Singkawang Mail Order Brides

This chapter discussed about the story of mail order brides in Singkawang from the perspective of insiders and outsiders. The distinctions between those described in chapter two.

5.1. Looking through the Eyes of Outsiders

Numerous numbers of literature and article judged this practice under the category of human trafficking. It is considered as crime and against humanity. In this sub chapter, we will hear what social actors - as part of the community and social system - considered as outsiders understood over the case, and how they view the case.

Social actors under the category of outsiders are Non Government Organizations (NGOs) and community organization, as they are not involved in the process directly but as actors who take the position of preventing and countering mail order brides as part human trafficking.

Only few community organization or local NGO focused its work in trafficking in Singkawang. Some perhaps exist in Pontianak, the capital town of the province but most of the time they worked through local partner in Singkawang. Similar with NGO based in Jakarta, they also either worked through local partner in provincial or in district level.

Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (LBH) PeKa (Perempuan dan Keluarga) or Legal Aid for Women and Family is the only one institution widely known in Singkawang. They work independently and voluntary to help women and family with a legal problem. However, they are not specifically working in countering human trafficking, but since the case generally involved women and girls, all trafficking cases always refer to LBH. This institution led by Rosita Nengsih, a middle age woman from Malay ethnic.

The other acknowledged local organization is Wahana Visi (WAVI) known as a child focus organization. Nevertheless, their coverage area not in Chinese community, but since their focus is children most of their programs somehow related in countering trafficking.

This chapter also provides the view from two local Chinese organizations. One is FOKET – *Forum Komuniasi Antar Etnis Tionghoa / Communication Forum among Chinese people*, and MABT – *Majelis Adat dan Budaya Tionghoa* or literally mean Cultural and Customary Chinese Association. Both are known as two biggest Chinese organizations in Singkawang.

According to Rosita (interview, 2010), the community perceives mail order brides as a trend among *amoi* in Singkawang, and it is believed to be a mean to improve the economic status of the family. The increased number of incidents in the past was because the learning process in the community when they saw their neighbor did the practice, succeed and brought the family into higher economic status. This indicated by their renovated or new house. The underlying causes were poverty, low education and cultural background that drive *amoi* and the family decided to do this.

Society considers the practice as a normal and legitimate practice, as a maneuver to survive. Terminology of mail order brides is only a term known among academic and legal practitioners, what people understand just a natural process of finding life partner. In local language, they called it as *pengantin pesanan* or *kawin foto*. Despite mass media intensely cover the case, society does not understand what the idea behind the practice. Moreover, this case generally “hidden”, only recognized among Chinese community and not publicly known by other ethnics.

According to one source, in general this practice brings a lot of positive impact rather than the negative impact. Just a few cases in which do not success. The girls normally returned to her family in Singkawang and never been excluded from the society. However, generally they turned to be very uncommunicative, do not want to share to others but limited to *amoi* who experienced the same thing.

“Success ratio is 60:40. During Lunar New Year, transfer of money from outside especially Taiwan and Hong Kong could be billions of rupiah. The failed cases are more exposed by media rather than the success ones” (Rosita - LBH PeKa, Pasiran - Feb 5, 2010).

Rio from MABT (interview, 2010) argued that the successful rate is very high (90%) for those who meet and married to Taiwanese through family or relatives who live in Taiwan. But not for those who meet and marry with Taiwanese men who are sponsored by entertainment company, in which through agent or middleman looking for a Singkawang girl to be marry with. However, they were deceived - once they arrived in Taiwan, those good-looking men are back to their own work while *amoi* trapped into sex service and entertainment industry.

In the eyes of WAVI, mail order brides is a form of forced marriage, as it has driven by economic condition and hope for better life, *amoi* persuaded by her parents or relatives. In average, they are 16-18 year old and still considered as children according to the law while her husband is double or even three times older. Ironically they were traded by their parents through middlemen. These practices believed as a result of poverty and consumptive life style in the community, and nothing to do with their cultural background.

Bong Cin Nen from FOKET (interview, 2010) added that low education is another driver. Few were graduated from high school, most of them graduated from primary school or even never attended school. He admitted the practice involved under age *amoi* which actually prohibited before the law, neither the state law nor the customary law. However, it more complicated if under aged *amoi* insisted and their parents allowed it. It is easier for FOKET to dispute the case if there is no consent from one of them.

FOKET has three main focus activities namely to improve political, economic and social equality of Chinese community among other ethnic groups in Singkawang, improve economic livelihood of Chinese families and preserving Chinese culture and tradition within the frame of Indonesia’s nation state ideology of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. FOKET admitted that many violations occurred in the process of marriage between *amoi* and Taiwanese men. Therefore, they did some advocacy with several partners to decline these violations. They then worked together with KADIIN Taiwan (Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce) in Jakarta and CAPIL office (Office of Civil Administration) in Singkawang and adding more administration requirements for the couples such as an official statement letter as a proof of their marriage status and or divorce letter or obit if they had married before.

This practice becomes an issue since *amoi* do not have any clue about her future husband. They have a very short introduction, or even they decided to marry at their very first meeting and they do not know the background until they found they had deceived. In addition, role of middlemen in falsifying documents and makes this as a source of income. Economically, the middlemen is the most benefitted person instead of *amoi* or the family. Moreover, Rosita (interview 2010) said that this marriage is a matter of luck. If *amoi* lucky she will live happily there and the family in Singkawang could have better life, but in the other hand if she is not lucky, she has to live in Taiwan miserably or returned to Indonesia if she lucky can run away from her husband.

“Some cases were just vanished. They feel embarrassed going back to Singkawang and prefer to live in poor and miserable conditions there. They never called or inform their family in Singkawang.” (Rio – MABT, Pasiran – Feb 4, 2010)

Low education of *amoi* and family lead them to lack of awareness of the dangers they may face thus they could easily be deceived, exploited, or pushed into the slave like work.

They all agree that law enforcement plays an important role in reducing the case. Trafficking Act No. 21 issued in 2007, considered new to many people. According to Rosita (interview, 2010) from LBH Peka, many government officials still do not understand the law, though they already taught and or socialized. Most of the time, they asked her for help related to which article in the Trafficking Law to accused people. Government officials think the Law is vague and a lot of ambiguity. Many terms are unclear, such as what constitutes of human trafficking. They use Child Protection Law No. 23, 2003 for cases involved under aged children. However, they recognized that it takes some times for Trafficking Law (UU No.21 Th.2007) to be familiar in the society. Many people do not understand and realized that this practice as a form of human trafficking (Thomas, interview 2010). Even government officials and law enforcement authorities considered this as unfamiliar law, thus a lot of cases not properly dealt or even halt for no reasons. If there is the case of trafficking indications, police did not use the Trafficking Law No. 21, 2007, to arrest the suspected to court due to unfamiliarity among community law enforcement officials. Besides, it believed that money plays an important role in eliminating the case.

“The police did not implement and use articles in Trafficking Law to bring people to the court. But I admitted that money does play “(Rosita - LBH PeKa, Pasiran - Feb 5, 2010).

In addition, there are two other laws need to be disseminated namely UU No. 23, 2002 about Child Protection and UU No. 23, 2004 about Domestic Violence (KDRT – *Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga*). These Laws also need to be disseminated to children as an act of prevention, not only owned by the state’s officials.

“...yet there should be a balance.. if we produce the law, we should disseminate the law to the public as well. In fact, people have to find the information by themselves” (Thomas – WAVI, Pasiran, Feb 13, 2010)

Eventually, number of mail order brides incidents is steadily decreased from the past ten years. Within a year, just one or two Taiwanese came and look for a girl. Improved economic life believed as the main cause behind besides *amoi* tends to less interest of marrying with Taiwanese, and demand from Taiwan has decreased respectively. Taiwanese men are now

diverting their searching to Vietnamese and Philippines girl, also girls from mainland China. Moreover, it believed that better education plays a role to reduce the cases. It is now compulsory for children going to school up to primary level.

“Statistics show that the case has 40% reduced since 1990s when this case was booming.”
(Rio – MABT, Pasiran – Feb 4, 2010)

Note : unfortunately, Rio could not give the exact figure, the above figure is his estimation based on his observation. Statistic figure provided in later sub chapter obtained from CAPIL office)

5.2. Looking through the Eyes of Insiders

This part provides mail order brides from insiders' point of view - people who directly involved in the practice and considered as an insider. This aims to understand the case from the inner perspective. Two cases will be elaborated descriptively based on the experience of the researcher lived in with *amoi* and her family. One case obtained from literature search. In addition, view from people who took part as intermediaries which in this case called middleman, agent, administration helper and local government officials will also be presented.

Case of Sisi

About 160 cm tall, clean and white, with black long hair tied back she approached me when introduce by Nam Jiu, smiled and said her name without hesitation. She was of medium, and even tends to thin, was wearing red pajamas, a combination of short pant and a sleeveless shirt. She looks beautiful and clean, striking contrast to her living home, a small discolored wooden wall and floor. The size is about 6x10m and divided into two parts, the service area and the main room. Perhaps the house is quite spacious, but compare to the number of people living in the house, it could be extremely packed out and narrowed. Sisi has one old brother working in Jakarta, and she lived at home with her parents along with her six little brothers and sisters, makes all together nine people living in the house, share the room and amenities. The main room comprises of living room and three small bedrooms. The living room, the biggest room in the house has multi function, besides a place for guests, place to watch TV shows, and in the evening it turns into a bedroom. Normally Sisi with her little sister Ana, sleep there use simple thin mattress. Each room occupied with such as simple furniture, a small wooden bed and cabinet.

The other part of the house is for kitchen and bathroom. A simple stove, using wood to lit the fire placed in the centre of the room. Next to it, an uncovered rain water basin that used for everyday washing, bathing, brushing and drinking. In front of it, a small of aluminum cabinet placed next to the dining table.

In the far right corner, a small table full with books and other stuffs, mixed with dried clothes. In the opposite, there is a half wooden wall bathroom and toilet with small wooden door. The wood was damp and wet, and porous on all sides caused by water shearing. The closet made of stone and cement and a small tub with tap water comes from the rainwater tanks in the kitchen. The cemented floor looks shattered and broken, makes whoever use the bathroom should be careful of not falling and get hurt by the sharp broken floor. On the front side, one exit door is facing the front yard. We can see small-extended rope from side to side for hanging clothes. The main door equipped with a small footstep and take you to



Picture 6. House of *amoi* family in suburb of Singkawang

the living room. It is a typical of most houses in Borneo, who is often called '*rumah panggung*' or home stage. The living room is a multipurpose room where people in the house get together, watching TV, study room for the kids, and bedroom during the night. On the left wall, some pictures stick on it. Some nice pictures of *amoi* taken in Photo Studio in Singkawang. They posed and dressed just like a Taiwanese celebrity or film actor. Sisi said she had to pay IDR 100,000 (US\$ 9.5) for one photo includes the wardrobe and free make up. This is very common among Chinese community in Singkawang, where they stuck some unframed photo's studio on the wall, includes the wedding pictures of their children. In the other side, there is a small Altar for their ritual praying with all the sticks and small pots. It is indicating that the house owner's belief is Confusionist.

Small wooden table placed against the wall and some plastic chairs available for sitting. A small cupboard near the front door with TV set and a drawer to store the clothes. Two bedrooms were at the left side without a door for the boys sleeping at night, while the master bedroom was located in the front and without a door too. A small curtain used replacing the door. Those bedrooms equipped with one simple bed and cabinet. The girls used the floor in the living room or aisle between the rooms for sleeping at night using a thin portable mattress. At the right side, a connection door linked the main part of the house to the service area.

Sisi' house situated in a small alley which can only be passed with two wheels vehicle, overgrown plants along the left and right path. It took about 30 minutes cycling from downtown. A quite big tree in front of the house with a tree house above, used as a place to rest for those who want to. The front side yard is a large enough and small canal sited at the right side. Currently it used for a temporary kitchen for making a basket cake – a typical of Chinese New Year cake. A small canal with brownish water at the right side is used for bathing, washing clothes and kitchen utensils.

There is only one neighbor in the area, located at the left side of Sisi's house inhabited with another Chinese family, but it looks much neater and permanent. The other closer house is across the road that also inhabited with a Chinese family. It is just a small neighborhood with only several houses and all are Chinese families. They are generally living in a cluster, grouping with their fellow ethnic, using their own language and constructing their own system. In Singkawang, settlements of people from Dayak, Malay and Chinese divided. The

downtown normally occupied by Chinese people, Malays mostly lived in north and west part while Dayak lived in the suburbs up to the remote areas. However, some Chinese people also live in remote villages such one hamlet in Mayasopa where they only speak their own language, implementing their own norms. Most of the Chinese families in Singkawang orient their life to Hong Kong and Taiwan, includes the time which one hour faster than standard time in the western part of Indonesia (WIB).

That time was festival seasons, a Chinese New Year celebration followed by Cap Go Meh festival on the 15th day of the New Year. Hence, many people rushing to Singkawang to celebrate the festivity with family and relatives. Demand of basket cake increased as seasonal and special cake for Chinese New Year. Side yard of the house used for producing the cake, run by a man comes from Ketapang, another district in west Kalimantan – as a distant relative of Sisi's father. He routinely produces the cake annually, and he got 8MT order from various places in Singkawang and surrounding. The cake made from glutinous rice mixed with water and sugar powder, steamed for 24 hours until it turned brownish. It called as a basket cake because the dough poured in a basket mold coated with banana leaves or plastic. It can be last for more than a year if stored in the fridge. Some literatures mention that the cake was an offering to gods, while other mentions as a long lasting food of their ancestor who lived in mountains, somewhere in highlands of China, who had long journey during winter.

The workers from the kitchen worked for 24 hours a day for almost two weeks to meet the 8 MT order. They are three of them who stayed in the tree house and use Sisi's kitchen and bathroom for their daily routine. They are familiarized to Sisi's as they often chit chatting and joking of each other.

Throughout the day, especially in the morning, many people came and visited the house, from the motorbike vegetable seller, the debt collectors to relatives and friends. They made a short stop or stay longer and take a short nap at Sisi's house, smoking and chit chatting. The intimacy between them was obvious, and they spoke in Kek.

Sisi's father worked as a vegetable seller, which known as *Cangkau*, means he collected vegetables from small farmers and then sell it to others. He used motorbike for collecting the vegetables and selling it from house to house. He bought the motorbike in credit and still needed to pay the monthly premium. However, for the past two days, her father stayed at home and not going for work, as he felt ill. According to Sisi, her father is *Tatung* – or shaman – someone who possessed by ancestor's spirit and has extraordinary abilities. Most of the time, he prays and provides offering on the altar.

Note : "Tatung ritual acts as an instrument to expel demonic spirits that cause misfortune to someone or a region. The expulsion done by a shaman called 'tatung' or 'lauya'. A tatung has extraordinary capabilities, and his prestige gained by healing." (Geertz, 1960 numerologi and fortune-telling and Harrel, 1987 available at United Singkawang www.singkawang.us, 2010).

While her mother worked as a laundress during the day in two houses from morning until evening. She worked a full day a week without a daybreak and earned around IDR 800K rupiahs a month (US\$ 89). Hence, the family depend only from the mother, as her husband's job is not reliable. Nam Jiu had mentioned that the father gambled and drunk, he



Picture 7. Tatung performance during Cap Go Meh festival

often borrows money, so mother needs to work hard for their living. Though three of her children are working, there still four kids who need to go to school. Sisi's first brother worked in Jakarta just like her, while her younger brother worked in one factory in Singkawang. Four of her younger brothers and sisters are at school.

Sisi's mother said that her four daughters are still young and not forced them to get married soon. She never forced Sisi to have early marriage, same to Ana, Merry, and Messy. However, she admitted that apparently the children prefer to work after completing their primary school.

When Sisi was 15-year-old, once she graduated from her primary school, she engaged to a Taiwanese man. At that time, she has many friends of her age who are married and have children after graduating from primary school, and inspired her to do so. The information spread from mouth to mouth, until one day came a woman together with a Taiwanese man and asked her for a hand in marriage and go with him to Taiwan. This woman came from Jakarta, but neither Sisi nor her family knew the woman. However, Sisi felt interested with the man and agreed to marry him. Then a simple wedding party arranged at her house, and pictures taken as a proof of their marriage. Only close relatives came, and Sisi got a golden ring. Afterwards, Sisi had told to wait while the woman help her in processing their travel documents while the Taiwanese leave to his home country. Nevertheless, after waiting for a year and more, Sisi never heard of any news regarding her departure to Taiwan. She made calls to the woman and her fiancée but got no response. Even when she met with the woman in Jakarta, she pretended not knowing Sisi. Then she decided to forget about going to Taiwan and worked in Jakarta. She sold her engagement ring for buying food.

"Ah, I do not want to marry with Taiwanese anymore...for what? Just forget about it..... I sold the ring for me to get cash for food." She admitted that her parents received money from the woman, but she has no idea how much it was. Sisi speaks *Bahasa* fluently but was dominated with Jakarta's dialect as she lived in Jakarta for more than two years. Both of her parents, brothers and sisters speak broken *Bahasa*, as they use *Kek* for their daily conversation. Even the songs played in a CD and movie watched all are in Mandarin.

Currently Sisi is on leave and in Singkawang for treatment of the disease she has suffered. She worked in Jakarta at Garment Company and intended to go back to her work after she recovered from her illness. If she worked, she could help her parents for living and for her younger sisters and brother for going to school. She could transfer IDR 1 million (US\$ 95) each month as she saved a lot since she stayed in her supervisor's house.

She had offered several times to marry with a Taiwanese again, but she refused. She did not want to experience the same thing – like her fate hung like hell for years. In addition, she also heard many stories from her friends that many *amoi* been deceived. Their hope to have a better life ended up, because in fact the Taiwanese whom they marry with are too old and poor. Moreover, they forced to work there whether in the field or factory and their own husbands torture many of them. If lucky, they are able to escape and return to Indonesia, since most of the *amoi* fear to go out of their house because the passport kept and detained by the husband. Many of whom could survive living in Taiwan despite their suffering, because they cannot do anything about it, if they escaped and caught by the police of Taiwan, most likely they would send to jail.

Sisi' story conveys how she processes her personal experience as knowledge for her future decision. As Long (1999) puts it, knowledge is *“a cognitive and social construction that results from and is constantly shaped by the experiences, encounters and discontinuities that emerge at the points of intersection between different actor's life worlds.”*

Her failure of marriage to Taiwanese, a waiting process she had to undergo, and stories she learned from her peer group indicated the knowledge process within her. As a human agency, Sisi has knowledgability and capability to respond, react and maneuvering to her particular social situation and social problem in her life. From her social relationship with her peer group she learned that she was not the only one who experiences the same problem. The problem she had turned into social experiences in which she processed it within herself as a knowledge process and used it as a base on her future decision. She decided to end up her long waiting process of her Taiwanese man and not expecting anymore of marrying Taiwanese man. Sisi has control and power over her decision in which different frames of meaning are possible to happen. As Long (1999) puts it, that knowledge emerges as a product of interaction, dialogue and reflexivity and contest of meaning and involves aspects of control, authority and power. *“It is multi-layered (there always exists a multiplicity of possible frames of meaning) and fragmentary and diffuse, rather than unitary and systematize”* (Long p.3, 1999).

The knowledge process among *Amoi* also emphasized through discussion with Susi, an 18 year old *amoi* who lives in the suburb of Singkawang. From the discussion with her, it revealed that currently many *amoi* are smart and would not be cheated by middleman or Taiwanese man. The learning process from the experiences of other *amoi* and awareness of their rights as children brought her to the decision of controlling their own life. Susi is young and beautiful, has a dream of having high education. *“We can say no to Taiwanese man and it is our right to decide”* (Susi, interview 2010)

5.2.1. Mail Order Brides Process

The process started when a Taiwanese searching for a girl to be married with. He then can choose three different ways of getting it, namely through the matchmaking agent, middleman or family/relatives who have friend or relatives in Singkawang. Those three channels can possibly contact to agent or people in Singkawang directly, or through Jakarta



Picture 8 . *Amoi* activities during the day

which then links them to the agent or person in Singkawang. The introduction process among *amoi* and Taiwanese can be done through pictures or photos. Agent or middleman in Singkawang sends out *amoi* pictures to the agent or middleman in Taiwan to be showed to Taiwanese who seeking for Singkawang girl. The other way is Singkawang middleman showed pictures of Taiwanese men who looking for a girl to *amoi* Singkawang (Sikwan and Triastuti (2004). Those pictures send out with make use of technology namely cell phone or internet.

The introduction process normally happened very fast. Taiwanese might go directly to search *amoi* in villages accompanied by a middleman, or they just stay at the hotel while *amoi* brought it there by the middlemen. They might choose *amoi* according to what they want and like. If both agree, they will see their respective dates of birth according to Chinese culture, if fitted may proceed to the next process.

Taiwanese men normally should pay the cost in a package to the agent or middleman amounted up to IDR 90 million (US\$ 10,000). The cost varies including the length of the stay in Indonesia and depends upon the requirements they requested. Normally the cost includes accommodation, wedding party, dowry, fees for papers and to the officials and local middleman.

"They come to Singkawang, at first the middlemen are searching of amoi who want to be married by showing the picture of Taiwanese. If amoi is willing, then her picture will also be sent to the Taiwanese. If both are agreed then the Taiwanese should come and get amoi. "
(Acian– community, Pasiran, - Feb 8, 2010)

Engagement can be carried out at home or in a hotel. They believe the term of engagement as part of their customary marriage. If the bride already exceeded this process, they have

been officially regarded married by Chinese custom. Normally only close family and relatives invited, having tea together, and made photographs of the new couple. This new couple picture considered authentic as an evidence of married. That is the reason people named it as Photo Marriage. Afterwards, *amoi* stayed in a hotel with his new partner.

Follow to that, the middlemen will process all the necessary documents and papers for *amoi* to be able going to Taiwan and registering the marriage legally according to Indonesian law in Civil Administration office. It might take five months to get everything done and the Taiwanese came to fetch the girl. However, Sikwan and Triastuti (2004) revealed that some of the new marriage couple did not registering their marriage in CAPIL office as they believed it already legitimate before their belief (Kong Hu Cu). If they do so, for immigration purpose they will be asked to get the visa for work, vacation or visiting family. Once she arrived in Taiwan, the middleman got her to the Taiwanese man and both will married there.

"At first they went to work there and then they are engaged and married." (Effendi – Village Chief, Mayasopa- Feb 8, 2010)

For the new married couple, in order to get a visa for Taiwan, they need to undergo an interview at the Taiwanese consulate office in Jakarta. The will be asked some questions related to their marriage, and at the same time examining *amoi* proficiency in Mandarin. The official national language of Taiwan is Mandarin Chinese, though the majority also speaks Taiwanese – variant of the Hokkien, and many speak Hakka (Kek) – the language in which Singkawang Chinese people speak. It might possible she failed the interview and visa cannot be granted (Bujang Ali, Interview 2010).



Picture 9. Fuli Village, Taiwan – one of the village where many *amoi* Singkawang married and live with Taiwanese men.

Source : Power Point Presentation of Kombes Pol. Minton Mariaty Simanjuntak, Kabid Lotas NCB-Interpol Indonesia in Workshop "Countering Trafficking in Person Strategy" in Singkawang, July 26-28, 2009

Note : As a result of political encounter between China (People Republic of China - PRC) and Taiwan (Republic of China - ROC), some countries maintains unofficial relations with ROC via consulates called Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Offices (TECRO). This office in charge of maintaining diplomatic relations and providing consular services (i.e visa application) and Indonesia is one the country. People known as Kadin Taiwan – or Taiwanese Chamber for Trading and Industry. (source : <http://www.reference.com/browse/nationalist+china>)

Case of Ami

The house situated by the main road to Singkawang town. The location is somewhat in the middle of grassland, but quite visible from the side of the road. It is typical Kalimantan house, house on stilts, though not as high as common stilts houses, but built on land with a small ladder to the terrace, it makes the ground floor are not in direct contact with the swamp ground.

This wooden house with a terrace in front, people have to walk through a small path of wet and muddy grass to reach the house. On the front side, there are quite big trees where two monkeys sit. It seems, according to Achian - the head of the family, the monkey was bought for IDR 250,000 (US\$ 28) five years ago, from a friend of him, as a result from hunting in the forest. They placed in front of the house as a belief to maintain the security of the house and its inhabitants from evil and believed to give long life. Many people who passed his house were interested to buy the monkeys, but Achian resisted of not selling the monkeys.

Achian lives with his wife and three children. In fact, he has six children, two of his first boys already went and work in Jakarta. Ami, his first daughter who had married to Taiwanese – she works in Tanjung Pinang, currently in Singkawang for holidays. However, Ami does not stay at the house but in her Aunt's in a different village. Thus, there is only Suli, whose age is 16 but still in 7th grade, and Afung, her older brother who currently sit in 4th grade. The youngest is Asun – an 8-month-old baby who is not in good health condition at that time.

They have been lived there for almost ten years; previously they lived in one hamlet in a rural Singkawang. From the kindness of one friend, they might stay at the house. However, soon they should leave out the house as the owner plans to renovate the old house. Acian has no idea on where to go and live with his family, as he has nothing left.

The house furnished with simple wooden table and plastic chairs which most of the time they just sit on the floor. It divided into four components namely living room, two bedrooms, kitchen and extremely modest bathroom. Suli does not have her own room, she sleeps in the living room with small thin mattress. A small kitchen with simple utensils linked to the left side of the house where the bathroom located. Do not imagine a worth use bathroom, it is just 1.5x1.5 m room with half-leaky wooden wall in which anyone outside can easily view the activities inside.

Acian is unemployed. Previously he worked as a vegetable and fish mobile seller. With his motorbike, he drives miles away to Sajingan – a village near the border with Malaysia. However, since two months ago he stopped his work as its dealer has taken the motorbike

back. He could not afford to pay the credit anymore. *"It's hard to find work here; many people are selling vegetables and fish, not as in Sajingan. I could not do it again cause I have no motorbike...it's a long way to go there.. "*

He needs money to get starts a new work but currently he has nothing in his pocket, and he has no idea to whom he should ask for money. *"What can be guaranteed, I got nothing at all".* Sometimes he received money from two of his children who work in Jakarta, but not anymore. *"I rarely communicate with them .. do not know also how he was doing, and where they live in Jakarta."* Acian does not even know he already becomes a grandfather from his first son. Nam Jiu - the contact person to this family - told that Acian never even cares with his own family. Not just once but even more he lent Acian some money for him to start the work, but apparently he used the money for gambling and drinking. Thus, Afun, his wife is the breadwinner of the family. She sells homemade cakes from house to house. However, currently she paused for production as the festival has taken place, there are plenty of food and cakes in people's house as well as in the market. *"My father always comes home very late, I do not know where he is going but normally he is in the coffee shop with his friends..he is smoking, gambling and drinking"* says Suli.

Activities started at six in the morning. Afun has awakened with Asun in her arms. Then Suli and Afung also get awakened that they need to get ready for school. Acian who came home very late last night was still sleeping. The kids were going to school without having a breakfast. Then Acian woke up and went straight forward to front terrace and smoking. Couple minutes later, he gets back inside and sleeps again while rocking Asun in his baby hanging as Afun is busy washing clothes. They only have a cake basket for their meals, and Asun just having a sugar water or sometimes breast milk.

They have not many activities during the day. Most of the time they sleep or just sit in front terrace watching the traffics. Acian smokes heavily while Afun taking care of Asun, play with him, feed him and take him to sleep. As Asun not feeling well, Afun took him to Tepekong to be prayed by the priest for his recovery. Small piece of paper (a prayer written in Chinese) folded and tied in Asun's neck. According to their beliefs, it is to keep Asun away from bad luck and evil. She also asked Suli to get traditional medicines from one Sinshe in the village for Asun recovery also more medicine from clinical doctor in Singkawang. People who are sick are prohibited from taking their pictures, as it will bring bad luck to the person and the family. They prohibit me when I took some pictures of Asun, house and family and without my knowledge; they deleted all the pictures in my camera when I was sleeping at night.

I met Ami in the evening. She lived in her Aunt's house that located about 20-minute cycling. Coffee shops along the way which only open at night with loud music and dim lights. People in Singkawang called the place *Kopi Pangku* – literary meaning: Sit on Cafe, where people who come there – which mostly are men, can have coffee or beer while a girl may sit on him. *"Ah, those girls are just lazy, they only want to get instant money by letting men touch her body. They will get IDR 300K (US\$ 26), but if you want more, asked the girl out,"* explained Suli.

Ami – a twenty-year-old girl – looks very sweet and beautiful. She just finished her shower when I got there. With a straight rebonding hair and a Blackberry in her hand, apparently she has decent life and up to date lifestyle. She does not want to stay in her house as she is

afraid of her father whom easily angry and beat anyone. Even her mother and Suli also hit if they missed doing something. *"He is evil, he often beats me, even my mother or Suli.. once she overslept when taking care Asun, she got beaten."*



Picture 10 . A wall full of pictures, a typical of Chinese Singkawang house

She is also afraid that her father forced her to remarry just as he did a couple of years ago, when she was forced to get married to a Taiwanese man who came to the house with a lady. Ami was 16 year old at that time, and the Taiwanese was about 40 year old, so she refused. *"He hit me because I do not want to marry. I cried a lot and feel distressed so much,"* Eventually she said yes and the engagement process carried out at her house, which only attended by her parents, sisters and the middleman. She got nothing while her parents received IDR 3 million (US\$ 295) from the middlemen. Neither Ami nor her parents know the middlemen, but someone told that she comes from Singkawang and has married to Taiwanese and live there.

However, according to her parents, Ami was not forced into marriage, but are also her willing. They were glad that finally she wanted to marry, as they hope it will brings money to the family. *"Because Taiwan's money is much higher than rupiahs. Unfortunately, Ami does not like to live there as she lives together with her mother and sister in law who also often beat her,"* Afun added.

Ami stayed in Singkawang for about 5 months while waiting for her documents and papers ready. Then she left for Taiwan accompanied by her middleman. She just came to know that her husband worked as a fish collector, while she also forced to work as a plastic garbage collector. As she has limited knowledge of Mandarin, her husband sent her out for Mandarin class.

Ami was not happy there, because she did not want to get married from the beginning, it is just because she was forced by her father. *"I often fight with my mother-in-law, when I came she told me that I did not necessary to get up early morning everyday. I did so, but she got angry when I woke up late and she said that I am lazy, then she hit me so I hit her back. I have reported to the police."*

Then she decided to run away, from the savings she has from skipping her Mandarin class, she took her passport which kept by her husband when no ones were home and left the house. *"In fact, I felt a bit scared too because nobody I know and nowhere to go. Then I met a man who worked on the ship and allowed me to sleep on the ship and give me foods."*

From him, she introduced to a friend who can help her return to Indonesia. In return, Ami needs to work for him in one of his store in Manado.

Back from Manado, Ami worked for some time in Jakarta in one of her relative house – helping to do some domestic works. Now she is working in Tanjung Pinang. Once after she returned home, she had been asked to remarry but refused and run away. She knows that her parents got more money again from the middleman. Currently she is in vacation to celebrated Lunar New Year and Cap Go Meh (CGM) with friends in Singkawang.

On the way back home, Suli and I stopped by at one shop to have drinks. Suli met his boy friend, Ferry, and we have a short discussion. Ferry came from East Singkawang and worked in Jakarta. As many other Singkawang youngsters, he come home for the New Year and CGM celebration.

In his opinion, a lot of *amoi* married to Taiwanese men are forced by their parents though they are still very young. *“Especially her mother, if amoi refused, her school bag usually being hidden and she is excluded by her parent”*. In fact, they have a miserable life in Taiwan, they got to work and beaten. *“Not to mention the men are also fat, ugly, bald and old...30, 40 or even 60 year old.”*

He added that Taiwanese men get *amoi* through middleman or agent. Those middlemen whose generally ladies, searching and looking for *amoi* up to villages in remote areas, with a false good looking picture of Taiwanese men. Parents received money but not as much - only around IDR 5 million (US\$ 554). Somehow, their house turned to be nice and beautiful but some are not. Nevertheless, *amoi* not just only married to Taiwanese, but they also worked in Jakarta and committed in prostitution. *“Even in Singkawang, many amoi works in a coffee shop and they dressed very sexy ...”*

5.2.2. Amoi and driven factors

Poverty has been identified as the main driver of *amoi* married to Taiwanese men (Rio, Rosita, Bujang Ali, Robertus, Tauhid, Prayitno, Thoamas interview, 2010). This also believed as the main factor that placed poor people at the highest risk of trafficking. As Davis (2004) suggests that acute poverty and lack of employment opportunities have encouraged millions people to find a way to support themselves and their families and hope for better life and future.

One study of trafficking in 41 countries indicated that a desire to improve their economic conditions combined with a lack of economic opportunities at home country was one of the main reasons people go abroad (Wijers and Lap-Chew, 1999:61 in Rosenberg, 2004 p.119). Davis argued that *“Motivation behind is an effort to improve their economic conditions and increase their material wealth”* (2004, p.120).

They travelled thousands miles away from home to live in an unfamiliar or even hostile surroundings separate from family, friends and community (Solidarity Center, undated). Many *amoi* generally come from rural and remote areas, but many also live in town of Singkawang. The number of Chinese residing in Singkawang mostly from sub-urban villages located surrounding of Singkawang town.

"Most of the amoi that married to Taiwanese are from west, south and east Singkawang, includes Pasiran, Kaliasin, Pajintan. " (Bujang Ali – West Singkawang Sub District Head – Office, Feb 9, 2010)

Poverty might lead to lack of access to education (Davis, 2004). They barely literate and have only few years of schooling or even never go to school - especially those from rural areas. He added that people with limited education have fewer viable job skills, opportunities, and are consequently more prone to exploitation.

In this case, *amoi* graduated from elementary and primary school are come from big family backgrounds, and parents work as small vendor or daily laborers. They are very young with an average of 15 to 18 year old and can be easily deceived,

"Amoi's education is low, just graduated from junior high or elementary schools or even ever going to school at all. They want to have better life" (Tauhid – Village Head, Sedau – March , 2010)

Lack of education and low level of literacy make it more difficult for the *amoi* to seek help in case they encounter trouble. They may not know how to access to available resources, be able to understand leaflets or other public advertisement about shelter or help lines, or feel confident enough to search for help (Davis, 2004).

Amoi wanted to work once they graduated from primary school though they still have no clear idea on what type of work they can do but as long as they can earn money to buy something, they are willing to do it. This encourages parents force them to marry at an early age, besides *amoi* themselves desired to have better life and have lot of money.

"Amoi are certainly does not want to go to school. They just want to marry and become rich so they also may live in a foreign country" (Asin – RT Pasiran, March 1, 2010)

As it has been mentioned above, economic factors are often considered to be a main reason of *amoi* marries with Taiwanese. Singkawang well known as a city of Chinese majority, however it is different from the image of Chinese people who economically well off, Chinese Singkawang is poor. From a survey done by FOKET - Communication Forum of Chinese Community conducted in 2000, numbers of poor people in Singkawang were 42,000 inhabitants. This survey was carried out independently by FOKET with the help of RTs and community leaders, since the survey from the government not based on ethnicity. The survey was conducted by using the indicators stipulated by BPS plus additional indicators namely physical condition of the house and income per month divided by the number of members in the family.

"Income per month of Household is less than IDR 500K to support a wife and four children, would not be enough. Their house is un-tiled floor, wooden wall and rifle roof...perhaps their floor are tiled but still the income still not enough.." (Bong Cin Nen – FOKET, Singkawang downtown – March 2, 2010).

From the survey conducted by FOKET in 2000 revealed that 42,000 inhabitants considered poor. Nevertheless, a new survey conducted in 2009 showed that number of poor people has been a lot decreased to 3,370 inhabitants, means of about 90% decreased within less

than 10 years.

Later this phenomenon does not only occur among *amoi* with poor family backgrounds, but also from a middle class family with the same hope to get better and decent life. Generally, they more selective and look for a middle class Taiwanese as well. They - as Davis puts in – already live better off and do not want to live in absolute poverty also prone to exploitation (Davis, 2004).

“The economic factor is not the main factor now, because there are few middle-class families are also included in this mail order brides.” (Rio – MABT, Pasiran – Feb 4, 2010)

Cultural and gender background is another factor that might lead to this practice such as women’s role within the family, children’s role and responsibilities, power, hierarchy and social order, historical precedents of bonded labor, and early marriage (Davis, 2004).

As described in the chapter III, apparently the same roots between Chinese people in Singkawang and Taiwanese lead to the emergence of mail order brides. Long history of migration explained the ancestor of Chinese in Singkawang, the practicing the same culture and beliefs. This similarity makes the agent and middlemen are easier to matchmaking the Taiwanese men and *amoi* Singkawang, and persuades the family (Sikwan and Triastuti, 2004).

- **Women’s role**

As most of Asian and African countries, wife and the mother is the center of the household and family that she controls the family finances, makes major decision about household and family, tasked with all aspects of child education and deals with all problems from economic difficulties to more general family crises (Suseno, 1997 in Davis, 2004 p.125). Thus, the role of a housewife endowed as the title of “Queen of the Household” (Sitepu, 2000: 190 in Davis, 2004 p.125).

However, this does not make women the head of the household and has the absolute power within the home. It suggests that it is in this domestic sphere that women most clearly manifest their social value and power – as wives and as mothers. Thus, women bear significant socialized responsibility for family development and household economy. Not to mention the global economic impact, women’s economic participation has been a central survival strategy for many households (ILO 1999 as cited by Hugo 2001; 108 in Rosenberg, 2004). It is acknowledged that women may have to become supplementary wage earners in times of family need, as Surtees puts it *“Indonesian women’s desire and obligation to support their families can arguably be linked directly with the feminization of migration and thus women’s vulnerability to trafficking and associated abuses”* (Surtees, 2004 p.126)

From the two cases described - the case of Ami and Sisi – we can perceive the role of mother and father in the family. How the mother is working hard to support the children while at home she does domestic works and taking care of the children before and after work. Ami’s mother worked as home mad cookies seller and Sisi’s mother worked as a laundress. Both their father though worked as vegetable and fish *cangkau* but most of the time they do not work rather they are gambling and drinking with friends (Sisi and Ami, interview 2010).

- **Children's roles and responsibilities**

In most Asian countries, children are obliged to their parents and to support the family. It makes them very vulnerable to trafficking namely child labor, child migration for work or forced married, are considered acceptable as family strategies to survive. In some societies, children are valued as commodity that can bring parents and family into higher social status *i.e* by married to men from higher class. This also the case of Ami, she forced by her father to marry with Taiwanese man in which they believed can bring wealth to the family. It happened not just once, when Ami returned to Singkawang, she was forced to marry another Taiwanese man for the second time (Ami, interview 2010). Moreover, normally if she refused to marry and obliged her parents, she got beaten and isolated (Ferry, interview 2010).

"Especially the mother, if amoi refused usually her school bag being hidden and she excluded by her parent" (Ferry – 18-year-old Chinese boy, Kaliasin – feb 23, 2010)

Children perceived to be of an adequate age to help their parents and assume some economic responsibility after the completion of primary school (Habsyah et al., 1995: 117 in Davis, 2004 p.129). Thus, social acceptance of a child's obedience to their parents and their obligation to help support their families make them vulnerable to exploitation. This practice as Davis (2004) puts it - perceived as an acceptable, honorable means to generate income, then is seen as a family survival strategy or work option rather than as exploitation (Davis, 2004).

In Chinese families, like most of the traditional families in Indonesia, still believed in one credo *"banyak anak banyak rejeki"* – means having many children can bring fortune. They have children in average of five while some even eight to nine and up to eleven kids, and most of them are girls (Rio, interview 2010). However, it does not mean they value daughter over son. It is because they can easily offer her daughter to someone else (Sikwan, 2004). As Lan (2003) puts it, a daughter considered as "spilled water" given away after marriage to another family.

People are associating *amoi* as US\$, because once she reaches her puberty, she can be sold and parents will receive and *angpao* (Rio, interview 2010). As Davis (2004) argues that some societies still believe that women reach maturity on their first menstruation thus she should then be married. Emphasized by Gardiner (1999 in Davis 2004), if they are not married fear that women are not marketable that being an old maid is disgrace to the woman's parents (1999, p.5 in Davis p.133, 2004). Hence, it makes them believe that *"the earlier a girl marries the earlier her parents will be relieved of the burden of supporting her"* (ESCAP, 1998: 39 in Davis, 2004 p.133).

The term used is Mamochi, or sell the girls. Thus, mail order bride or known as Photo Marriage between *amoi* Singkawang and Taiwanese / Hong Kong men generally regarded as a part of the traditions and customs of Chinese society. It is legitimate by customs and traditions. Sikwan (2004) argues in his research that photo marriage is similar with the marriage tradition in Taiwan/Hongkong. It considered legitimate if they have a picture together in the same frame.

"Photo Marriage is part of the ritual traditions of their ethnic, So it is very common and socially accepted .. just like in Moslem, were recorded at KUA only it considered legitimate"

(Tauhid – Village Head, Sedau – March 2, 2010).

Historical precedent of bonded labor

This practice refers to renting out one’s labor or that of a family member to pay off a loan is a common and accepted practice as family survival strategy. People placed into bonded labor especially vulnerable to abusive and slave like work conditions. ILO stated that in rural areas, it is common parents place their children in the ‘care’ of urban based relatives as servants (ILO/IPEC, 2001 p.30 in Davis, 2004 p.131). One study reported “many participants came to the cities because uncles or aunts or simply a friend or neighbor who worked in the cities came to the village to pick them up” (Habsyah et al., 1995: 119 in Davis, 2004 p.131). He added, the parents normally being ‘paid in advance’ for their children’s future earnings when the children are sent away to work as domestic workers or children sent away or being ‘sold’ as a payment of debt of the parents due to inability of paying debt. “In some countries, this appears to be a normalized practice and is not necessarily seen as a form of bonded labor” (Davis, 2004 p.131).



Picture 11. Picture of *amoi* with her Taiwanese husband and parents on the wall at her parent’s house.

He added, the parents normally being ‘paid in advance’ for their children’s future earnings when the children are sent away to work as domestic workers or children sent away or being ‘sold’ as a payment of debt of the parents due to inability of paying debt. “In some countries, this appears to be a normalized practice and is not necessarily seen as a form of bonded labor” (Davis, 2004 p.131).

In the case of mail order brides in Singkawang, parents were paid by the middlemen and known as *Angpao* as dowry for her daughter. In some cases, they have historical debt and *amoi* in exchange to pay of the debt of her parents. As it has been mentioned previously, Ami and Sisi’s father has been known of having gambling and drinking habit while they do not work regularly. The habits brought them into debt bondage with some people, and apparently it drives to force their daughter to marry or work as soon as he reached maturity (Nam Jiu, interview 2010)

- **Power, Hierarchy and Social Order**

In eastern cultures, social hierarchy is a complex web of relationship and positions that linked to the issue of power. Social status of people depends upon their social identity that determined their position in the social hierarchy in which influenced by a range of factors including age, gender, descent, education, occupation, wealth, ethnicity and place of origin (Brenner,1995:25, Grijns,1992: 109 in Rosenberg, 2004 p.23).

Thus, some factors are particularly important signifiers of status, as Mulder (1998:64) puts it in Davis’ (2004, p.125) it is the interplay of these factors which determines ones social identity. It can be changed depending on with whom people are interacting.

Davis (2004) believed these features of power and social hierarchy helps us to understand vulnerability of women and children to exploitation. In the process it involved use of power, and social hierarchy that determines who holds power in the society. It certainly involves the overt expression of power by the socially and economically powerful. So it is tied to a number of factors including wealth, social standing, age and class that make it a very complex array. Moreover, lack of intervention from the ‘powerful’ also contributes to exploitation (Davis, 2004). As the case of Afung (the 3rd case), though people who put them

into "slavery like" practice brought to court, they were prosecuted far less than what had been sentenced. Similar to this, in Alang case – though some people caught from the middleman to the government official, at the end the court let them free. As Rosita (interview, 2010) puts it the case known as "star" case as it involved five star generals who intervene on the case. As we can see that power, authorities and money play a significant role in whatsoever put women and children at vulnerable risk to exploitation.

"One person in Taiwan, Jakarta and Singkawang were arrested but at the end the court let them free. There was not enough evidence to bring them to jail. But it was all about money. Trafficking Act at the time was not yet active, but when the trial it was its on effect. Police did not use the Law of trafficking, but the money talks. Alang case was known as the "star" case. When some middlemen detained, many star generals intervened... They call to settled the case, stop the case, use the term of 86. " (Rosita - LBH PeKa, Pasiran - Feb 5, 2010).

5.2.3. Potential husband and drag factors

From the interview with respondents, indicated that the "husbands" or "buyers" from Taiwan tend coming from the low income men. They are workers, retired military men or even handicaps persons which normally difficult to get a woman. If they are worked, they worked as farmer or labor. The average age of the Taiwanese generally is above 30 or even 60 year old. Physically, most of the respondents said the potential husbands are old, bald, fat and disable. They not 'marketable' anymore in they own country, sometimes their parents help them searching for a woman who wanted to be marry with them for the purpose of descendants to continue the family clan. Hence, in Taiwan *amoi* generally lives together with her parent in law, and forced to take care of her old and disable husband and bear child for him.

Because Taiwanese know they are not physically in good shape, they use many tricky ways in order to get *amoi*, giving the pictures when they were young, or picture of someone else that are physically much better. They might do this intentionally or unintentionally but generally in cooperation with the middleman.

Most of the time, *amoi* were told of a good story about the prospective husband, or Taiwanese who comes to Singkawang are young and good looking, but in fact when they get to Taiwan, it found that those men were only assigned by company to cheat *amoi*. Then she ended up working in prostitution or karaoke.

"... the man who paid by companies like karaoke or a brothel ... They're young and handsome come to Singkawang to find amoi. Of course amoi feel interesting ... they are good looking and rich.. but in fact they had cheated and finally they have to work in brothel and karaoke. " (Rosita - LBH PeKa, Pasiran - Feb 5, 2010).

The prospective husbands are known as gambler and drinker. *Amoi* forced to work to reimburse the cost of marriage paid to the agent or middleman. Since Taiwanese men also come from poor families, they often borrow money to 'buy' *amoi* in Singkawang. The other way is through 'Arisan' where several people gathered in collecting money to buy *amoi* in turn. They keep collecting money until everyone in the group gets their turn (Lasiman, interview 2010).

Why do Taiwanese men look for *amoi* from Singkawang? Besides of similarity in the culture, ethnic and belief background, *amoi* Singkawang is also known for her beauty, obedient, diligent and good at domestic works (Rio, interview 2010). With relatively cheap price, Taiwanese can have one full of complete wife (Fosin, interview 2010).

Different exchange rate between Indonesian Rupiah and Dollar Taiwan is also believed as another drag factor of *amoi* married with Taiwan and wanted to live there. This differenced influence purchasing power of people who might bring more wealth in their hometown. Even their husband is come from poor family in Taiwan, he can come to marry *amoi* in Singkawang as it considered 'cheap', and with the same amount of money in Taiwan, he could not pay the cost for marriage with Taiwanese girl.

"..it is normal if she wanted to help her parents by sending money, exchange rate Taiwanese is higher than rupiahs..." (Prayitno – Pasiran, interview Feb 18, 2010)

Case of Afung

Afung was 16 year old, slim and sweet girl when she married to a Taiwanese, but eventually split up. On 2005, Amat – Afung's father, died of lung cancer at the age of 53. Since then only her mother Tjew Miao Ngo (55) who works from the help of people she knew. The earned income is certainly less than enough for Afung and her siblings. Then she finally decided to quit school. That is when her aunt, Kimoi, who offered her marriage to a 30 year old Taiwanese man. With the hope of helping her mother and freeing her family from poverty, Afung agreed. As she still under aged, a person (or *cangkau surat*) helped of taking care the documents and administration papers and her aged was upgraded to 19.

The party was held in one hotel in Singkawang. She got IDR 1 million (US\$ 95) for buying the wedding dress, and her mother received *Angpao* of IDR 6 million (US\$ 665). Her husband already provided all of the wedding jewelry such as ring, bracelets and earrings. At that moment, her husband admitted he worked as a mechanic. However, later she found that her husband was just an unemployment who gets up very late, going out and come back home late at night as his daily activities. Afung has very limited space to move, prohibited to go anywhere, imprisoned by her husband in a 4x4 room for almost two months, and is only given rice porridge with cassava leaf for her meal. *"We never cook. For our daily meals, he asked money to his mother, and he forbids me for working, that makes me could not resist..,"* said Afung.

Afung asked for divorce, and her husband agreed with one condition. She needed to pay back the money to replace the costs of 'buying her' from the middleman, Afuk. Then Afuk suggested Afung to marry to another Taiwanese man, so they money from her new husband can be used to replace the cost for her first husband. Afung has no choice, and she agreed. While searching for a new husband, Afung treated well by Afuk, provided with good facilities, lodging and even a luxury car for her mobility. Then, *"I offered from house to house. Each of houses asked to see if they interested in me. From the first until the ninth house, apparently no one wanted me or me who do not want to. Then at the 10th house, a man called Lai Chin Fin (32) interested in me. As I felt so exhausted then I just said yes to him and Afuk,"* said Afung.

She then underwent an introduction period with Lai Chin Fin, they go for a walk and eat together. With a reason to visit his parents before marrying for a second time, she got

approval to return to Singkawang. Afung let her went home while she asked for her people in Singkawang to handled administration process of Afung. Her name changed to May Ling Tjiew aged 22. This time her mother received IDR 2,6 million (US\$ 288), and Afung got nothing.

When she got to left Singkawang for Taiwan, Afung refused. She reported to one local NGO in Singkawang. Then one Cangkau named Ly who came to fetch her caught and brought to court. She was prosecuted for only eight months in prison, although sentenced for 1.5 years. Similar case also happened to Alang whose her departure to Taiwan was halted. A middleman and three Cangkau from Taiwan, Jakarta and Singkawang successfully arrested, as well as one honorary staff from the Office of Civil Registration.

“Two arrests were made of Jakarta and Singkawang, but at the end the court let them free. There was not enough evidence to bring them to jail. It was all about the money. Trafficking Act at the time was not effective yet, but when the trial it was in effect. The police did not use the Law of trafficking, but the money talks. Alang case known as the “star” case. When some middlemen detained, many star generals intervened... They call to settle the case, stop the case, use the term of 86 ” (Rosita - LBH Peka, interview 2010).

5.2.4. Administration papers and Role of Government Officials

Besides the role of the family forcing *amoi* to Marry with Taiwanese, Government Officials also play a role in the process of mail order brides as they benefited from the process. Police officers, military, sub district leaders, village leaders, RT and RW leaders, civil administration officers, prosecutors, judges and prison wardens have all been cited as directly or indirectly either complicit in the exploitation of *amoi*. The role of government employees is range from falsifying documents, ignoring the age of *amoi*, facilitating the process and releasing the defendant from punishment. According to Solidarity Center fact sheet of human trafficking (undated), culture of corruptions and bribes of government officials consider as another factor contributed to trafficking. They can be paid to falsify information’s on the ID cards, birth certificate, passports and thus make *amoi* more vulnerable to exploitation due to false identification and document.

From the interview with government officials revealed that some of them admitted helping *amoi* to get married and go to Taiwan. Usually someone who comes and asks for help is not *amoi* or her family, but someone who is helping her, which can be the middlemen or administration helper. The public, as expressed by Rio, a journalist and board member from MABT, also knows it.

“.... there are many document falsifications occurred so they could leave. The role of RT, Village Chief, District Head and Immigration in falsify documents the underage amoi”(Rio – MABT, Pasiran – Feb 4, 2010).

Upgrading *amoi*’s age started from Family Card (KK- *Kartu Keluarga*). Many people in 80s to 90s that do not have a birth certificate, that create space for falsification as this not required for KK, ID or passport. Date born in KK usually only based on information from the parents alone, not based on the legal document in which in this case is the birth certificate. They might easily cross out the date or revised with tip-ex and change the date and it considered okay by the government officials. The revised KK then submitted to respective RT leaders for having reference letter to higher level such as village office (Kelurahan) in order *amoi* have

an ID card (ID card issued for all > 17 year old citizen).

"Around 80s to 90s, many amoi upgraded their age. It simply crossed or tip-ex the date of birth in KK, generally cangkau or mak comblang did this. Someone has to have above 17 to have an ID" (Ahin – RT Pasiran, March 1, 2010)

People without proper identification generally fall to trafficking more easily. As Davis (2004) puts it, *"they often lose protection that the law affords as they are not registered in state thus assumed they do not exist in the eyes of the state because their age and nationality not documented"* (p.120). Without a birth certificate, people who are trafficked are more easily passed off as adults to anyone who asks.

ID card required for obtaining a passport. If RT unwilling to upgrade *amoi's* and did not issue a reference letter to the village office normally they find another RT who is willing to be paid and falsified *amoi's* age. They requested a moving letter (*surat pindah*) from the respective RT. Another way is falsifying RT's signature and make its own reference letter.

"A lot of RT also involved in falsifying the documents, if one RT refused, they try to find another RT. They just ask for a letter to move from the RT. Or they falsify his signature... I know this, because I see myself, but it has no RT stamp" (Robertus - RT leader, Pasiran – Feb 26, 2010).

In addition, those people took a short cut on processing the document. They go directly to the higher-level authority and found people who might cooperate or bribe to falsify documents.

"Couple of times the Village offices skipped by people who want to make a passport. They might go directly to the immigration office because there are people who can arrange it. But since the new mayor, it is stricter now. Reference letter and Village office stamp are must for processing in the municipality office." (Effendi – Village Chief, Mayasopa- Feb 8, 2010)

Amoi age becomes a bit complicated because of differences in the calculation of age according to Chinese culture. In their tradition, it started since from the fetus (where the baby still in mother's womb), or even far before the fetus grew, the calculation started. Thus, *amoi's* age could be one to two years older than the normal calculation.

"Chinese people have a different way in calculating age. Since the baby in the womb they started calculated. The difference can be two years comparing to BC system. As many people do not have a birth certificate, the date of birth in KK normally only based on parent's memory" (Hartoyo – village office staff, Pajintan Feb 16, 2010)

Since 2009, Singkawang municipality applying SIAK Online (*Sistem Informasi Administrasi dan Kependudukan*) or Administration System Online that creates smaller space for document falsification. Civil Administration office would not accept the hand crossed or tip-ex document. Birth certificate is now required for all citizens. Then many people falsifying birth certificate and upgrading *amoi's* age. Once, it happens when a number of birth certificates were signed by someone from the court and immigration office, later it found that the person had died long time ago but his signature still exists.

"Falsifying birth certificate vastly occurred everywhere. It revealed unintentionally that one signature still exists although the person had died." (Robertus - RT leader, Pasiran – Feb 26, 2010).

However, according to some government officials this practice was unfeasible. If *amoi* was still under age, it would be impossible for her to marry. What they normally do if the underage *amoi* want to get married was practicing customary marriage – or Photo Marriage, as this practice was accepted as legitimize the practice according to Chinese tradition. It is not necessary to registering it to Civil Administration office.

" amoi are old enough to marry, there is marriage law. If they still below the required minimum age they are just practicing photo marriage only, village office would not give reference letter if they are not old enough, but in Chinese custom, their marriage are valid. " (Tauhid – Village Head, Sedau – March 2, 2010)

"It's impossible if they are still underage, because the passport is needed. But yes, maybe they falsified my signature, use the village stamp without my knowledge. If they are old enough, I would not make it difficult, just say it. Perhaps in RT level, there must be obstacles in making a passport." (Ni Made – Pajintan Village Chief, Pajintan – Feb 13, 2010)

Falsification of documents has become public knowledge, both among officers and community, yet remain continues. As long as they met the required documents, they still process it, although knowing there is fraud on it.

The mail order brides have been occurred since 80s and at the peak in the 90s. Many people believed this practice brought prosperity to many poor families, and indirectly improved the economy of Singkawang. Many people benefited from the practice, including government officials. Falsification of documents considered normal and acceptable thing to expedite the process and not constitute as a crime. It assumed as a noble practice on helping to improve *amoi* life and her future. It does not break the law as parent's approval obtained for under age *amoi*.

"Many people feel being helped also government officials, in CAPIL office yes, everybody benefited ... maybe around 90% benefited. It's not a crime, just helping people expediting the process. It does not break the rule ... because its purpose is for amoi's better future" (Robertus - RT leader, Pasiran – Feb 26, 2010)

As a lot of people from different level government offices benefited from the process includes the police officers and judges, many cases do not process by the law as an absence or lack of evidence. If they do, the punishment can be much lower than what it sentenced.

"Many cases of the middlemen are not brought to the courts because absence of the evidences " (Rio – MABT, Pasiran – Feb 4, 2010)

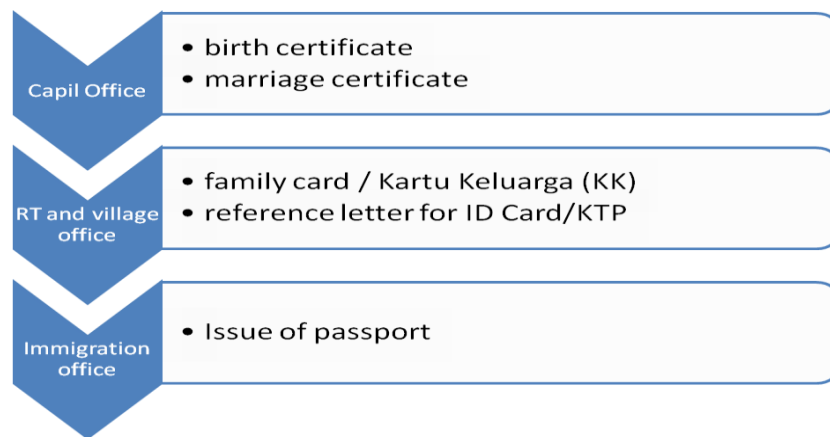
"Once I used identity of a child who had died ... not really a problem, but someone reported me to the police. .it was because of competition among middlemen and agent. I was the main suspected, but police caught an agent named Alang ..he was great agent.. and put him to jail. His lawyer up to 14 years, it was indeed a big case at that time. I was saved because of incomplete documents...and Alang only accused for only 10 months.. but in

fact, it just 5 months in prison.” (Robertus - RT leader, Pasiran – Feb 26, 2010)

People competes with each other to gain the benefits as much as possible and remove their competitor. Once happened to one of RT leader when reported by someone for falsifying data and identity of his citizen. However, he saved because he is staff from the government office and a big agent who is behind him and backs him up. This agent finally brought to the court and imprisoned, however it much fewer than what has been sentenced.

“Community is not much known about the Law because of lack of socialization. While it very difficult to apply the Law in the practice.. because many articles are not clear such as what considered as human trade, etc ...” (Bujang Ali – West Singkawang Sub District Head – Office, Feb 9, 2010)

Figure 2



In order of *amoi* may go and live in Taiwan with her new husband, both need to registering their marriage to CAPIL office. Marriage certificate is required for making a passport as a couple. Photo Marriage would not be accepted.

"If they only do Photo Marriage, amoi could not go to Taiwan .. or she only visited temporary but could not stay longer. But if they marry legally, she could live there immediately. " (Robertus - RT leader, Pasiran – Feb 26, 2010)

In order to issue Marriage Certificate for the new couple, both parties have to be present in CAPIL office to sign the certificate – it cannot be represented. Below are requirements of marriage certificate from CAPIL office :

- Birth certificate, KK, KTP
- Letter of acknowledge stated that both are never married before, issued by the district (if divorced, it must be attached to the divorce papers, or death certificate)
- Letter of dispensation to expedite the process, if they are in a hurry of going to Taiwan.
- Letter of blessing from the traditional /religious leaders.
- Photos of both couple

The above requirements also applied for Taiwanese except number one, replace with a copy of passport. In addition, report issued from the local police office in Singkawang and Taiwan

also needed.

"Administration papers arranged by the agent or middleman, Taiwanese returned back to Taiwan. Those will be submitted to Kadin Taiwan in Jakarta then the couple has to undertake an interview ... they will be questioned about the decision, etc.. and also test her skill in Mandarin.. So, before leaving, amoi should take Mandarin course first." (Bujang Ali – West Singkawang Sub District Head – Office, Feb 9, 2010)

The interview process in KADIN Taiwan believed for some people as an effort to reduce the number of cases and to minimize the space for document falsification. FOKET assumed it has one of their effort in approaching KADIN Taiwan to involve in minimizing the case.

"They all go home at a certain moment, there is a report to us so that at one point FOKET invited to Singkawang Taiwanese agency for clarification, KADIN representative from Taiwan, admits this incident was also true. Then we are in cooperation with CAPIL to add more requirements: for recording a marriage they should bring witnesses, both need to bring a letter from there, married or not. If you are certainly not to be married, do not require this first." (Bong Cin Nen – FOKET, Singkawang downtown – March 2, 2010)

Due to significant growing number of undocumented migrant worker in Taiwan since 1980, in which Indonesia with Philippines constitutes 93% of the total migrants (Lan, 2003), brings impact to the number of foreign women who can enter Taiwan for marriage each year. Taiwanese government has put a limit on the number each year and Indonesia are allowed only 360 such visas. In order to circumvent the quota, agents in Singkawang are often registered as migrant workers sending agents (or known as PJTKI), which allows them to send girls to Taiwan on working visas. *Amoi* were sent to Taiwan by using a fake Indonesian passport to falsify her age, as she was too young to marry according to Indonesian law. Papers were also falsified which allowed her citizenship to be changed without her knowledge (Arsana, 2001 in Rosenberg, 2004),

5.2.5. Financial advantages

Many people believed this practice somehow as an effective tool of poverty alleviation from the remittance (Solidarity Center, undated) brought by *amoi* who work and live in Taiwan. This practice brings economic improvements to the family in Singkawang and indirectly to the economic development of Singkawang town (Bujang, Rio, Robertus, Bong Cin Nen, Prayitno, Tauhid, interview 2010).

The other governments encourage workers to migrate to their countries because migrants are of cheap labor can supply services, build infrastructure or make their export industries more competitive in the global marketplace (Solidarity Center, undated). Trafficking, however, occurs when migrant workers have no access to legal and safe migration.

From the interview with local governments officials revealed that this practice as a form of survival of *amoi* and her families to improve their economic condition. They regard it as an acceptable practice and normal thing. If *amoi* family helped, thus municipality Singkawang also benefited financially. Increased number of houses in Singkawang is one apparent indicator. According to one source, this is one of the positive impact from the practice. In 80s, there were only 125 houses in his neighborhood but since 90s when the practice was booming, the number of new houses grew rapidly to 400 houses. Those believed as a result

from *amoi* married to Taiwanese. House can be as a dowry as well from the remittance. Though *amoi* and her Taiwanese husband work in the field or labor, due to higher exchange rate, they could build, buy or renovate their house in Singkawang.

"It brings financial profit to the family also for Singkawang town...if they send money it increased the economic turn over..." (Bujang Ali – West Singkawang Sub District Head – Office, Feb 9, 2010)

5.2.6. Agent and Middleman

As has been mentioned above, agent and middleman benefitted most from the business. Generally, these people are close relatives of *amoi* family but it could be someone they never know, and it possible their neighbors or people who travel from village to village and looking for potential *amoi*.

From the interviews revealed the three levels of agents working in the system. They worked in Taiwan, Jakarta as a transit town and Singkawang. Three actors identified as a mediator between Taiwanese and *amoi* namely matchmaking agent, middleman and family or relative. *Cangkau* normally helped the administration process.

Agent and middleman have broad networks in those three cities through kinship or friendship. What constituted as an agent is a corporation working in a quite large-scale business and having a work permit in the service industry (Rio, interview 2010). They may work legally and illegally - meaning with or without working permit from the government - simultaneously as recruiting companies, making it nearly impossible to know the difference. From the interviews, apparently Indonesian government applies a little control over the performance and practices of these agents. In case of human trafficking, agents may or may not be aware that they have put *amoi* into exploitative conditions (Rosenberg, 2004).

- **Agent**

Agent in Singkawang, normally works with the middlemen that might travel from village to village searching for the potential girls. They also have links to government officials in high level for backing up their business. For helping in administration papers, they work and recruit someone as *Cangkau*. However, it could be their own staff or the middlemen.

Interviews with one agent in Singkawang revealed the history of the chain in this practice. One RT leader informed that one agent nearby his house was a big agent. He has a big house with several rooms as accommodation for Taiwanese come to Singkawang. In the '90s, the numbers of Taiwanese came were pretty much up to 20 people in a month.

"It could be 20 Taiwanese in a month.. that was in 97 until 2001, but it gets down respectively. I usually invited staff from CAPIL office to come and registered the couple here in my house" (Anga - Agent , Pasiran - March 2, 2010).

It was in early 70 when a former school friend in Taiwan asked his favor to find a wife for him. Fosin graduated from the school in Taiwan and married to Taiwanese woman. It makes him have broad networks in connecting people. In 80s, he returned to Singkawang and start his business seriously. There were about six Taiwanese searched *amoi* by asking his favor.

"But I asked help of someone else in Singkawang to find amoi as she know many people

especially in rural suburd... So we contact them to find potential amoi” (Fosin – Agent, Pasiran March 2, 2010).

He added, Taiwanese men love *amoi* Sngkawang because of cultural similarities and the same belief namely Confucius. In addition, *amoi* Singkawang is known as polite, submissive and good at domestic works.

“Taiwanese likes amoi Singkawang to be his wife because they obedient and diligently working for housekeeping. Besides we both have similarities in culture and belief. “ (Fosin – Agent, Pasiran March 2, 2010)

The cost generally is in one whole package, from lodging, meals, dowries, wedding party and administration papers. The package itself are varies depending on the facilities and the agent might cover all the cost to be incurred to Taiwanese. Parents of *amoi* normally received an *Angpao* ranging from IDR 5 million to IDR 9 million (US\$ 550 to US\$ 990. All cost borne by Taiwanese, *amoi* and her family cost nothing.

As for the agent who mediates Taiwanese and *amoi*, Fosin refer this as an *Angpao*. According to him, the fee is informal cost, the rate is not officially published but depends on the generosity of Taiwanese. If they only received let say IDR 10K (US\$ 1.1), it does not matter for him as it regarded of doing good thing to others. However, an *Angpao* is required as a thanksgiving token. He claimed once he got IDR 10 million (US\$ 1,100) of *Angpao*.

Recently, demand from Taiwanese was declined significantly. Most likely they find the girl from Vietnamese or Philippines. Many negative stories about *amoi*'s miserable life relatively influenced the demand as well. Often, information about the potential husband has been twisted by the middleman and concealed the real life of Taiwanese such as the age, physical appearance and occupation in order *amoi* undoubtedly will say yes.

“Middleman often lied about the real condition of the Taiwanese. They just make up a good story in order amoi can be easily interested” (Fosin – Agent, Pasiran March 2, 2010).

In addition, administration procedure is strict now and worsened economic situation in Taiwan are other factors that lead to the declined demand for *amoi* Singkawang.

“There is many unemployment in the country (Taiwan)...while to find a wife need money..” (Fosin – Agent, Pasiran March 2, 2010)

In fact, *amoi* might also take advantage over the practice. Thousands reasons for *amoi* to leave Taiwan and returning to Singkawang in order to re-marry with another one. They make marriage with Taiwanese as a business that brings them a lot of money. *amoi* along with her husband in Singkawang conspired to do the business. Once *amoi* get what she wanted, she ran away from her Taiwanese husband, or even before she left for Taiwan, when her family received the dowries while the papers still on the process, she fled away with or without the knowledge of her parents. As an agent, Fosin experienced this case several times. *“So, I think there are good and bad Taiwanese but also there are good and bad amoi “*

He admitted the rate of successful marriage is very high compare to the unsuccessful case, however because the case has been politicized by some people and the image become

negatively visible. Eventually it brings economically advantage to families and Singkawang town. It can be seen during Chinese New year and CGM, billion rupiahs from the remittance, especially the transfer of funds from Taiwan.

"Economically Singkawang town is benefited. 90% of the case as success, it is a high number compare to the failed case. If we check accounts in Bank, billions of rupiah come from the people from abroad, especially Taiwan." (Anga - Agent , Pasiran March 2, 2010)

Since January 2010 up to February 2010, only two Taiwanese asked help to find *amoi* as a wife. In 2009, the number ranged from 20 people. Below is data from CAPIL office, from the past five years number of people in Singkawang who married to foreigners. As we can see above, in 2005 less than 20 couples in a year had decreased respectively in the two following years, the number increased tenth fold in 2008 but again decreased a half in 2009.

Table 5. Number of registered foreign couple in Singkawang

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Taiwan	9	6	47	116	62
Malaysia	2	2	1	2	1
Others (Philipina, Vietnam, Brunei)	1	0	0	2	0
Total	12	8	48	120	63

Source : CAPIL office Singkawang (interview, 2010)

- **Middleman**

What constituted as a middleman is individual people who mediate Taiwanese and *amoi*, worked informally and independently. In general, middlemen are middle aged women, usually married and has experience travel to Taiwan.

As middle aged women and fellow female, it is easier for them in persuading *amoi*. Hence, it makes them as a key actor in the process. They must be skilled in convincing and manipulating. They might put *amoi* families into debt bondage and required *amoi* as a payment.

"...middleman sometimes lent some money but at the end as the family could not afford to pay back, they allowed amoi married to Taiwanese" (Rio – MABT, Pasiran – Feb 4, 2010).

Middleman is the most benefited in the process as admitted by all respondents. Around 30-50% out of the total fees paid by Taiwanese, it goes to middleman pocket. As it has been mentioned above, Taiwanese pay the fee in a package and that is associated for wedding party, administration papers and dowries. One source stated a middleman could get IDR 7 million (US\$ 776) at the minimal, but it can be up to IDR 40 million. Even another source said IDR 70 million (US\$ 7,760).

What is the motive behind their practice? Most of the respondents said the economic factor is the main factor lead to this practice as they much benefited. In addition, they also believed that what they do is a good deed by helping someone finding his soul mates.

"Besides economic motivation, match making people is bringing huge heavenly reward...coz it helping people."(Fosin – Agent, Pasiran March 2, 2010)

One middleman admitted that motivation of becoming a middleman is not to gain a lot of profit. It is more because the experiences of her daughter who married to Taiwanese ended miserably. In the beginning, her marriage ran smoothly, happily and he often received money from her daughter. Until she found that her Taiwanese husband loves to gambling and drinking, and forced her to work as a driver while carrying her little kid. He would not let his sad story experienced by another *amoi* by married to the wrong Taiwanese men. Then he carried out a small investigation of life and history of potential Taiwanese husband prior meeting with *amoi*. For sometimes, he did this job but now has stopped as he found that *amoi* also take advantages from her Taiwanese husband by run away from him and carried off some properties with her.

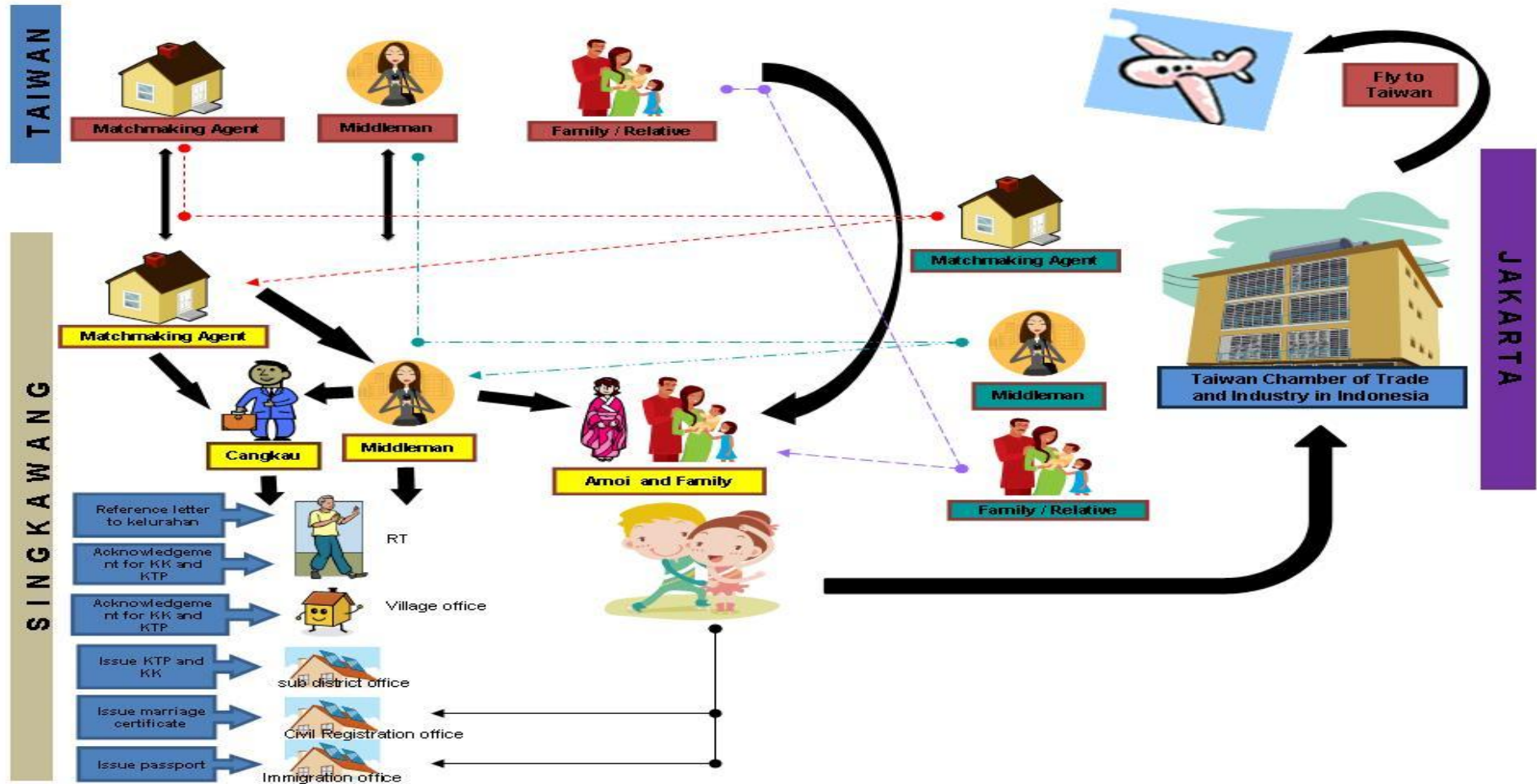
- **Administration helper**

It is known as Cangkau Surat to refer people who helping in administration papers. It could be the middleman him/herself but it could also be a different person. S/he is responsible on processing the required legal documents for *amoi* in order she can depart to Taiwan with her new Taiwanese husband.

Generally, these people had linked to key persons in government offices namely in RT, Village office, sub district office or even in CAPIL or Immigration office. In fact, staff from those respective offices could also be the Cangkau as they have more access to the other government offices in Singkawang. One sub district leader confessed when he was just a staff in the office, he helped plenty of people who asked his favor on processing documents of *amoi* who want to leave for Taiwan.

"I did help those middlemen to take care of the administration papers of Amo. They came to me and asking help then I helped them. In 90s, a lot of demands for this such as; birth certificates, marriage certificates, ID cards, KK and passport. Generally, I charged around IDR 3 million, but it is negotiable. Large numbers of amoi do not have a birth certificate so I help them ..." (Bujang Ali – West Singkawang Sub District Head – Office, Feb 9, 2010).

5.2.7. The Network of Mail Order Brides Singkawang



CHAPTER VI

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter provides discussion of the cases used in this thesis on the basis of a sociological analysis.

6.1. Looking back to the Ancestor and Long history of Discrimination

The Chinese community in Singkawang known as a solitary, introvert community, and not as a society that easily mingles with each other. They live within a cluster of their own. The model of their settlement is very typical that people can easily identify their house in which normally grouped in one cluster with two rows of houses facing each other. They speak in their own language namely *Kek*. It is common that Chinese people speak limited *Bahasa Indonesia*, even for those who living in rural or remote villages cannot speak *Bahasa Indonesia* at all.

"Many are not fluent in Indonesian. They live with their group with norms and rules made by their own. They tend to be exclusive, they usually want to marry people from their group."
(Effendi – Village Chief, Mayasopa- Feb 8, 2010)

From the observation during fieldwork, everyday life of a Chinese family has profoundly influenced from Taiwan and Hong Kong. From the way they dress, hair style, television program, songs, and even how they set their time. At home, they set their clock according to time in both countries that are one hour earlier. Furthermore, from the interview with other ethnic people in Singkawang, it revealed that Chinese people are known as humane community with tolerant character.

There are two aspects to understand the social behavior of the reason of Chinese Singkawang living in a cluster, as we can perceive from the two cases above (Sisi and Ami). First, we should look at the history of their ancestor migrating to Singkawang from the mainland China in the past. As it has been mentioned in chapter 3, their ancestor came from Guangdong province in the southern part of China. They were from Hakka ethnic and only small number of Hokkien ethnic came from Fujian province. Most of Hakka ethnic lived in rural hills and work as miners, farmers, small traders and regarded as tough and poor people in their origin places. They have been socially labeled as poor-rural people in their origin place, and eventually in South East Asia and Indonesia.

Those people also did the same when they came to West Kalimantan. They worked in gold mining in Montrado, live exclusively within their own group, and used their own language. The ways they live are remain the same until now. At present, they are not working in the mining anymore since it has closed, but they worked as small farmer or trader. Though not all Chinese Singkawang lives as poor people, but in general Chinese Singkawang known as poor Chinese, contrastly striking with common Chinese people in Indonesia who economically lived in prosper (INDIES Report, 2007).

Here comes the issue of boundaries and territoriality as Hortsman and Wadley (2006) said, that it becomes an important issue in the contemporary world *"where social groups aim continually define and redefine the relations between social and physical space"*. Those Chinese people who migrate to Singkawang were as Horstman and Wadley (2006) put it, on the border of the nation-state. They need identification in order to help to transform the concepts of their

nationalism. Furthermore, those Chinese migrants who cross the boundaries and territory as social and cultural systems, it goes beyond state boundaries. Hence, it plays a critical role in the construction of their own states. It explained by the way they living in a cluster, maintain their local tradition such as keep speaking their own local language, maintain their belief and tradition as represent their identity and nationalism and as Horstman and Wadley put it, this also related to the issue of identity, sovereignty where migrant people need it in their new place. The local people in their new place might see them are living exclusively.

In addition, Chinese society had strong beliefs on their ancestors and cultures and still hold on to it. The field work was conducted during January – March 2010, when people were celebrating Lunar New Year in February 14 and Cap Go Meh festival in February 28, like their ancestors did in the past. They celebrated with traditional ritual in *tepekong* – a Chinese temple, traditional foods, home decorated with typical Chinese ornaments, and Tatung festival, where hundreds of Tatung march down and showed their extraordinary skills along the protocol roads in Singkawang town.

Ancestors, older peoples, and parents are well respected and appreciated in traditional Chinese society. That is why their words followed without any objection from the child. Honoring parents is believed to bring good luck, so *amoi* – the term used to refer to a Chinese girl from Singkawang - always want to make her parents happy by following their orders and bringing up the dignity and social status of their parents. Even if sometimes against their own will.

Apparently this mindset influenced by the Confucianist belief that most of Chinese Singkawang adhere where good social relationships are the central. In principle, Confucianism teaches human beings to live in social harmony and never keep and extend a problem with other people. In the past, though many Chinese societies expand to many other countries, they never make occupation, and colonialism, they live together with local communities while at the same time still maintaining their customs and traditions brought from their homeland (Suardi, interview 2010).

Confucianism developed and proposed by Confucius, the Chinese social philosopher and thinker. According to Damien *et al.* (2005), it is a combination of the system and thoughts of philosophy. Recently, it is the most wide-spread system of religious thought in China and it concerned with the principles of proper social relationships, ethical conduct and practical wisdom. Moreover, he said that Confucius, the founder, is respected not only as a great man, but also as a god whose thoughts shaped Chinese attitudes toward life. It sets the standards of social value and patterns for living. His teachings also shaped the background of Chinese social, political theories and institutions.

The second aspect is the long history of discrimination of Indonesian Chinese. Indonesian Chinese and its descendants treated like a third citizen. INDIES and ATKI-HK report on Domestic Causes of Trans Border Marriages in Indonesia (2007) argued that the first citizen is the army and their family, and the second citizen is common people but not Chinese family. They lived in multi layer discrimination and restriction in all aspects for such a long time especially during *Orde Baru* (New Era) regime . This condition believed as a product of Dutch colonialism known as *Devide at Impera*, where community is divided and grouped based on ethnic and race, and make them hurtling each other. Chinese communities called "*Pecinan*" or China town and every Pecinan lead by one captain, and this becomes the first effort to divide

Chinese people in Indonesia into social categorization. However, since Gus Dur as a President of Indonesia (1999-2001), this restriction was abolished, however, the cultural stigmatization on Indonesian Chinese that caused by its restriction still continue until now (INDIES, 2007).

This emphasized by Rio from MABT – *Majelis Adat dan Budaya Tionghoa* or Association of Chinese Culture and Custom (interview, 2010) in responds to the number of Chinese people in Singkawang. Number of Chinese people in Singkawang recorded by the government official is much less than the actual number on the ground as he believed it can bring political implication, as part of the discrimination of Chinese people in Indonesia. Moreover, Rosita also sensed that current situation is little exposure of mail order bride cases in the media since the new Mayor in Singkawang who is Chinese descent, most likely related to Chinese ethnic issue in Indonesia. Concern about Chinese ethnic in Singkawang was also raised by some non-Chinese local government officials, as currently Singkawang municipality ruled by Chinese decent people from the Mayor to the key persons in the local House of Representative (Rosita, interview 2010).

6.2. Social Values – Gender, Poverty and Livelihood

Social values practiced by the Chinese people in Singkawang can be related to the gender practice, poverty culture and livelihood within Chinese family. Women roles in Chinese families bear significant socialized responsibility – just like women in most of Asian and African countries. Case of Ami and Sisi show us that mothers have to work hard in supporting the family livelihood, taking care of their children while the fathers are busy with their gambling and drinking habit, spending most of the time outside the home. It has been accepted as a normal practice, given the patriarchal attitude toward women among traditional Chinese family, which shows a low regard for the women in everyday life in the economic and social dynamic of the society.

Moreover, daughters are valued more over sons in Singkawang Chinese family due to the possibility of to give them away to someone else for marriage. It is indicated by the fact of *amoi* associated with US\$ as they can get *Angpao* (a small red envelope filled with money) as dowry if someone wanted to marry her. The term they used called as *Mamochi*, or literally means selling a daughter.

The three cases of this thesis represent poor Chinese family in Singkawang. We can perceive from their house, family background and limited resources in which in some extent motivated *amoi* to marry a Taiwanese man, with the hope of a better life and as a way of leaving the poverty. Extreme poverty, such as Ami's case, whom their family lived in the rented house and have no left over resources, while still having three school-aged children, drives her parents in forcing Ami to marry with Taiwanese men. Not juts one time, when she failed with her first marriage, they forced her again to marry with another Taiwanese man, regardless of what Ami experienced with her first.

LADI Report on Research Mail Order Brides in Benteng Chinese in Jakarta (2007), argued that mail order bride has been years developed over the years as a survival mechanism to get out of the poverty culture. Poor families are made to believe that living abroad promises a social change for the better. Thus, it is difficult to stop the mail order bride practice as they believe that they will get a better life by marrying Taiwanese men regardless of what they have to sacrifice in exchange. As Long (2004) puts it, women choose to sell sexual services in return for safe passage and livelihood. Some cultural practices – just like mail order brides – are

embedded in family and kinship systems. The practice becomes a rationalization in time of social and economic depression.

Despite the historical background of their ancestor who comes from one ethnic in mainland China that generally regarded as poor-rural people, the issue of unemployment, job insecurity, low wages were brought them to the decision of finding a way to get a decent life. Thus, this system of mail order brides is believed to be part of their livelihood, as a survival mechanism to keep them secure.

Apparently, it is not only for *amoi* and the family, mail order brides system as a livelihood also applied for other social actors who are involved in the system, includes the local government officials and other community members. Though somehow they know that is not right and against the law, but they close their eyes. They keep it happening and maintain it as they also benefit from the process. They make this as their source of income by helping in the process of mail order brides.

"Community knows about this, but they do not want to report it as they avoid the complicated procedures. The immigration also knows there are fraudulent practices, but did not conduct an investigation, as the required documents are complete." (Robertus - RT leader, Pasiran – Feb 26, 2010)

6.3 Long time migration network with economic development

The emergence of mail order brides cannot be separated from the long time migration network from mainland China to Singkawang as well as from Singkawang to Taiwan in the past. Huge migration of people from mainland China to West Kalimantan, to be specific to Singkawang in 13th century brought along the culture and tradition to destination area. Cultural values were inherited from generation to generation, and turn to be systematically structured in the community. Some perhaps eliminated or acculturated with local culture, however, they still maintain their ancestor tradition as part of their social identity. This can be seen in everyday life of the people in Singkawang. Data collection occurred during the festivity season of Lunar New Year and Cap Go Meh, the Chinese tradition of celebrating the season were exceptionally strong influenced by the tradition of Chinese in their homeland. People decorated their house with red ornaments, Barongsai and Liong parade from house to house prior the Cap Go Meh, Tatung parade on the day of Cap Go Meh, the basket cake and fireworks celebration in the evening.

Life of Chinese family in Singkawang is strongly influenced by the homeland culture and tradition. In everyday life, they oriented their life to China - as we can see in Sisi's case i.e. time setting, Mandarin songs, and Hong Kong program in television.

The similar culture of Chinese people in Singkawang and Taiwan, and long time migration history is assumed to be the underlying causes of the emergence of mail order brides system. People still maintain the family and friendship relationships in the two countries and that when the story started. They visit each other, in and out the country to maintain the relationship. As what had happened to Fosin, owner of one matchmaking agent in Singkawang. He studied in Taiwan and met his wife there, hence he has many links to Taiwanese families and friends. It followed by a request from his friend to find a girl to be married to from Singkawang. When he was successful, more requests came to him and from then on he started the business of matchmaking agent in Singkawang.

In his business, he involved many people. With the help of middlemen who are generally local people in Singkawang who travel back and forth to villages in order for searching girls who want to be married to Taiwanese man. People in government offices get involved helping with administration documents - from RT (*Rukun Tetangga* – neighborhood) to Sub district office, police office, Capil office (*Catatan Sipil* or Civil Administration office) and immigration office. Many people are engaged in the business and they all get some benefit out of it and as a source of income.

Amoi Singkawang who married to Taiwanese man, despite their marriage are failed or succeed, whether they are working or not in Taiwan - brought something back to family in Singkawang. As de Haas argued in UNRISD report on Remittance and Social Development (2007), remittance have the potential to stimulate economic growth, improve well being, and reduce poverty directly and indirectly. The remittance steadily increased and generate the development of Singkawang. One indication argued by Bong Cin Nen (Interview, 2010), number of poor Chinese family living in Singkawang significantly decreased in less than ten years, from 42,000 of poor people to 3,370.

In line with remittances, as quoted by de Haas (2007) - remittance is a livelihood strategy pursued by social groups typically households as a reaction to relative deprivation in order to spread livelihood risks, secure and increase income and acquire investment capital (Stark and Taylor, 1989; Quinn, 2006) rather than being a response to absolute poverty (Hampshire, 2002). He added, remittance is a central element of household's strategies to overcome local development constraints (de Haas, 2007).

However, he also argued that their effects of remittances on social inequality are much more ambiguous. Emphasized by Mitchell in NEC report (2006) that said there has been little attention being paid to this due to typical approach of handling the remittance in the country of origin is narrow and economically short term, hence effects on long term poverty reduction, equity and sustainable development could not be effectively achieved.

In higher level, as Kapur (2003) in de Haas (2007) argued, remittance are an increasingly important and relatively stable source of external finance that often play a critical social insurance role in the areas afflicted by economic and political crisis. Moreover, he argued that remittance has been proven to be less unstable and less to be pro-recurring, therefore it is believed as a more reliable source of foreign currency than other capital flows. Because it sent through informal channels, the actual importance of remittance is even higher than official figures show. In this case, Rosita and Robertus also emphasized (interview, 2010), during Chinese celebration, especially in Lunar New Year and Cap Go Meh, flow of funds sent back by migrants to Singkawang, especially from Taiwan could be up to billions rupiah. Robertus added, physical evidence that *amoi* married to Taiwanese brought prosperity to Singkawang town are a number of houses in his RT that dominated by Chinese family have considerably increased, and many temporary houses turned to permanent houses.

However, de Haas (2007) also argued that remittance has been commonly seen as an unreliable source of external income for families, communities and even for states. It would rapidly decrease with the settlement or return home. As Birk and Sindair (1979) put it (in de Haas, 2007), that remittance only created artificial and temporary improvement in livelihoods and create a dangerous dependency on external revenues. Therefore, it is important to have a long term planning of economic development and poverty reduction instead of depending on

the remittance from the people working and living abroad.

6.4. Legal Vs. Illegal

In March 2007, the government of Indonesia together with its parliament passed the Law No. 21/2007 on human trafficking (known as *UU PTPPO / Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Orang* or Elimination on Crimes of Human Trafficking). This law provides a mandate to local government to make policies to prevent trafficking and to address trafficking depending on local context and situation (Article 57, verse 2).

Definition of trafficking should be clear defined thus it will not be confused with regular migration and people smuggling. According to the Law, once there is coercion, force or exploitation, migration might turn into trafficking. People still confuse between those terms. ILO publication (undated) contrasts the nuances of people smuggling and trafficking. It says *“In practice, it is not always easy to differentiate between people smuggling and trafficking because ‘voluntary agreement’ may be a result of deception or may involve an individual or family entering into debt to pay for the travel, debt that puts them at the mercy of the lender. It may result in physical confinement when the human cargo is locked into vehicle or into a sending or reception centre. It may result in forced labor, where compliances is assured because documents have been confiscated, or by threats of disclosure to the authorities. In this cases, the ‘voluntary’ has become a ticket to trafficking.”*

Though mail order bride is not explicitly discussed within this Law, but let us analyze this mail order bride system whether it can be categorized as human trafficking based on its definition as describe in this Law. Article 1 verse 1 point 1 defined trafficking as :

“... is the recruitment action, transportation, storage, transfer or acceptance of someone with the threat of violence, the use of violence, abduction, confinement, forgery, fraud, abuse of authority or position of vulnerability, entrapment of debt or to provide payment or benefit, so as to obtain approval from the person who holds control over that other person, whether committed in country or between countries, for the purpose of exploitation or resulted in an exploited.”

It is more or less the same with human trafficking definition from The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), a supplement to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime as described in Chapter IV. There are aspects of Act (recruitment, transportation, storage, transfer and acceptance), aspect of Means (threat, fraud, abduction, confinement) and aspect of Purpose (exploitation, debt, slavery). The Law also describes the consent, the involvement of children, what constitute as children in the same Article and verse (point 5 and 7). Hence we can use those three aspects as a tool to analyze mail order brides as described below :

- **The Act (What is done)** : it is includes recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons.

From the three cases above, we can see that there is a process of recruitment of *amoi* through middleman or relatives. In Sisi’s case, information flows from different people that Sisi was looked for a Taiwanese husband, until one day someone came to her house together with a Taiwanese man, and asked her to marry him. However, apparently for some reasons, she was not able to go to Taiwan with her Taiwanese fiancée. Similar with Sisi’s, a middleman came to Ami’s house and offered her parents to allowed Ami married to Taiwanese man. She helped by

her middleman in arranging administration papers in order she could travel to Taiwan and live there with her husband. While in Afung's, her aunt who offered her married to a 30 year old Taiwanese, and someone else helped her and upgrading her age in order she could be leaving for Taiwan with her new husband. Recruitment and transportation process also occurred through Agent, as Fosin and Anga did. They helped Taiwanese men searching of *amoi* with the helped of middlemen.

- **The Means** (*How it is done*) : *threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim.*

From the three cases above, we can understand the process of recruitment involved the use of force by parents or relatives, use of deception through false stories about the life of Taiwanese men by middlemen or the Taiwanese and fake pictures of Taiwanese. It also involved giving of benefits to a person in control – whereas in this case are the parents, received amount of money in return for her daughter.

- **The Purpose** (*Why it is done*) : *for the purpose of exploitation, which includes exploiting the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices and the removal of organs.*

As we can learn from Ami's and Afung's case, they both experienced exploitation when they were in Taiwan. Ami forced to work as a plastic garbage collector, while Afung was prisoned in a small room by her husband, offered and sell to some other Taiwanese men by her middleman in Taiwan with the approval of her husband.

Still under the same definition, trafficking can be considered if one condition from each of the three categories above is met, and consent of the victim is irrelevant if one of the means above is employed. The case of mail order brides in Singkawang met with the definition above, thus it can be categorized as human trafficking. Furthermore, mail order brides in Singkawang involved under aged children – as we have learnt from the three cases – they were still under 18 year old when they married and experienced the three conditions above, with or without their consent - as they still under aged, it falls under the category of human trafficking.

In fact, the confusion among community in Singkawang still exists, and not popular among community in Singkawang. It not only experienced by the common people but to the local government officials, law enforcement authorities and police officials. As expressed by Bujang Ali (Interview, 2010), head of Singkawang Barat sub district :

"...community does not know much about Trafficking Law because lack of socialization from the government....however it is difficult to implement the law in the reality because the law is very vague, many unclear term...what does it mean with human trade (perdagangan) or trafficking? There are lots more. Because the term 'trade' is not an appropriate term, they are all follow the procedures and get consent from their parents..." (Bujang Ali – West Singkawang Sub District Head – Office, Feb 9, 2010)

The lack of understanding of the Law among them also expresses by Rosita from LBH Peka (Interview, 2010), as she mentioned *"...if there are cases, they often asked me whether is this fall under trafficking law or not, and if yes, in which articles they might charges to"*.

According to Fosin and Anga who are regarded as the owner of one matchmaking agency in Singkawang, their company is registered in the government record and has a permit to do a business in service. Though it is not clear enough what the “business service” they are engaged to, they run their business legally. This also raises a question of if someone or company makes profit by introducing a willing man to a willing woman then leaves them to work things out on their own, then where are the mistakes and who exactly is being victimized? The man is looked for a woman and the woman is looked for a man, and they both acted of their own choice, decision then where is the crime? This also raised by Fosin and Anga (Interview, 2010), they argued that what they do are a virtue of helping someone meeting their life partner, *“Match making people bring huge heavenly reward, because it helps people.”*

Many of the manifestations of trafficking practices are accepted as normal practices and not considered exploitative as acts of trafficking, due to lack of understanding in the community and local authorities. From interviews with people in Singkawang, we can conclude that mail order brides between *amoi* Singkawang and Taiwanese men have been accepted as legitimize practices as they have seen this as a part of Chinese culture, a means of livelihood and a survival mechanism. All three are related.

Confucianism, related to legalism, advocates for ruling through traditional customs and norms rather than through government regulations and penal law. In order to achieve the social order, it rejects the general use of formal laws. This based on its basic idea of this belief that all human nature is fundamentally good, basically perfect and upright. Hence, people led by administrative order develop a sense of self worth to avoid a sense of shame. Confucianism teaches, with the right leadership, people can conduct themselves harmoniously. The philosophy distinguishes between legalism and ritualism within the sphere of individual accountability (anonymous, www.buzzle.com, 2010). It allows people to have a sense of Shame, a feeling that would make them become a person with human character. They believe it would lead to a harmonious social order for the overall quality of the society.

Consequently, based on Confucianist teaching, law should be minimally used and only reserved for those that insists on engaging one’s self-interest without considering the well-being of the society (Diamant et.al, 2005). This explained why many Chinese people prefer to give money in order to avoid law or court, and many legal cases that involved Chinese normally halt before or without involving court.

“Chinese people do not like extending something or problem, as long as they can pay someone to sort it out, then why should come ...” (Rosita - LBH PeKa, Pasiran - Feb 5, 2010).

One community member also confirmed that Chinese people feel insecure to involve in a long pause problem or trouble, they usually stop the case by giving some money to the person whom they have the problem (Kalvin, informal discussion – 2010).

6.5. Modernity, bodies, globalization and mail order brides

Modernity and globalization promote materialistic values and secular view of life in a society, where this materialistic and consumeristic culture spread through the mass media to create and increase needs (Amaladoss, undated). This becomes a way of life and creates a system of values-that concentrates on the material world and in physical comfort.

As we can learn from the three cases above, Chinese community in Singkawang orienting their

everyday life to China (Hong Kong and Taiwan), and through mass media – television, they find out, gain knowledge, information on what has been going on in the other part of the world. Globalization has introduced those people to the materialistic and consumerist values spread through the mass media and create a dream in the society to have a decent life, imagined life as they observed from the media in which mingles with their local values.

As Bauman (1992) argues, the relationship between the local and the global is structured in an individual and produced in their everyday lives of what so called ‘habitats of meaning’. The local and global are entrapped at the intersection of different habitats of meanings through various channels, it could be on the internet, availability of products in the market or by watching television programs.

If we look at the physical appearance of *amoi* Singkawang, it starkly contrasts with the condition of their houses. The women look beautiful, clean, well maintained, fashionable and with *rebonding* hair (hair straightening style). As Bauman (2004) puts it, beauty means perfection and aligns with happiness. It has been one of the most exciting modern promises in the contemporary world. *Amoi* Singkawang is competing to get perfect as possible as they believed it brings happiness to appear more beauty and catchy. Related to the commodification, it increases the value of the girl in the market. Sigma Huda stated in United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, 1999 “*The fairer, taller, and prettier they are, the more desirable they are, the higher the price*” (Molland p.211, 2010). As being perfect means that they will never loses its value, never become outmoded and will never turn into waste (Bauman p. 114, 2004). Thus being prettier means they can get paid more and not thrown away. The body seems to become something where agency takes on an embodied form in which as Molland (p.223, 2010) said “*self esteem is redeemable through material gain.*”

In addition, *amoi* Singkawang kept updating their life style and becomes technologically literate, using cell phones or even a blackberry (in Ami’s case) to keep updated and linked with their social network. Internet cafe is not a weird thing in Singkawang, many youngsters use this to connect them with the outside world. *Kafe* – or coffee shops are always full of people during the evening. They are not only occupied by the youngsters, the older generation also comes there to maintain their social network.

Mail order brides in Singkawang are also made use of technology to spread the information. Cell phone and the internet were used for communication between those who lived in Taiwan, Jakarta or Singkawang. They maximize the use of technology to link with each other, finding *amoi* who is willing to go to Taiwan, or send pictures of Taiwanese men and *amoi* Singkawang. As mentioned by Rio (MABT, interview 2010), “*..the middleman helped in searching for amoi and approached her family. Nowadays, communication even very easier this time as they can use hand phone or internet.*”

Moreover, globalization influences people to search for having higher standards of living. As for poor people, the desires for consumer products lead to migration, with the hope to get better and higher income to buy the products, and this makes them vulnerable to trafficking. This material expectation also indicated by *amoi*’s willingness to work once they graduated from primary school, though they still have no clear idea on what type of work they will do, however, they are willing to do it as long as it gives them money to buy something they wanted. This factor also encourages parents in forcing their daughters to marry at an early age,

besides *amoi* themselves desired to have a better life and have a lot of money.

"Amoi certainly does not want to go to school. They just want to marry and become rich so they also may live in the foreign country" (Ahin – RT Pasiran, March 1, 2010)

6.6. Stigmatization of the returned girl - exclusion and inclusion

Not all mail order brides case end badly, even according to Robertus (interview, 2010) almost 90% are successful. Generally, if the marriage failed, the *amoi* went back to Singkawang. However, Rosita (interview, 2010) said that there are also a lot of cases where the *amoi* maintain living in Taiwan despite their broken marriage with Taiwanese, though she feels unhappy - either working under slavery conditions in a job, exploited, or deceived - rather than going back home to Singkawang. As an example, a case of a middleman in Singkawang where his daughter needed to work as a truck driver - carrying her baby while driving - due to her Taiwanese husband who was drinking, gambling and unemployed (anonymous, middleman - interview 2010). Another reason of not returning to Singkawang, is due to lack of funds as they live in poverty in Taiwan (Lili, *amoi* – interview 2010).

Nevertheless, *amoi* who returned home from their failed marriage, are accepted by her family and community, and does not experience and exclusion (Rio, interview 2010). However, they became withdrawn, quite, and unwilling to share their failed experiences to other people but share limited among *amoi* who experienced the same thing.

"... those who failed become very protective and do not share the story to another, only to those who are failed."(Rio, MABT – interview, 2010).

The returned girls live their life normally and can marry to another man without any difficulties. As Lili (interview, 2010) who returned home with her little son from Taiwan after her unsuccessful marriage with Taiwanese man, found a new husband in Singkawang when she returned home after work and married in Taiwan. Currently she lives with her new husband who works as a carpenter, together with her little son, and her mother and father in law.

Ami also experienced the same, when she successfully ran away from her husband in Taiwan, she returned to Singkawang and was again accepted by her family, relatives and friends. Though for the second time her parents forced her to re-marry with another Taiwanese man. However, this time she could run off from her parents though they already got *angpao* from the middleman. Now she is working in Tanjung Pinang and already engaged to one of her working colleagues.

6.7. Commodification of Singkawang amoi

The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Person (2008) argues that the commodification issue in human trafficking would not exist without the demand for commercial sex flourishing around the world. Putting people into a market like circumstances as commodities create a conducive environment for human trafficking.

As Wang and Chang (p.93, 2002) put it, the mail order brides that involves *amoi* in Singkawang and Taiwanese man can be categorized as an international trans border marriage system as it turns into an institutionalized profit-oriented social context which is described as "the commodification process." Furthermore, they argue that changes in the socio-demographic sphere in Indonesia and Taiwan have created a market for profit pursuing marriage agents.

Matchmaking agents are scattered at different social and demographic levels as it turns out to be a profitable industry. Not only companies or government institutions are involved in the whole process but also individuals who gain the benefit out of the process are involved in what grows to be a systemized structure. In order to meet different market constraints, those have emerged in the matchmaking process. As the mail order bride grows and matures, more and more people enter the market, offering competitive prices, and good service and delivery become the required conditions for success. Starting from an individual social-network, it gradually transformed to institutional in pursuit of profit. *Amoi Singkawang* becomes a trademark that is increasingly commodified to conform to the new situation in this competitive process. They are required to be 'good enough' in order they can marry and to be married when there is demand. In addition, as 'commodity' *amoi Singkawang* is marketable for Taiwanese men, they are known for their beauty, obedient, diligent and good at domestic works, besides economically they are relatively cheap (Rio, interview 2010).

Yet according to Wang and Chang (p.99, 2002), the demand of *amoi Singkawang* who married to ethnic Hakka males in Taiwan was at its peak before 1995. After 1995, the numbers were steadily decreasing while the demand of Vietnamese females steadily increased every year. This observation is also confirmed by some interviews of different respondents in Singkawang who stated the decreased number of incidents of *amoi* who married with Taiwanese man (Bujang Ali, Rosita, Rio, Suardi, Prayitno, Lasiman, Tauhid – interviews 2010).

As it has been mentioned in the previous chapter, the prospective Taiwanese husbands are in the average of above 30 and their educational level is not high, with occupations centered in manual works, self-employment, and farming, with an emphasize on low income occupational areas. Disabled Taiwanese men also jump into the mail order brides market. Further, the economic power of this category of male Taiwanese in the labor market has relatively declined. This disadvantage of lower social status and low economic power background make finding a life partner in his own country extremely difficult, thus finding an overseas bride may be a reasonable option (Wang and Chang p.101, 2002; interviews 2010). It can be said, those Taiwanese men who look for *amoi Singkawang* are not marketable anymore in their country.

Matchmaking agents and middlemen play a role as intermediaries between Taiwanese men and *amoi Singkawang*. They dominated the marriage market with the prospect of high earnings from arranged marriage activities creating a vast industry. Having broad social networks is an obligation to become an agent and middleman, whereas it increases the possibility in recruiting different kinds of *amoi Singkawang* across Singkawang, because having more prospective *amoi Singkawang* mean having more "goods" to choose from by the Taiwanese men. In order to survive in a competitive market, agencies need more women with diverse educational backgrounds and different physical qualities. Hence the agents make an effort to build a wide network and search into rural areas for finding potential *amoi* (Fosin, Anga, Robertus, interviews 2010)

In addition, being an agent or middleman needs to have a broad network with government officials in order to smoothen the process, such as administration and legal document processing and to keep an eye on the efficiency of the bureaucrats. As Wang and Cheng (2002) put it as a "know-who" skill, that it is not important of what you know, but who you know. This skill is a very important skill in this market in the bureaucratic country where a bribing culture is inevitable. It is required to speed up the process, falsifying documents and helping to supersede legalities. This money referred as *Angpao*. Hence, agencies or middleman also

recruit another person in government offices as an administration helper to helping the process. The more connections with government officials it makes the administration process faster (Wang and Cheng, 2002 and Bujang Ali, Robertus, interviews 2010).

6.8 Contesting Discourses – Outsider versus Insider

The two different views of outsiders and insiders could be immensely intriguing to see as each assumes to be the true one. However, as has been mentioned previously, the distinction among them is very vague and the boundaries around insiders and outsiders are vastly fluid. There is nobody purely an insider or an outsider. They can be an insider in some ways but can be an outsider by other criteria. Hence, as Willmott (1986) said, these two different views can be contested, given the fluidity of its boundaries.

We consider – as many people do – that outsiders have more power than the insiders. Outsiders assumed to be more objective than the insiders, and outsiders' objectivity must abound over self-interest (Rowe and Rankin, 2002). If we look at the mail order brides case in Singkawang, the outsiders perceive the case as something awful and inexcusable. The practice of mail order bride even called as tragedy where *amoi* being 'sold' by her parents (Sikwan and Triatuti, 2004). Outsiders put *amoi* under the category of being victimized and put people who are helping her to marry with Taiwanese under the category of human traffickers. Here comes the issue of criminalization of people. The marriage broker – it can be the agent or middleman - often portrayed as criminal that the marriage arrangements lead *amoi* into a labor or sex exploitative situations. In fact, middleman who intermediating brings *amoi* and Taiwanese men are also a normal person who are willing to help the girl and her family to have a better life. The motivation behind their action is doing a good deed, as this is considered a noble act that brings the heavenly reward of helping people in need (Anga, Fosin, interview 2010). It is similar with the case of recruiting women into prostitution in the case of human trafficking along the Thai-Lao border (Molland, 2010) where recruitment has the local connotation of helping other people.

The other motivation is to avoid more *amoi* Singkawang of having a bad experience by marrying the wrong Taiwanese man, and screening process was taken into account before matchmaking the two people (anonymous, middleman - interview 2010). In addition, *Amoi* as victims are often treated by outsiders as criminals. In destination countries, they are most likely prosecuted for immigration violations or involvement in prostitution. In the home country, they might be prosecuted either because of illegally leaving the country, using false documents, or for having worked in the sex industry (anonymous, www.stopvaw.org, 2010).

We can learn from the three cases above from the sociological perspective and by using an actor oriented approach, which enables us to see the case from the two perspectives of the insiders - who are often not included – as well as from the perspective of outsiders. Behind the what so called 'tragedy' of mail order brides from the outsiders' point of view, it appears to bring economic development for many people and Singkawang town, even the *amoi* herself can have a decent life and be able to help her parents. The knowledge and learning process among *amoi* makes them more selective and increases their awareness of any consequences they may face in if they decided to marry with Taiwanese men.

People under the same category even can have different opinions on perceiving the practice. This practice has seen to be a part of their tradition and cultural, thus it considered as a normal and legitimate practice. This opinion mostly comes from people from a different (non-Chinese)

ethnic background and people who are helping the process of administration papers. However, *amoi* and their family perceive the practice as a way out of poverty and hope for a better life. This seems to be the same as what the outsiders (helping bureaucrats) see over the practice. We can perceive here that boundary among insiders and outsiders are fluid that in this particular thing, the outsiders become the insiders.

6.9. Conclusion

The mail order brides among a Chinese community in Singkawang has been years developed since a long time ago. It started around 1970 and reached the highest point in 1990s. Since about 1995 and especially over the past six years the practice has been steadily declining though it still exists at the present in a considerably smaller number of cases. The decline is believed to be the result of the knowledge and learning process among the *amoi* of Singkawang, the decreased demand from the Taiwanese men, the new anti-trafficking law in Indonesia, the dropped off number of poor families in Singkawang and the more stringent control procedures from the local government.

In order to have a better understanding of the issue of mail order brides, we cannot disconnect the contemporary practice from the long history of migration and the cultural background of Chinese in Singkawang. Mail order marriage between *amoi* Singkawang and Taiwanese man is regarded as ethnic marriage as they come from the same ethnicity, the same Han family clan and the same belief of Confucianism which influences the everyday life of the people. The long historical background of Chinese Singkawang has put strong influence on the emergence of mail order brides system. The ancestors brought along the cultures to the new place and those assimilated to the local culture. It remains preserved as the people still maintain their own cultures and remain orienting their everyday life to the life of their origins.

Chinese Singkawang is generally deprived compared to other Chinese people in Indonesia who live in cities and economically prosper. Among the five biggest family's clan in China, Han family group is the most ethnic family migrated to Indonesia, and one of the sub ethnic namely Hakka is the most dominated in Singkawang. This sub ethnic has been widely known as tough people, socially labeled as 'poor-rural people', have distinct language and lived exclusively within their own group. Hence, it is understandable that mail order brides system believed as a mechanism to escape from poverty and as a means of livelihood. Reason of the way of having a decent life abroad has been accepted as a legitimized practice in the society.

This research has shown that the mail order brides practice has brought many advantages to many people engaged in the systems. As the practice created a market for profit pursuing marriage agents, it grows and matures, more and more people enter the market and take benefits out of it. It turns to be socially structured and systematized in the society. The role of agencies and middlemen as the intermediaries alleged to increase the number of incident as they fill in supply and demand in the marriage market. It has been acknowledged that they gained high profit from the industry and left *amoi* and family remains in the poverty.

Therefore, as a concluding remark, we need to be very careful in assuming that mail order bride in Singkawang only brought negative impact. A better understanding in the nature of the practice should be taken into account when developing of what so called anti trafficking program. Aspect of culture, belief, kinship, and human rights need to be considered apart from the practice brought positive economic impact to the person or community as a whole. We should not underestimate *amoi* Singkawang and treat them as an object just as they do

not have right to choose their own life. As a social agent in the society, they have the capacity to process their knowledge from the experiences to decide their future life. Thus, increasing the awareness of their rights is more important rather than combating people who are often negatively called human traffickers by outsiders who do not really understand the social and cultural conditions of the everyday life of the Chinese community in Singkawang. Expectantly, this research has contributed to a better understanding of the motivation and social-economic position of the *amoi*, middlemen and others involved.

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Appendix I. SINGKAWANG TOWN MAP



Appendix II. List of Question

Type of Respondents	Questions
Returned girl (ex-brides of Taiwanese)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was her initial knowledge and hope before married? • What was the motivation married with Taiwanese? • What are the experiences of marriage? • Were they any intervention on marriage? • What are the benefits of marriage through mail order system? • How does the returned girl influence and become influenced by her past experiences?
Family of the returned girl (parents or relatives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the family perceives on trans-border marriage phenomena? Do they perceive it as illegal or legitimate practice? • How do family members value the returned girl? • What are the motivations in supporting children married with Taiwanese men? • How they come to know about the mail order system with Taiwanese men? • Who and how they connected to the Taiwanese? • Do they know with the marriage broker? • How much money they can earn if the children married with Taiwanese through the mail order system? And how do they spent it? • Do they have asking to the children on what they want? • Do the children married by his own will or is there any intervention from anyone else? Do they receive money for the brides and how they used it? • Are there any children returns homes from Taiwan? If there is any, what they perceive on that case?
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does community perceive the phenomena of mail order brides? • How does community value the returned girl? • How many families who marry their children with Taiwanese? • How many among them have success – end up with happy marriage, and how many are they return home because of unsuccessful marriage or any other form of exploitation • How people perceive counter trafficking law? • How this law is being practiced in the community?

<p>Middleman or agent (in the village and in Singkawang town)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the motivation of becoming middle men? • How much money they earn and what is the financial arrangement? • How do they perceive counter trafficking law? • Do they perceive their action as illegal or legitimate practice? • What is the process of the system?
<p>Non Governmental Organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the program and intervention on countering mail order brides? • What is their position on influencing the community and local government • What are their interactions with other social actors • How do they perceive counter trafficking law? • And how this law is being practiced or become an effective instrument?
<p>Local government official (village leader and district leader)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do they perceive the phenomena in the community • Do they have local custom on countering the phenomena • How do they perceive on NGO program in child protection • Are they benefiting from the girls who married with foreigner • How do they perceive counter trafficking law? • And how this law is being practiced or become an effective instrument?

Appendix III. List of Respondents

Type of Respondents	Name of Respondents	Name of Institution
<i>Amoi</i> (Chinese girl)	Asu	
	Lili	
	Sisi	
	Ami	
	Suli	
	Selsi	
	Susi	
	Ana	
	Elis (Dayakese)	
Bujang (Chinese boy)	Amin	
	Ferry	
	NN (Sisi's friend)	
Government Staffs	Bujang Ali (Chinese)	Head of Sub District – Central Singkawang
	Ni Made (Balinese)	Head of Village (Pajintan)
	Prayitno (Javanese)	Head of Village (Pasiran)
	NN (Dayakese)	Head of Village (Mayasopa)
	Bona Ventura (Dayakese)	BPMPK – Singkawang
	Benny (Dayakese)	Capil Office
	Lasiman (Javanese)	Head of RT 44 Pasiran
	Robertus (Dayakese)	Head of RT1 Pasiran
	Tauhid (Malay)	Head of Village (Sedau)
	Ahin (Chinese)	Head of RT Gg.70
	NN (Malay)	BPS Singkawang
Gunawan (Malay)	Bapeda Singkawang	
<i>Amoi</i> Family	Asin	Mayasopa
	Aching	Mayasopa
	Sisi's parents	
	Ami's parents	Kalibaru
Non Governmental Organization	Rosita Nengsih (Malay)	LBH Peka
	Thomas Setyoso (Javanese)	Wahana Visi Indonesia / ADP Singkawang
	Rio Kurniawan (Chinese)	MABT
	Bong Cin Nen (Chinese)	Foket
Middleman / Marriage Agent	Sri (Javanese)	Singkawang
	Fosin (Chinese)	Pasiran

	Anga (Chinese)	Pasiran
	NN (Chinese)	Singkawang
Community	Ahmadi (Malay)	
	Nam Jiu (Chinese)	
	Pak Chan (Chinese)	
	Supriadi (Malay-Chinese)	
	Haryanto (Javanese)	
	Lingling (Chinese)	
	Lina (Chinese)	
	NN (Chinese)	Kue Keranjang Maker
	NN (Chinese)	Seller at market
	Zulkarnaen	Reporter from Metro Singkawang