

# **Globalization and local land governance: Mechanisms of confiscation and contentious politics in Myanmar's Dawei Special Economic zone area<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

Recent political and economic reforms in Myanmar have led to a qualitative shift in the way land is understood institutionally. Competing visions of land are emerging and new dynamics of contestation are manifesting in response to the expanding market-oriented vision of land. The present study focuses on the Dawei Special Economic Zone area, in the southern Tenasserim division, and understands such visions as being increasingly linked to global trends, but inevitably embedded in past legacies. The research combines theories of agrarian studies with social movement theory, dialoguing with the contemporary focus on globalization and transnationalism.

The paper argues that although the cause for dispossession and insecurity may be the expansion of market-oriented land relations that follow the Western idea of economically useful private properties, these occur in combination with remnants of state abuse that have been a historic cause of land tenure insecurity in the country. At the same time, the political and economic reforms have expanded the opportunity structure within which contestation has emerged, increasing the repertoires and transnational networks for collective action against dispossession. Social movements in Dawei have not explicitly framed their claims against globalization and neoliberalism, as other transnational agrarian movements have, but are increasingly engaged in international discourses of human rights and sustainable development.

Alliances and advocacy networks are coming together, but the political actors engaged are diverse, complicating the general idea that "peasants" are resisting agrarian change. By focusing on the nuances of collective action frames and alliance building in the Dawei Special Economic Zone area, the analysis puts in question the assumption that land confiscations will automatically result in "resistance", or that resistance will always occur in similar fashion. Instead of resistance that is one directional against agrarian change, contention is a multidirectional process of alliance-building. Vertically, claims are directed to different levels: local, national and transnational; and horizontally, they cross different political and social actors with different interests.

**KEY WORDS:** Myanmar/Burma, Dawei, special economic zones, collective action, social movements, land confiscation, globalization, human rights, democratization.

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## **1. Introduction**

On April 1st 2012, the Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi was elected to the Burmese Parliament after years of house arrest and a repressed political environment. As people in the streets campaigned for her openly for the first time, wearing red head bands supporting her opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) party, the promise seemed to be of a better life, "freedom from fear" and the much awaited transition to democracy. The event would be the culmination of a series of reforms initiated in 2011 (Jones, 2013) to liberalize politically and economically, allowing for the suspension of Western sanctions imposed as a form of pressuring the government for the ongoing human rights abuses in the country.

What would these reforms mean on the ground? What consequences did the discourse of democratic change and economic development mean to the majority of the population in Myanmar? Although the initial questions that instigated this research were broad and far-reaching, the focus of inquiry turned toward the rural population of Myanmar, which comprises more than 75% of the country's population (Wood, 2013:2). More specifically, the investigation focused on the implications of new land policies and new visions of land for the rural poor. The changing political-economic environment has also changed the opportunity structure within which contestation over land is now occurring.

The deagrarianization of Southeast Asia and the depeasantization of rural populations around the globe have been of evolving academic interest, as these processes are increasingly linked analytically to diverse understandings of globalization. As a transitioning country, Myanmar has encountered similar challenges with regards to competing visions of land. New land policies have been institutionalized to resonate with primarily economic and market-oriented visions of land seen globally, in opposition to democratic and human rights approaches that see land as a means to improve access to land by the poor and improve human rights (Borras, 2008; Assies, 2009). Such visions are manifest in land laws and policies, government discourses and actual control and access to land on the ground. They are also visible when contestations emerge to oppose existing or newly imposed visions of land.

Using the case study of the Dawei Special Economic Zone area in the southern Tenasserim division of Myanmar, the analysis seeks to understand these competing visions and the emerging dynamics of land governance in the country. The study views such visions as being linked to global trends, but inevitably embedded in legacies of military-led land control and historical contestations. An activist in the region described symbolically the changes in rural dynamics: "*Nowadays money is more powerful than the gun.*" "*The people are more afraid of the pen than to bullet*" (2014), illustrating increasingly market-driven and institutionalized mechanisms of controlling access to land in contrast to the predominance of force and violence in earlier periods.

As the paper will show, legacies of military rule are still evident in the everyday state-society relations on the ground however, while the changes in the economic and political sphere are reformulating mechanisms of land control, they are also providing new opportunities for social mobilizations and contestation. The following questions have guided the present research:

- How have the political and economic reforms in Myanmar changed the dominant vision over land and how has this affected land tenure security for the rural poor?
- How have the reforms changed the opportunity structure for contestations over land as well as provided new collective action frames for opposing such dominant vision?
- How are such dynamics of land governance linked globally?

To answer these questions, the approach uses a political-economy perspective of a broadly Marxist trend, framed according to the critical agrarian studies literature on agrarian change and transnational agrarian movements. It combines these with frameworks of social movement theory from the political process tradition, particularly on transnational activism, informed mainly by Tarrow (2005; 2011). It addresses some of the gaps considered by Borrás et al. (2008) on transnational agrarian movements that combine these two fields of study.

The paper argues that although the cause for dispossession and insecurity may be the expansion of market-oriented land relations in combination with remnants of state abuse, social movements have not explicitly framed their claims against globalization and neoliberalism as other transnational agrarian movements have. Collective action has been framed around human rights and responsible investment, combining a response to past experience of state abuse and increased engagement with international discourses on sustainable development and human rights.

It is possible that, regarding their visions for land, they may even be considered within the category of “progressive” trends (Gimenez & Shattuck, 2011), as opposed to the more radical trends of transnational agrarian movements such as *Vía Campesina* that openly oppose neoliberal visions of land, expressing demands for democratic land governance and (re)distributive reform. However, seeking support in global framings such as human rights and indigenous and ethnic rights may have strategic impact, drawing on historical legacies of contention, particularly from human rights and democracy movements, as well as the historical conflict between the Burmese military (ethnic Burman) and its ethnic minorities.

Alliances and advocacy networks are coming together around strategic issues, particularly land, but the political actors engaged are diverse, complicating the general idea that “peasants” are resisting agrarian change. By focusing on the nuances of collective action frames and alliance building in the Dawei Special Economic Zone areas, the analysis puts in question the assumption that land confiscations (referred to “land-grabbing” in current literature) will automatically result in “resistance”, or that resistance will always occur in similar fashion. Instead of resistance that is one directional against agrarian change, contention is a multi-directional processes of

alliance-building that act vertically, with claims directed at different local, national and transnational levels, and horizontally: across different political and social actors with different interests (Tarrow, 2005). They are not necessarily countermovements to globalization in McMichael's sense (2005).

Changing relations over land and new land policies such as those that formalize private property titles have generated land tenure insecurity for those with lesser capital and political power, imposing a predominant vision of land similar to those promoted by De Soto and the World Bank (2003). Land policies in Myanmar have tended to be more inclusive of political participation, decreasing the state-society gap that has been a historic trend in the country's recent history. However, the pro-market vision of land governance (Borras et al. 2008) has placed economic values first, and the effect is tending toward what theory would foresee as twofold: (re)concentration of land with consequent concentration of wealth and power. It has manifest what Harvey (2005) declared would be the consequence of neoliberal transformation resulting in "accumulation by dispossession" and the reestablishing of powerful elites. In Myanmar, the military has refashioned itself as the new capitalist crony class (McCarthy, 2013). The technicist ideas of land titling as an administrative function have denied land as "social relations" and have resonated with the World Bank's ideas expressed in 2008 (the "globalization from above") (Borras et al. 2008).

Contestation has emerged most significantly due to the political liberalization in the country, allowing a measured amount of protest, press freedom and some degree of political association, offering new visions based on democratic participation in policy-making, consultation and livelihood security. The more politically open atmosphere has also invited the formation of new political party, as the Dawei Nationalities Party that was formed in 2013 during the period in which the fieldwork was conducted. Therefore, the focus is a changing opportunity structure in domestic politics that has allowed previously covert or inexistent forms of contestation to emerge in the wake of the 2011 changes in Myanmar. The Dawei deep seaport and special economic zone project was the focus and target around which collective action emerged, although it was not the only reason why collective action emerged.

There is a multiplicity and dynamism in the contestation adopted by civil society in the southern Tenasserim division, particularly focusing on land confiscations in and around the Dawei Special Economic Zone. This paper argues that globalization, changes in land policies and neoliberal-type reforms are not enough to generate resistance or a social movement. *"It is not because some actors frame their claims in terms of globalization that the latter is the cause of collective action"* (Ancelovici, 428). Resistance should not to assumed, but rather demonstrated empirically in different case studies and across different contexts. Also, studies have shown that peasants may choose adaptive livelihood strategies instead of engaging in resistance, or seek personal gains in land deals instead of community protection (Marnanova, 2012). Borrowing from the political process tradition of social movements, and analyzing contentious processes as dynamic and not static (McAdam et al, 2001), this paper argues that movements also require other components such as formation of collective

action frames, often founded on cultural repertoires and influenced by historical legacies of contention, as well as existing social networks in order to emerge.

Borras et al. (2008) have highlighted the gaps in the literature on transnational agrarian movements that converge between agrarian studies and social movements, pointing out that “there are weak analytical connections between the rise in social movement studies and agrarian change dynamics.” (Borras et al., 2008: 181). Analysis is also missing on the *dynamics of NGO-peasant relations, sectoral alliances* (between small farmers, poor peasants, rich farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, peasant women, indigenous peoples and rural workers). These may converge in what he calls *thematic advocacy alliances* and these, in turn can be multi-class and multi-sectoral, “cutting across the rural-urban and global south-north divides” (198). Another gap in the analysis are the political strategies and forms of actions of transnational agrarian movements (TAMs), as well as the arenas and action between different sub(national movements). In Myanmar, although Jones (2014) argues that there is a systematic weakness and disorganisation of the social forces which could potentially challenge the structural powers in the emerging model of state-facilitated crony capitalism such as labour organizations, peasantry, minority groups and the middle class (167), the case study in the Dawei Special Economic Zone area shows the contrary, and is illustrative of a vibrantly emerging civil society that traverses sectoral and ethnic lines as well as national borders.

#### *Notes on methodology*

The current research uses a qualitative case-study approach based on empirical data. The data collection began with an initial desk research phase, focusing on news articles, independent reports and past scholarship on land policies, land confiscations and civil society in Myanmar. This was followed by fieldwork in the southern Thanintharyi division of Myanmar, where the Dawei Special Economic Zone is located, in February 2014. Some interviews were conducted earlier in Yangon, although the majority were conducted in the Thanintharyi division with local NGOs, women’s rights organizations, farmer networks, monks, ethnic organizations as well as volunteer lawyer volunteer and the local media. Semi-structured interviews occurred in informal settings such as in farmers’ households. They provided information of recent and past land confiscations (in the 1990s) largely involving the government and insights into the dynamics of alliance-building, political strategies and collective action frames in contestations over land. Direct observation of protests, civil society events, social gatherings and political party meetings were also crucial in understanding the dynamics in the region.

## **2. Changing institutional frameworks: past and present land governance in Myanmar**

Land policies changed under the successive governments, under British colonialism (1931-1948), to independent democratic Burma (1948-1962), and during successive military regimes under the Revolutionary Council (1962-1974), the Burma Socialist Programme Party (1974-1988), the State Law and Order Restoration Council

(1988-1997) and its reformulation as the State Peace and Development Council (1997-2011) (Hudson-Rodd et al. 2003). The entrepreneurial turn that began in 1989, after the economic stagnation during the phase of “Burmese Way to Socialism” (1962-1988), based on centralized state control and nationalization of the private sector (McLean, 2010:42). Since 2011, the entrepreneurial turn has deepened, and new land laws and policies have marked the qualitative shift in which land has effectively been commodified to be a saleable resource. Whereas previous policies had been marked by strong state control over land transfer and use, the new vision is more market-oriented and arguably not seeing the interest of smallholding farmers (Oberndorf, 2012).

The vision of land prior to the most recent reforms can very much be understood in terms of Scott’s view of state-making and incorporation of peripheral peoples into zones of state control (2009). Conflict between the central Burmese army and ethnic armed groups has been a battle over control of territory and incorporation into the national space since independence. Since 1989, the *tatmadaw* (Burmese armed forces) may have changed its strategy, seeking cease-fire agreements with these groups and adopting an “economic development” approach to governing its borderlands. (McLean, 2010:42). Wood (2011) coined the term “ceasefire capitalism” to illustrate a case where cease-fires in Myanmar between ethnic armed groups and the central government have been linked to economic development, focusing in the northern Kachin state. It has been a postwar military strategy where the Burmese regime allocates agricultural and logging concessions in postwar regions to assert control over these areas. The SLORC/SPDC military government that came to power in 1988 changed its policies to liberalize external trade, legalize cross-border trade with neighbouring countries and accept foreign investment, enacting a Foreign Investment Law (FIL) (Kudo & Kumagai, 2012).

However, only after 2011 has the economic liberalization really manifest with opening up markets to foreign investment, instituting new FDI laws, reforming economic policy under guidance of international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the ADB and IMF. Meanwhile, political liberalization has also prompted the lifting of western sanctions that were in place as pressure against the Burmese government’s human rights abuses. The new Farmland Law (2012) and the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law (2012) have regulated land according to the idea of formalizing rights. Together with the Special Economic Zone Laws, the new land laws effectively set down the groundwork for the central government’s vision of “development” and serve as a guarantee of lease to domestic and foreign investors, although the State is still ultimate owner of the land according to the 2008 Constitution. Such policies and guarantees for secure land investment are consistent with the national goals for development are directed towards increasing GDP and changing the country from an agricultural to an industrialization (Kudo, 2012). Agriculture will tend to be large-scale farming and for export. The danger and likelihood of such laws governing land however, as shown by research in other countries, is that titling is not the same as reaffirming existing rights and it does not necessarily result in greater land tenure security, particularly for the rural poor which

may have had relatively safe customary recognition of land rights. The likelihood that formalization will lead to negative consequences such as facilitating those with access to institutional administrative bodies, cronies with connections and those with bribing power is very high.

#### *Historical context of land laws and confiscations during military rule*

“Prior to 1953, citizens as well as foreigners could own agricultural land. However, with the enactment of the ‘Land Nationalization Act’ in 1953, all agricultural land has come under exclusive state-ownership. As such, all agricultural land was taken over by the government and was again put on lease to farmers who automatically became tenants to the land” (UNHCR, 4). According to Article 4 of the Act, land was *not transferable*. According to the Disposal of Tenancies Law, 1963, the government may stipulate conditions that, if tenants fail to comply (such as failing to grow the crops determined by the government), they may lose their land.

After independence and during the socialist era (1947-1988), the land policy sought to protect peasants’ rights to cultivate and have rights to use the land, although the state maintained its ownership of the land. This was part of the socialist concept of cooperative management and policies sought to eliminate landlordism, focusing on land re-distribution through leases and protecting farmers from losing their land. (FSWG, 2012:3). The Law Safeguarding Peasant Rights (1963), was also enacted in this period, however today, much of the laws protection peasants has been ignored.

When the SLORC came to power in 1988, putting an end to the socialist regime, and responding violently to the mass protests, the direction of the country was toward a “military command economy”. This was marked by increased liberalization and incentives for the private sector, although favoring companies with connections to the military leaders. In 1991, the SLORC enacted the Wastelands Law (1991), encouraging the development of the “wastelands” through the private sector. (BEWG, 2012) In practice, this meant the lands that had no formal land titles, and has led to the transfer of rights to private individuals and companies for large-scale plantations for export, often ignoring customary rights. And this has been particularly true in the upland areas (FSWG, 2012, 3).

Land confiscation, defined as “*action of taking or seizing someone’s land property through legal or other means. Land confiscation can occur as a result of buying or leasing of land property rights by domestic and transnational companies, Government authorities, the military and individuals. Land confiscation can also occur when the Government takes land for a public or business purpose, such as development or a public infrastructure project or other development.*” (Oberndorf, 2012: 13)

Much has been documented about land confiscations by the Burmese military. This has been understood as forced displacement, forced relocation and has often resulted in migration. Forced displacement has often been the result of conflict with ethnic armed groups and caused internal displacement or refugees fleeing across the border to Thailand. Historically, the relationship between state and society since the Revolutionary Council took over in 1962 has been criticized by international human rights groups:

*"The SPDC induced poverty through systematic and sustained violation of human rights. Individuals have no freedom of expression to publicly discuss violations of their rights. In this process, systematic violation of farmers' rights perpetuates poverty by constantly reproducing generations of poor. The military elite extract rents strengthening their position of power. Corruption thrives as secret and suppression of worker rights (no freedom of association, forced labour) further undermines human rights (Hudson-Rodd, 2008: 18)*

### *Political-economic liberalization in Burma since 2011*

The Myanmar government under President Thein Sein has embarked on dramatic political and economic reforms toward greater liberalization since 2011, after almost 50 years of military rule. The current loosening restrictions on press, releasing hundreds of political prisoners and allowing the opposition leader of the NLD party, Aung San Suu Kyi, to run for by-elections and join the new parliament in 2012 (Huang, 2013). Western sanctions that were previously in place as a pressure against the human rights abuses of the military regime have been lifted, and the country is undergoing further and dramatic economic liberalization under the guidance of international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to integrate Myanmar into the global economy and open up to foreign investment. The country has undertaken a more market-oriented, liberalized approach to the economy since 1988, when the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) took power after cracking down on popular protests, ending the phase of "Burmese way to socialism" initiated in 1962 (Kubo, 2013).

*"Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of a political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade." (Harvey, 2007:2)*

The roadmap to "discipline-flourishing democracy" began in 2008, when the government established a new Constitution that would guarantee the military's partial dominance in the Parliament and still restrict the main opposition leader from running for presidency in the 2015 general election. In November 2010, the first elections were held in Myanmar after 22 years of the current military rule, although boycotted by the opposition party and criticized by most Western observers. A multi-party system was established, as well as a new bicameral parliament and a civilian administration headed by a president and two vice-presidents as well as local parliaments and governments headed by chief ministers for the first time in 50 years (Zaw, 2011). However, structural constraints that will determine the extent, direction and pace of "reform", such as "the continued power of the military, the politico-military-business nexuses of the borderlands' "political complexes", and state-facilitated crony capitalism (Jones, 2014: 167). The "transition in Burma has been measured, controlled



from the top-down, and led by the elites rather than driven from below by social forces. As a consequence, any new space opening to civil society is largely intended by the elite reformers” (McCarthy, 2012: 10). Some argue that the reforms have been a political strategy to ensure the military’s continued dominance as primary political actor in Myanmar. (Huang, 2013). The transition has been compared to the liberalization reforms in China and Vietnam (Kubo, 2013)

### *New institutional frameworks governing land*

In March 2012, two new land laws were passed by the Myanmar Parliament: the *Farmland Law* and the *Vacant Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law*. The Farmland Law allows farmers to obtain a certificate granting “permanent land use rights to sell, transfer, mortgage or lease agricultural land” (KHRG, 21). It attempts to secure land tenure through land use certificate and registration, creating private land use property right. This includes the right to sell, exchange, inherit, lease the land and use it as credit. The Farmland Administration Bodies (FAB’s) were newly created to issue these certificates. However, according to critics, tenure security is still weak, as the state is still ultimately owns the land and can still remove these rights if conditions are not met. The *Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Law* allows the government to reallocate “wasteland” to private companies for agricultural production, livestock farming and aquaculture and mining that is considered of long-term interest of the state and the public. However, in practice, lands that are registered by interested investors as wasteland are often inhabited by local villagers and farmers or are being left fallow.

Although there were some improvements to past laws such as the recognition of non-rotational *taungya* (slash and burn techniques) as a legitimate land-use and recognizing that farmers are (already, de facto) using Vacant Fallow and Virgin lands without yet being formally recognized by the government (Oberndorf, 2012, 111); they are designed to promote large-scale agricultural investment and fail to create protection mechanisms for the majority rural population which consists of small-holding farmers. According to Oberndorff, tenure security remains weak, especially for smallholders, as the government still retains the power to rescind farmland use rights.

In general, reports by human rights groups such as the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) and the Myanmar Food Security Working Group have critiqued the new policies, arguing that there must be a more comprehensive policy on land management that must include consultation with all stakeholders, including civil society, farmers and private sector companies. More specifically, policy and legal instruments should provide tenure security for smallholders, families and communities, with an explicit protection for the rights of women. Also, customary laws related to land resources and ownership, such as communal ownership should be protected, with particular regard to ethnic minorities. They should also recognize rotational agricultural systems as productive land use. (Oberndorff, 2012: 111).

There should also be the recognition of rotational fallow systems, the freedom to farm (with no imposition from national policies on crop choice) and a system of national land-use planning that is participatory. It also defends more flexible

categorization of land (recognizing current land use), as well as equal rights for women in access to land titles and the need for Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of affected communities. This last point is essential and applicable to all development projects.

Nonetheless, there have been some developments since 2011. A Land Investigation Commission was set up by the Lower House of Parliament to investigate land disputes and confiscations, and although it has been considered an encouragement, demonstrating willingness from the Members of parliament, the committee still has limitations, such as the lack of a mandate to follow-up on complaints (KHRG, 2013:19). Other development in this regard include the Rule of Law and Stabilisation Committee that has also received hundreds of complaints related to land, and the Land Allotment Scrutiny Committee, which informs the parliament about environmental and social impacts of investment projects as well as being responsible with reviewing the national land-use policy and make recommendations (KHRG, 2013). Such developments are indicative of a growing engagement and decrease in the historic state-society gap, with particular regards to land governance.

Current land governance is shaped by past legacies of land confiscation by the military. The new shift toward a more market-led vision of land resonates with Western ideas of private property rights facilitating investment. However, similar to Vietnam and China, this process is gradual in that the state is still ultimate owner of the land and retains the right to confiscate land for public purposes or cases considered of national interest. The new land laws have facilitated and served as safeguards for investment, and characterized by marketability-based vision as opposed to a security and rights-based vision of land tenure (Assies, 2009).

### **3. The Dawei Special Economic Zone and surrounding areas**

As part of the new development path toward industrialization facilitated by new institutional frameworks and foreign investment laws, the Dawei Special Economic Zone (referred to henceforth as Dawei SEZ), was created in the southern coast of Myanmar. It is one of three special economic zones (along with the Kyauk Phyu SEZ, in western Rakhine State; and the Thilawa SEZ, about 20km south of Yangon, which is currently being developed by Japanese companies) that were implemented as means of attracting foreign investment to the country. The massive infrastructure project is threatening the land security and livelihood of farmers, villagers, fisherfolk and landless laborers in the region. It is set to displace hundreds of villagers and tens of thousands of people if followed according to plan.

The Tenasserim division is also experiencing diverse forms of land insecurity related to growing speculation, military appropriation of lands for government buildings and personal business, infrastructure projects such as roads, as well as the conflicts emerging from the new land titling procedures required by the Farmland Law (2012). Large agricultural and mining concessions have also been transferred to government-linked cronies in the region around the Dawei Special Economic Zone, and these have added to the general land insecurity and grievances of the region. This

section argues that land confiscations have as much to do with the current market-led reforms, which have intensified tenure insecurity, as with past legacies of state-sponsored displacement. Much of these impacts have been denounced and documented by local NGOs and civil society networks such as the Dawei Development Association (DDA).

### *Background*

The Dawei SEZ is located 20km north of Dawei, the capital of the southernmost Tenasserim (also known as Thanintharyi) division in Myanmar, which borders Mon State to the north, Thailand to the east and the Andaman sea to the west (see Appendix for map). The project requires an investment of US\$50 billion and the designated area is of 204.5 km<sup>2</sup> (DDA, 2014). The project plan includes a deep sea port, an industrial estate with heavy industries such as a steel mill, oil refinery, petrochemical complex, power plant and other utility services, a cross-border road and rail link with transmission lines to Thailand, as well as a town for residential and commercial development. The mega development project is set to become the largest industrial complex in Southeast Asia and serve as an important international trading and communications hub, linking Southeast Asia and the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean through the Andaman Sea (see appendix), allowing the passage of goods from the Middle East, Europe and Africa. It will also serve as a link to the regional transport network initiative of the Asian Development Bank, which connects with Thailand, Laos, Vietnam (through the East-West Economic Corridor), with Cambodia (through the Southern Economic Corridor) and Kunming, in China (through the North-South Economic Corridor. (TNI, 2012; DDA, 2014). There is also the expectation of a hospitality and tourism boom in the region, as foreigners seek opportunities near the pristine beaches (Loewen, 2012:10).

There have been major concerns from local communities and activists regarding the social environmental impacts of the planned SEZ. Currently, the region is rich in natural resources, pristine beaches and has local villagers depend on fishing, orchards and farming for their livelihoods. The local livelihoods include subsistence and sale of products such as cashew nuts, livestock and paddy. A small percentage is composed of wage laborers working on other people's land or in Dawei city. Forests also provide mushrooms, bamboo and medicinal herbs (DDA 2014: 19). Fishing communities also depend on fish, oysters and crabs for their livelihoods and there is a grave concern that the industry will negatively affect the coastal environment. The majority of communities living in the region are ethnic Tavoyan, also known as Dawei, who live mostly in the lowland areas and will directly be affected by the SEZ, as well as Karen, who live in the highlands and are mostly being affected by the road construction between Dawei and Thailand. Migrants from other regions in Myanmar also compose the regional population.

The establishment of a Special Economic Zone Law in January 2011, as well as a law specifically referring to the SEZ in Dawei, the Dawei Special Economic Zone Law (2011), which was revised since March 2013, have formed the legal framework within which investments could flow into the region and infrastructural developments could

begin under more favorable and more secure institutional guarantees for investment. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had been signed in May 2008 between the governments of Myanmar and Thailand, amended in July 2012. It is therefore a government-government project. The Italian-Thai Development PLC (known as ITD) was initially set to be the developer of the project, according to a Framework Agreement signed with the Myanmar Port Authorities in November 2010. However, the governments announced the withdrawal of ITD in March 2013, revoking the 75 year concession due to the inability to attract investors.

After halting the project in 2013, the Thai government announced in October 2014 that it would revive talks with Myanmar and Japan (Hariraksapitak, 2014). The Japanese government has also expressed interest in investing in Dawei. While Japanese companies are already engaged in development projects in the Thilawa SEZ near Yangon, issues of land confiscation, resettlement and compensation have not yet adequately been addressed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, JICA (Sandar Oo, 2013). In October 2014, the Japanese representative of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry reportedly said the country would invest US\$700.000 on three studies related to the planning of the Dawei SEZ, and would also draw up the master plan for the SEZ. The funding would come from Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry as well as the Economic Research Institute for Asean and East Asia (Zaw, 2014). JICA's lack of responsiveness to farmers in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone may well be an indication of future relations in Dawei SEZ.

#### *Land in and around the Dawei SEZ: Multiplicity of regional grabs*

The impact of such investments in the region have caused an increase in land tenure insecurity for the rural population in the area in and around the SEZ, and threats to livelihoods related to land and fishing. The fear is that if unaddressed, dispossession could lead to widespread landlessness, migration and urban poverty. According to the Dawei Development Association (DDA), 19 villages within the demarcation of the Dawei SEZ boundaries (industrial estate area and port) were set to be displaced in 2011. As plans have been modified, this number has been reduced to 6 villages as of September 2013 (DDA, 2014: 13). (See Appendix for list of villages affected).

The surrounding areas outside the Dawei SEZ demarcation which are also threatened with displacement includes a small port in the town of Ngapidat, where 70 families have already lost land to the ITD developer company for the construction of a coastal road and small port. The resettlement area in Bawar village, created for those who would eventually be relocated was also previously inhabited by 15 households lost land to make way for 480 others. A stone quarry in Paradut for providing gravel for construction work, operated by ITD has led to the loss of paddy land for 28 households in Mayin Gyi. Roads have also blocked irrigation channels and affected the paddy fields of villagers. The two road links connecting Dawei and Thailand that will include rail, pipeline and electricity transmission lines have also begun to impact villagers. The "access road" to Phu Nam Ron in Thailand, now open to traffic but not yet completely surfaced, has caused the confiscation of land in at least 13 villages (each village has an

average of 150 households and 5 people per household), according to the DDA report. A water supply reservoir is intended to be constructed, and if realized, would flood an area of 7-12 km<sup>2</sup> for a large dam. Currently, the region is occupied by the Kalonehtar village, inhabited by 182 households and approximately 1000 people. The residents have strongly opposed the project with the support of a local monk and youth groups. In total therefore, an estimated 20-36 villages and about 22.000 to 43.000 people will be directly affected by the special economic zone project, according to the Dawei Development Association (2014). The majority of these issues have not adequately been addressed by the local and central governments or the ITD company.

Loewen (2012) has classified the land-grabs in Dawei as *direct land-grabs* (immediately within the SEZ zone) and *indirect land-grabs* (due to overall development of the area and speculation and urban expansion). Indirect land grabs include those that lands have been purchased for speculative purposes, where investors have foreseen the huge rise in land prices. Accounts indicate that local land price has risen 20 times compared to pre-2008 values (Loewen, 2012: 10). Other indirect land grabs are linked to the a hydropower plant, a coal-fired power plant, large-scale rubber and oil palm plantations, as well as oil refinery. These have been often linked to crony businesses such as Max Myanmar and Htoo Trading Co. Corruption and lack of transparency have been a constant accusation in many these dealings, which favor cronies with links to the government and businesses with higher monetary power to pay for bribes.

Other diverse land confiscations are also emerging in the Tenasserim division, and these include farmers affected by the peri-urban expansion of Dawei city which is enclosing previous small-holding farmers (interviews in Appendix), displacing them for government buildings and private enterprises; even an account of Chinese businessmen buying land held as commons in a village through corrupt village heads; as well as the unaddressed land confiscations of the 1990s (see interviews Appendix). These diverse examples directly and indirectly related to the Dawei SEZ have as much to do with the emerging institutional frameworks that demand formal titles to facilitate investment, as with past practices of corruption, force and land laws that have long enabled the state to confiscate land for “public purposes”. They are illustrative of the market, technicist ideas of formal and individual property rights as opposed to customary practices and potentially pro-poor land policies based on fair access and providing for basic human rights.

Given the international nature of investments in the Dawei SEZ, it may be considered another example in the “global land grab” debate that has intensified since the 2008/2009 financial crisis (Borras, 2008). Although the SEZ per se does not qualify as one of the emerging agribusiness models for increasing food security or agrofuel production for countries in the global North, the mechanisms for grabbing have included similar patterns occurring elsewhere in the world, which can be useful in understanding the current transitional conjecture, legitimizing discourses of “development” and industrialization, increasing international capital (Thai and Japanese), institutional frameworks that have facilitated and secured such types of investment, in which governments formalize or act as brokers for foreignizing space,

and it is a confiscation of a huge tract of land, tending to “foreignize” space from the people who previously inhabited the area.

However, it may also be useful to understand the SEZ as a form of expanding state control over areas that were previously not yet incorporated into the state, in Scott’s sense (2009); or some variation of Wood’s (2001) notion of cease-fire capitalism. While the Dawei SEZ area consists mostly of Tavoyan villagers whose livelihoods are dependant on orchards and rice cultivation, some of the roadlink areas are inhabited by farmers that are ethnic Karen and have been recurrently displaced by conflicts between the Burmese army and the Karen National Army (KNA). As the roadlink area is controlled by the Karen National Union (KNU), the Italian-Thai Development Company (ITD) negotiated directly with the KNU to start the construction of the roads. Such competing authorities over land are illustrative of how investments in the country are occurring in the country where a unified institutional framework for land is absent and where non-state organizations are still contesting state sovereignty. The KNU has its own land administration and land laws (interview NGO activist 2), and such lack of cohesion in institutional frameworks make the to survey the local people near the SEZ to determine the compensation, such as trees destroyed by the project (Weng, 2012b)

#### *Problems of the new Farmland Law (2012)*

Some of the problems of the new farmland laws (discussed earlier) have manifest on the ground in Dawei. As the Farmland Law (2012) now requires farmers to formally register their land at the local management bodies, different challenges have arisen and illustrated the tangible effects of formalizing land titles experienced in other countries. The new law requires formal land titles, but when people come to register, access is often denied (interview with women’s rights activist) if other more powerful interests have settled their stake on that piece of land; registering the land often requires extra costs that poor farmers are unable to pay; requesting government officials to come and measure and certify the land is often denied, deliberately delayed or delayed for lack of capacity and personnel of the farmland management bodies (interview with NGO Activist 2); sometimes lack of knowledge by local farmers about the bureaucratic system may complicate access. Also, companies with individual connections or with more bribing capacity have reportedly had privileges over designating plots of land. The discrepancy between ownership at the land registry and de facto ownership on the ground has also been reported (interview with NGO Activist 1), and this is not uncommon in trends globally. Disputes between local villagers have also been reported (interview with village representatives from Kadoe village). The issue is a national problem when it comes to having no independent judicial body to hear such land disputes (Oberndorff, 2012).

The multiplicity of land confiscations and the incapacitated institutional structure as well as the chronic and expanding cronyism of the military are the new challenges of a transitioning Myanmar. Nonetheless, civil society has begun to mobilize to respond to the emerging land confiscations as well as to the challenges of the land formalization procedures, in activities that challenge investments by the ITD as well as

those that support state functions. There is subsequently a multiplicity of emerging political actors, many informed and trained by the NGOs that are transnationally connected, borrowing from international frameworks such as human rights, with growing awareness to engage in and contest claims to land through formal and informal means in ways that were not possible prior to 2011.

#### **4. Agrarian networks, alliance building and framing contestation over land**

At the height of global academic discussions on transnational agrarian movements, Malseed (2008) had observed the absence of anything that could be called such an overt “agrarian movement” in Burma as was occurring in Latin America and in other countries in Southeast Asia. It was problematic to assume such thing existed in a country where social movements were extremely repressed under the military regime. Although Malseed documented everyday day forms of resistance (Scott, 1985) in rural Burma, and his focus was on Karen state, it was hardly comparable to other “movements” observed globally. His critique and question was whether such movements based on emerging ideas of food sovereignty and solidarity with global movements such as Via Campesina were possible.

##### *Changing opportunity structure for contestation in Myanmar*

Since the political liberalization of 2011, however, the scenario has drastically changed, and political contention across the country has been widely reported. Although regional differences remain - as some local governments are still maintaining strongholds and enclaves of authoritarian rule and some regions are still under open conflict (such as in Kachin state), open protest is becoming part of the norm. Rural contestation throughout Myanmar has occurred against emerging land confiscations as well as to past, unaddressed seizures by the military since the 1990s. The opportunity structure at national level has changed, allowing for a degree of measured protest (although prior authorization for protest is still required according to the Peaceful Assembly Law), and political associations have been able to mobilize with less scrutiny. This was evident in Dawei, as local news agencies such as Dawei Watch began reporting since 2012 (interview with journalist/activist, 2014). The activist networks that were acting underground began manifesting more openly, and those advocating for human rights and democracy in exile began returning to the country since 2011, reorganizing around new and old contentious issues. The opposition to land confiscations has become prominent, changing from “overt to covert”, arguably comparable to what has happened in China after its neoliberal reforms (Walker, 2008).

With suspension of press censorship, the media has widely reported in local, national and international levels. Increased telecommunication and internet access, which had visibly arrived in Dawei, saw a reduction of the previously prohibitive costs of use and installation, and facilitated communication between activists and farmers. Although much of information sharing still occurred at social gatherings, teashops, protests and meetings, the new technologies and communication structure has facilitated mobilization. However, in Dawei, police are still monitoring political events,

following activists and recording discussions and speeches. NGOs are still regarded as enemies and seen with suspicion (interview NGO Activist 2). Despite protest being allowed, instances of farmers being imprisoned for protesting without authorization or reacting against unjust land confiscations still continues nationally (Nyein, 2014; Mann, 2014) and specifically in Dawei (Interview with Women's rights activist, 2014).

Institutional means of redress for land confiscations also became available through newly created government commissions, and the parliamentary land investigation commission. The newly formed Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) reported that 45% of the total complaints it had received in 2014 had been linked to land disputes, (547 out of 1,200 complaints between January and August). (Zaw, 2014). While most disputes in 2014 were arbitrations regarding land contested between local farmers, complaints linked to military or business land seizures were more significant in 2011-12. The latter were more rare in 2014.

Tilly (2002) has argued that one of the main political threats for social movements is the state institution itself, including its mechanisms of population control and repression. This can include outlawing social movements at the legal level, as well as physical repression of movements through military and police control. The degree, intensity and varieties of resistance movements may differ in accordance to degrees and forms of state repression (Slater, 2013). This was predominantly the case in Myanmar since 1962. State repression can shape forms of contention as well as leave legacies for future mobilizations. The intensity of state violence has definitively shaped the legacies of contestation in Myanmar, and the strategies used by civil society. Hence, mobilization in Dawei is still marked by a legacy of still tangible repression that fuels remnants of fear among farmers who are sometimes reluctant to join protests and fear being imprisoned. The collective memory of violence is therefore still present, although political actors are increasingly testing and challenging those boundaries.

Since the beginning of successive military regimes in 1962, state repression had consisted of arresting student leaders, establishing curfews (Hlaing, 2005), forbidding the formation of political associations through the National Solidarity Act of 1964. Ne Win's government created state-sponsored organizations along a corporatist, top-down model for peasants, youth, war veterans and literary workers. These "civil society groups" were therefore created and administered from the center. Groups tried to organize themselves independently from the corporatist civil society groups sponsored by the state, such as by forming in the mid-1970s as the Saturday Literary Discussion Group by writers and journalists in Mandalay, in contrast to the governments' Literary Workers' Association. (Hlaing, 2005: p.393). These politically charged literary groups would leave legacies until after the current wave of liberalization, in 2011. After the crackdown on student protests in 1988, and after an electoral loss in 1990, the Tatmadaw (Burmese armed forces) established the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and created the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA).

There is also a legacy of involvement of monks in activism, who were at the centre of the 2007 Saffron Revolution, and human rights and democracy movements



were long influenced by General Aung San, the independence hero and his daughter, the Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi. Student groups were also crucial in the democracy movements, particularly during the 1988 protests that resulted in the killing and imprisonment of many university leaders. The 88 Generation student leaders who had been imprisoned and released in 2011 after decades would become political activists and give legitimacy to movements such as the one in Dawei. The literary festivals that were also historically significant are still organized in 2013, as highly politicized events that promote ideas of democracy, human rights and empowerment.

### *Collective action frames: global and local/national*

While the emerging transnational agrarian movements have framed their contestations around the idea of “food sovereignty” and against neoliberalism, not all agrarian contention is a movement, and not all movements have “internationalized” as greatly as *Vía Campesina*, although they may be domesticating international discourses and framings, exchanging information and conducting activist training across borders. Although contention in the Dawei region can be seen as an agrarian-based movement, the diversity of political actors engaged in the movement make it hard to define as a peasant movement against globalization. It may well be that framing the contestation over a broader and inclusive umbrella such as “food sovereignty” or “democratic land governance” or “citizenship” may be a more effective strategy. However, they have distinctive framings and appeals to “human rights”, “indigenous people’s rights”, the UN “Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights” and “international standards on resettlement” (stating the World Bank and the ADB) (DDA, 2014).

### *Arenas and action between different sub(national) movements*

The agrarian “network” presented here is simultaneously an “actor” and a “structure” (Keck and Sikkink (1998). By targeting land claims at multiple levels, in what Fox (1990) has termed “vertical integration” and incorporated by Tarrow (2005), regional contestations over land have tried to seek redress at all levels of land administration, from village, to town, to national levels. Press conferences were held in Yangon, the main city in the country, to bring attention to the issue. On October 21st, 2014, activists from the Dawei Development Association, a community-based organization, held a meeting with the Thailand Human Rights Commission to present their report titled, “*Voices from the Ground: Concerns over the Dawei Special Economic Zone and Related Projects.*” By appealing to a potentially more responsive government across the border using Keck & Sikkink’s coined term “boomerang strategy” (1998), they have utilized their alliances that were formed previously, as much of the activists on human rights in Burma have historically been based in Thailand, as refugees, exiled political members or economic migrants.

Actions of groups such as the DDA has been targeted at multiple levels. To contest the negative impacts of the Dawei Special Economic Zone project, the targets

have been the Thai government, Myanmar government , Thai Human Rights Commission, Myanmar Government, Myanmar Parliament, Myanmar HR Commission, Karen National Union (KNU), ITD, future investors. appeals to the diverse levels of the Farmland Management bodies, and in the case of the peri-urban farmers of the Dawei Farmers Network, the appeal to different levels of government (regional and provincial) has meant greater or lesser support. (interviews, 2014)

Much of their framing contention is also a mixture of the past and current grievances. Land confiscations by the military government and crony businesses have been an extensive problem in Myanmar under the military regime and after the initial liberalization in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Widespread land confiscations, framed as “forced evictions”, “involuntary displacement” - linking it to the human rights discourse brought attention to the grievances that has led to many to flee across borders to Thailand. Cases of complaints in villages in the southern Tenasserim division near the Dawei SEZ included many who had had their land confiscations in the 1990s. These villagers also united around current contestations around land, responding to the changing opportunity structures and seeking redress for past land issues, particularly military confiscations, building military bases on areas bordering the Karen National Union, ethnic armed forces. The site had been largely a region of conflict and only recently achieved a cease-fire agreement. The point of these examples is that many people engaged in the contestation over land, attending protests exchanging information with others who had lost or were about to lose their land, and learnt from with CBOs and regional networks about how to address their claims.

#### *Dynamics of Alliance Building: horizontal alliances, cross-sectoral urban-rural*

The movement in the southern Tenasserim Division in and around the Dawei SEZ area can be said to be a mixture of dynamic alliance building, sectoral alliances (crossing different identity and social groups) and thematic advocacy alliances. And although I argue that the main issue has been the problem of widespread land confiscations, actors have fluidly engaged with multiple and simultaneous targets. The issue is often, not just land. Although the media, activists and academics can often frame political contention in rural settings as the resistance of peasants or farmers, the reality on the ground is a mix of social and political identities that may often fuse, converge and conflict. The “peasant” identity/paradigm that has shaped much of agrarian studies is recognized to be an abstract category of analysis that may be useful but may sometimes obfuscate the reality on the ground. The social basis of the movement go beyond class lines, and engage farmers of past confiscations, fisherfolk, academics, activists, Karen and Tavoyan, temporary migrants, peasants, part-time laborers, landless rural workers as well as land-owning farmers. The youth are a particularly interesting and active group, engaged in mobilizing and training, with increased awareness of land rights and collective action. These categories are fluid and cross-cutting. Diverse land-grabs also include those of peri-urban origin, those who had land confiscated by the military.

Strategic alliances and information sharing has occurred across ethnic divides in the Dawei region such as the majority Tavoyan ethnic groups in the region and the

Karen. These groups are constantly in communication and respond by informing other groups about suspicious approaches of authorities that may come to “measure out the land” or demarcate the area for purposes of later confiscation. The fluidity of movement of groups, largely on motorbikes across large areas of rural land, has benefitted from the newly accessible communication technologies (the commercialization of mobile phones and lines that were previously). A group of farmers in the peri-urban areas of Dawei city, affected by the increased speculation of land and expanding urbanization, infrastructure such as roads, and official government buildings, were building alliances with local human rights organizations and organizations working on women’s rights.

The boomerang political strategy would not have been possible if it were not for the legacy of historical repertoires (resorting to alliances in Thailand) of contention and the existing social networks across the border which are, actually extremely fluid, dynamic and constantly changing. The greatest change in the political reforms at the national level since 2011 has been the releasing of political prisoners, the lifting of censorship over the press, and the welcoming political exiles. Since then, the number of community based organizations, NGOs and international NGOs that were strategically based along the Thai-Burma border working on human rights, ethnic minority rights, refugee and migration issues, have shifted their bases from places like Chiang Mai and Mae Sot in Thailand to Yangon and other regions in Myanmar. Many of the CBO and NGO founders in Dawei had worked with NGOs in Thailand or undergone training with international organizations such as Earthrights International, which has been one of the main setters in advocacy campaigns in the region for land and environmental rights, contributing to framing discourses and setting strategic actions to assert protection of such rights.

#### *Political strategies and forms of actions*

Different strategies have been adopted by activists to bring attention to the negative impacts of the Dawei SEZ, such as press conferences in Yangon and in Thailand, dialogues with the Human Rights Commission in Thailand; open protests and targeted campaigns against the coal fired power plants which at one point was successful in halting the project (by targeting the power plant, the campaign sought to challenge the power supply to the ongoing project); the use of institutional mechanisms such as complaint letters and counter-mapping, as well as active engagement in the training and titling of land in order to avoid confiscations. Capacity building and information-sharing with other peasant groups in diverse regions across Myanmar has also expanded the network. Also, more open forms of disorganized protest such as the refusal to move until bulldozers threaten to take the land, blocking roads were observed. Alliances with international conservation organizations have also taken place as way of delimiting biodiversity hotspots to counter agribusiness and crony appropriation of lands.

Therefore, the dynamism is characteristic of the contestations over land occurring in the region. They are cross-sectoral and reach vertically to different levels of government. They also use existing transnational networks that had been

established in earlier political contestations solidified around the anti-neoliberal trend, responding to political opportunities and threats. Such pattern is useful in understanding Myanmar's transition from military rule, where its international solidarity against human rights abuses committed by the military has set the initial connections with transnational advocacy groups across the border in Thailand in the West.

## 5. Conclusions and discussion

The political and economic reforms in Myanmar since 2010-2011 have included institutional frameworks that have facilitated land confiscations through a market-oriented development agenda. New land laws, special economic zone laws and foreign investment laws have facilitated such mechanisms of land confiscation that inevitably favor military-linked crony businesses, and increasingly allow foreign investments. In the case of the Dawei Special Economic Zone, Thai and Japanese capital are going toward infrastructure and energy projects. The new vision of land in itself resonates global trends of private property that is transferable and safeguards investment. However, such new institutional frameworks are unlikely to benefit the rural poor who have disproportionate lack of access to the farmland management bodies, or capital and knowledge to seek such certificates, let alone power or influence to safeguard the land they already occupy. Although civil society is increasingly appropriating these as means of protecting their land, current practices of land confiscations are not guaranteeing tenure security or livelihood alternatives to those dispossessed.

The current practices of land confiscation also combine with past practices of military coercion and corruption, and the gap between state and society is still being bridged. Practices are far from international 'best practices' of compensation and prior information. The multiplicity of land confiscations in and around the Dawei SEZ is indicative of the increased land tenure insecurity faced by the rural poor.

However, together with increased investment and reforms, the opportunity structure for political contestation and collective action has also emerged. Rural democratization is an on-going process: *"Within civil society, it involves the emergence and consolidation of social and political institutions capable of representing rural interests vis-à-vis the state. Some may be specifically rural, such as peasant organizations, while others may be national associations, such as political parties, which developed a rural presence. For the state, rural democratization requires effective majority rule as well as both formal and informal accountability to its citizens."* (Fox, 1990: 1). *"Rural democratization cannot be separated from the challenge of democratizing the state more generally."* (Fox, 1990: 1). Hence, the process of democratization in Myanmar must necessarily address the rural question.

Although collective action around land issues has emerged, the complexity and dynamism of such actions can hardly be summarized as mere "peasant resistance" to agrarian change. The peasant category itself has been complicated by the multiplicity of social and political actors, including NGOs with international connections. The collective actions frames are also increasingly adopting human rights discourses that

resonate with international discourses on human rights, livelihoods, rights to information and prior and informed consent. Although these are transnationally linked ideas, legacies of past contention and previously existing social networks are the foundations on which such ideas latch on and further develop. Historic legacies of state abuse and military land confiscations have served to fuel and feed the current demands over land.

The human rights and the alternative visions of land that are proposed by such movements, although diverse and often mixed with ethnic questions and local customary practices, suggest a vision for land based on livelihood and tenure security that values existing practices and recognizes existing land relations as opposed to the new vision of land that is based solely on economic development, often under the discourse of “the good of the public”, or in the interest of the greater public. The human rights framework also resonates with similar agrarian struggles throughout the globe (Suarez, 2013), although collective action in the Dawei area has not explicitly defined their claims in opposition to globalization or neoliberalism. The underlying message is, however, for a need for democratic land governance and deepening democracy offering alternative vision for land.

Transnational activism can help bridge the historic gap in Myanmar’s state-society relations, which Borras claims is essential for democratic land governance. Alliances between advocacy networks (society) and reformist actors *within* the state are crucial for successful claims on land (as well as in restructuring concept of land governance to be more pro-poor and inclusive (Borras, 2008). Alliances with other rural/agrarian movements throughout Myanmar can also strengthen representativeness and the ‘reform from below’ suggested by Borras. Civil society in Dawei could also benefit by engaging in the more contentious debate of equitable land rights and citizenship, framing campaigns as such, potentially aligning with larger transnational mobilizations. Further discussions would have to address the fact that contestation for democratic land governance will inevitably require demanding a more responsive judicial system (Franco, 2008).

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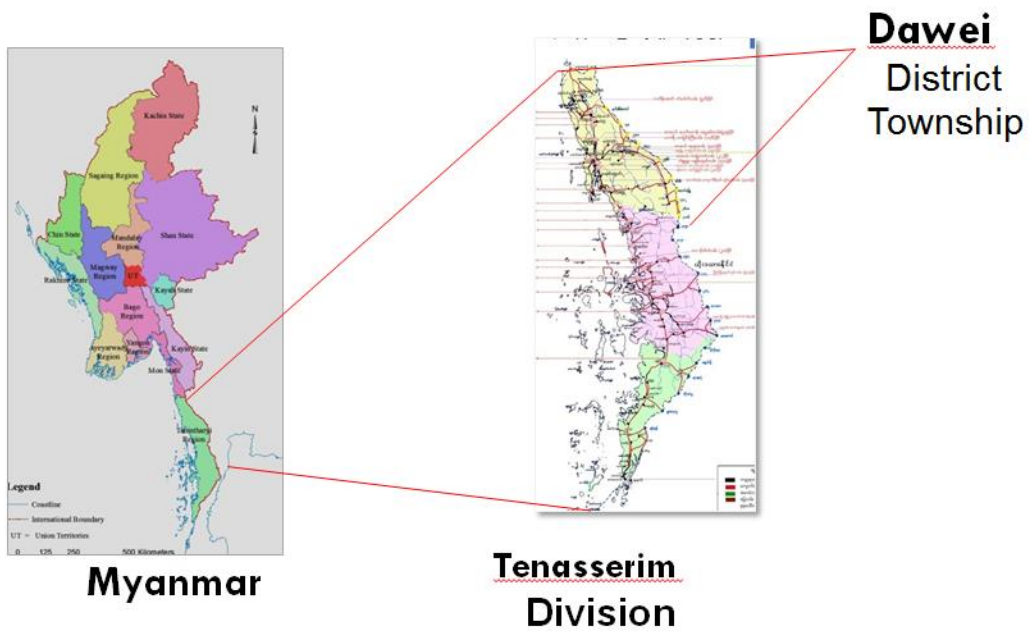
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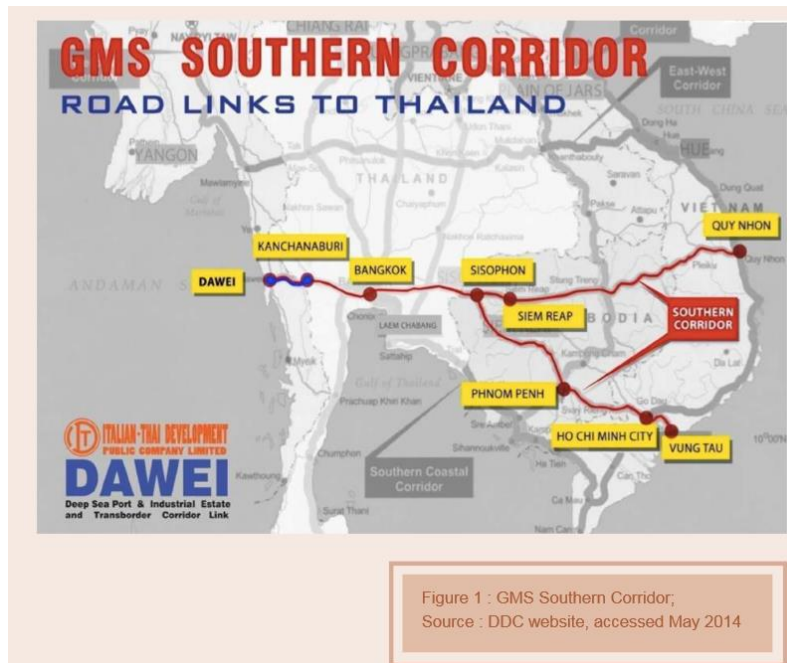
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**Appendix 1: Research location**



**Appendix 2: The Dawei Special Economic Zone and link to GMS Southern Corridor**



**The Dawei SEZ project**



(DDA, 2014: 08, 36)

## Appendix 2: Villages and people to be affected by the Dawei SEZ

Table 1: Villages and people affected by DSEZ project according to government statements 2011-2013

Village Name	Households	Families	Population	Included in official list on		
				2011	At Visitor Centre	2/12/13
1 Yalaing	348	340	1623	x	x	
2 Pagawzone	410	421	2212	x	x	
3 Thabyu Chaung	169	162	746	x	x	
4 Kya Khat Tabinin	333	320	1524	x	x	
5 Kyauk Whet Kone	205	197	1060	x	x	
6 Daung Shaung	82	101	603	x		
7 Pein Shaung	369	378	2063	x	x	
8 Kyauk Thout	196	210	1900	x		
9 Mudu	343	347	2029	x	x	x
10 Paradut	321	314	1662	x	x	x
11 Htein Gyi	415	405	2253	x	x	x
12 Min Dut	92	93	451	x	x	
13 Myo Haung	242	287	2391	x		
14 Sin Pu Net	41	49	509	x		
15 Net Twin	236	268	2668	x		
16 Mayin Gyi	136	135	821	x	x	
17 Lae Shaung	610	626	3337	x	x	x
18 Nyaung Bin Seik	52	52	328	x	x	
19 Ngapidat	18	23	145	x		
20 Wet Chaung	104	99	449		x	x
21 Kha Maung Chaung	339	335	1453		x	x
22 Thit Teo Htounk	411	393	2111		x	
Total (22 villages)						

(DDA, 2014:13)

### Appendix 3: Interviews conducted in February 2014

<b>Date</b>	<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
06/02/2014	NGO activist 1	Dawei Development Association (Yangon)
10/02/2014	NGO activist 2	Dawei Development Association
11/02/2014	Women's rights activist	Tavoyan Women's Union
11/02/2014	Human rights activist	Dawei Human Rights Watch
12/02/2014	Farmer activist leader	Dawei Farmers Network
13/02/2014	Farmer activist 1	Dawei Farmers Network
13/02/2014	Farmer activist 2	Dawei Farmers Network
14/02/2014	Monastery monk	Myein Gyi Village temple
18/02/2014	Farmer activist	ThabyeChaung village
20/02/2014	Journalist/activist	Dawei Watch
20/02/2014	NGO activist 2	Tarkapaw
20/02/2014	Academic/activist	Dawei Research Association
21/02/2014	8 Farmers displaced in 1990s	ThabyeChaung village
21/02/2014	Village representative	Kadoe villagers: Chinese cemetery confiscation
23/02/2014	Lawyer volunteer	Dawei Lawyers' Group
24/02/2014	NGO activist 3	Dawei Development Association