The definition and social networking of underground lottery

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Abstract

The objective of the research is 1) to study the definition of underground lottery and 2) to study social networking of underground lottery. Qualitative research is used in this research by studying from the major informants such as buyers and underground lottery sellers. The tools used in this research are participation observation and in-dept interview. Data analysis is done by decoding and interpreting and data-checking by methodological triangulation. The result of the study can be divided into 2 issues. The first issue was found that the concerning parties of underground lottery network had defined underground lottery as 1) underground lottery is to build up hope for them to increase their income other than their current career, 2) selling underground lottery is one way of having a sideline career for the sellers and furthermore, the sellers themselves hope to win underground lottery. 3) Underground lottery is the medium on building relationship and creating pleasure among concerning parties. The second issue was that creating social network of underground lottery results from that all the parties are previously in other kinds of relationship. As a result, they invited each other into the network. As all parties had involved in other kinds of relationship other than underground lottery, it also resulted in creating other kinds of social activities.

Keywords: social network, underground lottery
Introduction

The value of underground lottery has forever appeared in Thai society. Moreover, the value has been implanted in younger generations since they are very young. The value has been implanted on children since they start to learn to speak. As for the children of underground lottery sellers, when the selling day comes close, they tell their children to speak the numbers and use those numbers to buy underground lottery. This has shown the value they have implanted on their children. Consequently, children may think that underground lottery is a normal issue which will be able to lead them into the field or social network of underground lottery other than other children. The problems concerning underground lottery can be reflected from children’s viewpoint. For instance, in an assay of a female student from a school in Uthai Thani, it was written that “lottery” or “underground lottery” was a gamble that she had been familiar since she was very young because every member in her family played it as if it was normal. Since the children are in kindergarten, big sellers let children know the day when the lottery comes out. Furthermore, in some areas, strange incidents occur near the day of the lottery coming out such car accidents, seeing register numbers, the numbers of the milestone, the mileage of the car or even strange natural occurrence concerning plants and animals. The people involving in community network of underground lottery in each area have an ability to interpret those occurrences and turn them into numbers.

In the present Thai society, many medias have immensely presented negative images of underground lottery such as the news of catching underground lottery sellers, the news of the demanding of debt payment or the criminal news caused from underground lottery (Thai News Agency, 2009). Even though the images of society reflected on the news are negative sides of underground lottery, some of Thai people have accepted and seen that underground lottery is the hope to make them gain more money easily. In another way, they still live their life in the society that concerns on underground lottery.

Thai society has been called Buddhist’s society but the problems encountering nowadays are totally contrast with the Thai way of life. The problems of debt and gamble have led to various kinds of criminal problems which can be seen from newspapers such as the news of catching underground lottery sellers (Thai News Agency, 2009) and the key underground lottery sellers being stormed and charged with the big amount of underground lottery money at 3 millions bath on June 16, 2010 (Krisana Tiwatsirikul, 2010).

Such situation has reflected that in all areas of Thai society since the past until the present it is difficult to eliminate the problem of underground lottery. It can be seen from various samples in many areas which still encounter with underground lottery problem.
Similarly, even though they are in different areas and times, they are encountering the same problem. Thus, it can be said that underground lottery and gamble have deeply seeped into the way of thinking of Thai people until it is hard to solve. Besides, the habit of Thai people is that they are fun-loving. Moreover, as they love to take risks and believe in things, the problems of underground lottery are increasingly harder to solve.

Underground lottery has started from people who play and sell it which are called croupiers. They sell and have their social networks looked for people to buy underground lottery. Next, the social networks submit the underground lottery they have sold to a bigger croupier. The networks of the croupier will get commission from selling underground lottery. As a result, there are social networks relying on each other such as between relatives, friends, colleagues and acquaintances.

Therefore, researcher has posed a few questions; in Thai society how the people define the meaning of underground lottery and how underground lottery creates social network. This research has the objective to reflect the network of underground lottery, the definition of underground lottery from the viewpoint of concerning parties and the genuine perspective of the networks, sellers and buyers in the position that no one has previously studied.

This study is able to help the society understand the situation and the activity resulting from the social network of underground lottery in Thai society which has happened continuously from the past until the present and the real standpoint for the concerning parties of underground lottery community. This research can be used as a righteous guide regarding the use of grouping and social networking in order to apply it in the activities that enable communities to earn extra income and make use of it.

**Research question**

1. How do Thai people define the meaning of underground lottery?
2. How does underground lottery create social networking?

**The purpose of the research**

The purposes of the study of social network of underground lottery are as follows.

1. To study the definition of underground lottery of Thai people in Thai society either from buyers, sellers or general people.
2. To study the social network of underground lottery.
Definitions of specific terms

Social network means the relationship of group of people in various forms using underground lottery as a medium to create such relationship. They communicate by exchanging ideas and relying on each other in creating activities in the community.

Underground lottery means the gamble using the last 3 or 2 digit numbers of government lottery. The money played is not limited. Players are able to take risk as they wish and the results of underground lottery are from the result of government lottery on the 1st and 16th of each month.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework used in this research is the social network concept by Sari Pongpis (2005) which has given the definition as that social network is a form of social relationships which is different from other groups. This group sustains a clear boundary, knowing the members of the group and having a perceivable abstract. They have social structure at one level but their social network is the limitless. The condition of social network is that the members have to stay in contact constantly. The connection between members might be or might not be able to be seen in a concrete way in a form of exchanging, networking, communicating and living together. There is no certain structure in social network. There might be a structure to connect the members and groups but on one can force anyone to do anything. Each member or group is equally the center of the network. Consequently, the form of social relationship of social network is more complex than the ones from other groups or organizations.

In the present, social network has a meaning as social process which is created from the relationship between people, groups, organizations, and institutes with the same purpose, need and activity. However, the members of the group are still free from one another. The implications are the value of the relationship, the corporation, the mission and the process which are explained in the form of relation and incident of human society which refer to the cooperation between each individual or group which shares similar activities.

According to the research conducted by Panithi Sooksomboon (2002) named “social network and the search of options of street hawkers: case study of Northeastern hawkers living in Nanglerng community”. It revealed that social network that the hawkers had with other people was in the form of contacting, exchanging information, news and foods, selling and giving service and relying on each other. The social network resulted in the way of life of the hawkers and the family living in Nanglerng community which they had to rely on each
other. Besides, the research of the social network of hawkers in Nanglerng community had indicated that social network that could be seen concerned sharing, gambling and underground lottery among hawkers. However, their relationship was flexible as they could borrow money from one another, due to coming from the same hometown or being relatives. Moreover, the research conducted by Siriporn Venikpattanakul (2004) named “the network of shoe making of Ban Nongtha, Tambol Pasak, Lamphun” has revealed the creating of career network causing from passing knowledge by the family and environment from the community which they have found, noticed and participated in helping the family member. Subsequently, they started to form the activity as a network and expand it extensively. There are 3 factors namely career leader, body of career knowledge and the management within network.

Consequently, researcher has brought up the idea of social network to analyze the occurred incident with the people concerning underground lottery and the creating of social network to see how they relate and in which form and how social network of underground lottery affect the community.

Research method

1. Research area

The research area is in Nakornsrithammarat, which is called Buddhist’s town because it houses the Buddha’s relic and has become the center of all the people living there. However, a lot of people in the area still gamble on underground lottery and social networks of underground lottery are still intensive.

2. Group of informants

This research has focused on the search of field study circumstance in order to gain the meaning of society and social network of underground lottery by using interviewing method and gaining information from concerning parties in underground lottery network. The participating informants in this research can be divided into 2 groups as follows.

2.1 Key informants: Key informants are people who directly concern social network of underground lottery such as croupier, capitalist, buyer and seller. The information gained is used to study the definition of underground lottery, the way of entering the network, being a buyer and being a seller and how to create social network of underground lottery.

2.2 Informants: Informants are those who concern underground lottery, people in the community of underground lottery who either gamble or not, people who have quitted, beginners, monks and elderly people who have been respected from the community. The information gained is used to study the meaning of underground lottery, the belief, and the
hinting of underground lottery, the decoding and the symbols used to interpret numbers to buy underground lottery.

3. Data collecting

3.1 Collect data from relating researches

3.2 Field trip data collected by following methods.

3.2.1 Participation observation and non-participation observation: participation observation was done by the participating of researcher in the activity and the buying-selling process of underground lottery in order to create good relationship and closeness with the people who are observed until they trust the observer. It is done to gain information easily and make the information come out naturally from the informants and in order to be able to recheck the information. As for non-participation observation, researcher did not participate in the activity of buying and selling underground lottery but only observed the behaviors of underground lottery gamblers such as finding out how to get the coolest number and observing how to play it.

3.2.2 In-depth interview: In-depth interview is done by the researcher conducting in-dept interview individually. It is the process of questioning in details between interviewer and interviewee concerning the definition and social networking of underground lottery.

4. Data analyzing from interviewing and observation will be categorized according to the issue of data analysis and circumstance of field study by using the concept of definition regarding underground lottery and the concept of social networking. Next steps are interpreting the data, decoding it according to the concept and inspecting it by using triangulation method such as triangulation inspection of data, considering source of time, place and people.
Research Results

Researcher has presented research results into 2 issues; first is the definition of underground lottery and second is social networking of underground lottery. Researcher has presented as follows.

1. The definition of underground lottery in Thai society

As from field trip study conducted by interviewing general people, buyers, sellers of underground lottery, researcher has found that there are 3 issues of the definition of underground lottery.

1.1 Underground lottery in a mean of a way to earn income for buyers.

Even though underground lottery is illegal and can not be done openly; however, as from the field trip study conducted by interviewing concerning parties, it was found out as follows.

“I have been buying underground lottery for a long time. Sometimes, I won. Sometimes, I lost. If I won, I spent the money as normal.” (Dang Ngamdi (assumed name) interviewed on October 2, 2010)

“Sometimes when I won, I spent some money and used some to buy the it the next time. So I won’t use my own money to play next time.” (Noi Somchai (assumed name) interviewed on October 2, 2010)

“We all hope to win. If we buy 10 baht, we will gain 6,000 baht. So it’s worth the investment. If I lose, it is not a lot of money. If I win once, I will be inspired to buy again next time. I am happy when winning it.” (Manod Saengtham (assumed name) interviewed on October 4, 2010)
“If I don’t want money, why buying it? It is easy to buy nowadays, just call the person who sells it. No need to go to their house and then I can pay later.” (Ngamjit Sommai (assumed name) interviewed on October 4, 2010)

“I buy because I want the money. Everyone is the same. I buy every time. When winning I am very happy” (Vaewta Chana (assumed name) interviewed on October 4, 2010)

According to the interviews above, it has revealed that most of the buyers hoped that underground lottery was one of the ways to earn more money, apart from their routine work.

1.2 Underground lottery as a mean of increasing income to sellers.

According to the interviews with buyers, it was found out that even though selling underground lottery is illegal and unable to do it openly, the income from selling it is enough to make it as a sideline career besides their current work. As researcher has conducted a field trip study by interviewing underground buyers, they have given interviews as follows.

“I didn’t think to sell it this long. Before, selling single number is much easier even though there are a lot more sellers. But I don’t need to go out to sell it. Especially when it is highly prohibited by the government, buyers want to buy more. They can make a phone call to buy it and pay later. If they win, they can come to pick up the money right on the day of the result. Whatever happens, they still want to buy it. (Penpak Saksakul (assumed name) interviewed on October 7, 2010)

“I have sold underground lottery since I was a teenager. I get the commission. I earn 35% from selling it. I use it as my investment so I don’t need to use my own money. If I lose, I won’t feel sorry but if I win, it will be my profit. (Karnjana Raksa (assumed name) interviewed on October 7, 2010)

The statements from the interviews of sellers have reflected social meaning of underground lottery. It was found that underground lottery was a way to earn them an income, besides their current career. Moreover, they still spend some of the money to buy it. If they lost, they would not be too sorry because it was the commission they had gained from selling it. Buying and selling underground lottery simultaneously, they hoped to earn more money from winning it.

1.3 Underground lottery as a mean of creating relationship among group of people and creating pleasure
Besides being a way of earning money, underground lottery is also a way of creating relationship between buyers. Moreover, for those who have never bought it before, they might be persuaded by sellers to buy it and they will follow accordingly. For example, as for the people who have work together but are not close, when they buy underground lottery together, they start to exchange ideas which will lead to more conversations. Consequently, it can be seen that underground lottery is a medium to create relationship among group of people. Moreover, buying underground lottery has started from the persuasion of close acquaintances such as relatives and friends. According to the field trip study by interviewing group of people who bought underground lottery, it was found as follows.

“Working every single day is stressful as I’ve encountered the same things so buying underground lottery is like having something to look forward to. (Somjai Thongsuk (assumed name) interviewed on October 5, 2010)

“After coming back from the funeral that day, I sat talking with friends. Before coming back home, we speculated the numbers and asked what number we were going to buy or who had dreamed what…” (Saman Namkiew (assumed name) interviewed on October 5, 2010)

“We have not talked about buying underground lottery only. Sometimes, we have asked about other people. We have made conversations as normal. (Thongmee Kaewyai (assumed name) interviewed on October 5, 2010)

“After buying underground lottery, we went to the funeral and came back home to listen to the result in the afternoon. So we didn’t have to just wait for the result when we had something else to do too..” (Keawta Yusuk (assumed name) interviewed on October 5, 2010)

“I have come here to listen to what had happened in our community, to ask who have the coolest number or who have a good dream, then I buy accordingly and I hope to win like others. Talking to other people is better than sitting at home. Coming here I can meet people.” (Naree Boonmak (assumed name) interviewed on October 5, 2010)

According to the above interviews, it can be seen that group of people who have participated in buying activity of underground lottery are having different kinds of relationship such as exchanging ideas, asking for wellness, making conversation of politic and economy. As for people who buy underground lottery, they think that underground lottery is a gamble for pleasure among group of acquaintances which leads to mutual conversation concerning
underground lottery. Besides underground lottery, there are other kinds of activity in the community. Furthermore, waiting for the result of underground lottery creates excitement.

2. Social networking of underground lottery

Social networking of underground lottery can be seen as follows.

It is found out that group of underground lottery buyers are well related in society or community. Buyers are at basic level of network and have a good relationship in society such as parents, siblings, relatives and friends. As they are relative, they rely on each other for making a living. They have helped each other in many ways such as exchanging ideas concerning things happening in the community. They give advises to each other or consult personal problems. As they have preceded daily activity together, it has led them to involve in underground lottery. For instance, they sit together and talk about the good numbers while talking about work. When it is time for the result, they focus on the good number more, as seen in the interviews below.
“When meeting with underground lottery seller, wherever, I will ask him/her what the coolest number and then I buy it in advance.” (Kaewta Yusuk (assumed name) interviewed on October 5, 2010)

The statement from the interview has reflected that group of people who are in the field of underground lottery are mostly relatives, friends or people in the community. They have unite to do activities in the community and as well as group of underground lottery buying.

Each time of buying underground lottery, there are group of people who are sellers related in the network of underground lottery. Some are acquaintances or relatives as they have resided in the same community. However, the relationship is not as close as the group of buyers’ because each seller has their own group of buyers. The network relationship of sellers is more in the form of business, as general sellers have to collect money and numbers from their customers. When the amount of the money exceeds the limit, they will transfer such money to other sellers before sending to croupier, as seen in the following interview.

“We, sellers, sell and write numbers at home. Previously, we had to go to customers’ house but we don’t need to do it now. Customers like to come to buy it at my house so they can follow others too. They are my long-time customers. When they buy with one seller, they will stick to him/her. Some used to say that they had never won until they came to buy it here…” (Karnjana Raksa (assumed name) interviewed on October 7, 2010)

“Sometimes, if it exceeds the quota set by croupier, I have to share it with other sellers if they do not reach their quota yet..” (Sarin Raksa (assumed name) interviewed on October 8, 2010)

The above interviews have reflected that group of underground lottery sellers have created their network in order to facilitate selling in case they have exceeded their quota so they can transfer the numbers to other sellers. However, sellers are closer to their customers than to other sellers.

While the general sellers are selling underground lottery, there are also detail sellers selling it too. Detail sellers sell underground lottery different from general sellers because those who come to buy with detail sellers are able to buy with a lot more money than those who buy with general sellers. And the relationship between details sellers are in a good term because there is an investment involved. Every time when the result comes out, if buyers or buyers of general sellers win the lottery, they can come to get the money from detail sellers and do not need to wait or get the money directly from the capitalist. As a result, detail sellers
have constantly borrowed money from other detail sellers to pay to those who win. After that, they will get the money back from the capitalist.

Group of people who are at capitalist’s level or big croupiers are cluster of well-to-do relatives who live in different areas and invest together to open underground lottery business. Big croupiers are in a good term of relationship because they are relatives. Also, they are in a good term with retail sellers because they have to rely on each other on the money invested and the form of lineage when conducting underground business.

Discussion

As from the study of the definition and underground lottery networking, it is found that there are 3 issues of the definition of underground lottery. 1. Underground lottery as a mean of earning an income to buyers. As from the study finding, it has revealed that part of the people in Thai society still build of hope for themselves by buying underground lottery in order to hope that it is another way to earn an income for themselves and their family. 2. Underground lottery is used as a tool to create relationship, excitement and pleasure among concerning parties. Besides, people who get involved in underground lottery are relatives and close friends. 3. Underground lottery is also a tool to create income to sellers. The income is too much for them to quit.

Even though some organizations, especially the government, have tried very hard to solve the problem of underground lottery, it still exists in Thai society. Moreover, nowadays it doubles its intensity and more people are entering the field. Even people, who are well educated, working in a good position, also gamble on underground lottery and see it as a way of creating hope and pleasure among group of friends and relatives. As result, they can come to meet, talk and exchange ideas.

As for the issue on social networking of underground lottery, the relationship has been created because of their social relation in the form of family. As they are closely social related, the connection in underground lottery network is in the form of reliance and helping one another, other than in a form of business. As a result, the network has lasted long. It is consistent with the research of Pasuk Pongpajit (2000) which found that crating of relationship in a form of underground lottery had related in rank and mutual benefiting. This research is consistent with a research called “Life of a risk taker from a case study of underground lottery player”, written by Pasunit Sarnmas (2002). The purpose of the research is to understand the lives of people who gamble on underground lottery. The result of the study has shown a procedure of a continuous development planned in steps to become an
underground lottery player. It was found that there were 3 periods of time. The first period was called “entering the world of underground lottery player”. On the first time of deciding to buy underground lottery, it was found that it resulted from the chosen perception or the attitude towards underground lottery in a positive way. Moreover, there were basic conditions which facilitated socially and economically and the extra conditions of winning over the feeling that playing underground lottery was a high risk that can be succeeded. The second period was called “adapting themselves into the world of underground lottery players”. Next, after considering on playing underground lottery, the conditions derived from the demand to create social relationship, the demand to create hope in life and the demand to challenge and win over underground lottery. Moreover, they were in the new status of being a new member of a detail culture group in the society of underground lottery players. As a result, there were procedures to enter the world of underground lottery players. The third period was called “becoming an underground lottery player”. To become a habitual underground lottery player, one had to give the definition of winning underground lottery in a positive way. Moreover, they had to be able to explain the logic of underground lottery playing to the society and themselves.

According to the above circumstance, in the research conducted by Varinthorn Suwanjaras (2006) named “behaviors and viewpoints of the people towards underground lottery player in the area of Tambol Sansuk, Muang Distric, Chonburi”, which the people had seen that underground lottery was a gamble leading to troubles and losing properties. However, in this research, it had found some differences from the research of Varinthorn Suwanjamras (2006) which said that in truth buying underground lottery, in the meaning of buyers and sellers, was a way to create hope to increase income from their main career. Furthermore, underground lottery had created excitement and pleasure among relatives and friends. In this research, it had revealed that as in social circumstance concerning underground lottery, some of Thai people had seen that it was one part of their life which created hope to increase more income than other kinds of legal careers. It is noticeable that presently in Thai society, even though it is developed economically and socially into a modern society, the belief and the relationship based on underground lottery network still widely exists.

**Suggestion**

As from the research findings, there are 2 suggestions.

The first suggestion is that the groups or the networks of underground lottery have given the definition of underground lottery as follows. Underground lottery is a tool to create
income to either buyers or sellers and it is a medium to create good relationship between people, relatives, friends and people in the community. It also creates mutual pleasure.

As from the finding above, it enables the concerning groups to create activities in the community and use the network to organize useful activities for the community. As a result, the community is able to create activities that are able to earn more income to the people without relying on playing underground lottery. Therefore, as from the finding, strength found on social networking should be used to create groups of activities or extra careers for the people in the community; such as grouping to work together and increase income and good relationship among concerning people who play underground lottery. As a result, they stop relying on the extra income from playing underground lottery.

The second is the suggestion for future researches which should study the relationship of underground lottery involving in other businesses, the risk and effects from playing underground lottery.

Reference


Interview

Kanchana Raksawong (assumed name) interviewed, Arisa Samosorn interviewer, the underground lottery home sales on 7 October 2553.

Keawta Yusuk (assumed name) interviewed, Arisa Samosorn interviewer, Food within the community on 7 October 2553.

Ngamjit sommhay (assumed name) interviewed, Arisa Samosorn interviewer, The home of community leader on 7 October 2553.

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