

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is going to explain about essential things in regard of this undergraduate thesis. It explains briefly about the problem background which causes the appearance of the problem. Then, the writer will also explore about the theory which is used to answer the research question and finally get the hypothesis. This chapter will also explain about the purpose and benefits of research, research method, range of research, and system of writing.

A. Background

Myanmar has started to establish their nation building around 11st century by the establishment of Bamar (known as Burman) hegemony over other indigenous “nations”, but it was interrupted by British conquest which was completed in 1885. With a land of more than 676,000 square kilometers, Myanmar is sharing over 6,000 kilometers of contiguous land frontiers with five other states such as India, China, Bangladesh, Thailand, and also Laos. In term of its geopolitics, Myanmar stayed out of all blocs and regional groupings during the Cold War period by observing the strict neutrality. It remains outside the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), but joined in July 1997.

Myanmar is ruled under the junta which is called as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). Their position has been regulated in 1974 Constitution. Their power covers the whole regions of Myanmar which is divided into 14 regions. Burma is actually the state who is predominantly the Buddhist country, the society is sometimes described as the pacifist society. In the prayer of most of the Burmese Buddhist recite everyday, they usually mention that their government is referred to as one of the five biggest enemies of the people alongside their prayers for having the freedom from any kind of violence conducted by the government.¹

After years of the bad condition of the state, Burma society is looking for the leader who can bring them into the much more freedom condition. The condition is giving the hope when Daw Aung San Suu Kyi appears in the middle of society who has been living in the pressured condition done by the Military Junta. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi or who so called as Aung San Suu Kyi is the daughter of Burma's hero, General Aung San. His father was assassinated in the late of 1947 when she was still 3 years old. She spent almost half of her life abroad which is in India and in England after she got married with the Tibetan scholar, Michael Aris.

Aung San Suu Kyi started to increase her political effort to Burma in the late of 1988. She created the cooperation with the other pro democracy leaders in order to establish the National League for

¹ Hlaing, Kyaw Yin, "Daw Aung San Suu Kyi : A Burmese *Dissident Democrat*," Journal of Political Study, National University of Singapore (2010) : 6

Democracy (NLD). She was then appointed to be the General Secretary of NLD. During history, Burma is having one major party system which is the Military Junta itself that enables the military to take control over the state all the way. People demanded on having the reinstatement of democracy and the end of the one party system. Then government then responded it by having the military force, killing and also wounding thousands of protesters. The military indeed capitalized on the unrest, using it as the pretext to form the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and institute martial law. 1990 The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), confident that politicians friendly to the military would soundly defeat opposition parties at the polls, held general elections. In a landslide victory, Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party won 392 out of 485 seats in the parliament. The SLORC refused to recognize the election results and imprisoned opposition party leaders.²

She started to publish her string effort in making the betterment in Burma on August 26th 1988 when she addressed the public rally at the revered religious site in Shwedagon Pagoda who are attended by half a million people from all ethnic and also nationalities. She emphasized her speech on the point of "healing the country" and also "promised she would

² The Nobel Foundation, "Aung San Suu Kyi, A Biography", *Nobel e-Museum* 27 (2004) : 19, accessed June 12, 2012

do her utmost to restore democracy for the people”. As the daughter of Burma’s independence hero, General Aung San, she has the special position in the heart of many Burmese. Aung San Suu Kyi delivered her idea by establishing the National League for Democracy (NLD) as she officially became the General Secretary of NLD as well.

There are bundles of supports addressed to Aung San Suu Kyi during her campaign in order to make the better system of governance in Myanmar. This support is coming from both national and international level. One of the statements about her was delivered by the former Thai diplomat who said :

“Aung San Suu Kyi’s significance and value to regional security cannot be underestimated. She commands the respect and loyalty of diverse sections of Burmese society, including military officers. Her capacity as a conciliator and unifier presents the greatest hope for stability in Burma.”~Kobsak Chutikul, former Thai diplomat & MP, October 2004

During the era of Junta’s military dictatorships, it has been ended with the death of over 3.000 protestors and also the other cases dealing with the human right violation. Thus, it attracts people to build such networks in order to attract the interest of the international community (Fink, 2009. P.52). Burmese and international activist have coalesced to establish a transnational advocacy networks in the intervening decades. They are seeking to raise awareness about Burma and influence the policy of foreign governments and intergovernmental entities such as the United Nations, the transnational advocacy network has recognized the emotive

power of the personal narratives of Burmese activists and victims of human rights violations.³ These personal narratives have been collected and promulgated in various forums in the years since 1988. It has been published whether in news media, reports, testimony before the United Nations, or other venues, personal narratives serve to support multiple discourses concerning the situation in Burma.

Indeed, world politics involves non-state actors, structured as networks. They are motivated by value, and band together to share resources, designed to accomplish policy expression of those values.⁴ In Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi is becoming the activist who advocates the right of Burmese in gaining freedom soon. She motivates people in Myanmar to have curiosity and also feeling of fight in fighting for gaining their own freedom. The destination that Aung San Suu Kyi would like to propose is about the idea of the democratic transition. Her ability to operate in both Western and Burmese contexts has uniquely situated her to receive the support of the international community.

This succeed to get the democratic transition can not be separated from the role of the transnational advocacy network which is firstly initiated by Aung San Suu Kyi. Transnational advocacy networks are actually the form of the international networks of actors that share values,

³ Bynum, Kate Elliott, "The Mobilization of Trauma Narratives within Burma's Transnational Advocacy Network," *Journal of Southeast Asia Studies* (2011) : 26, accessed June 26, 2012, doi: 24442/151555

⁴ Keck, Margaret and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activist Beyond Border : Advocacy Networks in International Politic* (New York : Cornel University Press, 2010), 26-29

frequently exchange information, services and personnel. Relationship among networks in international arena is similar to those described in the literature on domestic activism.⁵

As what has been noted previously that Aung San Suu Kyi is marrying British academician who also have the international links who also advocate the freedom. The transnational advocacy network is working smoothly in engaging with the report of human right abuses happened in Myanmar. These movements or local NGOs are able to provide international NGOs with the information needed about human rights violations or other issues which the international NGOs in turn use to develop campaigns targeting other governments or intergovernmental entities.

Transnational advocacy network has made an international link between nongovernmental organizations, citizens groups, expert communities that began by the desire to share information and offer mutual support and solidarity for national reform movements. They are motivated by the voluntaristic effort in order to make a change due to the authoritarian regime conducted by the Military Junta during years. They voluntarily join in this network because they wish to make a reform in government body of Myanmar soon. The citizen are voluntarily joining in the public campaign held by National League of Democracy which is often

⁵ Keck, Margaret and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activist Beyond Border : Advocacy Networks in International Politic* (New York : Cornel University Press, 2010), 34-35

done in the public space.⁶ Besides, they also spread the news about humanitarian abuses done by Military Junta Myanmar and it automatically attracted other parties such as media to report on it then publish it into the international world.

Once an international link was made, many of these parties played a key role in the establishment of formal intergovernmental agreements and institutions. Transnational Advocacy Networks in Myanmar publicized campaigns that target international organizations or intergovernmental regimes. Then they try to collect supports by their voluntary works by having the link in domestic and international groups in collective protests against both governments and international organizational policies in what Keck and Sikkink describe as a common "boomerang" strategy designed to provide domestic movements greater leverage against their home governments.

In the case of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi is aggregating international supports by having the connections which are possessed by her husband and her. The first international support can be seen from her winning of Nobel Price in 1991. It becomes the starting point for her in spreading her thought and idea around the world about the idea of democracy for Myanmar even if she could not even attend that award moment. Transnational advocacy networks conducted by Aung San Suu

⁶ Mundy , Karen and Lynn Murphy, *Transnational Advocacy : Global Civil Society? Emerging Evidence from the Field of Education* (CA : Stanford University, 2010), 2-3

Kyi are also continued by National League for Democracy who becomes their supporters in guiding the process of democratization in Myanmar.

The existence of the central to a local social movement's marketability is the presence of a strong, charismatic leader who is able to bridge the divide between the local character of a particular social movement and the international conception of how activists in a developing country should carry out their movements. Aung San Suu Kyi fulfills the role easily for the Burmese movement for democracy and human rights. As the daughter of Aung San, the Burmese independence hero, Aung San Suu Kyi was able to command the respect of the Burmese people and came to the fore of the democracy movement after the encouragement by university students.

By being free from being detained, thus it leads also Myanmar to be free from any kinds of sanction which are done by international words such as some states in the Europe and also United States of America. It is directly asked by ASEAN who ask to the world to dismiss their sanctions (e.g. military embargo) towards Myanmar. Myanmar has shown their better step forward in order to have the democratic transition into much more democratic one by releasing Aung San Suu Kyi. The process of Aung San Suu Kyi in gaining this freedom is a long way process. In the relead of National League of Democracy 23rd anniversary, Aung San Suu

Kyi made a statement that emphasized on the strong efforts of this network to make a peace throughout Myanmar : ⁷

"To voluntarily constitute a State with self-determination for all the nationalities of Burma. To confer the rights of self-determination to all the Constituent nationalities. Our desire for reconciliation, discussion and unification of the people of whole country has not been reduced. We hold no grudges against anybody. Resolving the problems is most important. We will not hesitate to cooperate with any organization, be it the State Peace and Development Council or the Tatmadaw. We can work hand in hand with anybody for the country and the people."

During these years NLD struggled to overcome the obstacles along the way to its political objectives. The members of the League made innumerable sacrifices to withstand against severe restrictions, ruthless repressions, brutal harassments and illegal detentions and imprisonments. This network is eventually made a connection with other parties such as media and also INGOs to hold campaigns in promoting freedom in Myanmar from the Military Junta.

The actions conducted by Transnational Advocacy Networks which consist of domestic and international supports finally bring influence towards the decision making process done by the Military Junta in Myanmar. After the long struggle, Aung San Suu Kyi is finally released on November 13th 2010 from the 15 years of her house arrest. It shows about the success of Transnational Advocacy Networks who are

⁷ National League for Democracy official website. "NLD Statement NO.16/09/11 released on 23rd anniversary." (September 2011). <http://www.nldburma.org/media-press-release/press-release/405-nld-statement-no-160911-released-on-its-23rd-anniversary.html> (accessed September 29, 2012)

proliferating, and finally achieving their goal that is to change the behavior of states.

They succeed in framing the issue of human right violations conducted by the Military Junta to Aung San Suu Kyi and to all Burmese as a whole. Then, they also succeed on attracting the attention from both domestic and international supports. Myanmar is not able to stand along by them selves because international worlds have already urged for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and applying the much more democratic government there.

The analogy of the “boomerang patterns” is working successfully in the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. Boomerang pattern rests on the concept that when state A blocks redress to organizations within it, they activate networks whose members pressure their own states and a third party organizations which in turn pressure state A. It is seen in the fact that when number of movements conducted in Myanmar, the government can not do anything else because they are unsafe due to the pressure of other international community such as sanctions of embargo and the fewer acknowledgements in international arena because Myanmar has applied the authoritarian regime which harms the right of people within.

The release of Aung San Suu Kyi brings the good towards all people living in Burma and giving hope for them in order to live freely

without any harassments and also human right violations conducted by the Military Junta. As the implication of this release, the Junta also released 541 prisoners in a new round of amnesties (87 of whom are recognized as political prisoners). Still, Suu Kyi bears with her the legacy of a half century of dissent and struggle in what was one of the world's most repressive states, and warns foreign audiences that Burma's path to a just society has a far way to go.⁸

The release of Aung San Suu Kyi gives hope also to all international supporters for Myanmar democratic transition such as United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon who said:

“This is a key moment in Myanmar's history and there are real opportunities for positive and meaningful developments to improve the human rights situation and bring about a genuine transition to democracy.”

After free from house arrest, she is then taking part actively again in the National League for Democracy, a party that becomes the opposition of the government. Her first official visit was to Washington DC, United States of America in punctuating the remarkable thawing of tensions between the United States and Myanmar over the last year. Aung San Suu Kyi also called for the lifting of American sanctions against her country. She said the sanctions had served their purpose politically⁹, and

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ New York Times, *Suu Kyi's Visit to US*, retrieved November 9th 2012, http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/a/daw_aung_san_suu_kyi/index.html

she urged the United States to engage broadly with the country's leaders to help build a new democracy.

The phase of democratic transition in Myanmar has just started after the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. One of the best achievements brought by the networks are on how the National League for Democracy who used to be the excluded party in Myanmar finally gets winning in the election in April 2012. They got 43 of out 45 seats on the parliament. This is seen as the great step forwards in the Myanmar democratic transition process because Transnational Advocacy Networks are succeed in changing the state's behavior from authoritative into democratic government by the using of domestic and international community power. It proves that non-state actors can somehow give influence towards the state's behavior.

B. Research Question

“How is the role of Transnational Advocacy Networks towards the Release of Aung San Suu Kyi?”

C. Theoretical Framework

In order to analyze this case, the writer uses two theoretical frameworks as followed:

a. Constructivism

Constructivism in Alexander Wendt's perspective emphasized on the point that the way international politics is conducted is made, not given. The approach revolves around identity, which is construed as more basic than interest. His structuration is conceptualizing the concept of agent and structure as mutually constitutive entities.¹⁰ Thus, in the case of Transnational Advocacy Network in Myanmar, it can be seen that they are becoming the agent that have an influence in changing the structure of government which is dominated by the power of Military Junta during years. Besides, it also rests on the idea that state may be self interested but their identity can eventually be changing.

It is actually analyzing that state behavior is instead of being influenced by other state action, but it is influenced by the social movements within. Besides, constructivism also relies on the concept on how non state actors are also having the discursive position in making a chance. This discursive position is seen clearly on their relations with other states or other international organizations to create such report dealing with the problem occurred in Myanmar. Discursive position in the view of constructivist is seen with the position of non state actors in shaping international image by creating such reports in term of human right abuses occurred in Myanmar.

¹⁰ Zehfuss, Maja. *Constructivist in International Relations*. University of Warwick, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2002

Constructivist relies on the concept on how the non state actors can have the significant role in the decision making process taken by the government. In the case of the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, it is seen on the effort and the presence of the Transnational Advocacy Networks on collecting support from both domestic and international layers to indirectly pressure the government of Myanmar to release Aung San Suu Kyi.

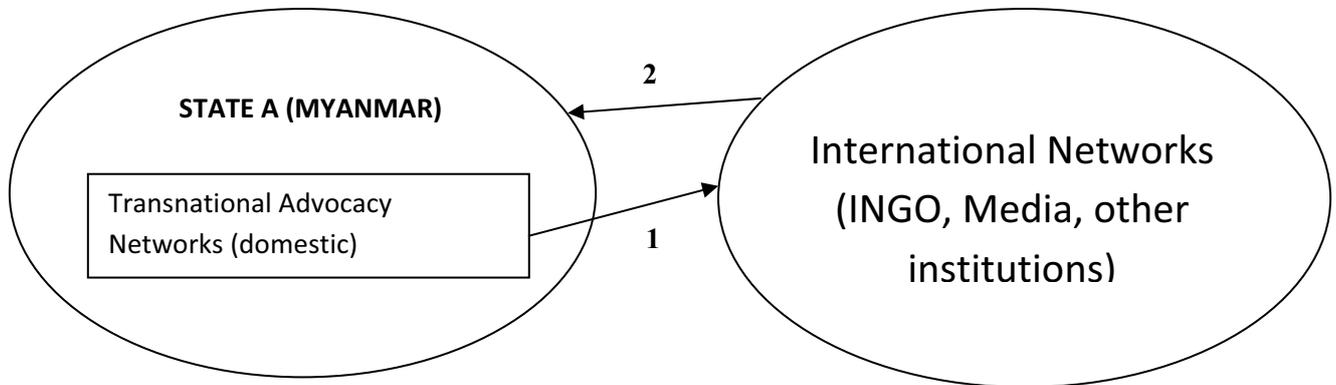
b. Concept of Transnational Advocacy Networks

The standard account of the Transnational Advocacy Network tells about the principle on how non state actors are remarking world politics by upsetting the conventional notions of power in international system.¹¹ They indeed rely on the persuasion and framing instead of disruption. Global networks of activist, NGO, INGO, experts, and media transform states and their preferences by developing, promoting, and monitoring compliance with norms of freedom and solidarity.

Transnational Advocacy Networks relies on the boomerang pattern on its action. Boomerang pattern rests on the concept that when state A blocks redress to organizations within it, they activate networks

¹¹ William Noakes, Stephen. "Advocacy Under Authoritarianism." (2011). Queen's University. Canada

whose members pressure their own states and a third party organizations which in turn pressure state A. Here is the analogy.



Description:

1 : Transnational Advocacy Networks which consists of the local NGO, National League for Democracy Party, People movement are activating networks with the international area such as with INGO, media, and other institutions by asking for their supports.

2 : The international networks use their powers to pressure State A (Myanmar in this case) indirectly to change their decision to release Aung San Suu Kyi by lobbying, embargo, etc.

In the case of Aung San Suu Kyi, it derived the fact that actually the power of people and also community in this case are those activist of pro-democracy can accelerate and give influence towards the behavior of state. It also talks about the idea of connecting the domestic and international norms. Domestic norms, however, are deeply entwined with the workings of international norms. Many international norms began as

domestic norms and become international through the efforts of entrepreneur of various kinds.¹² It analyzes the power of individual and also people to give contribution towards the behavior of state as well. Besides, it also emphasizes on the concept on how non state actors are trying to influence international politics.

In the case which is happened in Myanmar, social movement which is done by people can actually influence the decision made by the government. In the several years ago, we can see that Myanmar is living under the embargo from the West so that it leads Myanmar into the worse condition in term of their external relations. According to Alexander Wendt's words, 'Anarchy is what states make of it'. That is, anarchy is a condition of the system of states because states in some sense 'choose' to make it so. Anarchy is the result of a process that constructs the rules or norms that govern the interaction of states.

The condition of the system of states today as self-helpers in the midst of anarchy is a result of the process by which states and the system of states was constructed. It is not an inherent fact of state-to-state relations. Thus, constructivist theory holds that it is possible to change the anarchic nature of the system of states.¹³ In Myanmar, we can see that actually people who are bound into the transnational advocacy networks are emerged due to their demand to make a change in their government.

¹² Sikkink, Kathryn and Martha Finnemore, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change", *International Relations* 25 (2010) : 24

¹³ Wendt, Alexander, *International Organization* (New York : Spring, 2002), English edition.

Transnational Advocacy Networks concept relies on the idea that they are composed from the international networks of actors that share values, frequency exchange information, service, and personnel; relationship among networks in international arena similar to those described in the literature on domestic activism. The prominent role of individual decision makers in, for instance, adopting or rejecting policy innovations is acknowledged in International Relations theory but their role is often treated as a ‘black box’ for the reason of simplification such as in neorealism (cf. Waltz 1979). It is bound into the powerful institution that has major influence regionally or internationally.

In Myanmar, Military Junta that becomes the leader of the states has missed to be the self helpers for the Burmese. Thus, it leads people to establish a connection with international NGOs, a “boomerang” pattern emerges.¹⁴ In this pattern, movements or NGOs in a country with a repressive government that fails to respond to the needs of its people are blocked from engaging in direct advocacy efforts and look outward to find support from international NGOs. Constructivist then sees that the Burmese activists have positioned themselves well in relation to international NGOs, and these international NGOs have undertaken numerous campaigns to encourage governments and intergovernmental

¹⁴ Bynum, Kate Elliot, “The Mobilization of Trauma Narratives within Burma's Transnational Advocacy Network” *Journal of International Politics* 25 (2010) : 66, accessed August 26, 2012, doi:17.16667/26267

entities to pressure the Burmese military regime; there has been little positive change in Burma in the past twenty-two years.

Constructivism relies on the presence of non state actor in shaping international politics. Non state actor in this regard is previewed by the existence of transnational advocacy networks which consists of NGO, INGOs, media, and other activists in order to make a change toward the order of government. It is shaped by social and human behavior in which the role of identity is shaping political action and on the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures. The international system is therefore seen by constructivists as being a constitutive rather than merely a strategic domain (Reus-Smit 1996: 209–30).

Behavior through constructivist eyes is seen as essentially norm-driven, with states seeking to ensure a correspondence between their own conduct and internalized prescriptions for legitimate behavior that states have derived from their identities (Finnemore 1996; March and Olsen 1998). The social norm in Myanmar is shaped by the behavior of people living within. They collect support from any networks in order to fasten the democratic transition in their states. Thus, though they are not a state actor, but they do have the big bargaining position in shaping norms within politics.

c. Democratic Transition Theory

The theory of democratic transition and consolidation usually proceeds from the assumption that pro democratic opposition in

authoritarian regimes is spearheaded by secular liberals and that religious actor play a marginal if any role. Indeed none of the classics of 'transitology' (O'Donnell/Schmitter, Linz/Stepan, Collier/Collier, Kaufman/Shugart). In the case that happened in Myanmar, we can see that the movements conducted by the monks in the late of 2001 were also contributing towards the changing of regime in Myanmar. People were living under pressured so that they would like to seek for the new circumstance in where they would have much more possibility to express what they want.

O'Donnell and Schmitter offer a useful definition in their excellent succinct work. "The 'transition' is the interval between one political regime and another... Transitions are delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of some form of democracy, the return to some form of authoritarian rule, or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative.

In gaining the democratic transition to get succeed, there must be the emergence of a revolutionary alternative. There are some factors that are also playing an important role in Myanmar's democratic transition such as the national movement of people who are supported by international world such as by the support of International NGO such as Amnesty International as well as Human Right Watch. The key issue of the human right violation became the starting point of the report which is

conducted into the international world. It opens the access for international world to see what was going on in Myanmar and later on supporting the movement there. Political transition actually occurred when the authoritarian rule has been neglected by people. Therefore people gathered and establishing the transnational advocacy network in order to send their demand internationally.

D. Hypothesis

Transnational Advocacy Networks plays significant role in accelerating Myanmar's transition from authoritarian into more democratic government that one of the indicators is the release of Aung San Suu Kyi through aggregating on the power of Transnational Advocacy Networks by emphasizing on their discursive position.

E. Scope of Research

In order to avoid the topic from being expanded and out of context, limitation of the research regarding the influence of transnational advocacy networks conducted by Burmese and led by Aung San Suu Kyi in accelerating the democratic transitions in Myanmar. The time limitation of this research is started since Myanmar has started its uprising movement in 1988 led by Aung San Suu Kyi until 2012 when Aung San Suu Kyi and her party finally reached their goals to get involved in the parliament all the way.

F. Method of Analysis and Research

The writer gained the information and data by an extensive reviewing of relevant published (both printed and online) stuffs such as from books, movie, article, journals, reports, news, and other resources on a wide variety of topics related to the subject of this research.

G. Systematic of Writing

The first chapter discusses the introduction of the paper. It consists of explanation about the background and also the theoretical framework which is used as well as the hypothesis within.

The second chapter describes the dynamic of Myanmar political condition in general. It composes of information about the dictatorship of Military Junta in being the authoritarian government who used to have the powerful authority.

The third chapter discusses the analysis about the discursive position which is possessed by Transnational Advocacy Networks in influencing the government of Myanmar and also other international organizations. It is supported by the elaboration on how Transnational Advocacy Networks as the non state actors can bring major influence in shaping international politics.

The fourth chapter becomes the analysis about the role of the powerful institution in this network such as NGOs, INGOs, media, or even other non state actors in changing the system on the level of institutional procedures so that Aung San Suu Kyi is finally released.

The last chapter becomes the closing part which concludes the whole discussion above.