

In pursuit of sustainable ethnic equalities via cultural dialogue among the Cham in Ninh Thuận province, Vietnam

Pham Thi Thanh Huyen

Faculty of Oriental Studies

University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University

Abstract:

With all economic developments and institutional efforts in recent decades, the social inequalities among ethnic groups have reduced, and the principles of equality and social inclusion are broadly accepted in Vietnam. However, there are differences and stigmatization in cultural aspects – the risk of intolerance and misunderstanding sometimes becoming strongly visible, which requires the careful attention of the government to eliminate ethnic inequalities effectively. In this process, cultural understanding and flexible approaches from both sides, the government and the targeted ethnic group, are vital. As an ethnic minority with their own religion, beliefs and language, the Cham in Vietnam are a religious, linguistic minority as well. Being the long-lasting homeland with the highest number of Cham in Vietnam, Ninh Thuận is a suitable location to examine and observe the relation between the government and the Cham in the efforts to narrow down inequalities and stabilize the plural characteristics of the cultural fabric.

This essay attempts to suggest that the cultural dialogue between the Cham with local and central government institutions can help to resolve problems and eliminate ethnic inequalities with more useful and grass-root policies. In this paper, the author would like to describe some lingo-cultural issues among the Cham in Ninh Thuận province, which the author observed in recent field trips. Using historical methods and in-depth conversations with intellectuals, clerics, youths, and other Cham, the author suggests that lingo-cultural issues should be considered seriously to access genuine integration and harmony. Firstly, I will briefly introduce the Cham in the area of study. Secondly, I will describe incidents and circumstances in three fields: policy toward the Cham language (*Akhar Thrah*), religious recognition for the Cham Bani, and cultural heritage preservation (*Ppo Klaong Garai*

Temple Tower complex) to point out the current situation with potential inequalities and disagreement. In the third part, implemented solutions from the provincial and central administrative institutions, as well as suggested approaches will be discussed to stress that the cultural dialogue plays a vital role in the pursuit of sustainable equality and integration.

Keywords: Cham, lingo- cultural issues, cultural dialogue

Introduction

In recent years, Vietnam has experienced a fast and booming economic development. As a result, the poverty situation improved significantly. However, disparities have persisted in many aspects including the gap between ethnic groups. The central government, as well as provincial administrations, always declare their determination to eliminate ethnic inequalities, cultural distances, and promote social integration. In its Constitution, directives, and circulars, the Vietnamese government affirms and ensures that all ethnic groups have the right to maintain and develop their own culture, practice their customs, religions, and languages free from any discrimination.¹ However, there are complexities and difficulties that challenge those affirmations and efforts. As a conventional approach of inequality, income gaps lead to status anxiety- the feeling of not counting much in the eyes of others. Therefore, it is popularly believed that economic distance paves the way for social ills and cultural weaknesses. However, in this paper, the author wants to focus more on cultural inequalities themselves rather than as a result of economic inequalities because limits and inequalities in lingo-cultural fields can be a considerable risk for the maintenance and development of indigenous cultures of disfranchised groups themselves as well as for social integration and harmony. In this paper, the author would like to describe some lingo-cultural issues among the Cham in Ninh Thuận province where I have conducted field trips since 2015. This essay mostly relies on the relations between the Cham and local and central politics, especially in lingo-religious-cultural issues. Of course, in the analyzed aspects, the relations of the Cham with the Kinh – the majority group in Vietnam – and other ethnic groups such as the Raglai are also visual, but the content of this essay primarily focuses on the relation with the government and implemented policies which directly relate to the Cham. Combining historical methods and in-depth conversations with intellectuals, clerics, youths, and other Cham, the author suggests that

lingo- cultural issues should be considered seriously in order to have more equitable policies and achieve engaging and sustainable multiculturalism and equity. Three aspects will be discussed in this paper: the Cham language (*Akhar Thrah*) in bilingual (or multilingual) policies, religious practices and recognition of the Cham Bani, and cultural heritage preservation (Ppo Klaong Garai Tower Complex).

1. Demographic and general information

The Cham are a Malayo-Polynesian ethnic group who were the earliest inhabitants of the area of what is today central Vietnam and heirs of a powerful ancient civilization called the Champa. The Champa existed from the 2nd century to the 19th century, and this long existence contributed to the cultural development and historical consciousness on the Champa as well as its legacy among the Cham. Today, the Cham are one of 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam living in south-central provinces of Vietnam such as Ninh Thuận, Bình Thuận, Bình Định, Phú Yên and southern provinces including An Giang, Tây Ninh, Đồng Nai, and Hồ Chí Minh City². Based on the living area and cultural characteristics, the Cham in Vietnam are divided into three groups. Most of the Cham in Vietnam live in Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận, and are often called the Cham Panduranga. The Cham in Phú Yên and Bình Định are the Cham Hroi, and those in southern provinces are the Southern Cham (Chăm Nam bộ). The Cham Panduranga is the biggest group, and due to their historical background as well as self-identification, the Champa culture is deeply embedded in their daily life. They proudly see themselves as the heirs and remnants of Champa civilization with a continuous existence in this area despite political, military, and social fluctuations. There are around 101,964 Cham people in these two provinces, with 67,274 people³ living in Ninh Thuận (41.6% of the Cham population of Vietnam)⁴. In Ninh Thuận, the Cham live in settlements with other ethnic groups such as Vietnamese and Raglai people with a combination of languages and religions. Palei Pamblap Biruw (Vn.:Phước Nhơn), where I have conducted my research since 2015, is one of these settlements. There are 1,516 households and 6,567 persons in this *Palei* in 2016.⁵

Religiously, there are three main groups of the Cham in Ninh Thuận based on their religious beliefs: as they call themselves, they are the *Cham Ahiér* (with the influence of Brahmanism), the *Cham Awal* (or *Bani* with Islamic influence) and the *Cham Islam*. There is also a small number of Cham in Ninh Thuận who only worships ancestors, and they are sometimes

counted as the fourth religious group of Cham (*Cham Jat*) in Ninh Thuận.⁶ In Palei Pamblap Biruw, there are two main groups based on their religious identity: *Cham Awal (Bani)* and *Cham Islam*.

From the linguistic view, the Cham in Ninh Thuận or more broadly, the Cham Panduranga, mainly use *Akhar Thrah* (i.e. straight writing) as their mother tongue while among the Cham in the southern area, *Akhar Qu'ran* and *Akhar Jawi* are widely taught and used, which is strongly related to Islam and religious education. The Cham Hroi prefer to use Latin scripts for transcribing and writing the Cham language.⁷ Knowing and preserving *Akhar Thrah* is considered a proof of being 'more authentic Cham' for people in Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận compared with other Cham, especially in the southern part.⁸

Therefore, from religious and linguistic perspectives, there exist internal diversity and complexity that the government should take into account in making and enforcing policies related to this ethnic group or one of their sub-groups. In the following sections, the situation and concerns related to *Akhar Thrah*, Cham Bani and the Ppo Klaong Garai temple complex will be described and discussed to pave the way for understanding and suggesting sustainable efforts for ethnic equality.

2. Some lingual- social and cultural issues among the Cham in Ninh Thuận

2.1. *Akhar Thrah* in bilingual (or multilingual) policy

The Cham language is one of several Austronesian languages found in Vietnam, and is closely related to the Malay language. The sphere of what is called the 'Chamic language group' covers the languages of ethnic groups of Churu, Raghlai, H'roi, Jarai, Rade, and as far as that of the Utsat in Hainan island⁹ as well as scripts in the Philippines.¹⁰

Akhar Thrah (straight writing) or so-called 'Eastern Cham', which is popularly used among Cham Panduranga today was well developed under the Ppo Romé reign (17th century) and became the language in Cham manuscripts written on palm leaves (*lá buông*) or paper after that.¹¹ With the efforts of pioneering French scholars such as E. Aymonier and Cabaton in the early 20th century and then G. Moussay in the 1970s, dictionaries and the first standardization were introduced. Under the Republic Government of South Vietnam, the first Cham textbook was compiled by some Cham

teachers in 1961.¹² After the reunification of Vietnam (1975), in 1985, Cham intellectuals in the Committee for the Compilation of Cham Books (Ban biên soạn Sách chữ Chăm (BBSSCB) (established in 1978), standardized *Akhar Thrah* and published several textbooks and reference books used in schools. Until now most pupils in Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận have been learning and becoming familiar with this way of writing. *Akhar Thrah* was taught in schools from 1978 in Thuận Hải province (Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận today) with two classes and 82 students at elementary level. After the provincial division in 1992, Cham children in Ninh Thuận continue to be able to study *Akhar Thrah* as their mother tongue. In the 2002-2003 academic year, Ninh Thuận had 23 elementary schools in Cham communities with 367 classes and 9,886 students, meaning 100% of Cham children learned *Akhar Thrah*.¹³ More recently, official statistics published by the Central Committee of Ethnic Affairs in 2015 recorded a high percentage of Cham people knowing their own language (99.4%).¹⁴ The government also supports education and training programs for Cham language teachers with an emphasis on teaching methods of Cham language as the mother tongue.¹⁵ On Channel 5 of national television and the provincial channels of Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận, there are programs broadcast in *Akhar Thrah*. However, the reality is more complicated than these high numbers.

The Vietnam government enforces a bilingual policy for ethnic minorities in which Vietnamese is taught as the mainstream language (V.n.: chữ phổ thông) and primary tool of communication in society; the mother tongue of an ethnic group can be taught along with Vietnamese and be compulsory in elementary schools. Furthermore, since the 2000s, English was enforced as a required foreign language.¹⁶ Hence, in fact, for Cham students, Vietnamese – the official language – is taught from the 1st grade until the 12th grade. In the 2015 report, 78.6 % of Cham people 15 or older can read and write Vietnamese¹⁷; English is taught from the third grade onwards as a required foreign language and their mother tongue, and *Akhar Thrah* is taught in schools until the fifth grade. However, the Cham language is an optional subject and the time span for the Cham classes is only three sessions (*tiết* in Vietnamese, and which is 35 minutes) per week.¹⁸ The textbook is lent for free during the academic year but will be collected by schools before the summer holiday so that the next group of pupils can borrow them for studying.¹⁹ In 2016, at the elementary level, there were 886 teachers out of 1,366 teachers (64.9%) of Ninh Thuận who did not know the mother tongue of their ethnic students. This is a significant barrier to teach and communicate with students and their parents.²⁰ At higher levels, the ethnic minority boarding high

school of Ninh Thuận (formerly known as Ppo Klaong Garai High school) is the only school where students in the 10th and 11th grades can learn *Akhar Thrah* as elective classes with free textbooks and materials. In reality, the number of students in these optional classes is quite small (in 2009-2010, there were 24 students of the 11th grade and 16 students in the 10th grade who learned the Cham language) and includes students from other ethnic groups of the province such as the Raglai people. Even the Raglai language might share similarities with the Cham language, but Cham language classes are still not appealing to them.²¹

In fact, during my field trips, I observed that many Cham students at the elementary level can manage quite well with all three languages, but the condition is worse in lower secondary and high schools because *Akhar Thrah* is no longer taught at those higher levels. At the same time, there is a critical decrease in the number of students continuing their study at those levels. In the 2015 report, there was a high percentage of Cham children attending primary schools but this was lower for lower secondary and much lower for high schools at 90.3%, 73.3%, and 41.8% respectively.²² Hence, from both quantity and quality aspects, teaching and learning the Cham language faces enormous challenges. Therefore, the question of what is the exact definition of knowing or being fluent in a language should be considered by policymakers in the education and training field. If it is speaking only, those high numbers are reliable since most of the Cham in Ninh Thuận can speak and communicate in standardized *Akhar Thrah*. However, as a language with its own script and long written tradition, the reality that many students forget how to read and write *Akhar Thrah* is a severe concern. They can speak because it is used in family and community conversation rather than as a result of formal education at schools. Neither my host, his wife nor their five children (aged between 18 years old to 34 years old) could read and write *Akhar Thrah*. When my female host wanted to send some offerings to her dead relative at a funeral, she needed to ask for help from my Cham language teacher to write the list of offerings on the paper in *Akhar Thrah*. In daily conversation among young Cham, using Vietnamese words in sentences is increasing. In short interviews with the Cham in the video of the *Caraih* lotus field, we can observe this phenomenon clearly.²³ In karaoke songs, Cham songs are transliterated with Latin so that Cham people can sing along easily since Vietnamese is also written in Latin, so it is convenient for people to read *Akhar Thrah* in Latin script rather than its own script. There was even discussion among Cham intellectuals to use Latin script for *Akhar Thrah* so that it is easier for people to learn and retain it.

Indeed, reading and writing are significant challenges for Cham language maintenance and development.

In Phước Nhon, a Japanese language center was established in 2016 with funds raised by a Japanese non-governmental organization called Manabiya Tsubasa and attracted students in the village and nearby. The number of students is around 30 per year.²⁴ This project was initiated by a Cham who worked and then established a company with Japanese partners in Hồ Chí Minh City. The number of Cham working for Japanese companies in this settlement has risen in recent years so that children have attended these free Japanese classes with hope for a brighter future. A niece of my host's neighbor, a fifth-grade student, can manage well in four languages: she can sing Japanese songs, speak English quite confidently, read Cham fast and speak in Vietnamese fluently correspondingly with her age and her grade. However, whether students like her can retain this pace in higher levels of education and which foreign language is more suitable for them is left for further research.

In brief, despite the efforts of the government as well as Cham intellectuals, the danger of erosion and devaluation of *Akhar Thrah*, especially in reading and writing, is obvious. It is largely due to the ambitious but inefficient multilingual policy from the government, so an equitable and responsive language policy is needed in which the role and the need of students should be central.

2.2. Identity Card incident in 2017 and the question of religious identity among the Cham Bani

During *Ramâwan* of 2017, when I spent my research leave in *Palei Pamplap Biruw*, there was a discussion and debate related to religion registration in newly-issued identity cards reading 'Đạo Hồi' (Islam) instead of 'Bà ni' (Bani). The Cham Bani in this settlement disagreed with this new way of registration, and the topic immediately triggered a robust debate on social media as well as in daily conversation. Traditionally, the Cham Bani have a good relation with the *Ahiér*, and the dualism among *Ahiér* -*Awal* is obvious.²⁵ In more detail, priests of Cham *Ahiér* and Cham *Awal* had good relationships with each other for a long time. In the past, Cham *Awal* priests were considered monitors of royal palaces when the kings were absent, even though Cham kings were followers of *Ahiér*. Cham *Ahiér* priests usually give gifts to Cham *Awal* priests during *Ramâwan*; they attend the rituals of the other religion and play a role in those rituals as well.²⁶ Nowadays, during the *Katé* festival, Cham Bani in Phước Nhon devotedly worship at Ppo Romé tower (sometimes their number is more than the *Cham Ahiér* themselves from Hậu Sanh (*Thuer*), a nearby Cham village).²⁷

In contrast, the relation between Cham Bani and Cham Islam in this village is not that good. Historically, from the 1960s when Islam came to the village there was strong conflict.²⁸ In the 1980s, there was dispute between two groups again. Therefore, a long-lasting and deep-rooted suspicion toward each other persists among them. This dispute is part of the reason for the stronger reaction among the Cham Bani in this village to the identity card incident in 2017.

Besides, in religious practices, the Cham Bani does not follow five pillars of Islam strictly. Their practices of these essential doctrines are flexible. There is a Ppo Acar clerical class that is unique for the Cham Bani with the hierarchy and being representatives of Cham Bani households in religious practices and rituals. *Shahada*, *Salat*, and *Sawn*, to some extent, are visible and important among this class. However, for the Bani laity community, these practices are blurred and robustly flexible. In their notion of divinity, there is the incorporation of other Ppo (usually translated as gods or saints) rather than Ppo Ualah into their pantheons. A *sang mâgik* (a compound term of *sang* meaning “house” in the Cham language and *mâgik* which is believed to be from the Arabic word *masjid*), a prayer place for the Cham Bani, is not built and organized in the same way as a typical *masjid*. During Ramâwan, it is open to all Cham Bani to come and pray. However, in my accompany with my female host to *sang mâgik* during Ramâwan in *Palei Pamblap Biruw* in 2017 and 2019, I mostly see women of all households in long white dresses and leaving offerings (betel leaves and areca nuts are among the essential offerings), attending the prayer section which is usually from the late afternoon. Moreover, *Mbeng Muk kei* or ancestor veneration, is also prominent among the Cham Bani community during *Ramâwan*. These ceremonies are to invite ancestors to return and join them in this month. Due to a strong Vietnamese influence, drinking beer in this month is increasingly acceptable among male laity Cham Bani in recent years. *Zakat* and *Hajj*, mostly due to the economic conditions of the Cham Bani community, are not practiced. ‘Exchange of rice’ by older women is believed to be a practical version of *Zakat* among the Cham Bani.

On 19 June, 2017 the Religious Council of Bani Clerics and the Board of Religious Support in *Palei Pamblap Biruw* sent petitions to the local and central religious authorities to proclaim their disagreement with this reclassification and the separation between ‘Hồi giáo’ and ‘Bani’ and mentioned an ‘*unknown reason*’ for this sudden change. This ‘unknown reason’ is in the official dispatch dated June 2nd, 2017, from the Department of Administrative Management on Social Order and Security to command police departments to register ID card applicants’ religions according to the list of 13 state-recognized religions, not with the sub-groups.²⁹ More broadly, the Cham Bani

has been included in the population of Muslims in official statistics and academic scholarship with the popular term ‘Old Islam’.³⁰ For example, in the statistics in 2015 published by the Committee of Ethnic Affairs, the listing of the Cham based on religions reflects this mainstream viewpoint: 82.8% of Cham people are followers of religions including 48.4% of Islam (Hồi giáo), 33.5% of Brahmanism (Bà la môn) and a small number of Buddhists, Protestants, and Catholics.³¹

Getting back to the event of June 2017, in response to the petition and people's reactions, at the end of that month, the Head of Police of Ninh Thuận commanded that all identity cards of the Cham Bani would be registered as per the information in the household registration book. It meant that the religion would be listed as Bani, not Islam anymore. In August, the police of Ninh Hải district came to Xuân Hải commune to issue and change villagers’ IDs.³² So this issue was temporarily solved with the determined request of the Cham Bani as well as quick response and flexibility of the Provincial Police. However, it is still an on-going debate among the Cham Bani as well as dignitaries. In my last visit during *Ramâwan* 2019 in May and June, Imum Dương Điệp in Phước Nhơn strongly affirmed the difference between Islam and Bani, but he also said that there are Bani priests who accept the view of Bani as a sub-sect of Islam. On June 7th, 2019, the provincial and communal police of Ninh Thuận held a meeting with Bani priests to collect their opinions related to the name of their religion. Therefore, this particular incident suggests the need for viewing religious classification and registration in a broader context, taking into account the flexibility of practices in regards to Five Pillars of Islam among the Cham Bani, shifting discussions among the Cham Bani themselves, the historical dispute among the Cham Bani and Cham Islam as well as the influence of Islamophobia in recent years.³³

2.3. Tangible heritage preservation: the case of the Ppo Klaong Garai temple complex

Ninh Thuận is the homeland of a lot of famous Cham intangible and tangible heritage. Cham tower complexes are the symbol of architectural heritage and legacy of Champa in general and Panduranga in particular, and their prominence can be seen in the capital city’s name of Ninh Thuận: Phan Rang-Tháp Chàm (Cham tower). In Ninh Thuận, there are three prominent Champa temple complexes, including Hòa Lai (three towers) from the 9th century, Ppo Klaong Garai from the 13th century, and Ppo Romé (dated to the 16-17th centuries). Ppo Klaong Garai is in the city of Phan Rang-Tháp Chàm and is believed to have been the worship place of King Jaya Sinhavarman III of Champa.³⁴ This temple tower complex includes three separate towers: the main tower, the

gate tower, and the fire tower. The complex looks out to Dinh river. Commonly, Champa temple towers were built near the river, which suggests the importance of the river system for Champa's economics, political, and religious centers.³⁵ At the entrance of the main tower, there are two stone pillars with carved inscriptions. Ppo Klaong Garai is among the most important and beautiful Cham tower complexes and a prominent and important heritage that was ordered to be preserved, conserved and developed into a tourist destination by the Vietnamese Government in Directive No. 121-CT dated May 12, 1982.³⁶ In 1980s-1990s, Ppo Klaong Garai was restored with the help of the Ateliers for the Conservation of Culture Property of Poland (PKZ). It was considered the most successful case of restoration due to authenticity even though modern cement was used instead of natural resin as in Cham architectural tradition.³⁷ This tower complex is a “living heritage” (*bimong diip* in Cham) in contrast with abandoned towers such as the Hòa Lai tower complex. It has been a spiritual space to consolidate the Cham of different religions, especially *Cham Ahiér* and *Cham Awal* and even broader with the Raglai people who keep and protect the clothes of Ppo Klaong Garai. Therefore, this tower complex not only has architectural value but is also a cultural space. In December 2016, it was recognized as a Special National Heritage in a decree signed by the Prime Minister.³⁸ This is the highest national ranking for heritage in Vietnam and theoretically, this heritage would be protected with highest care. However, in reality, this heritage is endangered by unsustainable tourism. In order to promote tourism in the province, this spot is open to the public with tickets priced at only 15,000 Vietnam dong (about 70 US cents). On my last visit to the site in June 2019, I observed free group tour guides and free long scarf loan services that help tourists visit the temple appropriately and know more about the history and construction of this temple, as well as an electric car service. Obviously, this temple complex could be a bridge for cultural understanding. However, with the rise of tourism and without the knowledge of historical and cultural value of inscriptions, tourists have vandalized them with words and phrase in Vietnamese, and by various tools that seriously damage these inscriptions. In fact, inscriptions are the most important historical source of Champa therefore these inscriptions are precious. The situation is similar to the dome and wall of two minor towers. In comparison with Ppo Nagar tower in Nha Trang, the level of Vietnamization at Ppo Klaong Garai is lower, perhaps thanks to a large community of Cham and the existence of the center of Cham studies in this province. However, opening the tower every day instead of great religious occasions by *Cham Ahiér* priests³⁹, lighting incense sticks by tourists instead of burning aromatic woods fragments and candles (also during designated festivals only),⁴⁰ building tourist resting places and new houses⁴¹ in the protected area

are also issues that need to be considered to help encourage more sustainable tourism with respect to indigenous culture and economic benefits for the Cham from these tourist activities.

3. Discussion and concluding remarks

In the linguistic field, there are still debates and controversy in the Cham community about the changes and revisions in scripts as well success and limitations of the Committee for Compiling Cham books.⁴² The question of effectiveness of bilingualism (or even multilingualism) is still critical. We need a comprehensive evaluation of language policy and implementation as well as results and shortcomings, the relation between bilingual or trilingual policy and socio-economic and cultural development and equality among peoples, especially minorities with their own languages to accommodate their own needs in the broader context of national and international scales. For the maintenance and development of the Cham language, the government can support and facilitate platform and policies for more appropriate teaching and training methods as well as time span and program contents.

In the religious discussion, there is a need to enhance the dynamic relation between the Cham priests with the official government and Cham people in daily life and religious practices. This can help the government listen to the voices and wants of people, and, in turn, help people engage actively in policy-making processes related to their own identity. The government should lay the platform for inter-faith dialogue among the Cham especially between Cham Bani and Cham Islam to minimize misunderstandings and maximize peaceful co-existence.

For cultural preservation, Article 13 of the Law on Cultural Heritage prohibits all vandalizing of cultural heritage, and Article 20 requests related authorities to conduct suitable measures to protect intangible heritages.⁴³ It is necessary to strengthen the legal system as well as enhance the awareness of tourists. Sustainable tourism is also an essential aim since it helps bring about economic benefits and protect heritage at the same time. In the case of Ppo Klaong Garai, this task is needed not only to preserve the structure of the complex but also protect the spiritual space which the Cham engages and belongs to. It can be helpful to promote and diversify tours, especially cultural and eco-tours. In the context of cultural start-ups, Cham people have tried to utilize the cultural heritage of their ethnic group to start businesses. In Ninh Thuận, there are different

handicrafts and traditions that can be useful for cultural start-ups such as brocade weaving, pottery making, herbal medication. The projects of the lotus eco-tourism zone of Caraih and Cham homestay of the teacher Quảng Ngọc Nhiên⁴⁴ or the Inrahani brocade weaving company using traditional patterns started by Ms. Trữ Thị Thuận are among the successful projects. Supporting cultural tourism and eco-tourism to attract tourists and introduce cultural characteristics is a good way to help the Cham earn their living as well as to actively preserve the Cham culture. It is also vital to encourage Cham intellectuals and youth to research and spread the word about their history and culture in the Cham language, Vietnamese, and English for better understanding among the wider Vietnamese population as well as among tourists. Therefore, a cultural dialogue, ‘the oldest and the most fundamental mode of democratic conversation,’⁴⁵ should be an essential tool for enhancing social cohesion and a sense of community as well as reducing rejection and conflicts. As the ultimate goal, besides economic benefits, when people are exposed more to diversity, appreciation and tolerance can be increased along with knowing about and understanding differences and similarities with others. In the long term, a truly multi-cultural society with fewer suspicions and greater harmony can be obtained.

¹ Article 24 of the Constitution affirms the freedom of religion, Article 42 ensures the right to proclaim ethnicity and use mother tongues and Article 61 emphasizes special attention to educational development among ethnic minorities.

<http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/NuocCHXHCNVietNam/ThongTinTongHop/hienphapnam2013> accessed September 14, 2019

² For more information on the Cham in the southern area, please read Philip Taylor: Cham Muslims of the Mekong Delta: Place and Mobility in the Cosmopolitan Periphery, University of Hawai’i Press, 2007 and Phú Văn Hãn (chủ biên), Đời sống văn hóa và xã hội người Chăm thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, Nhà Xuất bản văn hóa dân tộc, 2005 [Phú Văn Hãn (ed.), Cultural and social life of the Cham in Ho Chi Minh City, National culture Press, 2005]

³ In one article, this number in 2019 is ‘about 73,000 people’ Nguyễn Thành, Giúp cán bộ, công chức hiểu hơn văn hóa, phong tục tập quán của đồng bào Chăm [Helping staff and officials to understand culture, customs of the Cham], Báo ảnh dân tộc và miền núi [Pictorial of ethnic

minorities and mountainous areas], 10/09/2019 <https://www.dantocmiennui.vn/chinh-sach/giup-can-bo-cong-chuc-hieu-hon-van-hoa-phong-tuc-tap-quan-cua-dong-bao-cham/237062.html>

⁴ Central population and housing census steering committee, *The 1999 Vietnam population and housing census: main results*, <http://www.gso.gov.vn/default.aspx?tabid=407&idmid=4&ItemID=1346> accessed 18 October 2017, pp. 194-19

In the newly released census of 2019, the total number of the Cham in Vietnam (to 01/04/2019) is 178,948, the Vietnam population and housing of 00:00 hours on 1 April 2019, p.160, <http://tongdieutradaso.vn> accessed 05 January, 2020.

⁵ Kiều Maily (sưu tầm và biên soạn), *Palei Phước Nhơn quê tôi (địa dư chí)* (Nhà xuất bản Tri thức 2017) 25 [Kiều Maily (collected and edited), *Palei Phước Nhơn- my homeland (descriptive geography)* (Publishing House of Knowledge 2017) 25]

⁶ Sakaya, Một số vấn đề cơ bản về tín ngưỡng, tôn giáo của người Chăm ở Việt Nam [Some main issues of beliefs and religions among the Cham of Vietnam] in *Văn hóa Chăm- nghiên cứu và phê bình [Cham culture- research and critics]*, Nhà xuất bản phụ nữ [Women publishing house], p.220.

⁷ Phú Văn Hãn, Văn hóa người Chăm ở thành phố Hồ Chí Minh [Culture of the Cham in Hồ Chí Minh City], pp.61-63; Trần Phương Nguyên, Ảnh hưởng của Islam giáo tới việc giáo dục tiếng Chăm ở Nam Bộ [Impact of Islam to teaching Cham language in southern area], *Tạp chí nghiên cứu tôn giáo [Journal of Religious studies]*, Số 12 (126) [No 12(126), 2013, pp. 87-98

⁸Rie Nakamura, Awar- Ahier: two keys to understanding the cosmology and ethnicity of the Cham people (Ninh Thuan province, Vietnam) in Andrew Hardy, Mauro Cucarzi, and Patrizia Zolese, *Champa and the Archaeology of My So'n (Vietnam)* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), pp.81-82.

⁹ J. Collins, Chamic, Malay and Acehnese: the Malay world and Malayic languages in Berkeley Center for Southeast Asia Studies University of California and Campā International Office of, "Le Campā Et Le Monde Malais: Actes De La Conférence Internationale Sur Le Campā Et Le Monde Malais" (Paris, 1991), pp.110-17

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¹² Jaya Bahasa, Phát hiện Giáo trình tiếng Chăm đầu tiên [Discovery of the first Cham textbook], *Gilaipraung*, published 21/5/2013 available at gilaipraung.com/2013/05/jaya-bahasa-phat-hien-giao-trinh-tieng-cham-dau-tien/ accessed September 16, 2019.

¹³ Lộ Minh Trại, Để nâng cao hơn nữa chất lượng công tác dạy học tiếng Chăm [in order to improve the quality of teaching the Cham language], *Báo Ninh Thuận*, [Ninh Thuận Newspaper], 1/8/2013 <http://baoninhthuan.com.vn/news/47480p0c75/trao-doide-nang-cao-hon-nua-chat-luong-cong-tac-day-hoc-tieng-cham.htm>

Lộ Minh Trại is a teacher, former director of ethnic minority education of Department of Education and Training of Ninh Thuận

¹⁴ Results of statistics of socio-economic situation of ethnic minorities in 2015 <http://csdl53dtts.ubdt.gov.vn/Files/phieuh0/Bieu39.pdf>

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¹⁵ <http://vbpl.vn/bogiaoducdaotao/Pages/vbpq-toanvan.aspx?ItemID=46119&Keyword=> accessed September 14, 2019

¹⁶ Decisive 53/CP dated February 22, 1980 and Law on Universalization of Primary Education in 1991, Decrees in 2000, 2001 for English

¹⁷<http://csdl53dtts.ubdt.gov.vn/Files/phieuh0/Bieu41.pdf>

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¹⁸ Can D. Quang, *The Mother language teaching program addressing the language, culture, and identity rights of the Cham community in Ninh Thuan province, Vietnam*, Doctoral thesis, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2012, pp.53,89

¹⁹ Lộ Minh Trại, *Đề nâng cao hơn nữa chất lượng công tác dạy học tiếng Chăm*, Báo Ninh Thuận, 1/8/2013 <http://baoninhthuan.com.vn/news/47480p0c75/trao-doide-nang-cao-hon-nua-chat-luong-cong-tac-day-hoc-tieng-cham.htm>

²⁰ Plan No. 4235/KH-UBND, *Kế hoạch tăng cường tiếng Việt cho trẻ mầm non, học sinh tiểu học vùng dân tộc thiểu số giai đoạn 2016-2020 định hướng đến năm 2025 trên địa bàn tỉnh Ninh Thuận* [Plan for reinforcing Vietnamese among children of kindergartens, elementary students in ethnic minority area from 2016-2020 with the vision to 2025 in Ninh Thuận province] Ninh Thuận, 19/10/2016, p.2

²¹ Bá Minh Truyền, *Trường trung học Po Klaong Garai và thực trạng dạy và học tiếng Chăm* [Po Klaong Garai High School and the situation of teaching and learning Cham language], 2012 <https://gilaipraung.com/2012/11/10894/> accessed September 14, 2019

²² <http://csdl53dtt.ubdt.gov.vn/Files/phieuho/Bieu57.pdf>

²³ <http://w.w.w.facebook.com/176563229468918/posts/624401531351750/>

²⁴ Personal communication with a coordinator and teacher at this center

²⁵ Rie Nakamura, 'Awar- Ahier: Two keys to understanding the cosmology and ethnicity of the Cham people (Ninh Thuận Province, Vietnam)' in Andrew Hardy, Mauro Cucarzi and Patrizia Zolese (eds.), *Champa and the archaeology of Mỹ Sơn (Vietnam)* (NUS Press 2012),pp.78-106.

²⁶ E. Aymonier, *Les Tchames et leur religions* [The Chams and their religions], (Ernest Leroux 1891),p.78

²⁷ Inrajaka, *Hành trình văn hóa Chăm [Journey of Cham culture]*, Nhà xuất bản văn hóa dân tộc (Publishing house of National Culture], 2017, pp.118-119

²⁸ Cham Islam appeared in Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận since the 1960s when Từ Công Xuân- a Cham Bani worked in Saigon government and decided to be Muslim and encouraged people in his

and his wife's villages to convert to Islam as a come-back to a purer Islam. Then there were a number of the Cham Bani became Muslims and mosques were built in Văn Lâm (101), Phước Nhơn (102), An Nhơn (103). For this result, people called followers this new wave of Islamization as New Cham (*Cham Biraw*) and their religion is New Islam (*Hồi giáo mới*) and Bani as Old Islam (*Hồi giáo cũ*). This method has not been accepted by the Cham Islam.

²⁹ Official dispatch No. 1718/C41-C72 ,2017, p.2

³⁰ Some related sources on this topic:

For academic scholarship: M.E.Aymonier, *Les Tchames et Leurs religions*, Paris: Ernest Leroux, Éditeur, 1891; Antoine Cabaton, *Nouvelles recherches sur Les Chams* [New research on the Chams], (Ernest Leroux, Éditeur 1901) ; E.M. Durand, ' Les Chams Bani' [The Cham Bani] (1903) 3 Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extrême- Orient

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³¹ <http://csdl53dttts.ubdt.gov.vn/Files/phieuho/Bieu56.pdf>

³² Công an huyện Ninh Hải cấp phát giấy Chứng minh nhân dân tại xã Xuân Hải [Police of Ninh Hải district issues and delivers identity cards at Xuân Hải commune] <http://www.ninhthuan.gov.vn/chinhquyen/congan/Pages/CONG-AN-HUYEN-NINH-HAI-CAP-PHAT-GIAY-CMND-TAI-XA-XUAN-HAI.aspx> accessed 20 October 2017.

³³ This section is discussed in detail in an article titled: Praxis & Policy: Relations between Cham Bani Religious practice and Vietnamese Government Policy with regard to Identity Cards (under review) co-authored with Dr. William Noseworthy.

³⁴ Sakaya, Sự tác động của làn sóng du lịch đến tháp Po Klaong Garai tỉnh Ninh Thuận- một cảnh quan kiến trúc cổ bị phá vỡ [impact of tourism to Po Klaong Garai tower in Ninh Thuận province- an ancient architecture site being damaged] in *Văn hóa Chăm- nghiên cứu và phê bình [Cham culture- research and critics]*, P.55

³⁵ For more information on this matter, please see: Trần Kỳ Phương, Rie Nakamura, The Mỹ Sơn and Pô Nagar Nha Trang sanctuaries: on the cosmological dualist cult of the Champa kingdom in central Vietnam as seen from art and anthropology, Singapore: ARI Working paper Series, National University of Singapore, No.100, 2008.

³⁶ Directive No.121- CT on issue of Cham people <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Quyen-dan-su/Chi-thi-121-CT-cong-tac-dong-bao-Cham/44091/noi-dung.aspx#>

³⁷ Tran Ky Phuong, Cultural Resource and Heritage Issues of Historic Champa States in Vietnam: Champa Origins, Reconfirmed Nomenclatures, and Preservation of Sites, Singapore: ARI Working paper, No.75, 2006, p.22

³⁸ Decisive No. 2499/QĐ-TTg dated 22/12/2016).
<http://dch.gov.vn/pages/news/preview.aspx?n=1580&c=25> accessed September 2, 2019

³⁹ Petition of conference on Champa 2017, champaoversea.com accessed September 16, 2019

⁴⁰ in Ppo Nagar tower complex in Nha Trang, there is a place for burning hell money which is a totally alien tradition to the Cham, they never burn hell money in the funeral or worshipping.

⁴¹ Sakaya, Sự tác động của làn sóng du lịch đến tháp Po Klaong Garai tỉnh Ninh Thuận- một cảnh quan kiến trúc cổ bị phá vỡ [impact of tourism to Po Klaong Garai tower in Ninh Thuận province- an ancient architecture site being damaged] in *Văn hóa Chăm- nghiên cứu và phê bình [Cham culture- research and critics]*, pp.57-62.

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⁴⁴<https://www.nhandan.com.vn/kinhte/item/35975702-mo-hinh-du-lich-sinh-thai-sen-cua-thanh-nien-nguoi-cham.html> accessed July 15, 2019

⁴⁵ https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/concept_EN.asp