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Interdisciplinary Research on the Concept of Self-Help Group: Problematizing Fragmentation of the Theories and Histories

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Abstract

The concept of "Self-help group" (SHG) has been attracting scientific focus from different disciplines. In general, SHGs can be objectified as a spontaneous civil initiative leading to formation of collective activities through fostering solidarity to tackle any types of life challenges, such as poverty, gender-inequality, discrimination, and any type of marginalization. Also, different groups have different shared objectives; peer-support on medical conditions or both physical and mental disabilities, alcoholic addiction, and environmental issues shared among local community, just to name a few. This research elucidates how different academic disciplines separately analyze SHGs without enough inter-reference and problematizes a fragmentation of SHGs research caused by a lack of interdisciplinary approach, ending in failure of constructive studies. In conclusion, the author reveals a possible framework to grasp the whole picture of SHGs.

Keywords: Self-Help Group, Fragmentation, Community Development

1. Introduction

This study asserts a need for an interdisciplinary approach in aim for development of theoretical study on Self-Help Group (SHG). In general, SHG is regarded as a phenomenon of which people form a small group spontaneously and exchange dialogue in a quest for compassioning and sharing useful information, clarifying a cause of their common problem and solution. Most of different discipline indicated that SHG has various advantages in its independent autonomy, efficient identification of issues and solution, sustainability as an organizational agency engaging in social, economic, and political impact.

SHG is organized based on different thematic issues, such as poverty, gender inequality and discrimination of ethnic minorities, medical diseases, and environmental issues, just to name a few. Regardless of a fact that formation of group to exchange dialogue is a fundamental activity for human society globally, previous studies rarely have research with interdisciplinary manner. The tendency fragmented the concept and phenomenon of SHG into individual research fields. As it is shown later in this paper, researchers' approach to SHG from different fields; community health, social-work, poverty reduction, social movements and so on. While globalization and digitalization have been diminishing a gap of standard life between developed and developing

countries, it is obviously required to approach with inter-sectional and inter-regional studies for the issue. In latter part of this paper, we overcome such fragmented status through analyzing discussion among different disciplines, and attempt to find common essence of SHG which can be scaffold.

2. Overviewing previous research on SHG

The first opportunity in modern society when phenomenon recognized as a concept of SHG attracted scholars in especially social welfare, was an establishment of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) initiated by two persons who were suffering alcohol abuse in 1935 amid of the Depression in U.S. A predecessor of AA is Oxford Group, founded by an American Christian missionary. Frank Buchman promoted the idea of surrendering one's life over to God's plan. This idea is central to the 12-step program adopted by AA.

Afterwards, it is expected that SHG has its completive function for professional treatment regarding various health-care problems, not only addiction, but also chronic disease, various disabilities, and gender. The 1976 is an epoch year when it brought a dramatic leap in academic studies, and led some special SHG scholarly journals which produce famous researchers such as Gerald Caplan & Marie Killilea (1976), and Alfred H. Katz and Eugene I. Bender (1976), which produced the most significant theoretical concepts.

These scholars commonly indicated SHGs, are voluntary with a simple group structure for mutual aid and sharing useful information and emotion regarding their facing issue. They are usually formed by peers who have come together for mutual assistance in satisfying a common need, overcoming a common handicap or life-disrupting problem, and bringing about desired social and/or personal change. The initiators and members of such groups perceive that their needs are not, or cannot be, met by existing public institutions. Self-help groups emphasize face-to-face social interactions and an assumption of personal responsibility among members. They often provide material assistance as well as emotional support; they are frequently 'care' oriented and promulgate an ideology or values through which members may attain an enhanced sense of personal identity. At least, the definition provides following three essences in SHG.

[Three essences of SHG]
(1) Spontaneity: voluntary small group "usually" formed by peers
(2) Homogeneous Identity: having a common need and problem
(3) Innovative Transformation: bringing about desired social and/or personal change

Froland (1983) mentioned two names as a source of self-help principle; Peter Kropotkin who wrote "Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution" in 1902, and Samuel Smiles, Scottish writer of "Self-Help" in 1858. An idea of human mutual aid in Kropotkin (1955) appeals to numerous scholars, which considers human social activity ascribes to universal principle which is continuous with the nature. This discourse was accepted preferably by many scholars (Katz & Bender 1976, Dobrof 1987, and Chesler & Chesney 1995).

As for the phenomenon of SHG itself, however, its origin is disputable. Kayoko Hirano (1995), for instance, indicates that the prototype of SHG can be seen in brother-hood union in British industrialization and that it developed in the U.S through Self-help movement and civil action movement, symbolized Anti-Vietnam war in 1960. However, Hurvitz (1976) finds its origin in "the concepts of group confession" in early Christianity and religious movement.

If you give a brief glance at economics discipline, there is a discourse that tells "the origin of SHGs is from the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, founded by Mohammed Yunus" in 1975. (Krishna 2011), which targets Micro Credit/Finance (MC/MF). In development economics, SHG is defined as "a small voluntary association of poor people, preferably from the same socio-economic background", mostly formed by under-privileged women living in villages in attempt to create collateral ability and borrow money from financial developers. The economists (Mishra & Raveendran, 2011) consider SHG function as:

(1) "common fund by the members through their regular savings"

(2) "flexible working system and pool the resources in democratic way"
(3) "periodical meeting and decision making through group meeting…"
(4) "small scale loan amount with the affordable rate of interest"

Reminding the definition in the welfare field as we already take a brief look at, SHGs "often provide material assistance as well as emotional support", thus SHG can certainly have the aspect of economic empowerment role for people in some hardship. While "Self-help" and "mutual aid" can be universal phenomenon, it seems to be not easy to be defined from narrowly limited perspective. Desai (2001), in fact, asserts the India history of SHG can be longer and already existed at least in 1904. "*Nidhis*" and "*Chit* Funds" in south part of India were sorts of SHGs which encouraged shrift and small-scale group saving, encompassing a training on punctuality and life plan. It implies each country has its own cultural and historical background of SHG, for instance" Tontine" and" Hui" in Vietnam, "*harambee*" in Kenia and many trust union and agriculture/ fishery cooperative in Indonesia. (Prabhjot Kaur, et al, 2010) According to Jerinabi (2006), "the genesis of SHGs could be traced to 'Mutual Aid' in Indian village community. In traditional rural societies, self-help takes various forms. Activities like housing and farm operations, which must be completed within stipulated time, depend upon such arrangements. Likewise, people share implements in agricultural production, irrigation water/ bullocks necessitate managements based on self-help". Jerinabi follows a definition originally proposed by Smith and Pillheimer (1983), confirms most prevailing definition even today in Economics field as below.

> "The SHG is defined as a voluntary group valuing personal interactions and mutual aid as a mean of altering or ameliorating the problems perceived as alterable, pressing, and personal by most of its participants" and "These groups are voluntary associations of people formed to attain certain collective goals that could be economic, social or both".

Such "informal" group (SHG) share apparent affinities in three essences of (1) spontaneity, (2) homogeneous identity as the shared common social class such as caste and traditional vocation and purpose, (3) innovative transformation, covering a range of social activities and advocacy for "altering or ameliorating the problems".
Some economists regard the theoretical origin of SHG can be traced back to, not Kropotkin but, Olson (1965), who approached toward theorizing human collective action in scientific context. According to the theory, people are rational in nature and decide to participate in the collective action only when a formation of small group enables them to benefit from it in exceeding its cost.

If allowed to discuss rational nature of the small group along with this discourse, it is still noteworthy that a concept of "cooperatives" also has its own domain in some disciplines and aims to exploit economic opportunities in market and "empower people to improve their quality of life and enhance their economic opportunities through *self-help*" (Ortmann & King 2007). The root of SHGs in this perspective can be detected at the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, Ltd in 1844, a consumer cooperative established in England and types of which serve as credit or banking institutions was traced back to the establishment of the first savings and credit cooperative in 1864 by Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen in Germany. Then, it emerged in European recognition when the system was formally institutionalized by an establishment of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) in 1895.

Both developmental economics and social welfare, however, share at the lease same nature in "dialogue" as activity in SHG among members who have a common suffering and attempt to find solution. In this sense, the research on SHG in the context of economic argument is, with its narrow focus on the financial aspect, taking the risk of missing a core mechanism in the overall structure of SHG. In other word, the SHG concept is exposed to alteration from the view of its economic effects through a prosperity of the MC/MF research in developing nation. Also, a side problem happens when we exclusively focus on mental and spiritual aspects which targeted mainly by SHGs scholars in social welfare field in the developed nation if they dismiss material function of SHGs. SHG may be able to develop its spiritual orientation for the people to be more rational purpose with clear economic function. After all, "self-help" was fragmented by different ideal goals in researcher's hypothesis, epitome by SDGs (Sustainable development goals) today.

3. Social capital and SHG

It is a hindsight for economists to discover the social aspects of SHG, which have been becoming a big issue since 2000s. Sundaram (2012), which draws social/ economic impact of SHG in India, indicates the huge range of effects on not only employment, but also mental/ psychological transformation like "increased self-respect" and "environmental management", "participation in local government", "frequency of interaction with outsiders" or so on. However, these features are under common recognition in the discipline of social welfare or community health. It is apparently duplicated finding on SHG among different disciplines.

In this view, Bullen. D and Sokheang. H（2015）attempts a typology of SHGs in Cambodia, showing five types of SHG.

1. Savings-led microfinance
2. Credit-led microfinance
3. Livelihood self-help group model
4. Savings-led microfinance + livelihood
5. Credit-led microfinance + livelihood

The typology implies SHG can be related to a certain range of ambiguous term of "livelihood", and as a good practice of micro-finance SHG, women began "over 40,000 grassroots campaigns on issues such as cross-border girl trafficking, domestic violence, and the dowry system" based on their "decision-making" (Pickens, Thavy & Keang 2004). Once a federation of SHGs can be formed, it functions politically as a policy-advocacy actor (Puhazhendhi, 2012, pp. 25-26). These studies signify that even SHG aiming at financial function at the initial stage, once a place of dialogue is created, the community generates spiritual and socio-political empowerment for the members and cherish a potential of being an actor of social innovation and transformation (Bong-Ho Mok, 2015).

As empirical studies usually target measurable objects, social capital (SC) conceptualized in sociology was adopted to grasp social/ cultural aspect of SHG in economics. Bard (1985) defines SC "is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group" (Anheier, 1995), and the economist translated it into "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks, groups or other social structures" (Olomola, 2002). Linda Mayoux (2000, 2001) focuses on increased well-being through MC/MF and clarifies social and political empowerment impacts made by SHG.

Developing Horizontal Networks	**training innovations**: setting up a register of skills and training needs, facilitation of mutual information exchange, training of grassroots trainers. **marketing interventions**: formation of activity-based associations to provide opportunities for women at different ends of the marketing chain to exchange information about marketing strategies (including successful group strategies)
Challenging Vertical Inequalities	**individual and group 'strategic plans**: for challenging gender inequality at the local level **addressing exclusion**: provision of services for poor women 'Men for change': groups at local level and attending trade fairs and AGMs
Macro-Level Change	federations to lobby for benefits to poor informal sector traders a broad-based movement for gender advocacy

Chart 1: Building on Social Capital: Ways Forward (Incited from Mayoux 2001)

The attempt reveals a fact that some economists challenge to find some methodologies to produce a good practice with strategic intervention. Mayoux (2000) refers to "self-help" in context of "participation as a mean to

increased efficiency through consultation for 'market relevance', group formation for self-help to decrease costs of service delivery and some participation in decision-making to increase commitment and innovation". On the other hand, it also warns a dilemma between empowerment by external intervention and sustainability accomplished by pure "self-help", remarking that "the emphasis on 'self-help' often fails to recognize the costs to women of participation in terms of time and resources. It does not necessarily provide the opportunity for them to articulate and develop strategies for empowerment".

This remark opens the way to find an overlap in attempting among different disciplines again, when the issue pursues the methodology of good practice, leads to the contradictive question like "what is a good intervention/method to support Self-help?" In development studies, actually "resource mobilization" expected for community "self-help" has become a mainstream, sometimes called "Self-help Approach" (SA) already discussed. So far, we can find common key steps as this paper proposing, (1) spontaneity, (2) homogeneous identity, (3) innovative transformation" in the manual and practical guideline (NABARD, 2005, Kattakkara, 2013). How can we resolve a contradiction between "self-help" (spontaneity) and external "intervention"? This is the issue of the ambiguous remark such as "usually" found in the definition proposed by Katz & Bender (1976).

4. Community Organization and SHG

Since one of the significant features of SHG is recognized as "only those experiencing the problem can understand it" (Robinson, 1981), external experts and professionals are supposed to have an adequate distance from paternalistic intervention to the group. In social welfare field, this has been a long argument as a tense-relationship between both external intervention and SHG. Back and Taylor (1976) already revealed that there is "distrust" among SHG members against experts/ professionals (and their knowledge). Gartner and Riessman (1976) conceptualize "*aprofessional*" to signal a conflict between "professional knowledge" and knowledge owned by SHG which is mainly based on "experience", "intuition" and "common sense". Borkman (1976) clearly named specific knowledge shared in SHG as "*experiential knowledge*", which is "holistic" knowledge distinguished from physiological, pathologically limited, and partially fragmented "professional knowledge" produced by experts. Professional intervention may jeopardize "*experiential knowledge*" and subordinate it to their scientific knowledge. Powell (1987) problematizes whether SHG with external interventions still can be called "Self-help" or not, and suggests clear distinction[i].. Receiving this stream of argument, Kurtz (1997) coins "*support group*" to accept SHG with external intervention. Matsuda (2006) summarizes both different "cultures" contrastively. (See chart 2).

Professional culture	SHG culture
Logical/ scientific thinking	Narrative thinking
Logos	Pathos/ Spiritual
Scientific knowledge	Experiential knowledge
Perfection-oriented	Imperfection-oriented

Chart 2: SHG and Professional culture from Matsuda (2006)

According to common orientation discussed among Japanese scholars, experts should minimize their intervention, and respect "spontaneity" and autonomy (Sakashita 2003). In other words, the accumulated discussion in social welfare discipline allows certain extent of intervention, while best efforts to secure "Self-help".

In Development Studies in the context of international development, on the other hand, it is difficult to see marginalized people achieve a self-forming SHG without any external impetus (Prabhjot Kaur, 2010), thus intervention manner should be further discussed. This trend grounds on conceptual history of "community development", which is used since 1950s among documents written by United Nation, especially drawing on British experiences in India and Africa. Midgley (1986) categorize the elements of "community development"

into "a concern with social and economic development", "the fostering and capacity of local co-operation and self-help" and "the use of expertise and methods drawn from outside the local community".

Any international support can be recognized as "external intervention", and the manner is called "community organization" (CO) or "self-help approach" (SA). Both CO and SA are neighboring concepts, as we can see mixed use[ii] of both concepts almost in a same sense in many documents referring the context in developing or developed, social welfare or international support study.

CO is treated as one of approaches to mobilize resources in urban development in social work discipline[iii], although the demarcation of CO and SHG (SA) has not been conducted so far, thus preventing integrated study[iv]. Giving a glance at the arguing definition of CO, however, we can find the discourse telling organizing community is the approach to discover common issue and resolution for it with their "*self-help*" effort (Fink, 1942). CO is practiced at slam area in the third world countries as well (Pathare, 2004) in pursuing almost same advantage expected by SA.

A word of "community" frequently means a public realm related to "local society" from the view of adjacent space to livelihood, and it generates cultural regulation. A Dunham (1958) defines "community is a group of human beings, settled in fairly compact and contiguous geographical area and having significant elements of common life as shown by manners, customs, traditions and modes of speech". The term "community", however, is still abstract since it represents an outline of unevenly distributed, extendable human interaction. In sociology, Maciver (1917) also regards "community" found on intangible" common attitudes, a common understanding of different attitudes, common social values, and communion". Considering such multiple implications of "community", CO theories address it from non-geographic perspective (Rivera, 2002). Distinguishing "forming (self-help) group" and "organizing community" is so arduous as seen this, many scholars have used both as synonyms so far.

5.   History of CO theory

In this section 5, we spot a light on the endogenous process of self-help intervention by briefly overviewing the history of CO theory, "*Social diagnosis*" (1917) written by Richmond, securing expert position in social work, demonstrates "the need of liberating the powers of self-help and mutual help within the people themselves self-help" can be realized through "human service" and these stead developments achieved in a manner of that "the client's own level of endeavor will have to be sought, found, and respected". After this remark of "self-help" in CO context, Richmond (1930) proposes the theory of the social work as a spiral development between "individual betterment", "organized service", and "mass betterment" with reflecting social environment. Ross (1955) also makes it a clear that a focal point of grievance on the condition of society will cultivate the group planning and action, thus should be disseminated broadly. In this sense, the shared problem is a focal place of the overall metamorphoses of the society. (Ross, 1955) finds these as "trends" of CO in "self-determination", "community pace", "indigenous Plans", "growth in Community Capacity", "Will change" and these are indispensable to organize community.

Such a set of practical principle became persuasive through economic crisis in 1929 to the adopted New Deal in 1933, when criticisms arose to the several top-down measures, was handed over Jack Rothman. Rothman classifies CO into "locality development", "social planning/policy" and "social action" (Hyman, 1990). Especially "Locality development" model originated from "democratic procedures", "voluntary cooperation" and "self-help" (Ross, 1955) is the stage of fostering identity; sense of oneness among participants by overcoming diversity in the community. "Social planning/policy" is the process of "learning" on problematic situation and its factor based on scientific thinking and objective date in pursuing rational endorsement on technical approach to resolute the shared problem. "Social action" is an innovative transformation stage that the marginalized/ oppressed people gain power to take the deprived rights back to themselves, represented by Saul David Alinsky. In this stage, the group (organization) is supposed to face their opponents, thus results in social action such as strike, boycott, and civil disobedience against the ruling social system[v]. It means that SHG with an adequate intervention cannot avoid social conflicts between the group and institutional system. This dispute

should be taken into consideration in social welfare, development economics and international development study. As a summary of this discussion, the CO process can be charted in.

    1. Problematization based on reflective thinking
    2. Objective planning based on scientific thinking
    3. Practice /Action to improve the system of society

A philosophy of Paulo Freire well explains the transition among this three-stages, along with his concept of "conscientization", "critical intervention into reality" and "practice" in his methodology of "problem posing approach" (Gravine, 2001). We need to note that Freire's philosophy is also developed by Robert Chambers into "*Participatory Action Researh* (PAR)". If we admit that CO depicts such a way of intervention in forming SHG, it inevitably includes such a critical aspect that leads to social change. In other words, a democratic dialogue equipped with "spontaneity" and "shared problem"(identity) would potentially bring about "social innovation" (Carroll, 2000) .

6.   Historical background of CO and SHG

Both study of CO and SHG connects each other in the historical background, when the issue is targeted originally at the same phenomenon. That is, the age when Rothman propose the model in 1968, the U.S, which is the time people saw a rise of "counterculture" among young generation incurring public right movement and anti-Vietnam war. Remembering AA (Alcoholics Anonymous〉stand out in social welfare, as Garvin & Cox (2001) describe the time as "value of self-help activities", in this period, the concept of "self-help" encountered the remarkable transition of its meaning. The period is symbolized historically from the American president L. Johnson stressed on a general welfare relying on "the creation of important societal and community efforts", e.g. Volunteers in Service to America(VISTA), the Job Corps, vocational training for drop-outs, afterwards in 1970s, to conservative R.M Nickson, who clarified his position as "individual responsibility", "private initiative" and "a philosophy of self-help" (Trattner 1989: 305) . In other word, the concept of "self-help" survived in mixed form of anti-government and ecological posture requiring self-control and self-exertion, symbolized in Hippie culture, healthy exercise and an organic food, thrift life and controlled health. It was transiting from "traditional culture" to "multiculturalism" in accordance with "self-responsibility" to own life. Furthermore, advocative aspect of SHG is diminished into self-responsibility; "the self-help ethos restricts to a personal level problem that have both personal and political dimensions" (Labonte 2002: 93).
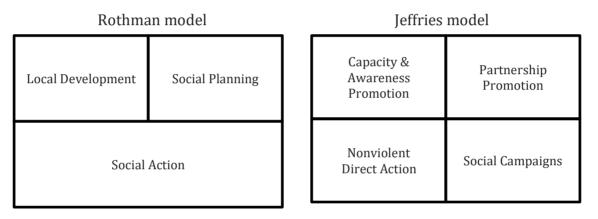
In CO studies, same as social welfare study on SHG, the issue between "self-responsibility" and "social innovation" (transformation) becomes problematic topic. The tension arises between individual freedom of value and social control derived from common sense of "justice". Private dimension or public dimension, self-determination or supportive intervention, humanism or science, these dichotomies are also crucial points as ethical issue emerges surrounding SHG. Even if the role of social workers can be limited in securing access to information for the people to encourage self-decision making, they cannot avoid "ethical dilemma" which brings friction between marginalized people and society. Such a political and moral issue also apparently reach the personal subjectivity. That's why Banks (1995) requests both social workers and people who share common cause of suffers to have "critical reflection" (Banks 1995: 12). There is not only one simplified answer to such ethical issue, and process of "understanding" is indispensable with self-reflection among different subjectivities.

7.   Historical path between social movement and SHG

Notwithstanding that CO theory in sociology, SHG in social welfare and economics contexts indicates innovative aspect of SHG, they tend to avoid further discussion. However, there are famous example which tells us not to overlook the connection between in both disciplines. Ton van Naerssen (1989) elucidates urban social movements in the Philippines, picking up a case of ZOTO (Zone One Tondo Temporary Organization), which adopt self-help program conducting school construction/ management, health-care center, and public water procurement. ZOTO also works on pressuring politically in order to mobilize social workers and churches to bold their self-help action. Philippine Ecumenical Committee for Community Organization (PECCO), where provides training course for CO, became an affiliated resource with networking different institutions, based on
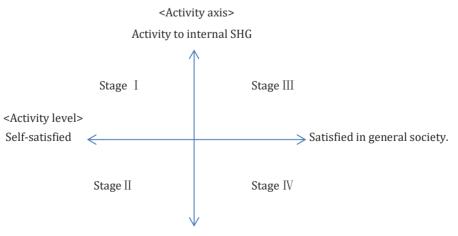
the philosophy of Alinsky and Freire. As seen in this case, there is an apparent necessity for cross-cut study between the disciplines, both in developed and developing context. Halbert White, who worked with Alinsky in Chicago disseminated CO theory in 1968 to Korea, and in 1970 to the Philippine. In 1971, SOCO (Society for Community Organization) was established in Hong Kong and in 1972 ICCO (Indonesian Committee on Community Organization) was founded in Indonesia, in 1973 VOMPOT (Voluntary Movement for Peoples Organization in Thailand) in 1979 India" (Kiba, 2012).

The latter parts of this paper examine social movement theory developed by Sociologists. As same as SHG in social welfare (Gartner 1977, Katz 1981, Jeffries 1996), social movement theory scopes gender based SHG which inherits Rothman model. For instance, to approach feminism social movement, incorporates "capacity and awareness promotion" to expand the scope of mutual capacity and recognition of group potential. Jeffries renames "social planning/policy" to "partnership promotion" to imply a relationship with external "authority" and "unsympathetic power structure" to prepare for the third stage. And the third stage, "social action" model is also re-conceptualized and divided into "nonviolent direct action" and "Social Campaigns" to potentially bring a change into political/ legislative authorities (Jeffries, 1996).

Rothman model		Jeffries model	
Local Development	Social Planning	Capacity & Awareness Promotion	Partnership Promotion
Social Action		Nonviolent Direct Action	Social Campaigns

Picture 2: The contrast Rothman model and Jeffries model

As remarked in Jeffrie's discussion, active communities shift toward "de-radicalization" and adopting "dialogue" rather than fighting with authority for the sake of capturing resource mobilization nowadays. Then, social active group and SHG would get becoming closer phenomenon. From this view, SHG in social welfare also has a demand to the society in order to satisfy their needs, Noda (1998), Japanese scholar, shows the categories to assort SHG activities (picture 2). This Diagram will help us to grasp a picture of social action aspect of SHG.

<Activity axis>
Activity to internal SHG

Stage Ⅰ   Stage Ⅲ

<Activity level>
Self-satisfied ←————————————→ Satisfied in general society.

Stage Ⅱ   Stage Ⅳ

Function to external Society

Picture 3: Four stages of SHG activity (partially modified Noda, 1998)

Activity axis in this diagram has two directions; internal and external of SHG, while activity level shows a grade of individual and societal satisfaction. Stage IV in the picture equals to "social action/ resource mobilization" function related to "social movement theory" in sociology discipline. We can classify the factors of definition of "social movement" proposed by Della Porta & Diani (1999) into: (1) "conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents", (2) "dense informal networks", (3) "share a distinctive identity".

These factors representing social process made by collective action (Diani 2006: 20-21), are compatible with SHG concept, since SHG also stresses its informality, and "identity" as shared problem and conflict with existing society. The study on "social movement" theory attracted scholars' attention in 1960s, reflecting public right movement in the U.S or environment activities and woman rights movement. Before 1960s, the mainstream in the theory is represented by the discourses of Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx, which states that marginalized actors would lose "common sense" and regulation, deprived in "anomy" in unease and grievance in a mind-set of industrialization and capitalized society. Afterwards, the stream was directed by J.S. Mill who emphasis on "utility", which drives social movement arises from shared dissatisfaction to public service. This Economics school presumes the common people acts rationally in objective conditions according to economic class system, considering a distance between ideal and actual status.

However, in this theory, a fulfilling condition (e.g. grievance, dissatisfaction) automatically generates social movement, and verse versa. This simplification received a strong criticism from the view of Olson (1965), that is if the presumption allows a rational behavior corresponding with objective condition, individual chooses to become a "free rider" to exploit collective goods, thus never participate in collective action theoretically.

To overcome the Olson's view, in 1970s, Resource Mobilization (RM) theory alternates perspective in the study. John D. McCarthy & N. Zald (1977) propose a view of "resources" available for social movement into consideration, therefore social movement is a part of overall social organism as "social movement organization" (SMO). Resources and environment encompassing SMO provide a decisive role to cause movement, which cannot always be attributed to income increase nor social dissatisfaction. RM theory spots objective resources accessible for SMO such as media, relationship with authority (McCarthy, 1977: 1212-1241). Eisinger (1973: 11-28) accentuates a political environment of SMO, proposing "political opportunity structure theory". He asserts that social movement is evoked when political regulation is adequately delivered. It gets suppressed if the regulation is too strong. If the regulation is too loose, people gain freedom to appeal in other institutional way, hence comes to decrease a possibility for the movement.

The problem of these RM theories is that SMO is still observed as a flat homogenous actor, as same narrow Economics model. In this perspective, human behavior remains still mere rational individual who acts along with demand-effect. It neither does overcome Olson's theory, nor criticizes it after all (Crossley, 2008, pp. 304-305).

Social movement theory finally reaches to incorporate diversity in plurality of SMO by Alan Touraine and Alberto Melucci, who propose "New Social Movement Theory"(NSM） in the context of complex post-industrialized society. NSM addresses the process of "self-decision" and "identity" in SMO. In this school, SMO confronts not only ruling authority, nor production-distribution of public service along with disparity within the classes, but also interpretation concerning the identity and value of the definition, e.g., cultural value/ code, human body, gender, and ethnicity so on. The movement in this sense is regarded as a war for re-definition, seeking for symbolism and social role, generates in complex structure and context of different actors (Melucci, 1989). The theory found it standpoint closer back to SHG in terms of prioritizing "identity" issue among members.

8. Cultural perspective in SHG studies

After 2000s, comparative research scoping developing countries has been flourishing (McAdam, 2007), NSM meets a touchstone of different environments in the Third world. It is pointed out that most contentious political theories are usually derived from scientific western context in democratic civil society (Oliver, 2003). Also, this course receive counter criticism in that an acute demand for human basic needs should not be treated equally to "self-identity" and recognition issue (Shigetomi, 2007). The challenge to comparative study, however, is still meaningful since "identity" is not the issue only for "civilized" people.
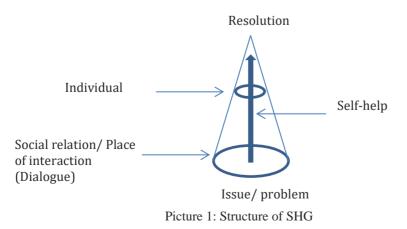
Spiritual/ cultural value is also essential for human survivability. To regard people in the third world automatically as in poverty, most of the developers deprive them of spiritual meanings from their life. However, spiritual perspective seems to be crucial both in SHG and social movement analysis. *Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement* in Sri Lanka started in 1958, re-defined "development" derived from western modernization with their indigenous traditional culture of Buddhism (Yokoyama, Ariyaratne, Chea 2017). In Sarvodaya recognition, Westernization destroyed traditional value of Sri Lanka and caused unease and violence among people. The indigenous value and framework "MUST" be reincarnated for people`s "survival" and "progress" (Ariyatratne, 2001, p. 303).

The case of Salvodaya indicates cultural studies contribute to realize process and roots of social action. In social welfare field, more and more research demonstrate an cultural approach (Hyman 1990). Chakravarty& Jha (2012) clearly attempts to expand SHG scope from the mere financial function to psychological function, through qualitative interview in India. Women SHG increases recognition of "self-value" and improve their position in household, and accessibility to heath knowledge and health-care support services. Nayar et al. (2014) alerts if we try to apply SHG which originated in the culture of individualism in western society to different social context, "the result would be disappointing". In developing countries, where are in scarce of stable social systems and health care services, it is difficult to expect a good result through SHG approach/ practice, moreover, would result in a trap of "self-responsibility" within "neo-liberalism" background, exempting (or obscuring) responsibilities of the government and public service.
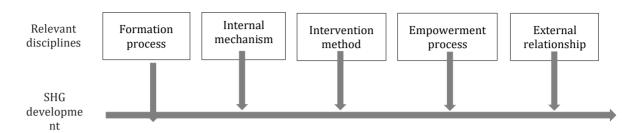
Even if we admit this opinion, cultural/ historical studies on SHG has been in scarce until today. It has not been clarified its unique logic in especially developing nations, like in South-East Asia and Africa before comparing with a value system of Western world.

9. Conclusion

As this paper elucidates various theories related to SHG, clarified that inter-disciplinary studies would connect to different academic achievements. Many insights can be mutually learned through inter-disciplinal manner. In conclusion of this initial attempt, it can be formalized a structure of SHG through both CO and SA we have seen in this paper. As "individual" in the sense of person and "society" (persons), "community" and "group" has been used as a different demarcation commonly in different disciplines. Then, once we can separate "self-help" (a person) and "group" (society, persons, community). It defines that "self-help" is power directed from endogenous development based on human "plurality". The interaction among individuals is a "place" of process to reflect "problem" and "resolution" in collective consciousness and "SHG" itself as both field of "dialogue". Therefore, the group can transform from a static social relationship into an organic active body, through given the orientation by spirit of self-help, which regulates and gives a direction to individual behaviors. This is a minimum definition of mechanism of SHG among different disciplines.

Picture 1: Structure of SHG

Also, I categorize five phases of SHG that should be discussed in a manner of inter-discipline. There are still numerous other potential majors could be addressed like (social) psychology, philosophical counselling, medical/ nursing care, phenomenology, social business/ innovation study and anthropology etc.

Picture 3: Mapping Inter-disciplinary studies in SHG development

Such a cross-cut study potentially broadens each scope and insight of SHG and can be efficient in taking advantages of different academic findings. As a recent example, (Chen, 2016) shows a symbolic case in China of the mixed phases with an economic support and a mental illness treatment by forming SHG, "because poverty and mental illness are closely linked". In the case, SHG also invites external stakeholders for the sake of learning way in changing a behavior and their environment. All five phases in the diagram of picture3 can be accessed from different disciplines to investigate more details in the case.

As we give closer look to methodology of SHG studies, Aklilu Getenet M (2016) attempts to set criteria to monitor and evaluate SHGs with the cross-dimension of Self Help Group Effectiveness Index (SHGEI) and Empowerment Index. The former adopts 12 items; capacity building, participation, membership feelings, economic independence, motivation, fund generation and management, awareness, mutual trust, group norms, conflict management, collective mobilization, and marketing (availability, opportunity, and problems). These items open to be placed at the four dimensions of Empowerment Index, Educational, Social, and Economic and Political dimensions. The discussion, however, should reach to a question how we can monitor and evaluate based on which modalities of qualitative and quantitative.

Innovative aspect of SHGs bring a change of existing value and framework. Besides, the exploration in this paper indicates the fragmentation of SHG phenomenon is caused by a general nature of social science. Scientific methodology tends to consider "objectivity" as fact-based evidence with excluding meaning and perspective of "subjectivity" as much as possible. In the end, it does hinder "critical reflection" (Banks, 1995, p. 12) on own standpoint, viz own "subjectivity" of researchers, ending in rather *subjectively fragmented* research. Most of social scientists nowadays tend to ignore the limitation in each professionalized discipline. In this tendency, "meaning" or "truth" for people can be extracted through superficial observation of the phenomenon. Then, observable facts can be only objective truth, judging value of SHGs narrowly. As Hannah Arendt clearly mentions, "there are no truths beyond and above factual truths" (Arendt, 1978, p. 61) for such scientists. Research lacks interdisciplinary approach probably propose very logical, scientifical findings on the table, according to what they want to observe, but never critically reflect their own standpoint and thinking itself from another perspective. Traditional studies simplify phenomenon and sacrifice a truth of spiritual value and meaning, because "spiritual meaning" and "values" cannot be observed, nor converted into measurable factors. "It seems it has fallen into a vicious circle, which can be formulated as follows: scientists formulate their hypotheses to arrange their experiments and then use these experiments to verify their hypotheses" (Arendt, 1958: 287), ignoring other unnecessary facts (factors) just because these are out of their scope.

However, the essence of SHG as a collective self-help action is the fundamental human behavior can be found globally. Interdisciplinary studies on SHG would elucidate multiple functions of "dialogue". In this sense, phenomenology with well-harmonized with anthropological methodology (including ethnomethodology) which approach to unique value system and meaning in different culture would be most significant impact to clarify the respective values among SHG members in different cultures with various backgrounds in the beginning of interdisciplinary approach. Yet, this concrete methodology of interdisciplinary approach has not been clarified.

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[i] Powell does not deny the overall intervention yet suggests mutually complementary relationship with social welfare system.

[ii] For instance, (Hilfe, 2011) uses both concepts in explaining poverty as not only derived from a financial factor, yet also psychological backgrounds like "lack of security", "Hopelessness", "Isolation". In order to tackle poverty, they need "encouragement, motivation and training to strengthen their personalities. This is the only way of becoming empowered members of the community and this is where the self-help approach starts" and "the Self Help-Approach A people's movement for the well-being of their children".

[iii] Devine（1922）classifies social work into 1) case-work, 2) organization and administration of institutions, 3) teaching and organization of small groups, 4)education of public, 5) co-ordination and organization of the resources of the community. CO falls under 5).

[iv] Neal K. Katyal (2005) deals anti-criminal approach case of SA and it distinguish an independent usage of "Self-help" as voluntary individual action from "Community Self Help" as the same meaning of "Self-help group".

[v] The further development of the theory can be seen especially in Rothman (1996)