

**การสร้างพันธมิตรร่วมและการพัฒนาศักยภาพของ
แรงงาน: กรณีศึกษาการรวมกลุ่มของแรงงานในภาคเหนือ**

**COALITION BUILDING AND LABOUR
STRENGTHENING: A CASE STUDY OF LABOUR
ORGANIZING IN NORTHERN THAILAND**

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความเรื่องการสร้างพันธมิตรร่วมและการรวมกลุ่มของแรงงานในภาคเหนือ เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของงานวิจัยเกี่ยวกับแรงงานในเขตเชียงใหม่ ลำพูน มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการสร้างพันธมิตรร่วมและการรวมกลุ่มของแรงงานในภาคเหนือซึ่งเป็นเขตภูเขาอุตสาหกรรมขนาดกลางขนาดย่อมรวมทั้งธุรกิจอุตสาหกรรมเกษตรได้รับการส่งเสริมมากความก้าวหน้าทางเทคโนโลยีและการสื่อสารสมัยใหม่ นำความเปลี่ยนแปลงหลายประการ การศึกษาครั้งนี้ใช้วิธีการจัดกลุ่มศึกษา การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกผู้นำแรงงานทั้งในภาคที่เป็นทางการและไม่เป็นทางการ นักวิชาการที่เกี่ยวข้องและการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลสถิติแรงงานและการพัฒนาอุตสาหกรรมในภาคเหนือ จากการศึกษาพบว่าการรวมกลุ่มในภาคเหนือมีลักษณะที่แตกต่างจากการรวมตัวของแรงงานแบบเดิมที่มีการจัดตั้งสหภาพแรงงานโดยมีการประสานความร่วมมือกันหลายกลุ่มทั้งในอดีตและปัจจุบัน การจ้างงานในภาคเหนือมีความซับซ้อนมีรูปแบบการจ้างงานที่หลากหลายอันเป็นผลจากกระบวนการพัฒนาอุตสาหกรรมในภูมิภาค ตลอดจนการเปิดการค้าเสรี และการค้าชายแดน ซึ่งนอกจากจะมีการจ้างงานอย่างเป็นทางการมีแรงงานภาคอุตสาหกรรมที่ทำงานในโรงงานในนิคมอุตสาหกรรมลำพูนแล้วยังมีแรงงานที่ทำงานในโรงงานขนาดกลางและขนาดเล็ก และแรงงานจำนวนมากเป็นแรงงานในภาคที่ไม่เป็นทางการหรือแรงงานนอกระบบ แรงงานในธุรกิจการเกษตรและแรงงานข้ามชาติ การสร้างความพันธมิตรร่วมกันระหว่างนายจ้าง ลูกจ้าง องค์กรพัฒนาเอกชนและตัวแทนจากภาครัฐจึงอาจนำไปสู่การพัฒนาความเข้มแข็งและแก้ไขปัญหาแรงงานร่วมกันได้

คำสำคัญ: การสร้างพันธมิตรร่วม พันธมิตรข้ามกลุ่ม การรวมกลุ่มของแรงงาน แรงงานที่ไม่เป็นทางการ

Abstract

This article investigates coalition building and labour organizations in Northern Thailand, based on my research with precarious workers in Chiang Mai –Lamphun provinces, Northern Thailand. Northern Thailand is mountainous landscape where many medium-sized industries, export and agribusiness industries have been promoted. Modern communication and information technologies have brought about enormous changes in this area. By using focus group discussion, in-dept interview and statistic data collection, the research shows that labour organizing in Northern Thailand has been taken in different from of labour trade unions. Labour employment in the North has seen its complex, composing of different categories of workers causes by regional industrialization as well as trade liberalization such as factory workers, precarious workers and a large of migrant workers. Coalition building of employers, workers, NGOs as well as local government can lead to labour strengthening and resolving of labour problems.

Keywords: Coalition Building, Cross Class Coalition, Labour Organizing, Precarious Labour

Introduction

Thailand regional industrialization and global economic development generate new wage labour relation which is different from industrial work. Recent work is much more fluid and discontinuous. The workers have been more dislocation and they are not being in the workplaces. Free trade policy of the government brought about a number of migrant workers to Northern Thailand and enter different sectors of labour market i.e. service sector and agricultural sector. It is interesting to investigate how different categories of workers are organized and how labour dispute will be solved by using a new strategy of labour organizing strength. The paper will illustrate the coalition building on the precarious workers in the North in getting support for labour organization as well as cooperation of employer employee relations. Supporting by local government can create bargaining power for contemporary labour organizing in Northern Thailand. However, labour NGOs are also taking important role in strengthening labour organizing. The success of coalition depends on several conditions which influence on creating cooperation of state private organizations labour assistance.

Historically, the labour trade unions in Thailand has co-operation with several working groups concerning sociopolitical problems. Labour trade unions in Thailand are set up under the Labour Relations Act of 1975. This act provides the labour rights to establish trade unions, labour federations, and labour councils. Its outlines the bargaining process, labour rights to strike and lock out. However, this act provides solely for workers in the factory. The factory workers have taken the most active role in labour activities until at present. The workers took the important role in the democracy uprising of 14 October 1973 in Thailand. This uprising event led Thailand became to a parliamentary democracy and heightened the political consciousness of all groups of Thai people both in the urban and rural areas. The workers succeeded in demanding for better wages, safe working conditions (Chayataweep, 1990, pp. 36-53; Thanachaisethawut, 1990)

However, in the past several years, labour movement in Thailand face many difficult conditions of their demands cause by various conditions particularly the decline of labour solidarity and the changes of labour employment. The majority of Thai labour force are not concentrated in the industrial sector but they are absorbed in various economic sectors. The Thai labour structure in every sector is substituted by a number of migrant workers. This is very difficult for organizing labour trade unions. Thailand is also traditionally a patronage society. The relationship between employer and employee is based on patron-client relationship. The Thai workers are bond by the par merit obligation and must be grateful for employers as many employees feel that employer provide work and money for them. Thus, organizing labour trade unions have many obstacles. The success of labor movement in the past was essentially strong supports from other social movement. Thus, coalition building of labour and different groups may succeed in providing better working conditions and welfare for the workers. In this article, the main research questions are (1) how workers in Northern Thailand are organized and (2) how coalition building of labour with different groups lead to labour strengthening in providing better working conditions and welfare for the workers?

Theoretical reviews

Contemporary labour employment across Thailand at present has seen the widespread of work insecurity. The labour force in Thailand is becoming precarious work in several economic sector with the increasing of part -time, short term work, self employed and temporary work (Charoenlert, 2013, pp. 28-29). A number of workers in the Thai labour force engage in precarious. These categories of work are not fully cover by the labour law and the workers are hardly be organized. This is different from the standard full- time work which is fully covered by the labour law. The growth of precarious work not only increases work insecurity but also strongly impacts on labour organizing and the strength of labour power. Precarious work has brought about the alienate feeling of those who work in this sector. Short term contract as well as contemporary work are unable to fully guarantee their future. This creates stress and frustration on everyday life.

Cross class coalition and coalition building

This study focuses on cross class coalition building and investigates how different categories of workers are organized and how coalition building is formed as employee negotiation space. There are many studies relate to coalition building as strategy of labour strengthening. Afonso (2011, pp. 705-730) investigates the strategies of national employer association towards labour market regulation. He found that employers' strategies tend to use labour protection in relation to labour mobility. Employers in non-tradable sector faced strong trade union support for domestic wage standard in order to avoid competition of lower wage employment of migrant workers.

The notion of coalition building has been used in different aspects. Valenta (1989, pp.29-30) examines the concept of coalition and finds that coalition defined as temporary alliance of different parties has been fruitful for political scientists. The terms has been theoretically developed by several theorists. However, he argues that these are useful for better understanding of bargaining process and decision makings in Western politics under pluralistic parties. In practice, coalition adopted in operation for a group formed when there are more than two parts, groups, parties and so forth working together as a partnership to achieve a certain goal. Coalition of different groups or parties is negotiation process which brings people from other sides working together. Coalition building may occur in different forms such as cross class coalition between employers and employees. Cross class coalition is challenge in organizing out groups and the feeling of alien people to be in group and become political partner. Creating cross group coalition is a social process which bring several different groups working together with different characteristics. However, coalition leads to change alienate atmosphere to familiarity of different groups. The structure of corporatism effects on the results. High concentration association of employers and employees indicates level of coalition. Employers is a reflection to political institution as well as rules of election and constitution.

However, some studies on coalition building find difficulty in its definition and operation. Cakmak (2012, pp. 3-4) asserts the discussion on notion of coalition building. Although coalition strategy has been intrinsically used on civil society movement, rare study has been made in terms of scholarly discussion. The notion of coalition in NGOs movement involves human being entities as well as several human needs, conditions and social activisms. Thus, it is hard to define due to its diversity engaging in coalition. In this context, the terms coalition is more complex than

cooperation of many different groups or parties which is common used in referring to working together for a common goal i.e. association, federation, alliance, union etc. It is important to consider diversity of coalition which is probably the most uncontroversial. Cakmak (2012, pp.5-6) argues that diversity of coalition is relates to various characteristics. These are the liability among its members such as beliefs and common agreed ideas. The second aspect of coalition is the flexibility. Coalition building should be flexible because this will create high level of mobility and let members be independence. Flexible structure allows members independently participate in coalition activities. Other characteristic of coalition is the certain issue of coalition building. Some issue which is high controversial should not be considered for coalition building because this would lead to conflict and clash between members.

Mix (2006, p.16) asserts that the coalition building on contemporary environmental issues is not often occur and face difficulty to make coalition. Some problems for cooperation of different groups derive from an evaluation of status. Thus, building coalition needs strong supports from social activists and several alliances. The formation of coalition dealing with social activism take high intention and long term cooperation. The success of campaign coalition relates to various factors.

The change of government labour policy can be considered in relation to cross class coalition. The study of Dion (2010, pp.17-20) indicates that welfare system in Mexico is resulted from negotiation of trade unions and the government in dictator regime. United front of different sides; trade unions, farmers and company owners are much beneficial for cross class coalition under industrial export promotion policy. Coalition building can be likely succeeded in democratic political atmosphere. However, cross group coalition is able to develop under authoritarian government as contestation among different benefit groups could be difficulty possible. Cross class coalition is constructed by organized working class and support for an authoritarian regime. Working class is to gain benefits for member coalition.

Contemporary social activism and labour movement can also take cross class coalition strategy. Contemporary social movement theory focus on important factors which effect on fail state and divided elites, economic problems as well as sanction from other countries. Among these, one important factor is bargaining power deriving from cooperation of different groups which impacts on the implementation of state policy Goldstone (2011, pp. 457-462).

Coalition building is essentially helpful for labour development. Gourevitch & Shinn (2007) observes that corporation between employers and employees; manager and the worker cooperation creates fruitful regulations and leads to job security. However, the success of coalition building probably depends on many socio-economic factors. The corporation in a particular country is related to political coalition which the workers, employers, managers are form and get victory in political struggle. The intercoalition cleavages possibility occurs between owners-managers and workers (class conflict), managers-workers and owners (sectoral conflict), owners –workers and managers (property and voice conflict). Gourevitch and Shinn argues that the workers has rarely been able to win and get victory in political struggle unless they create coalition with other groups.

In the case of Thailand where labour organizations has less bargaining power, coalition strategy is new for labour development. This might be caused by many factors such as difficulties of cooperation between employers and employees. Hence, there are less studies on coalition building. However, some substantive studies examine the problem of labour strength in Thailand.

The important problem is the weakness and less bargaining power of trade unions both in term of qualitative and quantitative dimensions such as less proportion of trade union members, solidarity and unity of labour organizations. (Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, 2012, p.7-89, p.7-90). Thus, successful coalition building may occur relating to several circumstances. Thailand is similar to several countries in terms of it has been effected by globalization and economic crisis in the past several years. One of the consequences of globalization is the fragmentation of the labour market. The global competition causes many companies in Thailand seek for labour employment strategy. The flexible employment as well as hiring casual labour and outsource have been adopted in several enterprises. Subcontracted and short term employment have been widely used. As a results, the labour market has become segmented into formal and informal labour.

Thailand has been identified as middle income country by world bank in 2011. Moving to middle income country indicates the succeed in some level of economic development using several indicators such as income per capita as well as reduction of poverty index . However, Thailand moving from middle income country to next step of developed country must be considered several important factors. Only economic growth index can be unable to illustrate equity and distribution of wealth for improvement of quality of the people such as human resources development, education, employment as well as labour skills.

In the past decade, Thailand, however, could not move forward to high income country. In conditions of improving from middle income trap to high level income country, Thailand has to improve labour skill and technology which lead to the increasing of high productivity for competition. Thailand has been succeeded in creating diversity of production by changing agricultural production to export goods in several sectors such as agriculture, tourism, textile and car industry. However, up until now Thailand has not been success in climbing to high income country. Doner (2008) argues that there are several factors effects of reaching high income country especially collaborations of private and government sectors. Evaluation and consultation process to increase potential productivity which relates to production process, technological development and labour organizations.

As mention earlier, The success of using coalition strategy depends on various conditions such as different group status, campaigning issues and so forth. However, this study considers the success coalition building relies on the important social activism of coporations between different groups as well as democratic political atmosphere. Furthermore, the flexible corporation and the strong support from the state officers.

Research methodology

This research uses qualitative method which composes of 1) reviewing documents of state policy in regional development and labour employment as well as data analysis of labour statistics. 2) In -depth interview was conducted with employers, academics, precarious workers and NGOs in Chiang Mai during June 2015-May 2016. Focus group discussion was constructed with 2 groups of the workers; 10 formal and 5 informal workers, with total 15 workers in Northern Thailand during June 2015-May 2016. 3) Statistical data was collected from Chiang Mai Labour Office and Northern Region Industrial Estate.

Findings and discussion

Labour employment in Northern Thailand

Northern Thailand named Lanna was an autonomous state with its own traditional culture and language. The old Lanan Kingdom composed of several peripheral states which became the ninth provinces in Northern Region including Chiang Mai and Lamphun province. Chiang Mai was integrated to Siam and after the abolition of peripheral independency and became a part of new administrative structure of the Thai state. Northern Thailand has been changing rapidly after the Thai government adopted the industrial policy to export aim to increase economic development and create job opportunity in the region. Chiang Mai and Lamphun province was aimed to be the centre of industrial investment in the North. Consequently, the industrial development in Thailand firstly started in Bangkok and its peripheries which later led to the growth of economy and industries concentrated in those areas. In 1970s, Thai government changed to decentralize the industrial development from Bangkok and eradicate the poverty in the region. This has also effected on the change of labour employment.

According to the labour statistic in Thailand, the labour force slightly declined from 40.1 million in 2012 to 38.08 million in 2014 and slightly increased to 38.28 million in 2017. The labour force trend was slightly increased causes by low birth rate of population. The whole population of the country has slowly increased from 65.4 million in 2010 to 65.9 million in 2017 (NSO, 2017). The percentage of population growth has drop from 0.8 % in 2012 to 0.4 % in 2016 and 0.2 % in 2018. The growth rate of Thai population trends to grow steadily until the next 20 years. This has leads to the problem of labour employment and labour shortage in several economic sectors.

Since the past three decades, the labour structure in Thailand has been changed from majority of farm workers to industrial and informal workers causes by industrialization and urbanization. The labour force in agricultural sector has importantly declined from 63.4% in 1990 to 41.1% in 2011 and 32.9% in 2017. Among this, 81.4% were male labour and 66% were women (NSO, 2017). Labour employment in Thailand mainly concentrates in the informal sector. In 2017, people working in informal sector were 57.6% of total number of the labour force, 54.8% are male and 45.2% are female. This data shows that the labourers in Thailand is absorbed more in informal sector than the formal sector. The majority of informal labour are in agriculture 12.6 million or 56.9%, service sector 32.4% and 10.7% in manufacturing sector. The number of labour both in formal and informal sectors are still dominated in Bangkok and its peripheries. However, some factories were closed due to economic crisis. This circumstance causes the industrial workers have to go home in rural provinces and work in informal sector (Ativanichayapong, 2007, pp.6-7)

The labour force in Northern Thailand are scattered in agricultural sector, service sector and various forms of informal sector. The statistic in 2017 shows that the labour force in Northern in agricultural sector is a little higher than in non-agricultural sector. The total number of labour force in the North was 9,463,000. The workers who are working in the agricultural sector is about 38.13% and 31.06% were in non-agricultural sector. Interestingly, labour employment in non-agricultural sector are scattered in various economic sector i.e. manufacturing, service sector, self employed work and so forth. Some of those workers in off farm job return to farm job from time to time. The pattern of go back and forth between farm and off farm is usual for local economic circumstances. The urban economic expansion also increases more job opportunities.

However, there are problems of labour shortage in many economic sectors i.e manufacturing, agricultural and service sector. As a results, a large number of migrant workers from Myanmar is absorbed in every economic sector. Migrant workers are important component of labour structure in Northern Thailand. This essentially effect on labour organizing and the strength of labour unions.

Regional industrialization has created complex scenario of labour structure in the North. The formal factory workers concentrates in factory in the Northern Industrial Estate situated in Lamphun province; 30 kms from Chiang Mai province. However, a large number of workers are employed in the small factories outside the industrial estate. Moreover, the amount of migrant workers are hired in 3D work (dirty work, dangerous work and difficult work) and farm work. This labour circumstance importantly effects on labour organizing in the North. The workers face difficulty to set up their trade unions. Thus, coalition building with other groups such as local government and NGOs might be able to create labour strength.

Using focus group discussion with 10 workers who used to work in the factories and now become precarious workers, the research found that labour trade unions in the North are hardly to be set up, causes by many factors. In the context of regional industrialization, the workers often go and back between off farm and farm jobs. Furthermore, at the beginning of organizing trade unions, many employees were laid off. There are only three trade unions in jewelry, electronics in the industrial estate at Lamphun province and textiles in Chiang Mai province. However, these three labour organizations are unable to run their activities at present and the employer of textile factory are now move to Tak province which is now determined by the government to be the Special Economic Development Zone. As a results, the workers, labour academics and NGOs seek for strategy of labour strength by cooperation with public and private organizations.

Coalition building and labour organizing

In Thailand, cross group coalition strategy has not been widely used in labour activities. Coalition building is taken in some activities of trip party committee such as labour dispute, minimum wage committee and so forth. Corporation between employer and employee is rare and has many obstacles. This form of coalition can be operated in some enterprises with strong bargaining power of trade unions. The majority of strong trade unions concentrates in Bangkok and in the factory workers in Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) or Eastern Seaboard of Thailand. EEC is the Industrial Estate in the Eastern Seaboard Development Program (ESB) of the government which composes of several provinces in the East Sea; Chonburi province, Rayong province and Chachoengsao province.

The formation of labour organizing in the North occurred based on less bargaining power of the workers. There are only three formal trade unions which labour union leaders are unable to operate any activity. Furthermore, in the past ten years, several labour leaders were laid off. The new leaders dare not to encourage their union members while there have been many problems from regional industrial development such as labour health, working conditions and so forth. Moreover, Northern labour characteristic is also an important factor, as the workers avoid to confront with the employers. They often quit the jobs and go back to farm works. The workers themselves work in different economic sectors and mainly dominate in precarious work and informal sector. Thus, Northern labour organizing might need different strategy from the typical formal labour trade union.

Concerning on labour problems in the industrial estate has brought about cooperation of several representatives from local organizations such as NGOs, labour academics and related public organizations working together for labour resolutions. Since the past 20 years, there have been various labour issues raised by NGOs, labour academic and those who concern on labour issues. In 1993, the cases of 14 workers' sick and death from work in Lamphun Industrial Estate, Northern Thailand led to public concern and coalition building of worker leaders, journalists, health and labour academics, related public representatives and NGOs. This circumstance encouraged many labour networks to campaign on labour rights, labour health and labour justice. Many public organizations such as Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare took actions on solving the problems. The consequence of this circumstance led to cooperation to set up a new working organization named Lamphun Women Health Center (LWHC) and Northern Labour Network.

Lamphun Women Health Center was set up in 1998 under cooperation of trade union leaders, academics, people leaders in communities and local government officers. The center was based on the coalition building between different groups seeking for resolution of labour problems in Lamphun Industrial Estate. The failure of running activities under trade union led to the new strategy for campaigning labour issue. Thus, LWHC was expected to be the first learning practice of cooperation of representatives from different organizations. LWHC aimed to operate several activities such as learning center and service on health occupation, developing working skills, counseling for women problems etc.

LWHC reflected coalition building of cross groups on labour issue. The board committee of the center composed of academics, local government officers, women leaders in the communities as well as trade unions and labour NGOs with cooperation with labour and women NGOs in Bangkok. The center firstly succeeded in campaigning for labour health and created labour health network in the North and in Bangkok. However, LWHC eventually was unable to further the center activities due to the lack of budgets. The center finally was closed in 2002.

Coalition building cross organizations also occurred in cooperation of local administrative organizations and local people in the communities around the industrial estate. The study of Good Government for Social Development and the Environment Institute (GSEI) indicates that the cooperation of people in community and local administration organization was very helpful for solving industrial hazardous problem and took action on environmental conservation. The study constructed with three local administrative organizations in Lamphun province; Meungnga district, Makheu Jae district and Ban Klang district and success in encouraging community people participate in solving hazardous problem around the industrial estate by using coalition strategy with the mass media, public organizations and the employers of the factory to solve industrial pollutions in the communities around the industrial estate. Those local administrative organizations also work together in creating local regulations with participation of community people.

The success of campaigning for health problems and environment issues is an important case of coalition building from different groups named The Council of Worker and Environment Related Patient's Network of Thailand (WEPT). WEPT composes of national committee on health and environment from different working groups such as academics, public health and the workers from different sectors, formal union leaders and precarious workers (interview with Chareonlert, 2015)

Coalition building between different levels of WEPT is benefit for workers in sharing information and knowledge as well as resolving of health problems. Health and environmental issues have been presented in public and led to health awareness on job. There are many important issues derive from WEPT movement; setting up national health occupation, providing and producing health occupation experts. As a result, occupational health issues has been importantly concern by public and related public sectors. Occupation health curriculum were constructed in the universities. The government adopted the new law on safety to determine that every factory must have safety officer. Furthermore, campaigning of WEPT led to corporation of public sectors. Since 1995, the ministry of labour and ministry of public health has set up 'occupational health service center' in every region of the whole country (Srikhamdokcae, 2016)

The success of WEPT is an example coalition building of different level groups. This cross group corporation is hard at the beginning due to different hierarchical status of employer, state officesr and workers. However, WEPT get strong supports form academics and NGOs using campaigning and mobilizing strategy for public concern on health safety. Health and safety becomes public social issues and creates corporation activities form related public organizations such as Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Labour.

Coalition building of precarious workers in the North has been created by various groups of informal workers working together with local government, academics and NGOs. Northern precarious workers has set up informal network of cross group coalition. The members of informal network are producers of different economic sectors i.e. textile, organic pig producers, wood carving group and motorbike taxi group. Different working groups are composed of different occupations in farm and off farm jobs, such as textile, organic agricultural producers, service sectors and so forth. Many different levels of working are organized to work together with strong support of local government. In the past ten years, informal labour network has succeed in providing information and knowledge of health and safety for their members as well as receiving some budgets for training course of labour skills. LWHC is a case study of the first beginning of creating cooperation between community, academics and worker groups both on its success and failure.

Cross group coalition is operated in both hierarchical and horizon levels. The network works on several activities relating to each group identity such as ethnic group, women issue, aging, urban life, disable people and so forth. However, the informal labour network has run various activities mainly dealing with expanding and seeking for markets of productions. Cooperation with several cross groups, the informal labour network can get many supports from the state provincial office in terms of budgets and important information. Furthermore, informal labour network has cooperation with labour organizations in Bangkok from time to time in campaigning for labour policy of the government such as social welfare and social security law.

Cross group coalition in horizon level can be seen in the each group of producers. Producing the same products is benefits for sharing information and experiences which are helpful for their work and products i.e. the market, producing problems, debts and so forth. Building coalition among the same groups of producers has led to the strength in mobilizing and pushing the government to response to their needs especially in solving the farmers debts. Some of group producers; textile groups, for example can be able to get financial support from the Department Industrial Promotion, the Ministry of Industry.

Vertical coalition building of different groups is helpful for supporting on policy implementation. As there are several different groups in the informal labour network, each group has run its own activities for members and cooperate with other groups mainly in state policy implementation. Thus, cross group coalition is necessary with academics, NGOs and public organizations. The informal labour network in the North often cooperate with labour network in Bangkok. The success of campaigning for labour benefits can be seen as the case of demanding for the rights of clients in social security law item 40 which is benefit for informal workers. The informal labour network cooperate with NGOs, labour academics and formal workers. These results were relevance to substantive study of Ativanichayapong (2007, 64-77) on labour movement which shows that campaigning on health and welfare needs cooperation of different labour groups as well as strong support from the government.

Conclusion

The changes socio-economic development has led to the complexity of labour employment. There are many different forms of works particularly short term and contemporary contract employment. These kinds of work essentially effect on labour organizing. Typical trade unions in the workplace may be unable to take much role and bargaining power. In some cases, coalition building strategy can be helpful and succeed in providing benefits for the workers.

As labour structure in the North of Thailand composes of various categories of workers due to the complex labour employment. There are a number of precarious workers in every economic sector, such as agricultural, industrial and service sectors. Furthermore, a large number of migrant workers are also absorbed in many economic sectors and play an important role in Northern labour activities under strong support of labour NGOs. These migrant workers are well organized by NGOs; MAP Foundation for the Health and Knowledge of Ethnic Labour and Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF). Labour activities in Chiang Mai and Lamphun provinces are often organized by these organizations and migrant workers by cooperation with provincial officers, academics and the media.

Coalition building may occur in different forms. The results of this study shows that coalition building of employee and employer under strong supports from academics and the government very much help for creating corporation of different groups. Coalition building is a social process which organize different levels of various groups working together under a certain goal. This strategy is different from typical labour organizations in Thailand which mainly focus on the problems of their members. The success of coalition building thus depends on many important factors which will lead to benefits for employers and employees such as good regulations and working conditions. The implications of this study are 1) labour strategy should move further beyond typical labour trade unions 2) health, social welfare and environment issues should be considered for creating coalition building and strengthening labour capacity.

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