

# Urban Heritage under Transition: Theingyi Zay in Yangon/ Myanmar

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## 1. Introduction

The downtown area of Yangon which is situated between the Yangon River in the South West and the Pazundaung Creek in the East forms a habitat for more than 200.000 people. In the centre of this downtown area lies the Theingyi Zay, a market established during the colonization by Indians under British legitimation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century which is still a focal point for local and regional, long term as well as short term day to day trade and a significant representative of the colonial heritage in Myanmar.

Beyond this original function of trade the social function of Theingyi Zay is of immense importance. As Yangon can be regarded as a melting pot for a variety of ethnic groups and religions the Theingyi market reflects this heterogeneity because it is operated and used by people with Burmese, Indian and Chinese ancestry as well as Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Christian and Jewish religious backgrounds. While the downtown area of Yangon is spatially characterized by ethnic groups, the Theingyi Zay assembles a mixture of this heterogeneity in a very dense space. Furthermore, it also reflects to a great amount the socio-economic gradient of Yangon's citizens as people of all social classes come to pursue their business.

Since the initialising of transition in Myanmar in 1988 through political and economic reorganization, this process has reached a stage of unprecedented velocity which sets a volatile frame for urban heritage within the context of urban development in Yangon and consequently for the future of Theingyi Zay, as well. This development leads to a variety of urban planning challenges because it demands a readjustment of local infrastructure (traffic, electricity, social housing, etc.).

In order to approach this complex scenery the author of this study focuses on the key question:

### **What impact does the current process of transition have on the Theingyi Zay?**

This main question is broken into following guiding questions that lead through the study.

- What is transition and which parameters are typical according to the state of the art for this concept and can be found in Myanmar?

- What is the concept of Urban Heritage and why is it important for social communities?
- Can transition developments be seen at Theingyi Zay in recent years?
- How do local actors describe the current state of the market (strengths and weaknesses) and how are they related to transition processes?
- What should be considered for future developments?

In summary, this study approaches the theme theory based through elaborating on the concepts of transition and urban heritage at first and develops the empirical background by describing how these concepts can be found in Yangon in a second step. Especially the empirical background contains information gained from government officials who stay unnamed due to anonymity reasons. In a third step the author explains the chosen methodology which enables to display a detailed picture of the market and depicts the concrete impact of transition by empirical means (step 4). A strengths and weaknesses analysis provides foundation for future considerations (step 5). The sixth and last step gives space for an evaluation of the analytical framework, critical reflection of used methods and presents a new framework as extension of the current one.

## **2. State of the Art**

This chapter aims to clarify basic concepts of transition and urban heritage. This is necessary to identify fundamental ideas which will be picked up during the empirical and analytical part.

### **2.1. Theory of Transition: A holistic approach**

Transformation offers a lot of associations and therefore most persons have a different understanding of this term. A reason for that lies in its complex nature since it stands for a multidimensional phenomenon which changes depending on the scientific perspective. It therefore evoked many similar but yet different theoretic approaches to grasp its determinants. As societal transformation has been assigned a holistic character (KOLLMORGEN 2010: 4), it is the aim of this chapter to establish a holistic overview about the theory of transition, which includes:

- a discussion of applied terminology
- Theories of transition to explain driving forces, premises and actors
- the introduction of scale and velocity
- the establishment of analytical dimensions

### ***Transition vs. Transformation***

In political sciences there is no single definition of the term *transformation*. For instance in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it described the transformation from capitalist to communist societies (LEE 2002: 5). After the third wave of democratization in the 1970s its almost reversed because it has been reintroduced to describe in general the development of a system from an autocracy towards democracy or vice versa. However, the term has soon been complemented by synonymously used terms such as *transition* or *transplacement*. Hence, MERKEL 1994 contents to define two dimensions of the term *transformation* in order to restrict it from other terms. One the one hand MERKEL focusses on the *object* of transformation, on what is transformed, the political or the socio-economical system and on the other hand in which *velocity* this process takes place (MERKEL 2010: 62). The Bertelsmann Foundation's Transformation Index<sup>1</sup> understands transformation as an intended politically designed change towards democracy and market economy. Success depends on the actor's abilities and will. It can only be sustainable if the people agree and accept the process (BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG 2012: 6).

Referring to FISHMAN 1990, MERKEL states that one needs to concretize the general term transformation and define whether a government, a regime or a state is being transformed. A change of government is the most regular form of transformation since it is a usual process in most political systems. A fundamental change of access to governance, governance structure, claim to power and ruling is regarded as change of regime. MERKEL refers to the processes of democratization in Spain (1975-1978) or in South Korea (1985-1987) as examples of change of regime and political systems. It is important to keep in mind that there is a sharp border between hybrid systems which are partially transformed systems and full democracies (MERKEL 2010: 66). The process

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<sup>1</sup> The Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) analyses and evaluates the quality of democracy, market economy and political management in 128 developing and transformation countries (<http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/cps/rde/xchg/bst/hs.xsl/307.htm>).

of democratization or the passage/descent from an autocracy to a democracy is called transition. Consequently, one needs to introduce an initial point as well as a (normative) final point in order to be able to call transition the phase in between (RÜB 1994: 112). In conclusion, the term *transformation* is a generic term as *transition* is one form of transformation.

### ***Transformation Theories***

Transformation theories present approaches which aim to illustrate principle driving forces, premises, actors of transformation and where applicable the time a transformation starts (LEE 2002: 11). For the course of this thesis this is necessary because this theoretical background helps to understand and correlate typical characteristics with actual findings in Myanmar. The presentation of these approaches follows MERKEL'S differentiation in four basic approaches. According to MERKEL there are basically four theoretic approaches to transformation which allude to and summarize the broad variety of theories related to transformation; the system approach, the structure approach, the culture approach, and the actor approach. It will be pointed out that there is an interdependency between the orders state, economy society and culture (LEE 2002: 13) and hence between the following approaches. All of them aim to explain why systems change towards democracy and identify important determinants.

#### *System approach*

The first approach is based on sociological system theory which includes amongst others the modernization and development theory. The sociological system theory identifies a functional differentiation of democratic systems into social part systems as a requirement for a functioning democracy (MERKEL refers to PARSON 1969). If a system is not divided into subsystems, it will not last in the long run. As example MERKEL refers to WILLKE (WILLKE 1988: 286) who claims that communist or socialist systems fail because the differentiation of the society is constraint by authorities while the whole system underlies a socialist or communist code which prohibits an instant reaction to the differentiation of subsystems by fairly slow state run administration units. Therefore, the system ultimately collapses due to a lack of efficiency and legitimation at one point whereby ground is laid for democratic developments (*autopoietische*

*Systemtheorie Luhmanns / autopoietic system theory by Luhmann (MERKEL 2010: 67-70)).*

Based on these thoughts the so called modernization theory establishes the relationship between economic success und a successful democracy since economic success is granted by functioning state systems. According to modernization theory the most important factor for a successful democracy is a positive economic development and the overcoming of poverty (Ibid.: 70). Once a society has enough economic resources it is able to invest in education whereby education is regarded as elementary for democracy because it enforces a strong educated civil society. However, this theory lacks an explanation for wealthy autocratic systems (Middle East, Singapore) or historic transformations towards autocracy such as in Germany 1933. A certain degree of wealth can be regarded as one precondition but not as ample. Thus, the relationship of wealth and democracy can be regarded as causal but not as mono-causal (Ibid.: 73). In addition, modernization theory states that wealth means an equable allocation of values and not extreme rich or extreme poor groups within societies (Ibid.: 71). Beside this, development theory argues on similar grounds. Underdevelopment is seen as technical problem and not through a broader understanding as social transformation as the transformation of the whole society (CASTLES 2001: 19). In other words, pre-transformed socialistic state systems follow rather dogmatism and a party oriented jurisdiction and fail to include partial and individual participation (CVIJANOVIC 2002: 9) which then initializes the need for change.

#### *Structure approach*

The structure approach focusses on power structures which political transformation processes underlie. As stated above, democracy can only be regarded as one of many alternative results in transformation processes. However, this approach offers four important factors, which determine democracy as result of transformation. First, the distribution of powers within the elites, second the economic basis of the rural upper class, third the constellation of classes and their relationship towards each other, and fourth the distribution of powers between social classes and the autonomy of the state (MERKEL 2010: 76). Hence, democracy can be understood as a compromise between elites and other groups (Ibid.: 78). This also means that democracy can never be viewed as a static product because a compromise has to be regarded as a process which continuously underlies a variety of influences.

As a representative of the structure approach VANHANEN 1992 claims that the wider the dispersion of resources of powers within the economy and the society, the higher the degree of democratization (MERKEL 2010: 77). This means that the structure approach does not only focus on one element of the society, a strong and wealthy middle class, but the relationship and the balances of powers within a system. Furthermore, this approach highlights the importance of the state's autonomy. This is advantageous in comparison to the modernity approach (Ibid.: 79) although this approach lacks to focus on the heterogeneity of social groups which do not act as single unit.

### *Culture-theory*

The third theoretic approach towards transformation is called culture-theory. This approach emphasizes religious and cultural influences in democratization processes. On the one hand it examines religious preconditions. MERKEL refers to HUNTINGTON 1991 who claims that restrictive fundamental religions are incompatible with western democratic standards for the nature of these religions is based on timeless dogmas which situate their religion on a higher level than democratic values (Ibid.: 80). Therefore, culture theory concludes that secularization laminates the grounds for democratic systems. Focusing on religion alone as most important determinant for culture and cultural environment, culture theory would be highly limited. Therefore, culture-theory studies the social capital of a society also. A society's capital is determined by the strength of its civil culture which in turn consists of values, social traditions and historic experiences and is distinctive for a successful democracy. According to PUTNAM 1993 social capital must be learned and habitualized in the long term and cannot be introduced spontaneously (MERKEL 2010: 83). Thus democracy can only be introduced in a fertile and democracy friendly cultural environment.

### *Actor theory*

Actor-theory applies to the heterogeneity of social groups and complements transformation theories. On a micro-scale there is typically more than one actor that is more than on interest. This already implies the progressive nature of this approach since decision-making processes are situation conditioned. The macro-scale (that is international influences, political and structural institutions) simply sets the frame for democratic transitions (MERKEL 2010: 84), whereby mutual reactions will be considered later. Within actor theory one can identify two approaches, the descriptive empirical

approach and the rational choice approach. The former describes the actor's interests and strategies, basically how they act and why they do it. This approach is complemented by including the individual's cost benefit calculus. Through game theory methods one tries to find out whether a decision can be regarded as rational and predicts how a certain actor reacts in certain situation (Ibid.: 87).

In summary, these four approaches represent a solid foundation for understanding concrete examples of transformation processes. While the system approach focusses on the role of the state regulating the framework for economic development, the structure approach illustrates the allocation of power within a political system. Culture theory enlightens the cultural setting for individual democratic behavior which is aimed to be explained through the actor theory. However, the capacities of each single approach should be seen critically because it should be highlighted that none of these theories is true by itself but has to be seen in context and combination with the other ones. Economic development alone does not grant democratic development but is one important factor. Furthermore, the distribution of power underlies constant struggle and is influenced among others by cultural settings. All of these forces influence individual behavior respectively. To increase the capacities of the approaches they should be extended by the dimensions of scale and time. Furthermore, due to analytical reasons they need to be divided into an economic, political and social dimension to approximate the holistic aim. In terms of scale one can first distinguish a global and a local scale.

### ***Scales***

#### *Global vs. Local*

Transformation also is an issue of scale. In regard to transformation one could assume that transformation results from a dialectic relationship of globalization and localization. Globalization on the one hand is argued to lead to a westernization of socio-economic, political and individual decision making parameters, hence to a leveling of cultural differences in favor of western customs. Localization, on the other hand, is regarded as being a "valve" for local interests and results in an enforcement of difference, of different local cultural conventions. LOGAN 2002 argues that globalization provokes a strong local reaction which reflects local history, traditions, and cultural

identity. This discussion in transformation theory has led to the new word creation “glocalization” as technicus terminus for the dialectic relationship between the global and the local (LOGAN 2002: xviii). In this context CASTLES 2001 alludes to the creation of ‘new forms of global stratification in which some individuals, communities, countries, or regions become integrated into global networks of power and prosperity, while others are excluded and marginalized’ (CASTLES 2001: 21).

This differentiation of scales even increases the complexity of the theoretical concept of transition but is wise in order to achieve comprehensiveness because it shows where certain influences can come from and how they impact local and global structures vice versa. To break down this complexity, it seems appropriate to introduce different analytical dimensions of transition as foundation for an analytical differentiation as suggested among others by STADELBAUER 2006.

#### *Dimensions of transition – analytical differentiation*

On all scales transition processes can be analyzed in social, economic and political dimensions (CVIJANOVIC 2002: 9) which however are broken down respectively to gain analytical depth. The Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI), for instance, understands democracy in the political dimension beyond minimalistic definitions as it aggregates political changes to socio-economic stability and management capabilities (BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG 2012b: www). In other words, the lesser stable the economy aggregated with a lack of management capabilities or capacities is the weaker democracy is.

Transition can be divided thematically in processes on a meso- or macro-scale into social, economic and political dimensions as the Bertelsmann Transformation Index does it because it should be born in mind that transition may not be initialized on a global scale but certainly is influenced by global effects. However, relevant decisions are mostly made on the state scale. Thus, the socio-economic as well as the political dimensions will be analyzed on the state scale. According to STADELBAUER 2006, e. g., in former Soviet Union States in Eastern Europe transition was initialized on a political level and influenced the economical level (STADELBAUER 2006: 51). This contradicts modernization theory approaches that see the incapability of socialist central systems to deal with the immense velocity of fragmentation processes in a modernizing society

as reasons for transition. Although theoretical approaches come up with different sources of initial transition, the distinction of dimension as suggested by STADELBAUER can be regarded as helpful. As further example, COY 2006 identifies the socio-economic fragmentation within and between urban areas as another effect of transformation processes and exemplifies thereby other scales of transformation; micro- and macro scale (COY 2006: 63).

#### *Economic dimension*

Generally the term transition implies in the economic dimension a change from a central planned economic system to a market orientated economy. This adaption requires a complete new organization of the economic system including new institutions, a liberalization of market rules and new markets (STADELBAUER 2006: 53). In this context POPOV 2007 has proven that economic performance in transition countries depends highly on macroeconomic stabilization besides liberalization whereas stability can be granted by strong institutions (POPOV 2007: 27).

#### *Political dimension*

Transition from a political point of view generally means an improved participation of the people in political decision processes and an increased legitimation of decisions by the people. Hence, the term capturing this process properly seems to be 'democratization' although, for example, STADELBAUER diagnoses a wide variety of realizations ranging from authoritarian to western style democracies in Post-Soviet states (STADELBAUER 2006: 53). Furthermore, the political transition is accompanied by a more or less decentralization of powers. Powers held by the central authority are distributed more subsidiary than before granted by adaption of legal norms (STADELBAUER 2006: 54). In conclusion one can speak of a general political liberalization in transition countries.

Certainly the political dimension underlies influences from the global local nexus. If globalization was understood as the definition by HELD 1999<sup>2</sup> implies, one could argue that this process leads to an undermining of the national-state governance. Nevertheless, history has shown that during transition new forms of governance

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<sup>2</sup> Globalization: 'A process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact- generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power' (HELD et al., 1999: 16).

emerge which do not necessarily rely on formal or official regulation (CASTLES 2001: 21).

### *Social dimension*

The social dimension covers developments from the macro to the micro sociologist scale. This means that there are postmodernist developments that inflect on all levels. Postmodernist developments mean “the introduction of a disjunctive set of new values, reflecting the postmodern urban experience” (SHAW, JONES, GIOK LING 1997: 169). Individual responsible and independent decision-making gains more importance throughout this process because political and economic developments set the frame which allows this. More consequences can be the emergence of a civil society and the growth of social disparities due to Social Darwinism (STADELBAUER 2006: 54). These consequences should also be seen in the context of scale. Local as well as global phenomena interact mutually, especially if “flows” are being understood as tangible and intangible flows. Tangible flows refer to goods or migration processes which are initialized on a local scale whereas intangible flows refer to cultural entities that inflect via new information capabilities locations far away (CASTLES 2001: 23). Thus, the implied transformation of society including effects like social stratification or post-modernization cannot be viewed independently but has to be viewed in the context of scale.

These thoughts lead to an interim conclusion on the way towards and holistic approach. All previous thoughts can also be arranged in oppositional pairs which conclude the difficulty of a holistic transformation theory: public vs. private; sanctioned order vs. shadow order; permanent vs. transitory legal vs. illegal; planned vs. marked economy; winner vs. loser; Centralism vs. decentralism (RUBY & RUBY 2008). The oppositional character of these pairs is highly discussed because they can be seen as dilemma as well as necessary characteristic (KOLLMORGEN 2010: 8). Still, a holistic approach needs to include the notion of time, as well.

### *Velocity*

The notion of time or better the notion of velocity plays a crucial role in transition theory. As pointed out above, transition refers to a process. Thus its speed needs to be taken into account. The speed is determined by different modes of transition. These can

be differentiated in political modes (e.g. reform vs. revolution) or economic changes. For this study only the economic mode will be introduced.

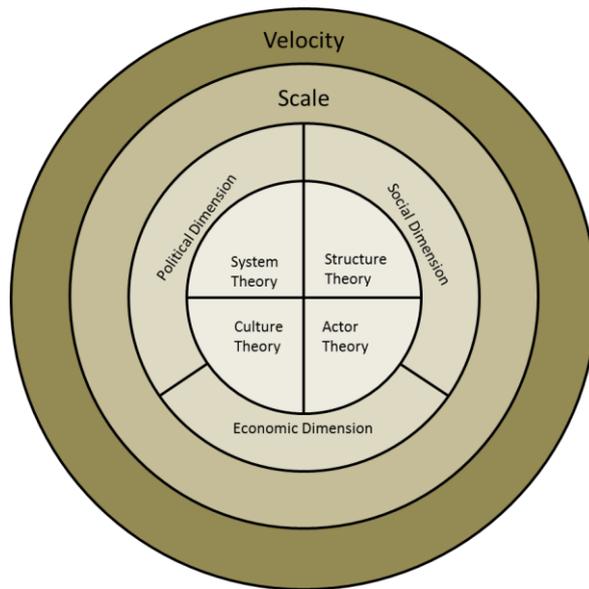
Especially for economic transition there are two famous distinctive approaches; Shock Therapy which refers to an instant rapid liberalization of prices and Gradualism which implies a reduced speed approach in which institutions maintain powers gradually (STADELBAUER 2006: 53, POPOV 2007: 2).

For the case of some former Soviet States POPOV has proven that those states which followed a gradual approach performed better in managing recessions. Recession was the result of an adverse supply shock which was caused by a liberalization of prices after the political breakdown. This led to disorders in the industrial structure. Moreover, supply shocks resulted from a collapse of state institutions which were not able to enforce regulations any longer. All of those shocks can be accounted to poor policies (POPOV 2007: 2). This shows that speed depends on political management. This is why management abilities are regarded as highly important by the BTI, as well (BERTELSMANN FOUNDATION 2012b: 5). In consequence, Shock Therapy has led to a variety of social problems, especially through empowering social disparity developments. However, as radical as the term Shock Therapy may sound, there has never been such radical economic liberalization, only really fast and slow price deregulation strategies which means that there only have been different forms of gradualism (STADELBAUER 2006: 54). On the other hand, HAVRYLYSHYN 2007 contents that gradualism is the more expensive alternative for rapid transformation because it is accompanied by adopting deeper reforms and deeper reforms lead to higher growth rates and lower inflation (HAVRYLYSHYN 2007: 3).

### ***Conclusion***

So far this chapter has presented a holistic overview on transformation theory. It has been pointed out that transition can be regarded as the period of time between an autocratic and a democratic system. However, both, the initial as well as the final state cannot be fully defined. Therefore, one can conclude that transformation is a timely and spatially non-delimitable term.

Furthermore, it has been shown that transition theories are highly multidimensional and complex<sup>3</sup>. This can be illustrated in following figure.



**Figure 1: summary of holistic approach towards theory of transition, (own sketch based on literature findings)**

It has also been shown that transformation theory consists of many parameters in regard to system, actor, dimensions, scale and velocity. These indicators characterize a certain status quo in the process of transition. Therefore, this study summarizes typical indicators of countries under transition as following:

- Questionable political will;
- Lack of capacities;
- Lack of capabilities;
- Social disparities;
- Social stratification;
- Short windows of opportunity;
- Permanent embarking of new actors;
- Unpresice systematic cognizance and arbitrements
- Lack of governance;
- Individual liberalization;
- Decentralization of powers.

In the end the value of this chapter for the course of this study needs to be shown. It is necessary because the theory of transition is the basis of the argumentation why this study focuses on certain elements of transition in the empirical background. Through

<sup>3</sup> The complexity can be also constituted with Popper who states that all theories on societies have to be complex because of the impossibility to isolate events of society as well as the fact that social life is a natural phenomenon (social life ← biology ← Physics and Chemistry: social sciences are last element of hierarchical order) (LEE 2002: 15).

this it lays foundation for answering the question which impact transition has on the Theingyi Zay.

## 2.2. Theory of Urban Heritage

Urban Heritage can be seen in a conceptual and institutional dimension though both dimension highly influence each other. Concepts represent the signified while language provides the signifier as in this case the term “Urban Heritage”. Consequently, concepts like “Urban Heritage” are constructs created by people (GRAHAM, ASHWORTH, TUNBRIDGE 2000: 2f). Therefore, in order to fully comprehend the constructed concept one needs to think about its origin and genesis (source), the agent, and its goal. Hence, this chapter eludes on the origin of heritage as concept first, then distinguishes different Urban Heritage approaches chronologically and finally depicts contemporary concepts of urban heritage.

### *Origin*

Elements of contemporary Urban Heritage approaches are retraceable along their intellectual legacy over time, why it seems necessary to elaborate shortly on the development of Urban Heritage concepts. The concept’s development is characterized by a parallel increase of complexity and specificity (This paper will follow the outline of the remarkable book “The Historic Urban Landscape” by Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers who have given a very detailed and informed depiction of this concept’s development.) While the creation of the concept was branded by a dichotomy between Romanticism and Realism in the beginning (middle 19<sup>th</sup> century), the advancing industrialization led to a differentiation of both approaches and crystalized itself in the opposite relationship between the Modernism Movement and Conservation ideas which still steps into the light in current debates.

In Europe from the time of the French Revolution until the shift from the nineteenth to the twentieth century urban heritage conservation was constraint mainly to individual monuments because urban planning at this time was concerned with addressing the infrastructural demands of the uprising industrial revolution and further urbanization processes. These developments called for a modernization which meant a destruction of the historic city in many cities worldwide, for example in Paris (Haussmann plan).

Modernism Representations of the state's power, however, have been conserved in form of statues and monuments in order to represent its historical legacy. Moreover, protection covered cathedrals, palaces and gardens as witnesses of statutory heritage (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 3).

Intellectuals throughout Europe expanded the concept of monument preservation by acknowledging the historic city as preserve worthy because they noted the historic cities were the foundation in which one's own history is built. This theoretical expansion allowed Alois Riegl, an Austrian art critic and historian, to give the first fundamental distinction between 'value of memory' (*Erinnerungswerte*) and 'value of contemporary' (*Gegenstandswerte*) at the shift from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. The former refers to the earlier approach to heritage conservation, the valuing of the antiquity of an artefact, whereas the latter implies a modern idea, the 'use value' of heritage. The use value can be distinguished in an 'art value' as well as a 'newness' value. Both values differentiate the 'use value' from archaeology and ruins by focussing on the comprehensible artistic quality and the unswayed depiction of art (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 9f). This conceptualization permits for the first time the right for aesthetic enjoyment of the memory value of heritage and highlights the importance of its protection (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 10).

At this time more highly influential ideas have been created by (the German architect and critic) Werner Hegemann and (the Scottish urbanist and biologist) Patrick Geddes. Both pointed out the evolutionary character of a city. The current city is only a state in constant transformation and reflects the complex web of traditions and interactions of its inhabitants. They focus not only on social relationships but the human nature interface, as well. This led to the conclusion that conservation should never be limited to a small unit only but destructing and modernisation on the other hand be spatially minimised (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 12f).

Combining these different train of thoughts Gustavo Giovannoni coined the term 'urban heritage' (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 14). In order to tackle the dilemma of modernity vs. conservation approaches he stressed the historic city as an important part of the network of urban functions. He proposed addressing the social needs as well as addressing the functional needs of modern society. The historic city, in his eyes, was not the place for production and work but social life, etc.

These ideas were oppositional in a wide debate in urban planning and served as counterparts for modern movement ideas. Those, which were forwarded early through the Athens Charter (1943) and the CIAM (Congres International d'Architecture Moderne), contented to destroy the historic cities and preserve only some buildings with documentary character and rejected social networks through rejecting the historical city although it should be mentioned that it recognized historic buildings at all (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 22). During the 1960s it became evident that standardized architecture and planning led to a range of severe problems such as poor housing, social marginality and monotonous urban spaces, which contributed to the end of the CIAM's modern movement (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 23).

Around 1970 Thomas Schumacher introduced the theorem of "contextualism" which addresses heritage in its physical and social contexts and hence focuses on the contemporary value of heritage. His approach grounds on Heidegger's theory on presence ("Räumlichkeit"), which has been further developed by Norberg-Schulz who argues that space transform from a 'situs' to a 'locus' as soon as life takes place (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 32ff). In consequence, urban heritage must not be seen as single and isolated object but on a scale larger than the project. This context is subject-matter in many current debates on Urban Heritage and referred to as the question for the genius loci, the spirit of the place (SCHOFIELD & SZYMANSKI 2011: 1).

As aforementioned the development of the concept is seen due to analytical reasons in the conceptual and institutional dimension whereas the institutional dimension can often be seen as the operationalization of the conceptual dimension. Important for the understanding of the institutional side is its distinction of scales since rules and regulations are proposed from local to international scales. Due to the limitation of pages this paper will focus on a few landmarks which resemble conceptual innovations. On an international level the post WW2 city development led to a higher awareness concerning heritage preservation and thus to the foundation of UNESCO related organisations, such as ICOMOS, ICOM, ICCROM who followed in general similar approaches. For instance, the 1964 so called Venice Charter was adopted by ICOMOS in 1965 and acknowledged that objects should be seen in their contexts (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 39). This was new for institutions which concentrated mostly on single buildings and monuments before. Moreover, the 1972 World Heritage Convention of the UNESCO marks one of the most important milestones in heritage recognition for

three reasons. First, it sets the whole issue in the framework of an international legal system, secondly it recognizes combinations of natural and cultural heritage and thirdly proposes international responsibility when dealing with world heritage (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 41). This convention marks a good example for above stated increase in complexity of Urban Heritage concepts as it only focuses on material realizations of cultural identities (JENKINS 2008: 5) and neglects intangible cultural heritage yet.

The 1975 Amsterdam Declaration during the European Architectural Heritage Year paved way for the recognition of intangible heritage because it highlights the need to protect social fabrics of historic cities as well and thus recognizes cultural capital (for the first time) (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 45). However, this declaration as well as the 1976 Nairobi Recommendation are criticised for being too static in their recognition of social values which is tried to be corrected in the Washington Charter of 1987. This charter expresses heritage through its authenticity and states that authenticity is the sum of physical structures plus setting and surrounding plus functions acquired over time. The notion of time is new and undermines the critique of being too static (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 48). The 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity took this idea on and underlines that it is culture which contributes over time to gain or increase value by acknowledging “heritage as an expression of the diversity of cultures and conservation practises to the values attributed by each culture” (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 49).

Through recognizing culture as key element the Nara Document sets the premise for intangible heritage which complemented the UNESCO convention in 2003. Recent debates deal with the role of Urban Heritage concerning sustainability and manifest themselves till now rather in regional charters, such as the 1994 Aalborg Charter or the 2005 Vienna Memorandum. The Vienna Charter acknowledges that sustainability depends on that heritage is organized horizontally in a web of relationships and vertically in a web of layers (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 64f). Therefore, one needs to deconstruct these layers to reveal all influences/origins (LOGAN 2002: xvi). Other regional charters highlight the importance of the notion of the genius loci.

At this point it can be said that the terminology of heritage lacks international conformity because there a plenty of different regional interpretations of the concept of cultural heritage. AHMAD points out examples of Australia which refers to heritage as ‘place, cultural significance and fabric’, China to ‘immovable physical remains’ and

Canada to 'material culture, geographic environments and human environments (AHMAD 2006: 299). Especially Asian approaches to heritage point out economic value of heritage. The 1978 ASEAN COCI (Committee on culture and Information), for instance, promotes tourism and heritage and as its medium (JENKINS 2008: 8). This shows that the commodification of heritage is a big issue, although not only in Asia because there are plenty of continuous conflicts concerning heritage because of the stakeholder's different interests.

#### *Contemporary understanding of the urban heritage concepts*

Having elaborated on the genesis of the concept of heritage and shown that there has been an increase of complexity, it has been underlined that there is still no single universal understanding of the concept. Therefore, this paper will not quote one single definition of heritage, but explain certain features of contemporary Heritage definitions and their interpretations that can be seen as internationally agreed on as they are stated by UNESCO. The variety of notions, aspects and references related to defining heritage has been compiled by Jokilehto (2005) and serves as repertory for examples to describe what heritage is currently regarded as.

Nowadays heritage is differentiated in natural, man-made, tangible and intangible heritage. Universally all four types have a notion of spirit in common. Spirit means the impact on the spectator, inhabitant or visitor while perceiving the place or action. This becomes clear when looking for example at the 2001 UNESCO recommendation on sacred mountains where the perception of nature becomes meaningful (JOKILEHTO 2005: 41). Other authors describe the spiritual value of a place as sub-tangible or sub-intangible and highlight that the meaning assigned to places or actions are what distinguishes places from others (JENKINS 2008: 7).

For the course of this thesis only cultural heritage will be further elucidated. Cultural heritage is everything created and passed on by culture. Thus, heritage should be distinguished in tangible and intangible heritage. The former refers to physical entities, such as buildings, monuments, statues and other touchable objects which can be manmade or natural (HLAING MAW OO 2006: 199). The latter expands according to the UNESCO perception the former views of heritage by including traditions and living expressions that can be passed from one generation to the next into the concept of cultural heritage. This comprises oral traditions, social practices, rituals as well as performing arts or the knowledge to produce traditional crafts (UNESCO: 2). Because a

concept understood in such way must recognize that intangible heritage underlies constant influences, it takes the inherited as well as the contemporary patterns into account. Cultural heritage is constantly changing through enrichment and developed further by each generation. Thus it provides 'a link from the past, through the present and into our future' (Ibid.: 5). Furthermore, it is argued that intangible heritage enhances social cohesion through providing the individual with the opportunity to feel as a part of society to which it can contribute through its participation. Thus, intangible heritage enforces identity and responsibility with and for one's own heritage (Ibid.: 5) Thus, intangible heritage represents a community based human centred approach towards a successful way to deal with heritage.

To understand contemporary heritage approaches and differentiations one should focus shortly on the aim of the concept also. The goal of the concept can be deduced by calling it the realization of function. One important function has been mentioned above, heritage endows identity. Hence, the establishment of identity can be seen as one goal of the concept. Moreover, social values set a frame for social patterns which are tolerated and expressed by one community. These patterns might not be adequate for other communities but are confirmed for this community and thus a reliable framework which allows the individual to act without the need to reflect each action but can rely on its experience. Therefore, strengthening intangible cultural heritage means strengthening the community and the individual at the same time. Naturally further goals, such as economic commodification and protecting cultural diversity, must not forgotten to be mentioned.

Taking on the above depicted development of Urban Heritage concepts and the thought about current understandings of (urban) heritage, one of the so far most complex and comprehensive approaches can be seen in the Historic Urban Landscape approach. It synthesizes 150 years of conceptual and institutional developments (and paves ground for a contemporary adequate toolbox of Urban Heritage management approaches.)

The historic urban landscape approach tries to compile the broad range of ideas and definition and project it on urban scenarios. It defines the historic urban landscape as

'the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of the "historic centre" or "ensemble" to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting' (BANDARIN & VAN OERS 2012: 231).

This approach distinguishes itself because it does not narrow heritage down or neglect elements of other definitions and approaches but includes the old ideas of contextualism and genius loci.

## **2.2. Conclusion**

For the course of this thesis the Historic Urban Landscape approach seems an appropriate and important theoretical foundation because the Theingyi Zay in Yangon has got tangible value and as important, and this thesis will try to point this out below, intangible social value through its horizontal location in the centre of Yangon and the vertical (historical, social) context of the melting pot Yangon.

However, the author of this thesis is aware that the occidental view of the development of heritage concepts reflected in the theoretical foundation. This becomes an issue because this thesis is considered with an Asian context. However, this chapter tried to sketch a general picture of the Urban Heritage concept and will lay focus on the concrete perception of heritage concepts below.

The last point of this chapter mentions one more debatable issue in this context. In contrast to the positive notion of heritage as identity establishing momentum one could also discuss all approaches to be historically self gloryfying with an instructional notion. This would undermine all of heritage's claim to education and consequently lower the context giving surplus for people's lives. Therefore, one needs to be aware of the way in which heritage is depicted because the concept contains dangers in terms of manipulation, as well.

## **3. Empirical Background**

Before one starts to describe the transition in Myanmar it has to be highlighted that it is almost impossible to find scientific articles or founded second opinions that are up to date with the extreme high velocity of political, economic and socio-economic developments. It lies in the nature of descriptive or analytical scientific articles that the scientific literature lags behind the actual processes in Myanmar. Most research and

analysis focus on the time before the inauguration of the new government in 2011. Secondly, the quality of all imposed studies is questionable because it is almost impossible to find valuable statistical data for two reasons. First, the authorities in Myanmar lack the bodies of administration to generate accurate data and secondly it is often not wanted politically to present accurate data because it could provoke inconvenient questions. This is also the reason for not taking internationally well reputed indices, such as the Bertelsmann Transformations Index or the Transparency International Index (TII) into account to refer to recent developments because they rely on data imposed before 2010 or 2011. Another reason for viewing current indices critically lies in their character as universal tool which limits them from a special, context oriented examination of the special socio historic situations (KOLLMORGAN 2010: 7). Therefore, this thesis will present a synthesis of scientific articles and international press articles as well as personal talks and experiences.

Neither does this thesis offer the appropriate framework nor aims it to analyse the different developments in Myanmar in depth, however what can be concluded is that there are certain trends towards democracy if one believes aforementioned international indices which depict a progressive but devastated picture about Myanmar before 2010 and sets their information into comparison with current findings (see table 1).

### **3.1. Transition in Myanmar**

The column for political development of table 1 reveals a trend from military towards civilian rule. Although the mentioned election in 2010 has been criticised – uninclusive election and allocation of parliament seats to the military (TURNELL 2011: 139), it still marks an improvement in comparison to former situations. There have been political reforms which strengthen individual liberties and deregulate powers towards a decentralized political system. Furthermore, it depicts an approximation of the central government with some of the ethnic minorities.

In tendency one can claim a greater velocity of the progress in recent time because of the higher density of remarks towards democracy in recent years. However, there are some critical voices which challenge the positive interpretation by enhancing that only political and macroeconomic stability can lead to positive prospects for the country. To guarantee the political stability, they demand to change that “first past the pole” voting system to a system that represents ethnic minorities in a larger proportion and ensure that the National League for Democracy (NLD<sup>4</sup>) has got the bureaucratic competence for governing in case of an election victory in 2015 (ICG 2012: 17). Core of their anxiousness is to prevent frustration within the population in case the ruling party cannot meet expectations fast enough (ICG 2012: 17).

### *Institutional developments*

Table 1 marks an approach towards a change of the state’s system since the Republic of the Union of Myanmar offers a greater acknowledgement of the ethnical states than it had been the case during the Union of Myanmar. Other institutional processes do not fit in the form of a table but are not to be left out. Most institutions experience broad internal developments ranging from increase of wages and personnel to restructuring. KRAAS 2010, for instance, has described reorganisations of the Ministry of Construction for the 1990s (KRAAS 2010: 31f) but there are currently some reorganisation progresses and implementations, such as the MIC. Critical voices about the institutional order claim that the government’s spending on military does not meet appropriate balance requirements (21% in 2009) (TURNELL 2011: 141). Also, the author has been told in informal talks with government officials that the internal structures in government organisations are under progress, too. Some issues in regard to internal restructuring are pointed out in the following subchapter.

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<sup>4</sup> NLD: National League for Democracy, party of Aung San Suu Kyi which is presently the strongest opposition party

| Time        | Political developments                                                                                                                                                                                         | Institutional developments                                   | Economic developments                                                                                                          | Others                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1988        | After economic crisis and uprising a new ruling military Junta is installed (WSJ <sup>5</sup> : www)                                                                                                           |                                                              | Economic crisis                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1989        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Renaming to “The Union of Myanmar” (FT <sup>6</sup> : www)   |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1990        | NLD wins election, government ignores result (BBC <sup>7</sup> : www)                                                                                                                                          |                                                              |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1997        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                              | US economic sanctions in response to continued human rights abuses by the military government (WSJ: www)                       |                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 2008        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                              | Nargis destroys country’s main agric- and hydrocultural production zones                                                       | Cyclone Nargis devastates most of Myanmar’s Delta Region (KRAAS , BBC: www)                                                                                                         |
| 2009        | NLD states to take part in elections if certain pro-democratic premises are fulfilled (BBC: www)                                                                                                               |                                                              |                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 2010, Nov.  | USDP <sup>8</sup> claims victory in first elections for 20 years; Opposition claims fraud; Government claims that this marks the turning point from military to civilian rule (BBC: www)                       | Renaming to “The Republic of the Union of Myanmar” (FT: www) |                                                                                                                                | Aung San Suu Kyi is released from house arrest (BBC: www)<br>Monks and political prisoners are banned from the election (WSJ: www)                                                  |
| 2011, March | Thein Sein is sworn in as president of nominally civilian government (BBC: www)                                                                                                                                | Unions are legalized (WSJ: www)                              |                                                                                                                                | -May – 14.000 prisoners are freed by the government (REU <sup>9</sup> : www)<br>-October – general amnesty, some political prisoners are freed (BBC: www)                           |
| 2012, Jan.  | Government signs ceasefire agreement with Karen Minority (DW <sup>10</sup> : www)                                                                                                                              |                                                              | German Development Minister Dirk Niebel travels to Myanmar to discuss a raise of development aid (DW: www)                     |                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 2012, Aug.  | First visit by an Indian prime minister since 1987 (BBC: www)<br>Abolishment of pre-publication censorship (BBC: www)<br>Replacement of hardliner Information Minister with more moderate candidate (BBC: www) |                                                              | 12 agreements are signed to strengthen trade and credit lines (BBC: www)                                                       | Myanmar citizens stage peaceful protests (WSJ: www)<br>Removal of more than 2000 people from a blacklist that kept unwanted persons out of the country (WSJ: www)                   |
| 2012, Sept. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                              | US eases ban on imports from Myanmar (WSJ: www)                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 2012, Nov   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                              | Signature of the new Foreign Investment Law that removes many restrictions for foreigners doing business in Myanmar (WSJ: www) | -European Commission Chief offers more > \$100m in development aid (BBC: www)<br>- continuous violence in Rhakine state (WSJ: www)<br>- US president Barack Obama visits (WSJ: www) |

**Table 1: Important cornerstones of Myanmar’s development in the transition process (own online research, sources in footnotes)**

<sup>5</sup> WSJ: Wall Street Journal, [www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com)

<sup>6</sup> FT: Financial Times, [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com)

<sup>7</sup> BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12992883>

<sup>8</sup> USDP: Union Solidarity and Development Party, military backed

<sup>9</sup> REU: Reuters, [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com)

<sup>10</sup> DW: Deutsche Welle, [www.dw.de](http://www.dw.de), <http://www.dw.de/timeline-change-in-myanmar/a-16247098>

### *Economic developments*

The difficulty to describe Myanmar's economic development and its potential is described by TURNELL in 2008 and 2011. He points out for pre 2011 that "Myanmar's official economic statistics are unreliable, incomplete, often internally contradictory, and subject to sudden revision" (TURNELL 2011: 137). He exemplifies his claim by juxtaposing the official economic growth rates with the numbers for energy consumption which should develop in a firmly parallel relation but do not in Myanmar's case. He concludes that the GDP rates officially announced by the government have been exaggerated (TURNELL 2011: 138) which means that politics influence official figures. In addition to that, he points out that the government of Myanmar lacks the administrative body to measure exact figures about its economy (TURNELL 2011: 141). That the official side of the macro economy lacks integrity at least to some extent and an adequate body of administration can be seen as the major reason for the devastated economy until 2011. This situation displayed itself, for instance, in a variety of disparities which are listed as deficits in the UN Framework for Myanmar 2012-2015. This report indicates the rural-urban gap with rural poverty at 29% and urban poverty at 16% as well as pointing out that of the rural areas account for 85% of all poverty in Myanmar (UN 2012: 7). Moreover, the report specifies in reference to the Multiple Poverty Index that the group of the poor is distinguishable in a large proportion of very poor and a lesser proportion of the poor and great disparities between the non-poor and the poor (UN 2012: 8). These issues are important to be taken into account because all disparities endanger social cohesion and political stability.

However, a turning point is the resignation of Myanmar's vice president Tin Aung Myint Oo who was considered as patron of the old economy's elite. His resignation paved way for groundbreaking economic political reforms. Beyond this, major stakeholders of the old regime realized that they are well positioned to hold most of their privileges even after a system change (ICG 2012: i). Nevertheless, change cannot be achieved in a day but economic improvements should be tangible for the gross of the population in terms of access to electricity, land reform, better public transport, cheaper communication and better health care as soon as possible (ICG<sup>11</sup> 2012: i).

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<sup>11</sup> International Crisis Group

In accordance to the displayed easing of sanctions in table 1 more stakeholders emerge the market in Myanmar which had been dominated by three economic power centers: business associates of the military regime (cronies), the military and the Union Solidary and Development Party itself. To deal with these new actors, Myanmar needs long term decisions because the short sightedness of the political actors has been pointed out by ICG as one of the major problems in the current transition process (ICG 2012: 9). These problems are accompanied by the continuing importance of personal connections, the highly interconnected character of reforms, (ICG 2012: 6), remaining economic sanctions (ICG 2012: 7) and the continuous inflation (TURNELL 2011: 143).

In order to enhance transition the government has embarked on following economic objectives (ICG 2012: 6):

- Dismantling of monopolies
- Promotion of foreign investment
- Job creation, human resources
- Boosting electricity generation
- Improvement of export-oriented transportation infrastructure
- Comprehensive tax reform
- broad financial sector reform
- float of the Kyat

These goals are necessary but ambitious. It needs to be approximated realistically in which ways the current bureaucracy has got the capacity and capability to cope with the new workload especially. Also, this needs to be assessed for the time after the next elections in 2015 when probably most of the military structures need to be substituted ad hoc.

### *Others*

The environment of external pressures and simultaneous processes of economic reconstruction and political reform (ICG 2012: 4) embed various other developments that can be linked to transition. One development the author wants to highlight is the increasingly active, aware and strengthening civil society (ICG 2012: 10). People use the new liberties to protest and demand in public and their voice is more likely to be heard than in former times. Furthermore, there is an increase in civil society organizations, such as NGOs. Nevertheless, the true influence of the civil society is still questionable, especially in regard to economic and political agreements which often refer to the time prior to the transfer (2011) of power and are therefore questioned and contradictory (ICG 2012: 5).

### 3.1.1. Practical challenges in regard to urban planning

Core of the challenges regarding regional and urban planning (including urban heritage preservation) lies in the great disparity between external and internal pressure (expectations) and the capabilities of national, regional and local institutions (capacities, organization, education level, financial equipment). This disparity results according to several informal talks which the author of study conducted with senior members of several local institutions in a volatile and inconsistent framework for urban planning.

The current pressure onto all Myanmar institutions is immense and increases with each political decision/step towards democracy. As the chronological overview (table 1) above has shown, economic processes accompany political developments because especially foreign investors judge these as a sign for stability. Besides that, private local investors also increase their engagement as soon as the political frame suggests stability. This leads to pressure on those institutions which have to cover the interest in spatial investments (real estate<sup>12</sup>, special economic zones, and infrastructure) by private, cooperative and public actors (“pressure is main problem”; KRAAS, IT, 17.12.2012). Furthermore, political will enforces the pressure on institutions as policy makers want to see progress.

However, according to further informal talks with officials, institutions are highly challenged by dealing with these forces. On the one hand there is a severe lack of capabilities in terms of human resources. Sources have stated that there are currently 20 persons in all Myanmar spread over national, regional and municipal administrations leading the organization of spatial planning (IT 1, IT 2, and IT 3). Most of these persons have international experience. The staff employed in the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) is mostly regarded as young and fairly inexperienced although they have at least a bachelor in a topic related field (IT 2, IT 3). In addition, wages in the institutional public sector seem rather insufficient because starting wage at the YCDC in the urban planning section only is 60.000Kyats (approx. 58€) while the costs of living increase drastically in Yangon. In some cases this leads to additional privately conducted work which can have a mixed interest character with the administration unit.

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<sup>12</sup> Since the citizens of Myanmar are not able to invest their savings at the stock market, real estate is the main investment option for local citizens.

On the other hand, the informal talks revealed unclear cognizance between different institutions when dealing with foreign investors. This structural deficit is a result of the ongoing reforming process that introduces specific laws which are not coherent with the established and current laws. Thus, there are effects of concurrent jurisdiction and concurrent institutional responsibilities (IT 5).

As a consequence of this situation, one can often find an official and an unofficial side in the actual administrative process. As an example, when foreign investors want to invest in property or real estate they have to get permission from the Myanmar Investment Committee (MIC), the institution which gives permission on a national level. In practical terms the MIC asks for an advice by the local authority and grounds its decision on it (official side). Often the local administration (e.g. YCDC) does not have the capacities to deal with the request and asks for support at the DHSHD which writes the recommendation of approval or disapproval (IT 1, IT 2). Hence, it is not the responsible authority that gives approval but another institution (unofficial side). In other cases, the MIC simply approves investments, which local authorities do not dare to correct. In regard to sensible investments, such as investments in real estate with heritage character, other actors like members or organizations of the civil society embark the stage, as well (IT5). This leads to a further complication due to pluralization of decision processes which on the other hand is a great opportunity for the civil society. Hence, especially in regard to urban heritage one can find a volatile and fragile framework for dealing with Urban Heritage.

### **3.1.2. Conclusion**

As suggested in chapter 2 referring to MERKEL 2010 one needs to identify the main object and velocity to determine the form of transformation. In the case of Myanmar we can say about the main object which is the political system, that the current government is an autocracy because there still is a restrictive access to governance although there has been development. Parts of the government are set by law by autocratic forces, in Myanmar's case the military. Therefore, it can be argued that there is only a partial public legitimation of government in Myanmar. On the contrary, the government's claim to power cannot be regarded as universal or totalitarian as it had been (1962 – 1988, 1988 -2010) because there have been systematic changes

(aforementioned), such as a pluralisation of the political structure and an increase in the ways political participation. This correlates to the typical developments stated in chapter two by MERKEL (MERKEL 2010: 24 according to MERKEL/Croissant 2000: 7; Table 1).

The speed of transformation in Myanmar cannot be classified as easily as the object since one cannot set an appropriate reference value which includes the initial situation, internal and external political forces as well as conceptual differences in form of the aspired democratic system. Therefore, this thesis only relies on cornerstones of the developments in Myanmar which indicate a transition process in Myanmar.

Also, the theoretical part has shown that transformation occur in different dimensions. Table one has differentiated developments in these dimensions. All processes in all dimensions can be regarded as on going.

### **3.2. Urban Heritage in Yangon**

In order to draw a comprehensive picture of the heritage situation in Yangon one needs to take the broad history of Yangon and Myanmar into account. Most Asian countries experienced different post-colonial forms of political systems, from democracies to dictatorships in all political colours. Consequently, cultural layering is a common feature in most Asian countries (LOGAN 2002: xvi). Thus, heritage in Yangon can be divided into distinctive layers, as well. Since this study focuses on a representative building from the colonial period, it will focus on this part of the vast history of Yangon especially. There are three layers the reader should be aware of: Pre-colonial Yangon, the colonial city Yangon and the post-independence Capital (HLAING MAW OO 2006: 201). This distinction of layers already raises an important issue when dealing with heritage in a post-colonial country. Whose heritage does one talk about?

Due to the political situation in Myanmar the post-independence governments proclaimed a strict detachment from the British. This affected colonial heritage, as well. In order to enforce Burmese identity, British colonial statues and symbols were taken down to reject the colonial heritage layer. The focus was soon laid on pre-colonial heritage and involved revitalisation of historical Burmese features, even elements of the Burmese monarchies. This handling of heritage is common in nation building processes

to create and maintain one common identity. To lay focus on preserving cultural heritage from pre-colonial eras helped the government to legitimate its origins.

Under British rule Rangoon was developed to an advanced colonial city with typical elements, such as cantonments, schools, universities, zoological gardens, hospitals, parks, sport grounds, running water and sewage systems (KRAAS et al 2010: 27). It would be too strict to say that British Heritage was tabooed because the government could not substitute the colonial infrastructure but the Burmese contribution to it was underlined instead. For a lot of Burmese the British colonial rulers were exploiters and propaganda used it to coin the term 'blood suckers'<sup>13</sup>. This attitude towards the colonial rulers mirrors only one of many because the process of post-colonial recovery is not uniform but a wide and complex range of attitudes towards colonial heritage all over Asia (LOGAN 2002: xvi). This difficult relationship with colonial heritage is still an issue today and is picked out as a central theme in many urban planning projects. On the one hand people appreciate the formerly advanced British infrastructure, on the other hand people want to give way for Burmese or at least modern projects. Consequently, this conflict adumbrates most planning concerns as soon as colonial heritage is involved.

Concerning the post-independence heritage layer, there are not many voices that question the socialist heritage building's representations yet. The buildings of this layer also represent issues which are highly questionable. However, either the author of this thesis overestimates the symbolic value of the representative socialist buildings or agrees to some informal talks which state that the time for open dialogue has not come yet. In conclusion, it is necessary and easy to debate colonial heritage but heritage from the post-independence layer is off topic.

One of the most important questions is why is there a demand for heritage preservation? No other South East Asian City has a similar high number of colonially erected buildings still in use. However, these buildings often are in dilapidated condition due to several factors. One factor is the rent control by the YCDC that limits the rents for private use but allows rent increase for commercial use. These minimal rents have resulted in a bad condition of the buildings because it had not been profitable anymore for house owners to repair their buildings or invest in new ones. Another factor is the overall desolate economic condition of Myanmar during socialist rule from the 1960s

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<sup>13</sup> 'blood suckers': taken from a privately translated document about the history of the Theingyi Zay

until the late 1980s which did not allow large private investments. Therefore, Yangon was able to sustain a unique heritage character because many buildings have not been replaced or repaired.

### **3.2.1. Institutional and legal Framework**

#### *Institutional Setting*

As mentioned in chapter 4 all dimensions of the state and its society underlie constant transition processes and so does the field of urban planning wherein urban heritage should be located. Before and in 2010 political decision makers had been the predominant drivers of urban development (KRAAS et al. 2010: 31). For the current situation this statement must be further differentiated. The political and economic liberalisation has led to a (slight) shift of powers in regard to urban change. Before 1988 the state was nearly the only actor in urban planning projects. After 1988 more private investors entered the market as drivers. Through the ratification of the new constitution in 2010 and the constant political progress the market becomes even more interesting and lucrative from an investor's point of view which can be seen at the enormous price increase for real estate in Yangon. Property Prices rose by 39 percent, office rents by 50 percent and hotel rooms by 65 percent states the Silk Road Yangon Property Index<sup>14</sup>. Because of that the role of political decision makers shifted from a more driving role towards setting the appropriate infrastructural, institutional and legal framework, although the state naturally forwards projects itself.

Therefore the state is still the most important stakeholder because it still holds the formal power because can give permissions. On the other hand the pressure on state institutions has increased significantly because national and international investors push onto the market. Therefore one can assume that there has been a shift of power towards the new economic stakeholders.

Legally responsible for the administration of the city of Yangon is the YCDC which was installed by the State Law and Order Restoration Council in 1990 to replace the prior Yangon Municipally. According to the Directive No. 7/90 of October 1990 the YCDC

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/18743>

chairman holds the rank of a minister and the department heads of the rank of a general (KRAAS 2010:32). In terms of spatial planning the YCDC is self-governing the territory of Yangon whereas neighboring regions and towns belong to the national or regional planning area. Besides the YCDC, there is the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development (DHSHD), a department of the Ministry of Construction which can be regarded as driver of urban development in Yangon, as well. However, in principal the YCDC is independent from national planning decisions but there are certain exceptions to this regulation. A third institution that matters in Yangon is the MIC which coordinates and permits foreign investments nationwide. This Committee can permit land lease and building projects even on the YCDC territory. Furthermore, there is the principal of direct rule. The national government can enact planning on a local scale. This issue that results from the unclear cognizance is one of the cores of urban planning difficulties in Yangon. Moreover, the lack of capacity hampers effective urban planning.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Legal Framework*

The legal framework of heritage conservation in Myanmar is stated by the “The Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law” of 1998. This law defines Cultural Heritage as “ancient monument or ancient site which is required to be protected and preserved by reason of its historical, cultural artistic or anthropological value”(SPDC 1998: 1). All heritage can thus be associated to places (HLAING 2006: 201). The formulations in the law are rather vacant because it does not give certain parameters for the above given definition. However it objects among others following issues: The implementation of heritage protection policies, the actual protection and preservation, the uplift of hereditary pride and the promotion of public awareness towards heritage (Hlaing Maw Oo 2006: 210f).

Nonetheless, new regulations are on the way as the new Laws on Foreign Investment and Regional Planning show (IT 1). The new legal framework, especially the Foreign Investment Law, affects heritage issues because some heritage sites will be even more contested when a safer legal ground allows greater revenue. For example, the new Foreign Investment Law changes handling of real estate because foreign investors can

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<sup>15</sup> This difficulty has been explained during informal talks with high rank officials of the DHSHD and the YCDC whose names cannot be mentioned because the structural difficulty should be handled confidential.

now long lease property for up to 50 years and own companies without a local partner (REUTERS, Nov. 3 2012: www). In reference to the Theingyi Zay the attractiveness to invest in the property of the market has risen through this change because the security of land and being the only owner has increased economic value which is result of projected possible revenues.

In Yangon the YCDC issued a municipal by law and issued a list of 189 buildings which are currently regarded as preserve worthy by the YCDC in 1996 because they are of special historic value. The buildings on the list need to fulfil special local requirements, such as being older than 100 years and are distributed hierarchically in Kyauktada, Pabedan, Kamaryut and Dagon Township in a descending order (HLAING MAW OO 2006: 210). The by-law, for instance, regulates the number of storeys around Shwedagon Pagoda and Shwe Phone Pagoda which protects visual axis (Ibid.: 209). The Theingyi Zay is not among the 189 buildings listed.

One can say that heritage preservation in Yangon focusses mainly on tangible heritage and tries to protect old, aesthetic and important buildings. The list aims to represent Yangon's cultural diversity and therefore includes Burmese temples, Christian churches, Mosques, Synagogues, pre-colonial Burmese buildings and colonial buildings. Yet, there is no special regulation to protect intangible cultural heritage in Yangon as it is stipulated in contemporary urban heritage approaches. Examples of intangible cultural heritage are the comprehensive passed down behavioural patterns at markets. Also the genius loci is not officially recognized yet. This would be premises to follow the ideas of contextualism and meet the demand of the Historic Urban Landscape approach. So, at this point Yangon's heritage concept can rather be allocated to the concept of musealization.

### **3.2.2. Actors of heritage conservation in Yangon**

The above mentioned institutions (YCDC, DHSHD) act rather as frame setter for the field of heritage conservation. Besides them, there are several other actors, namely the Yangon Heritage Trust (YHT), The Association of Myanmar Architects and the UN-Habitat. Whereas the UN-Habitat plays a rather unimposing role, the Association of Myanmar Architects aims to create a blueprint which will be implemented to make

Yangon one of Asia's vibrant cities in 2040 again. Nevertheless, the YHT is currently the organisation with much more publicity.

The Yangon Heritage Trust was founded by the prominent Burmese historian Dr Thant Myint U in early 2012 was inaugurated at its first conference with the title "Towards a Conservation Strategy for Yangon in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" in June. The trust presented following objectives:

- Moratorium of 50 years to protect old buildings older than 50 years
- Challenge is to maintain Yangon's unique character and merge it with the needs in infrastructure and amenities of a modern city
- Aim is to preserve more than single structure such as the secretary's building but maintaining the city's overall character and neighborhoods<sup>16</sup>
- create jobs for people
- Do not displace local communities
- celebrate the city's diversity
- invite international investment
- encourage tourism
- test new models of public private partnerships<sup>17</sup>

Although the aims of YHT seem noble and thoughtful, it was the impression of the author that the organisation and its aims need to be taken with caution. On the one hand the structure of the organisation is based around its founder, Thant Myint U, and therefore gives the impression of the Trust being critically one-person centred. On the other hand, the organisation is a registered national NGO (non-governmental organisation) and claims to meet all necessary requirements of international NGOs. However, according to an interview with the trust's vice president Daw Moe Lwin there are certain structural lacks. First of all, there is a lack of transparency in regard to the organisational and financial structure of this organisation. There is no certain number of members to start with. When asked about the funding of the NGO there was no precise information given. There are international governmental and private stakeholders that fund on a project or campaign base. Also, it is worth to notice that the YHT resides in one of the most prestigious and expensive office buildings in downtown Yangon. Hence,

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<sup>16</sup> The first three objectives are extracted from an article from March 2012: <http://www.mmtimes.com/2012/news/619/news61901.html>

<sup>17</sup> The last six aims are extracted from an article in June 2012: <http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/5789>

the lack of transparency in funding results in an lack of transparency of its private, national and international stakeholders' goals to the public.

This is important in relation to the YHT's vast publicity. Because the YHT receives a lot of publicity in local and international press<sup>18</sup>, it can be stated that the YHT dominates press releases in regard to Urban Heritage in Yangon. Consequently, the YHT has got enormous influence through its publicity on the local heritage real estate market. In conclusion the lack of transparency in funding in connection with the Trust's publicity reveals a critical disparity.

A discussion of the aims and objectives during one of the think sessions with PHD candidates of Yangon University and local residents has exposed that some of the objectives are but yet empty words. For instance, the wish not to displace local communities needs to be set in context with processes, such as gentrification that can follow any kind of upgrading. Moreover, the aim of creating new jobs lacks a notion of sustainability because first, there will be jobs created in construction anyways. Secondly, there will be meagre years following years of boom, to name only two points of critical reflection.

Talking about actors in the field of heritage conservation, one needs to mention the University of Cologne which accompanies the urban development of Yangon scientifically and enables international awareness and exchange. In December 2012 Cologne University organized a forum of 23 South East Asian and German experts who were concerned among other themes with heritage in Yangon. The forum offered space for international dialogue and presented examples and experiences from South East Asia and local examples concerning heritage. The presentations and discussions have underlined the importance of sustainability in terms of the role of Urban Heritage in regard to urban sustainability as well as the sustainability of heritage related projects themselves. Furthermore, the forum highlighted the necessity of intangible heritage protection in order spread awareness for human centred approaches. Parts of this thesis have already been presented and discussed at this occasion on December 6 2012 in Yangon. Still, there is great demand for discussion of critical developments in terms of tourism and commodification of heritage.

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<sup>18</sup> A quick research via google searching for "Heritage in Yangon" reveals the dominant publicity of the YHT.

## 4. Methodology

### General Methodology

Empirical social research can basically be divided into two general approaches. On the one hand, there is the critical rationalism which tries to generate hypotheses from which conclusions can be drawn in a logical deductive way. On the other hand, there is the hermeneutical approach which is drawn from the social constructivism school of thinking. In order to find out which approach is appropriate for one's thesis it is necessary to ask oneself what can knowledge be generated by certain methods (erkenntnistheoretische Reflexion) and what criteria and standards are normative for a method (methodologische Reflexion) (GEBHARDT et al. 2007: 84). Because the impact of transition on the Theingyi Zay must be seen as indicators and reasons in its complexity, this thesis relies on quantitative methods (mapping and evaluation) as well as qualitative methods (interviews and mental maps). Nevertheless, the focus lays on the constructivism approach because "Die äußere Realität ist uns sensorisch und kognitiv unzugänglich" (GEBHARDT et al. 2007 nach Siebert: 85) and thus needs to be withdrawn by means of introspection (MAYRING 2002: 31) and the outrospection through conducting interviews (and depicted by means of graphical visualization). The chosen overall structure of this thesis includes three analytical steps as to be seen in figure 1.

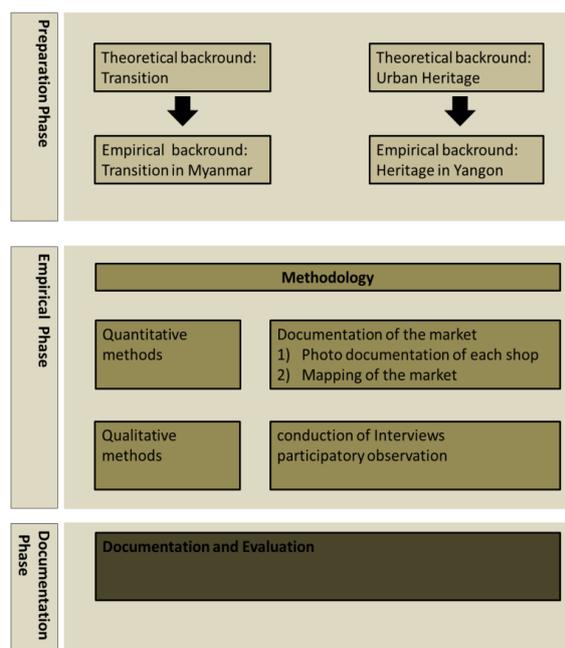


Figure 2: methodological conception (composition based on Selbach / Meyer, Kruker u Rauh 2005: 45f)

The first step can be seen as a preparation phase which concentrated mostly on appropriate literature for the theoretical foundation of this thesis. Also the author had a first examination of the 2005 data which consists of a fairly detailed data base, a commodity group map and 30 shop profiles which have been written by Myanmar students. It needs to be said that it was impossible for the author to judge on any of the data at this stage of the thesis because the relevance could not be approved or disapproved yet. Nevertheless, the author decided that the 2005 map can serve as a solid foundation for the 2012 mapping and that the 2005 questions can serve as a pool for interview questions, as well.

#### *Empirical Phase: Quantitative methods*

The empirical background has shown that Myanmar meets certain characteristics of transition countries. The empirical phase hence aims to detect these features at Theingyi Zay in Yangon to answer the central question of this study about the impact of transition on the market.

During the empirical phase multiple methods are used which can be grouped into quantitative and qualitative methods. In order to develop a comprehensible methodology for approaching the development the method of mapping seems to be suitable. Mapping the market is the initial step in a series of tools to approach the theme of the thesis. The visualization of the states of Theingyi Zay in 2005 and 2012 lays foundation for comparison and identification of changes. Mapping as tool helps to visualize characteristics and changes with the help of generalized categories. In a second step changes can be analysed, grouped and hierarchized. Qualitative interviews support the identified in a third step. However, one needs to bear in mind that a map approaches reality on a cognitive level to construct a model of the reality (HAKE et al. 2002: 379).

The market is mapped on the information base of an unpublished collaboratively conducted study from 2005 by students of the Geography departments Universities of Cologne/Germany and Yangon/Myanmar. In order to guarantee comparability the 2005 data base has been adapted to 2012 categorical standards. Coherent categorical standards are crucial because maps rely on coding of sematic information (HAKE et al.

2002: 379). The result is a thematic map oriented at the definition of a map established by the International Cartographic Association<sup>19</sup>. In regard to the analysis of information the process of analysing maps needs to be understood.

Every image, as does a map, serves as a primary source of information which has a descriptive function and is processed cognitively to a mental map. It serves for generating, confirming and correcting of information. Furthermore, it assists through analysis generating secondary data and can hence be regarded as heuristic tool in a scientific process. According to HAKE et al, this accounts especially for using more than one map at a time (HAKE et al. 2002: 382). Therefore, the methodological approach chosen in this study allows a quantitative and qualitative analysis. Quantitatively the generated maps provide an overview about the number of shops in 2005 and 2012. With the help of statistical tools, such as a from-to-matrix, one can express all changes numerically in a detailed way. By following this analytical way the space time nexus is considered. In respect to practical difficulties it has to be pointed out that all numerical evidence drawn from mapping is vulnerable to categorical misinterpretations. For instance, one shop may offer spices and vegetable. In this case it is rather impossible to identify the dominant product group of the shop and an educated guess is all that can be relied on. Moreover, due to language shortcomings certain products cannot be assigned definitely. It is often not possible to identify products of category 3 (chemicals, flavours, oil) according to their packing and the language barrier prohibits from asking about the contents. Thus, assignments of shops to categories certainly account to a minimal amount to arbitrariness. Nevertheless, the heuristic approach chosen relatives this deficiency by validation through qualitative interviews in order to ensure general trends identified. An exact description and consistence of the categories used in this study and photographs of every shop are given in the appendix (App. 10.7. & 10.10.).

The 2005 material helped a lot with the development of categories because it helped to understand differences of groups. The legend of the map is organized in a hierarchical order. Every main commodity group is given a decade, for instance "Fabrics" is marked with 110. All subcategories of a main commodity group are ordered at the unit position

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<sup>19</sup> „A map is a symbolized image of geographical reality, representing features of characteristics, resulting from the creative effort of its author's execution of choices, and is designed for use when spatial relationships are of primary relevance.“ (HAKE et al 2002: 25 acc. to GRUENREICH 1997)

of the legend. The appendix contains maps of 2005 and 2012 as well as a comparison map (App. 10.4.).

#### *Empirical Phase: Qualitative Methods*

This thesis works with two kinds of qualitative methods which are Interviews and Participatory Observation at the market. The questions for the interviews are based on the 2005 questionnaire which serves as an open and adjustable pool of questions which grad flexibility. They aim to cover the three general themes of the thesis:

- (1) to depict the status quo (economic and social dimension)
- (2) to identify indicators and reasons for changes at the market
- (3) to generate information about possible future developments

The latter method provides information based on participatory observation. For instance, some religious or ethnical features of the market sellers can be concluded from their appearance because most backgrounds provide certain visual characteristics (e.g. red coloured beards for male Sunnah Muslims). Such differences in appearance evoke interest in social coherence or the atmosphere in the market in general which can only be further examined through specified questions. This example already highlights the appropriateness of working qualitative empirically since this methodology provides the necessary flexibility to adapt to specific situations even spontaneously when needed. To support the purely verbally conducted interviews and shop profiles the author asked vendors to create a mental map of their commodity's flow. Examples of these maps can be found in chapter 5.4. and the appendix (App. 10.11.).

During the Documentation Phase all information were processed and evaluated. Although the main evaluation of the empirical data and experiences was done after the empirical phase, some evaluation took place continuously. The character of this thesis demanded constant adaptation to certain circumstances and findings. However, the main processing and evaluation was done after the empirical phase. First, the maps were created with the help of a cartography professional as foundation for any comparison analysis. Secondly, the interviews and mental maps were evaluated. The interviews were transcribed while in Myanmar with the regular Windows Media Player (no alternatives) and as with the program F4 as soon as it could be downloaded back in

Germany. Moreover, the author used the program MaxQDA to sort and evaluate the qualitative data.

### *Limits of methodology*

It has been pointed out above that the field of interest consists of variety of cultural environments and serves as a forum of economic and social exchange. Furthermore, the empirical background displays the vibrant and volatile framework for the market. This complexity cannot be depicted in every detail by the described methodology because it is simply too complex to achieve a 100% comprehensiveness.

Especially in regard to the empirical work and specific state and official related information the author wants to highlight the pioneer character of this work. Language barriers might have led to misunderstandings while the volatile political framework combined with a lack of official primary data led to a lack of information itself. Therefore, the empirical work cannot provide secure numbers but trends.

The qualitative database of this thesis consists of six interviews with market vendors, interviews with the general managers of A, B, and C Block, seven informal talks and 30 shop profiles from 2005. This might seem little for a total number of 1156 shops but the aim of the field work was to display issues and developments in order to draw a comprehensive picture. For this goal, the information base seems sufficient.

It needs to be borne in mind that the quantitative methods created a map which can never be more than a model as well as the qualitative methods which underlie innate human processes like misunderstandings and misinterpretations because of cultural and cognitive exhaustiveness. However, critical reflexions soon provided an idea to minimize interpretation failures through organized dialogues.

### *Reaction to the limits of methodology – Think Sessions*

Soon during the conduction of interviews and generating the first data the feeling arose that western centered socialization influenced the perception of information. As a reaction to that phenomenon the author invited PHD candidates of the University of Yangon as well as other students or interested people to my accommodation to have think sessions that introduced me to Burmese centered thinking and explain local

traditions and habits. Thus, the author was able to gain more than local topographic knowledge.

The procedure of these sessions included a three step method suggested by RICHARDS 2005. In the first step one discusses the *conditions* under which data and information have been generated. In this phase we tried to get clear on terms and concepts so that all talk about the same things. Then one tries to identify *consequences* of these ideas and attitudes in a second step. Thirdly, one wants to reflect whether conditions and consequences represent a strategy which the whole interaction, the interview underlies (RICHARDS 2005: 72). For example, we discussed deeply the terms “good business” and “bad business”. First, we tried to figure out what does “bad business” mean for one individually. So we came up with different possibilities such as a real or a relative perspective of the interviewed person. Secondly, we reflected on the circumstances in which the interview partner was asked because Myanmar does not provide a social net and hence we talked about coping strategies when business is really bad – social network, family, friends, support by one’s religious group, etc.

In the end, this method is a great help to reflect the genesis of one’s own information in order to critically approach one’s own Eurocentric perspective. Second aim of these think sessions was to discuss findings in general. On the hand we discussed key findings and on the other hand we thought through future development alternatives of Theingyi Zay and aimed to include public/private, social/economic and ecological points of view.



Photo 1 & photo 2: discussion during the think sessions (Christian Guenther 2012)

Finally, the author points out that the Structure of chapter five is result of parallel thinking processes with Hlaing Maw Oo of the DHSHD/Myanmar and Prof. Dr. Frauke Kraas of the University of Cologne/Germany.

## 5. The Theingyi Zay

The complex of buildings called Theingyi Zay consists actually of five buildings (A, B, C, D, and E-Block) and is located in the western downtown area of Yangon. As you can see in the location reference map of M1 (App. 10.4.) the objectives of this study, the market buildings which are referred to as A and B Block, are situated between Maha Bandoola Street in the South and Anawratha Street in the North. The A Block is between Kon Zay Dan Street in the East and 26<sup>th</sup> street in the West whereas the B Block is framed by the 26<sup>th</sup> street in the East and 25<sup>th</sup> street in the West. Both buildings belong to the administrative unit of Pabedan Township. Whereas the downtown area can be regarded as grouped into (homogenous) ethnical and religious groups the Theingyi Zay hosts these groups and grants space for heterogeneity. The author presents the market in this chapter from six different perspectives in order to introduce the market to the study. This deep introduction is necessary since it provides important background information only which enable to understand impacts of transition at the market.

### 5.1. The Historical dimension: overview of the market embedded in the historical context of Yangon

As it has been shown in the theoretical part, the object of interest should always be analysed in the context of its own history. Here, the object is the market's functions as stages of the current daily life. Thus, the historical perspective of the people's life whose stage is being analysed should not be left out.

The history of the city of Yangon dates back over 2500 years. However, this study leaves most of it unattended and concentrates on the history beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century because the history of the market as the history of Yangon is closely related to the colonization of the country by the British. In the course of the British conquering northern Myanmar and Mon State during the first Anglo Burmese War (1824-26) the British encouraged the Indian Surati people to come along to Myanmar. The British sponsored especially those groups supporting the monopolization of the major roads and sources of the country and sponsored the establishment of a Surati market in Mawlamyaing (Mon State) in 1826. This market flourished and soon Surati people as well as the British searched for ways to expand business to the, at this time, yet

uncontrolled territories in Myanmar's main capital regions. As soon as British troops conquered Hantawati Region, Okalapa Region and Yangon to colonize all of lower Myanmar, the Surati Bazaar Company approached Yangon to expand their business.

On the premises of the Thein Taw Gyi monastery with the permission of the monks operated a native run market under the leadership of U Kauh and Daw Mea which was called Theingyi Zay. This market consisted of simple huts but was a flourishing market still (MYINT, KHIN, AUNG 2006: 175). This market attracted the Surati Bazaar Company which bought the premises from the British Authority which held estate rights after the Second Anglo Burmese War (1852-53) paying between eight pe (0.8 Pya) and nine Pya (100Pya = 1kyat) for each square foot at a total of 6.26 acres. The native shop owners were compensated with a total of 750kyats to give place to the Surati Brother's Bazaar. In 1854 the initial stage buildings of the markets were replaced by bamboo structures with thatch roofs and the market's name was changed to Surati Bazaar. However, after fires in 1855 and in 1857 measures needed to be taken and the authorities decided to let the Surati Brother Company construct three proper buildings, the A, B and C Block (according to SP7 also D Block), with a clock tower at B Block as a landmark.<sup>20</sup> The city's population increased rapidly (1886: 46,000, 1860 > 60.000, 1931 > 1.000.000) so that not only the size of the city increased but the infrastructure was expanded as gateway to the resource-rich hinterland in the nineteenth century, as well (RIVET 1996: 94, KRAAS, et al 2010: 27). In 1868 D and E Block were built as extension of the market for fruits and groceries (MYINT, KHIN, AUNG 2006: 175).

Because of natural disasters, the impracticality to rebuild the city during the Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852-1853) and the fact that all property had belonged to the Burmese government/royalty before the war, the British were able to restructure Yangon as they wished. Priority had the function as main port city for trade in Myanmar embedded in the port city structure of the British Empire as well as the flood protection to secure investments. The plan for the colonial city by Dr William Montgomerie was realized by Lieutenant Alexander Fraser and still characterizes the downtown area through a check board grid (RIVET 1996: 88). The grid consists of broad 160-foot (49m) boulevards west to east, broad 100-foot (30m) north to south, alternating with 2 x 2

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<sup>20</sup> The part of the thesis displays another difficulty – contradictory clues about the history. Most of the information are taken from an official note on the history of the market and amended by personal talks and shop profiles, which however contradict each other. For example, SP 25 states that clock tower at C Block was destroyed in World War 2.

narrow 30-foot (9.1m) wide streets and one medium 50-foot (15m) wide street (presentation KODITEK ForUm 2012). Surati Bazaar was then included in the grid at its current position.

The following history of the market can only be reconstructed in fragments because of a lack of or non-accessibility of data. However, various persons pointed out that Theingyi Zay had been one of four major markets in Myanmar. The next records of the market show that the current A building was built in 1905 and the current B building was constructed in 1938 whereas it still includes the traditional clock tower. It seems likely that the modernization of the buildings especially the A Block was necessary due to hygienic reasons since the sanitation conditions of the whole downtown area are recorded as highly insufficient in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century because of massive population pressure (RIVET 1996: 97).

The population development was result of an increased economic importance of Yangon. As main harbour most of all natural resources such as teak and rice were handled in Yangon which gained even more importance after the annexation of upper Burma in 1885 and the railway connection in the 1880s. A lot of the increase of population was due to international and national migration. People from China but most of all Indians moved to Yangon under the protection of the British who installed Indians in administrations conducting their divide and rule policy. Also migration movements from inner Burma boosted the population development of Yangon. The origin of the different groups can still be seen in the ethnical segregation of the city today because Yangon accommodates an Indian, Chinese and Burmese quarters (KRAAS et al 2010: 26f). The economic boost of Yangon was a result of increased rice, timber and gems exports as well as the systematic reclamation of the Irrawaddy Delta for agricultural use and the annexation of Upper Burma (KRAAS et al 2010: 27).



Photo 3: Damages Rangoon WW2, Theingyi Zay is marked as hit; Source: <http://www.40thbombgroup.org/images/Poole/Rangoon.jpg>. 2012-10-21

Towards the end of the Second World War the Burmese took British side against the Japanese in order to strengthen their position in negotiations about independence after the war. This led to Japanese bombings of the downtown area of Yangon and severe damages of the market buildings had been recorded. The C building was completely destroyed whereas the other buildings could be saved. The C building was reconstructed by Colonel Aung Gyi in the 1960s (App. SP 8).

Independence led to a general burmanization of the society. As Indians had been supported and privileged by the British authorities a large number of Indians were forced to leave Yangon and Myanmar. Furthermore, The Burmese distanced themselves from the colonial past by changing former British street names and landmarks into Burmese names. This also happened to the Surati Bazaar which was renamed to its pre-colonial/Indian name "Theingyi Zay"<sup>21</sup> after the independence in 1948. In 1949 the shop-boxes of the B building were renovated and the market was reopened in 1952/53 (App. SP 8).

Unfortunately the author was unable to find any official records of the time until 1990. It seems likely that during the strict socialist period records of such kind were unappreciated by official sides. Nevertheless, it has been pointed out to the author by various informal sources that Theingyi Zay had been a centre of informal trade as well as supportive ground for political movements in the 1980s and 2000s.

<sup>21</sup> The etymological approach reveals the markets connection to the monastery because he name Theingyi Zay means translated: Thein= Monastery's ordinaries\* hall, Gyi = big, Zay=Market → Monasteries big market

In 2005 the market achieved its founding centenary although the history of this site and its function as space of trade dates back at least fifty years longer. For the celebration the market received renovation for approximately 6.000.000 kyats by the YCDC market committee in 2004/05 (SP 8: 4).

When the cyclone Nargis hit lower Myanmar during the monsoon season 2008 the Theingyi Zay suffered severe damages as did most buildings in the downtown area. In order to repair especially the roof every vendor had to contribute 10.000 kyats to the YCDC to cover the expenses (A 317).

## 5.2. The institutional dimension of the market

During British rule and until 1958 Yangon was administrated by the municipal board which was then changed into the Municipal Committee until this committee was transferred into the Yangon City Development Committee according to the State Law and Order Restoration Council's Law No. (11/90) in 1990. The Yangon City Development Committee classifies all 160 markets of Yangon as either A, B, C and D markets according to their size and importance. Theingyi Zay (A and B Block) is operated as one of Yangon's ten Rank A markets under the leadership of the YCDC market's committee.

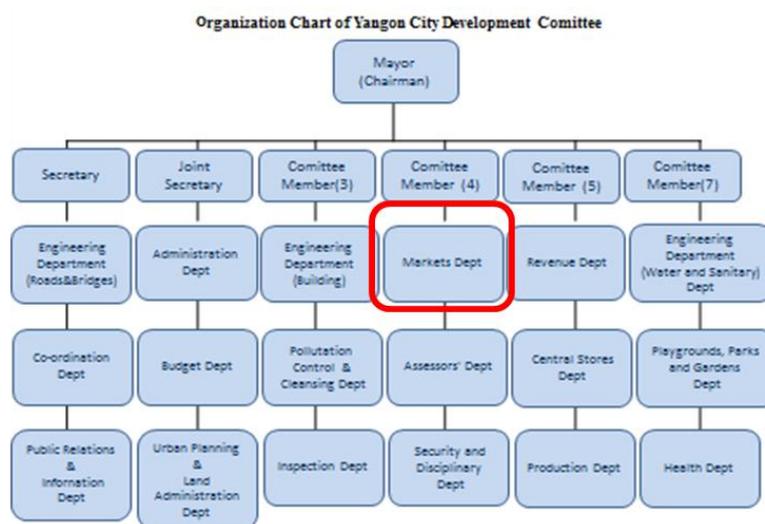
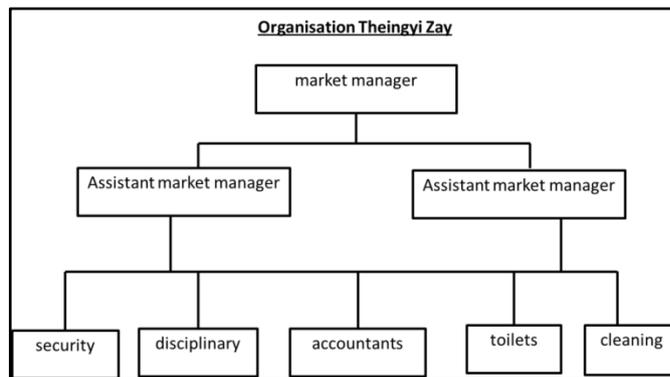


Figure 3: Organization of YCDC, Source: Yangon City Development Committee

There is one general manager for A and B Block who controls two assistant managers for A and B Block each. As it can be seen in chart 1, the market organisation can be divided into five categories with own staff each. Each Block has got own workers for the fields of Security, Disciplinary, Accounting, Toilets and Cleaning. It has been stated that there is a strict hierarchy within this organisation.



**Figure 4: Organization of the Theingyi Zay; Source: YCDC market department**

The market is open six and a half days every week Monday till Saturday from 6 o'clock a.m. to 5:30 o'clock p.m. and Sunday from 6 o'clock till 1 o'clock p.m. This weekly routine underlies the Burmese national holidays on which the market is closed. Only for the two weeks of water festival in April the seller's holiday differs because they take five days off instead of two weeks. In addition to that several shops close on days of their personal choice, for instance at the Ramadan finishing day for the Muslims.

There are two operating modes at the market. One is the ownership model. The shop has either been bought off the YCDC or previous municipalities which administrated the market or the shops are privately sold with permission of the administration. Rates for one shop in recent years have been around 500.000 – 700.000 kyats for a 5X5 feet shop and respectively higher for larger shops. The owners of the shops pay monthly taxes, electricity and telephone bills according to their usage. The second is a rent model where shops are rented by the YCDC. Currently the rents at the market are quite low at Theingyi Zay. Shops cost between 2700 kyats 5400kyats per month plus running costs. Prices for both modes are under the control of the YCDC

The performance of the management is seen quite differently among the sellers. There are those who point out a severe lack of management in terms of hygiene, security and administration.

'I really dislike the part of the manager, officer. They are the leader must be changed if possible. They must really work for ours (us) and this market.' (FI 5)

According to them the combination of poor management and the old fashioned constructional state do not allow a 21<sup>st</sup> century worth efficient economic performance because the lanes are too narrow and dirty. The dirt gains a loss of attractiveness and the narrow lanes are even more constricted through goods stored in the lanes because the rules are not enforced which would prohibit that. Beyond that, street vendors are not allowed to sell on 26<sup>th</sup> street during market hours. This prohibition is also not enforced. This leads to an overcrowded street that disabled market vendors from being supplied and delivering their goods. This logistical problem is even more enhanced through a lack of parking spaces in the area. Nevertheless, other vendors claimed during the interviews that there is no need for improvement.

### **5.3. The architectural dimension of the market**

#### *A Block*

The 1905 A Block building is 152,4m long and 33.5 meters wide and builds up a total of 5111 square meters. Currently, it accommodates 650 shops whereas it has to be noticed that not all shops are in single use but in 91 cases in combined usage. The market grid (App. M1) shows 5 main rows in North South and 19 rows in East West direction. The width of the rows cannot be measured properly because the market sellers often store their goods in front of their shops and narrow them to different degrees. However, it officially differs from a short meter to two meters in the middle North South row.

This Block does not tangle Maha Bandoola Street in the South directly because there is the Thein Taw Gyi monastery. This attachment is a result of Theingyi Zay's history and its above mentioned former connection to the market. Nowadays the A Block building is partly housing an YCDC township office in the South Eastern corner of the hall. The office building built in the year 2002 has got 5 storages and lead to the replacement of

16 traditional shop constructions by metal boxes. The shops assemble a variety of constructional modes and range in size from 5X5 feet over 7x5feet to 10x5feet. The main form of shop is the teak wood box construction. These light occa colored boxes serve purposes from storage units to wholesale shop or allow the displaying of goods for retail purposes in the arena style.

In 91 cases boxes or stalls have been combined enlarge the size of the shops for different purposes. So one can find combinations, such as two boxes with a single open side, two boxes combined storage and selling function, one box and an open display arrangement as well as two combined units with single open display function. Another form of shop is the open display form. It can mostly be found in the northern wet market section of the market where sellers display meat, vegetables or fish. Also some of the traditional medicine shops use the open display form. As the combined shops already show, there is a demand for larger units in the market. Due to the high ceiling / roof construction plenty of shops enlarge their storage capacities by setting up extra boxes on top of their box stalls. The statuses of the shops differ enormously. While some shops have upgraded their shops through investing in tiles, glass cupboards, modern scales and registers, as well as rather modern design, other shops kept the traditional outline.

#### *B Block*

The B block building tangles Mahabandoola Street in the South, is 137.2 m long and 33.5 m wide and adds up to 4596 square meters. The grid of shops inside is laid up by five North South and 20 East West lanes whereby the middle lanes are wider than the other lanes. At the South End the building includes an office unit for the general manager of A and B block on the first floor which can be reached via a flight of stairs in the South East corner of the market hall. This building was built in 1938 and accommodates 506 shops. All shops have a unitary design of dark wooden boxes which are all set up in sets of four and have the size of 5X5 feet.

#### *A and B Block*

The roofs of both buildings are carried by teak wood constructions. They suffered severe damages during Nargis in 2008 and have been repaired and modernized by common financial effort of the market sellers. However, there are still minor holes that allow water intrusion especially during strong monsoon rains. The floors of both

buildings are made of concrete and have some kind of drainage sewage system. The electricity provision and telephone lines are based on old and often insufficiently secured cables. There are frequently power shortages. According to the general manager there have been some investments in safety issues especially in fire safety lately.



Photo 4: upper left: Theingyi Zay B Block outside view; upper right: integrated YCDC office building in A Block building; lower left: Inside view Theingyi Zay B Block; lower right: roofs of A and B Block buildings (Christian Guenther 2012)

#### 5.4. The economic dimension of the market

The economic dimension as well as the social should be seen as a process because they underlie constant changes. However due to analytical reasons this chapter tries to exclude processes and developments, their indicators and their reasons to avoid redundancies in the analytical part. Thus, this chapter and the next chapter should be seen as foundation for the analytical part, which complements the understanding of the economic and social dimension by including developments, their indicators and their reasons.

#### 5.4.1. Spatial-functional differentiation of the market

As illustrated in M1 (App. M1) the major commodity groups in the A building can be differentiated into a food and a non-food sector whereupon the food sector can be divided into a wet and a dry sector. The wet sector includes according to M1 Meat, Vegetables and Fish, which have their main market hours in the early morning and a lot of customers come on a daily base (Interview A121). The dry sector of the food related commodities consist of the categories as in M1 Dry Goods, Traditional Medicines and Fast Food. The non-food sector comprises the Commodity groups Chemicals, Dye and Paint, Warehouse, Others, and Fishery Equipment. A few textile-related shops can also be found which sell clothes and rolled thread. Within all commodity groups there are shops that specify on wholesale and retail or combine both. Currently there are 24 shops closed. M1 shows the distribution of these commodities and one can identify a northern food related, a southern non-food related section. Moreover, there is a clustering of meat and vegetable shops in the north western part, dry- goods in two north-eastern areas, chemicals in the eastern middle part, and a strong fishery equipment cluster in the southern part of this hall according to M1.

In the B Block commodities are mainly textile related including traditional clothes like longyis for men and women and modern shirts and pants for both genders. Moreover, the categories Fabrics, Cosmetic Goods, Slippers, Rolled Thread, Paper and Stationary are mainly located in the B Block. Rather exceptional are eight shops which sell fishery equipment while 16 shops are listed as closed. Other than in A Block one cannot distinguish certain sectors or clusters within the Block. There is rather an even distribution of shops of the main commodity groups (M1).

There are no exact dates, just general information through informal talks and shop profiles about the commodity distribution set up in former times. However, it had been pointed out that the A building originally was reserved for food related products, earlier even exclusively for fruits, vegetable and meat. The B building originally held iron and hardware, clothing and marine products (SP 25). Later, assumingly due to changes of C, D, and E Block, products restrictions were loosened and the A building was divided into a wet and dry sector. As M1 reveals, nowadays there do not seem to be any strict restrictions within the A building because one can find a shop of category 10 within the traditional dry market sector. The B block mainly kept its traditional distribution of goods.

### 5.4.2. The economic role of Theingyi Zay in a regional context

In order to describe the economic role of Theingyi Zay it needs to be pointed out that this market comprises wholesale and retail vendors as well as vendors who do both. Whereas retail can rather be regarded as a local phenomenon (exception: village representatives who buy for the whole village), wholesale is further embedded in the local, regional, national, even international context as it can be seen in examples of the conducted commodity flow mental maps in figure 2. Historically, there has been a shift from international business to national business in 1968 and re-internationalization of business in 1988 after the introduction of the market economy system (SP 10).

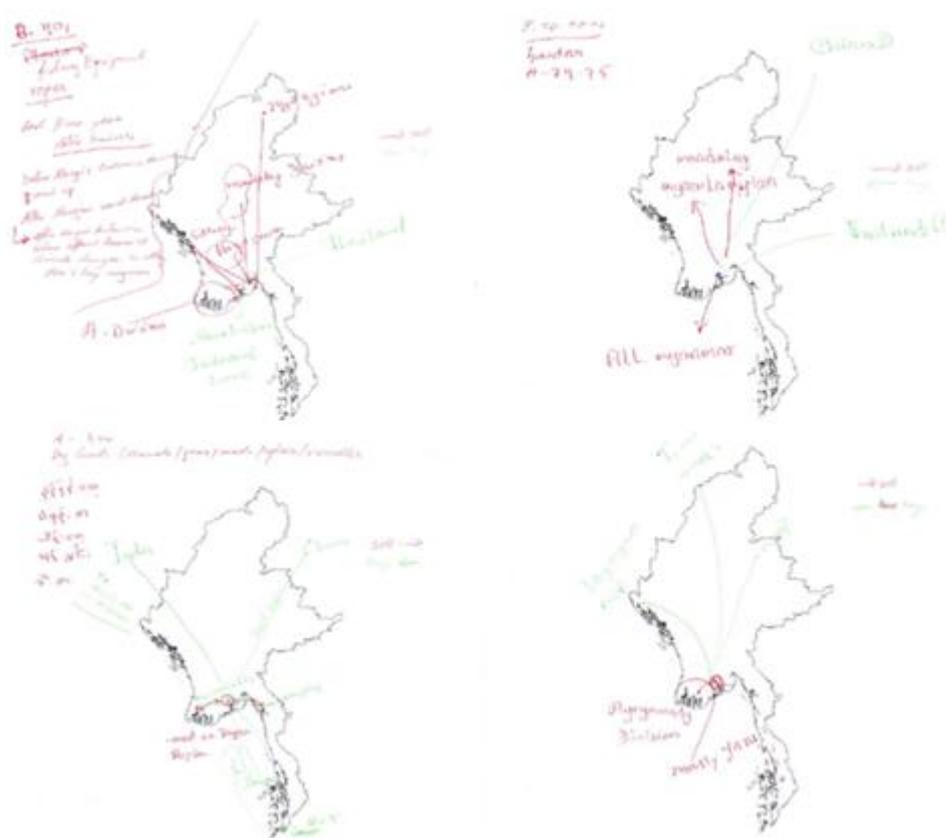


Figure 5: Commodity Flow mental maps, conducted in September 2012 (App. 10.6.)

For instance, Theingyi Zay serves as a major distribution center for Fishery Equipment for Myanmar. Shop keeper buy goods from China, Thailand, Myanmar, but also Europe via trading companies at the borders or in Yangon and sell them in the majority to customers in the rural areas of Myanmar (SP 5).

Theingyi Zay is also described as major hub for textile trade in Myanmar. Raw materials are bought from China and either first processed to goods like garments or immediately resold as raw fabrics to villages or other customers. Myanmar's main textile related industry location is Yangon where there are the largest amounts of factories and workforce. Following extract of an interview and a shop profile of a textile seller at Theingyi Zay B Block highlight the connection of Theingyi Zay with the rural areas.

*"Who do you sell to, the county side or the Yangon people?  
Country side, so many country side come."* (B338)

B Block is one of Myanmar's main distribution centers of textiles, which are produced in the Yangon region but sold to various places (SP 25)

Theingyi Zay is furthermore an important wholesale center for local Yangon businesses. This can be easily exemplified through the food sector as for instance brokers buy livestock from the villages, sell it to slaughterhouses or immediately to vendors at markets such as the Theingyi Zay. From here the goods are either sold as retail product to private customers or as wholesale products to restaurants. Even Yangon's high class hotels currently get their meat supply from Theingyi Zay (A121).

The local communities use the market in its traditional function and generate their private supply from it. Mostly the early market hours are busy with local people who buy their daily or weekly supply of fresh food. Assumingly, this is due to a lack of refrigerator units in many private homes. It will be interesting to see how an improved standard of living would impact the customer's behaviour at the market in future.

## **5.5. The social dimension of the market**

Following chapter presents besides the spatial religious embedding the different social groups of the market.

### **5.5.1. Religious embedding**

As M4 (App. 10.4.) reveals Theingyi Zay is surrounded by a variety of pagodas, mosques, Chinese and Hindu Temples which host various religious groups. In immediate

connection to the market, there is the Theindawgyi monastery which hosts more than 100 monks and is one of the Buddhist centres in the downtown area. The Buddhist community is embedded in the market's yearly routine as most market sellers participate in traditional Buddhist festivals and donations to various receivers during each year. Remarkably not only Buddhists participate in activities initiated by the Buddhist community.

To name a few, each year on the full moon day in July, the Thadingyou festival in October, the Tazaungdang festival in November, and the Thingyan festivals are celebrated (more or less) by the market vendors. During the Thingyan festival the market sellers have a common day of cleaning and repairing the market building and individual booths. This social gathering reveals the family character of the market (B387, B382). Other festivals serve for donation ceremonies or excursions which happen trans-religiously (B357) and inter-ethnically (B382). The sellers collect and donate money for different purposes, such as pagodas (Kyakthitiyo Pagoda, Shwedagon Pagoda, or Theindawgyi) (SP 4:1), orphanages, temples or mosques.

The religious embeddedness can also be seen through looking at social practices at the market. For instance, there is no pork being sold within the market buildings but on 26<sup>th</sup> street. Furthermore, all meat has to be halal in respect to the Muslim community. However, beef is traded although Hindu's engage at the market.



Map 4: Religious buildings surrounding Theingyi Zay

In conclusion, one can argue the market provides a fairly open environment for different religions. Religion itself is not a primary attribute of the market sellers. It can be assumed that people at the market see each other's further characteristics first or don't seem to regard religion as the most important attribute. The market serves the function of providing room for meeting, confrontation and dialogue which helps to reduce stereotypical thinking in regard to religion. Thus, the market is a melting pot of various religions which can be found in downtown Yangon.

### 5.5.2. Social groups

Watching the vibrant life at Theingyi Zay is fascinating because a brief observation already reveals the great variety of people which set up the seller and customer clientele groups at the market. Different ethnicities, sexes, ages as well as socio

economic statuses are attracted to Theingyi Zay because as one interview partner describes it: 'Theingyi Zay has everything you need' and thus there is supply for every demand. Furthermore, Theingyi Zay offers wholesale and retail commodities which range in quality and price enormously from serving the financial abilities of the poorest and the demands of the richest.

Beyond this general statement, informal talks, observations and interviews draw a more detailed picture of the social groups of people who come to or work at the market. In regard to daily retail clientele an informal talk with a group of fishery equipment sellers (conducted 28.12.2012) revealed that the market serves rich, middle class and lower class people although they make clear that the high class clientele is the minority of this group. Other informal talks underline this statement as Theingyi Zay is identified to serve the needs of middle class and lower class people more than the high class people. This also accounts true for wholesale customers. Wholesale customers comprise of two different groups. First, there are shop owners in Yangon or villages who specify on certain goods, such as cosmetics or Longyis and need supply for their shops only. Besides, all kinds of street food stalls, food shops, low class and high class restaurants as well as major hotels receive their supply of Theingyi Zay.

Secondly, there are representatives of villages who travel to Theingyi Zay with a list of commodities to buy for other families and individuals in their village and enjoy the compromised variety of goods at Theingyi Zay. They buy goods from raw fabrics for festivals (weddings, etc.), ropes and nets for their fishing boats, raw ingredients for traditional medicines and nutrients they cannot find in their villages. Although they serve the function of a broker, they do not necessarily get paid for that (IT, 28.12.2012). The practise of including of a broker mirrors the socio economic gradient of the catchment area because it can be assumed that the representatives are not only sent due to practical reasons but because it is cheaper to cover the travel expenses of one person only.

A short passage of an interview exposes another detail especially of the A Block, the three main ethnical groups at Theingyi Zay:

*"Who are your most clients (ethnic groups, men, women, shop owners)?*

Especially Hindu and Muslim.

*So the Hindu buy cow?*

No No No, to supply to other restaurant. And Chinese. And especially women.” (A121)

As the whole market’s former name was Surati Bazaar, there is still a great Indian ethnical legacy within Theingyi Zay. The Indian community (of Yangon) consists mainly of Tamils who live there in the third generation but tender their cultural heritage and identity. The Muslim group of the Indians is bigger than the Hindu group and consists of more Sunnahs than Shias (IT, 28.12.2012).

Within the textile related businesses at the B-Block it would be generally true to state by simple observation that sellers of Chinese origin predominate. In this context one should see the growing dominance of Chinese origin products in opposition to domestic textiles (IT 21.12.2012). Chinese raw fabrics are imported to Myanmar and processed to garments, blankets, pillowcases, mosquito nets, etc. in the area of Yangon as it is the major textile industry location in Myanmar. Moreover, the spatial near to Latha<sup>22</sup> township gives another reason for the influence of the Chinese community in Theingyi Zay B Block.

Burmese sellers are omnipresent in both buildings and all commodity groups. So, sellers, customers, employees of any ethnical background can be observed at the market. So it can be concluded that there is an ethnical heterogeneity at Theingyi Zay.

*“Is the market attractive also for young people or rather for older people to buy stuff?*

Old, just like older.” (A121)

Age is an important social factor which needs to be taken into consideration when talking about different social groups. As the extract of the interview above shows that Theingyi Zay attracts more elder than younger persons. On first sight one could conclude a lack of attractiveness of the market which certainly accounts true for some young people but is not to be generalized. For this there are several reasons. First, Many young people in Yangon do not live alone but with their families. Doing the daily shopping is not one of their chores but is done by elder people of the household.

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<sup>22</sup> Latha: Burmese word for Chinese

Secondly, many shops aim at wholesale. This business is also taken care of by elder, more experienced people on purpose. So there is no need for young people to come. However, on second sight the products and their arrangements seem not to attract young retail customers, other than customers of the food sector. Since most shops aim at wholesale, young retail customers are not their target group. This explains why this interview partner really actually sees less young than older people.

## 5.6. The atmosphere

Including the above mentioned factors, the constructional and functional states of the market halls create a unique atmosphere in both blocks. This atmosphere is highly perceptible by all kinds of senses. The eye catches the dark but vivid life in the narrow lanes while one can smell the dust of years next to the scent of traditional medicine and flavours. In A Block, the wet market section hosts a hectic life including the butchering and processing of chicken and other animals in traditional ways. In B Block carriers handle large bundles of textiles through the lanes and make themselves way by shouting and pushing. So, one cannot stand in one place longer than a few seconds without being in the way in most areas of the halls except at the Dry Goods, Chemistry, and Traditional Medicine cluster in the east side of the A Block where the business seems to be handled less hectically. A complete shift of atmosphere can be observed in the renovated part of the market beneath the YCDC township office in the South East corner of A Block. Here, the metal boxes are mainly used for storage purpose, subsequently less vivid life is perceived. During visits at the market with people who have been there before (informal sources), it was soon clear that some shops performed changes which could be easily perceived and influenced the atmosphere (More telephones, glass counters, modern office equipment). Furthermore, the usage of technologies such as telephones and mobile phones seemed to have increased. On the other hand some shops did not change at all. For both phenomena indicators and reasons need to be found. This will be dealt with in detail in chapter eight.

More atmosphere influencing factors are embedded in the social and economic dimensions as the perceptible atmosphere is also a result of human feelings and

attitudes. As following extracts from an interviews and quotes from Shop profiles show, there is a strong and perceptible interpersonal atmosphere, as well.

*“I think it’s a good atmosphere because, you know, the other shop keeper we are so family, we can discuss other things.” A121*

The most frequently used adjective to describe the interpersonal atmosphere at Theingyi Zay between market sellers and their customers as well as among each other is familiar. This familiarity is a result of long grown relationships. Many shop owners inherited their shops from their parents or other relatives and worked in these shops all their lives. This is why the shop owners know each other and their families rather well. Furthermore, seller- customer relationships are also long enduring, as following extract exemplifies.

*“Do you have more regular or more occasional buyers?  
Regular, long term, regular customer” (A59)*

What can be concluded is that the relationships at the market are built on mutual trust and respect. Therefore, there is a strong feeling of connection among the market sellers and the surrounding local communities.

Nevertheless, the familiarity contradicts the so far purely positive description of atmosphere in some cases. One interview partner mentioned that becoming a vendor in the family business sometimes is a result of social pressure and not a result of free individual choice. At least for a few individuals this seems to have an impact on the atmosphere.

Another example reveals the notion of “pride” that should be located in the social dimension.

*“Yes, proud of because of they share their products with the poorer persons, especially with fishermen. So it's a very proud of to be seller in Theingyi Zay” (A59)*

For this vendor being a salesman at Theingyi Zay is a strong social proof. Part of the pride is a feeling of responsibility. Most interview partners feel responsible not only for

their shops but also for the market as a whole. However, one vendor makes it clear: 'Yes, I am responsible. But it is under the command of the manager' (A121).

Beyond that, as pointed out above through the arbitrarily chosen commodity flow maps, Theingyi Zay has got a trans-regional economic importance since commodities are traded nationwide in rural areas, as well. This extract shows that some vendors at Theingyi Zay are aware of the resulting social responsibility as they provide goods to the rather poor rural population of Myanmar. This seller is not only aware but even proud of supplying the marginalized groups of society with goods. However, not only this context contributes to the pride at the market. Other vendors pointed out that they are proud of being sellers at Theingyi Zay because the market is famous and has a good reputation.

One can also assume that the economic performance of the sellers at the market also highly contribute to the atmosphere as the atmosphere depends on the people's mood and grade of satisfaction. The economic performance is closely related to economic issues, such as competition and social issues like the change of the customer's behavior and lifestyle. Developments regarding this context will be covered later when this thesis deals with developments at the market to avoid redundancies.

## **6. Refined analytical framework**

The chapters above have given an introduction to the necessary theoretical and empirical background as well as a detailed overview about the status quo of Theingyi Zay. The theoretical foundation has underlined that it is important to distinguish between different analytical dimensions. Therefore, the analytical part approaches the complexity of the Theingyi Zay by a Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis in an economic and social dimension. Strengths and weaknesses are the result of certain developments which is why this part aims to depict what has changed and why it has changed. In order to do this following questions lead to the analytical framework presented in figure three:

- 1) Which kinds of quantitative developments can be observed from 2005 to 2012 at Theingyi Zay?

- 2) Which kinds of qualitative developments can be observed from 2005 to 2012 at Theingyi Zay
  - a) on an economic level?
  - b) on an social level?
  - ➔ What strengths and weaknesses can be concluded?
- 3) What should be considered in future developments?

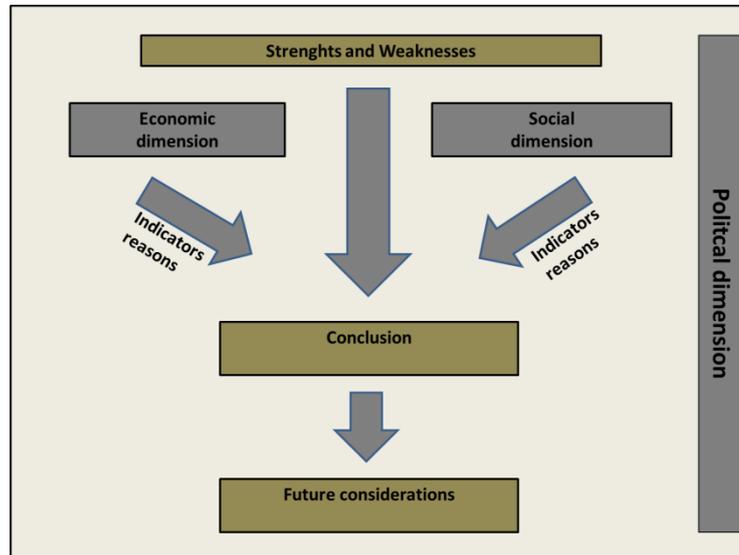


Figure 6: Composition of Analytical Framework

### 6.1. Quantitative findings

The quantitative analysis finds on the comparison of the Theingyi Zay maps from 2005 and 2012 (App. M2 and M1) as well as the comparison map (App. M3) which depicts the changed distribution of shops. A first analysis of M3 reveals that 34% of the shops in A Block and 29 % in B Block changed from 2005 to 2012 in the main categories.

#### *A Block, main groups*

TGZ 2005 (M2) shows a total of 650 shops divided into main 18 categories. The quantitatively largest group belongs to the food sector because of the 650 shops 131 trade dry goods related to food, 81 meat and vegetables and 9 sell fast food. Moreover, the 107 shops in the chemistry category include 79 shops selling chemicals for nutrition purposes. 95 shops sell traditional medicine, 89 fishery equipment and 46 are warehouses and 40 belong to the category of others. There are 15 shops related to textiles. Five shops sell fabrics, another five sell clothes, four sell thread and one sells

longyis. Besides, four shops deal with paper and stationary and two trade cosmetic products. The data of nine shops could not be concluded from the 2005 data.

TGZ 2012 (App. M1) also depicts a total of 650 shops divided into main 18 categories. Of these 650 shops 124 deal with dry goods, 110 with chemicals, 96 with fishery equipment, 91 with traditional medicine and 71 with meat and vegetables. 72 shops function as warehouses and storage units, 17 are classified as others, 14 trade dye and paint and eight shops sell clothes. Five shops trade thread and four deal with fabrics. The database shows that 27 shops are currently closed.

The contrast between the main categories of 2005 and 2012 shows 120 differences which are depicted in M3. The main change is the increase of warehouses by 26 from 2005 to 2012. There are 23 less shops in the dye and paint sector and ten less shops in the meat and vegetable category. More changes in the main category can be seen in table 1.

#### *B Block, main groups*

As tool for a detailed depiction of the data the author has chosen from-to matrices for A and B Block separately which are presented in the appendix. With the help of these matrices one can form pie charts (examples app. Chart 1) to visualize changes from one main category to another. They show developments of shops from and to different commodity groups on the main category level. These charts reveal that there is no certain trend towards or from one certain category to be identified. One could have thought that the transition process in Yangon already had led to developments, such as a substitution of traditional medicine shops with Chinese plastic ware or English medicine. Besides, it could have been expected that there are less traditional clothes, Longyis, dealers in B Block. Yet, there is no such trend to be identified. However, the analysis has shown that there are changes at the market and changes need reasons. Therefore, one can conclude that the Theingyi Zay is dynamic and vibrant.

#### *Clustering*

The spatial distribution of shops is another indicator for the dynamic of Theingyi Zay. According to historical information the distribution of shops at Theingyi Zay relied strictly on the commodity group of a shop. In consequence there had been a strict segregation between wet market and dry market (A Block), food market and textile

market (A and B Block). However, in 2005 this strict segregation was already weakened according to M2 (App. 10.4.) because it pictures 17 shops selling meat in the Southern half of Block A although the Northern half of Block A was originally restricted to wet market products. Moreover, one can find fishery equipment in the Northern half of Block A and a few textile related stalls in Block A, also. This shows that the strict clustering has vanished in favour of a loose clustering which has passed through time. Nowadays, spatial clustering in A Block is visible though not strict. M1 (App. 10.4.) provides the illustration for this claim as dominant commodity groups can be seen in certain parts of the market and M2 (App. 10.4.) proves that this development is continuous since there are less shops in the original cluster areas. Nevertheless, a growth of the fishery equipment cluster can be identified.

#### *A and B Block, subclasses*

The analysis of changes on the subclasses level is an addition to the claim of the quantitative analysis because it does not reveal any certain trends either. On the one hand, the number of shops on the subclasses level in comparison to the main unit is too little, on the other hand the distribution of shops in which shops have changed to or changed from on the subclass level is rather equal. Therefore, one cannot identify certain trends but come to the same conclusion as the analysis on the main category level.

All in all, the comparison of the two maps has displayed two issues. First, the traditional clustering is continuously weakened. This can be rated as an adaptation to a changed environment and external influences. Secondly, there is no certain trend from one commodity group to another but the market can still be seen as a dynamic organism that underlies continuous change. This can be interpreted as proof for the market's vitality because it adapts. Therefore, the following chapter aims to elude on these changes in more detail through displaying strengths and weaknesses of the market by referring to indicators and reasons.

## 6.2. Qualitative findings: Indicators and Reasons of strengths and weaknesses

### *Economic dimension: weaknesses*

There are several indicators for weaknesses in the economic dimension at Theingyi Zay. Indicators and reasons, however, are often not quite distinguishable because an issue, such as less customers at the market can at the same time be rated as a reason or as an indicator. Therefore, reasons will be presented at the end of this section collectively to avoid redundancies. One identified indicator is the earlier eating times of the vendors.

‘Before not like this. In the morning 6:30 you have interval you eat at 2 or 3 o’clock. Now 10 or 10:30 you can eat. Not too many men at the bazaar.’ (A 317)

This passage from an interview with a dry goods vendor shows that some vendors are apparently not as busy at the market as before. This is a strong indicator and demands further investigation. Reasons for this indicator could be either packed customer numbers during the very early market hours or less customers in total. However, since not only this interview partner has claimed less customers to be the reason, this can be seen as an important reason why the vendors have less to do. Less customers can also be rated as an indicator for other weaknesses of the market. Besides these indicators, the complaints of the vendors themselves about declined business stated within the reasons section can be assessed as indicators, also.

Reasons for aforementioned indicators can be found within and outside the market. The empirical background has shown that the political and economic, local and national environment of the market has changed recently. The political opening has led to more economic liberties, which is why there is an increased competition in the downtown area for Theingyi Zay. For instance, a vendor for traditional medicine claims an increase of shops for western style medicine, in Myanmar so called English medicine. As the next extract shows his problem is not that the shops offer exactly the same products but that he is not competitive with the production means of western companies since he has to buy ingredients and produce a pill for headaches himself whereas due to economics of scale large companies can still produce cheaper than him.

‘Yes medicine is competition because I can't competition in a part of investments because I can't afford many like foreigner companies. Ingyi

Zay<sup>23</sup> market and also there are a lot of medical traditional medicine market and another medicine market, that is why.' (A 411)

Furthermore, he points out that there are many other markets for traditional medicine in Yangon which are a competition. During a discussion in the think session (18.08.2012) the Burmese students have pointed out that in cities, especially in Yangon, people increasingly rely on English medicine (effect of changing habits due to transition because these alternatives had not been there before or not as easily affordable) and therefore pressure the market for traditional medicine. The combination of these two points reveals an increase of competition for the traditional medicine sector of the market.

During FI 4 the vendor has claimed two more reasons why businesses outside have an advantage towards Theingyi Zay. First of all, shops outside are not restricted through market hours. They can practically operate as long as they wish and thus offer a greater service for their customers (A 317: 45:00). Moreover, he states that the shops outside have more space. This however, does not have to be an advantage for all shops because some shops are satisfied with their space or could not afford a more expensive place but are able to maintain business under these conditions.

A seller of key chains and other little accessories blames an increased number of vendors at the market and street vendors for his declining number of customers and business as the following extract illustrates.

'How to say. My business is doing so many people. Before five years I am in this street only, alone to sell in this region. Now there is some people are open in this market and Mingalar market.' (B 338)

Positively interpreted this would mean that more people are willing to take risks because they anticipate the current situation as business friendly and dare to invest because they see a good business opportunity. In opposition, this could mean that there are not enough jobs in Yangon, so that people are pushed, as this interviewee puts it, in tight trade sector. It can be assumed that this pressure even increases in future because of the growing population of Yangon in the current transition process of the country.

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<sup>23</sup> The author wants to clarify that due to language difficulties between the author and the interview partner as well as the author and the translator there are some misunderstandings about names of several locations which however, does no harm to the point of the argument because then the exact location is not relevant.

In addition, the evaluation of the interviews has brought up a group of weaknesses which is related to the building structure and location of Theingyi Zay that can be seen as affecting the competitiveness of Theingyi Zay negatively.

'They shall prepare this market style a little, maybe. You can see this market style, no good. It's too narrow and no air, too hot, not clean. If possible in the part of maintenance they need to improve.' (A 59)

This fishery equipment seller and his wife who were interviewed jointly criticize the buildings of Theingyi Zay and argue that the structure of the market does not provide the means for 21<sup>st</sup> century business. During the interview they highlighted that it is rather difficult for them to handle large amounts of commodities in the narrow lanes and call the building's atmosphere as rather old fashioned. Their logistical issues have been pointed out by other vendors, as well. Apparently, there is a lack of parking spaces and enforcement to clear the streets around the market to guarantee smooth logistics. If one sets this interview in the context of aforementioned transition of Yangon, one will come to the conclusion that an increase number of population and cars will increase these weaknesses. Especially when assuming that the improving economic development of Myanmar will increase the demand of fishery supply as aqua farming exports will steadily increase, as well.

Other affects of transition have been risen by a beef vendor at Theingyi Zay and the following extract is a good example for the current dualism in Myanmar. First, there is an increase of supply prices because new actors embark the market (Chinese companies) and force the vendors at Theingyi Zay to be competitive customers towards beef companies which are brokers that buy the beef directly of the farmers. Secondly, the market is not completely free because the YCDC sets a maximum price. Thirdly, long business relationships have been cut which is also a stressor.

*And do you know any reasons why*

The major factor why the business declines for our business, especially beef, is the many beef companies control the market. Before we have bought the beef from the company at the price of 2500 kyats to 3000 and we sell.

*Per what size? How many kilograms?*

One [...whiss]

*How much is a whiss? How many kilgramms.*

1800 gramms.

We had to pay 2500 kyats to 3000 kyats before and we sell it for 4000 to 5000kyats. So we had a lot of profit. But now not like before. Now the price we buy from the company we must pay 3300 but appropriate for our, for the profit we must sell it for 6000. At least 6000 kyats but we are not permitted to sell at this price because there is a limitation. The maximum rate we can sell is only 5000 kyats.

*Who sets the maximum price? Who says it, the government?*

Especially YCDC. He says, before [...not understandable...] we need precisely the rate of the beef but now he did it right for me because of the price is so high, because you know sometimes some of the cow (You know cow?) are used. How can I say? Because some of the cow, some of the beef product cannot compose and cannot come easy like before. Because they mostly come from the countryside

*Do you mean the customers or the sellers, the producers? So the farmers or the consumers? The people who buy from him or the people who sell to him?*

The seller

But most of the beef producers, some of the producers are exporting to China. So only a little percentage comes right here. So the price rises. So we have difficulties to manage the price and this situation is well known at YCDC but they cannot manage for us.

*Are they buying at the big companies now?*

Yes, they are buying the beef from the companies, yes.

*From the same companies you were also buying from?*

Yes, same companies Before last month I had another company I was buying beef from. But this person is now not suitable for me. Then I changed my company where I had to buy my beef. Now I later the company I get my beef is not as six month work together with me. But, you know, I am not okay and this is not \*pleaseable [pleasant] for me because of the price. And they also, generally on one day I need five of six cows. But now is not stable for me. Three four or one, is not okay for me (A 121).<sup>24</sup>

In conclusion, transition sets a volatile and dynamic environment for people at Theingyi Zay which enhances structural weaknesses (management, building condition, little

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<sup>24</sup> Adapted by the author in terms of understanding: 'Until last month ago I bought beef from another company but this person did not suit me anymore. So I changed the companies. But it is not the same as if we had worked for six month already. You know, I am not okay because of the price. Secondly, I get an unstable beef supply now. Usually I got five to six cows a day, now it's sometimes three, four or only one.'

space, accessibility) and increases pressure on market vendors (internal and external competition, price dualism, traffic increase).

#### *Economic dimension: Strengths*

As it has been aforementioned in chapter 7 Theingyi Zay has various advantages in comparison to other selling places. First of all, Theingyi Zay is well known and has got a good reputation on a local and regional level. Its publicity on both levels has a lot to do with its good location in central downtown, as this extract shows:

‘Theingyi market is situated in middle downtown and centre market.  
Every item you can get, everything what you need ( A59).

People from the whole region and even further away come to the market because they now they find a great variety of commodities and qualities. Especially during monsoon season the shelter function of the market buildings allow decent storage and selling. This is very convenient for the customers and enhances the market’s attractiveness. In terms of accessibility the market can be seen from two perspectives. For local communities who can reach the market by foot (or even short travels on the bus) the location in the downtown area is a strength. Nevertheless, for people who need to travel to the market by car or busses from the countryside the location can be a weakness also, because of an increasing number of traffic jams due to transition processes.

Furthermore, Theingyi Zay is attractive for local and regional communities because it offers rather low prices. One reason for that are the low rents for one stall (chapter 7). In comparison to land prices and rents for commercial usage which have risen by about 50% in recent month, there is only a small increase of rents at Theingyi Zay by 500 kyats per month from 2007 till 2012 (2007: 2200kyats, 2012: 2700kyats) (FI 1). Therefore, prices at Theingyi Zay increased less than in the surrounding area which grants a price advantage for the customers.

Another strength of Theingyi Zay is that the shops do not specify on wholesale or retail but do both. ‘They order and I send him [Wholesale] They have [...] I sell the commodity to the country side with a car’ (B 338). This means the vendors at Theingyi Zay are service orientated because they can sell small amounts up to large amounts that require shipping.

Although the quantitative analysis has revealed that there is no significant trend from one commodity group to another, the market underlies a dynamic change. This is, as shown above, largely due to adaptation processes. Still, there is also adaptation at the market without a change of commodity groups, for instance when the market sellers upgrade their shops in order to increase selling space, storage space or develop their shop's appearance. Investment in the shops means faith in the future of one's business.

### *Social dimension*

Most of the social strengths of Theingyi Zay have been mentioned above in chapter seven when talking about the unique atmosphere of the market. There it has been mentioned that shops mostly have long traditions and strong bounds with their customers and among each other. Furthermore pride and familiarity have been mentioned.

'There is very nice to sell and coming to. But of because my father's time I already have the customer and so I like it' (A 121).

The strong relationship becomes clear in the extract above. Most sellers can adopt customers from the prior generation. Traditionally one family would buy at and recommend only one shop. Therefore, clustering of commodity groups in the streets or at the market is no problem because sellers mostly have regular customers and do not need to worry. However, this custom which is also based on familiarity among sellers seems to weaken in recent years as following extract displays.

'Because my young time also I know. So okay everything. I like neighbor.  
*So it is friends and family?*  
Yeah, like this  
*Okay, was this the same five years ago?*  
No, now is a little weaker.  
*Now is a little weaker'* (B 338).

Reasons for this development can be seen in the changing lifestyle. People are offered and able to afford more alternatives than before. At the same time transition processes allow more individual liberties and personal choices. This impacts their behavior at the market in terms of social cohesion.

|                                      | <u>Strengths</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <u>Weaknesses</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic dimension<br><br>indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- good location (central downtown)</li> <li>- well known (local and regional)</li> <li>- variety of commodities</li> <li>- competitive prices</li> <li>- adaptation processes</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- non suitable for 2012</li> <li>- competition in the surround</li> <li>- lack of parking space &amp; acce</li> <li>- Electricity shortages</li> <li>- lack of internet</li> <br/> <li>- early eating times</li> <li>- less customers</li> <li>- adaptation / upgrading</li> </ul> |
| Social dimension<br><br>indicators   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ positive atmosphere (family, friends) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ among the market sellers</li> <li>→ with customers</li> </ul> </li> <li>- pride</li> <li>- interethnic</li> <li>- Interreligious</li> <li>- inter socio-economical</li> </ul> <p style="margin-left: 150px;">} meeting point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ ethnic, religious, socio-economical, age, gender heterogeneity</li> <li>- → <b>social cohesion</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- change of lifestyle leads to unpopularity of Theingyi Za</li> <li>- social pressure</li> <li>- more older than younger customers</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                      |

**Table 2: overview strengths and weaknesses of Theingyi Zay**

Nevertheless, it can be deduced from the summary of table 2 that despite all negative developments Theingyi Zay still is an important institution of the downtown area, especially in its social dimension because it assembles a variety of different ethnic and religious backgrounds and genders. As melting pot it thus serves as a social anchor. Economically, it can be argued that there is a loss of economic importance of the market for a majority of Yangon’s citizens because there is an increased number of alternatives, more socio economic opportunities to use them and hence an increased competition. However, this argumentation accounts only true for those people gaining socio economic status through transition. For the rest, the ones who do not have the opportunity to participate, the market gains even more importance because they are dependent on Theingyi Zay’s low priced offers and would lose their local livelihood if the market was demolished.

‘Yes I see some or most of the customers their lifestyle changed. Last ten years mobile phones were very expensive so everyone can’t use it. But now, you know, more cheaper than before. So everyone can use it. And the clothes they wear is also changed, not like the other before. Changes of the customers’ (A 121).

### 6.3. Considerations for future developments

As all parts of the analysis, ideas about future considerations need to be embedded in the context of transition. In Yangon, there is an undisputed demand for infrastructural development to meet the demands induced by accompaniments of transition. Some of the demands are as obvious as an enlargement of shop and traffic capacities, others are as subtle as the enforcement of existing rules. All these demands also inflect Theingyi Zay, as shown above, economically and socially in one way or another.

| Status quo                                   | consideration                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unique but contested heritage                | Display uniqueness as cultural good<br><br>Socially acceptable upgrading (resize, infratructure, access) |
| Social importance beyond economical function | Raise awareness for social importance (capacity building)                                                |
| Danger of displacement of local communities  | Regard and Support Theingyi Zay as livelihood                                                            |
| (Immediate) need for action                  | Enforce rules and regulations<br><br>Enhance maintenance                                                 |

**Table 3: Considerations for future developments**

Table three tries to summarize current issues. Currently Theingyi Zay functions because its vendors perform economically and socially sufficient. Therefore, Theingyi Zay can be regarded as living representative of tangible as well as intangible heritage. However, its function and thus the heritage component are endangered because one could raise voices to replace the buildings by alternatives ranging from parking garages to modern shopping malls. No matter which strategy one followed (*Modernization, Restoration, Preservation, Conservation*), all future scenarios should be aware of following consequences.

#### **In case of replacement with other shopping alternative:**

- Most vendors could not bridge time until replacement is finished and they can earn money again
- Not all vendors could afford to rebuy into a modern mall or market

- An increase of every single shop's space would result in a multi storage building
- Alternatives at other location would harm long term relationships<sup>25</sup>

**In case of Modernization of A and B Block:**

- All improvements of buildings to increase attractiveness are investments that will have to be balanced through an increase of prices which might not be affordable for local communities.
- An increase of every single shop's space would result in less shops in total and put most likely the current sellers with least financial capacities out of business.

**In case of conservation<sup>26</sup> of A and B Block:**

- To retain cultural significance with a minimum of change could result in a decrease of attractiveness because as incomes increase demands for shopping standards might increase.
- Investments to the building must be according to the sellers and customers need in order not to raise prices too high.

It is hard to estimate the number of affected people. There are 1156 shops of which most have labourers. The operators as well as the staff have families to support. Besides the people who generate their income directly at the market, there are street vendors who buy their supply close to their place of action, transportation labour, etc. who generate their income indirectly from Theingyi Zay. Furthermore, the concept of livelihood also includes the side of consumption, so all people who buy at the market. This number however, is even harder to estimate since there are no studies about the number of people who shop directly or order at the market. Nevertheless, the author would claim that there would be more than 20.000 people's livelihood affected by change in one way or the other.

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<sup>25</sup> The shift to D ward has not been successful for many sellers due to a lack of connection between products

sold, sellers and customers (Appendix: SP 14: 3)

<sup>26</sup> Conservation: ICOMOS 1988: 'all processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance'

(SHAW, JONES, GIOK LING 1997: 169)

## **7. Evaluation**

### **7.1. Evaluation of previous framework**

The previous framework of this study seems appropriate to meet the aims of this thesis because it manages to draw a picture of the impact of transition on urban heritage in Yangon. The approach is based on a detailed description of the volatile and fragile political and economic environment of the market. This is connected through the strengths and weaknesses analysis with the fragility of the market itself and includes the local and regional communities in its train of thought. It shows that a large group of people depends on the market economically and depicts the value of the market beyond its economic function as an anchor of Yangon's civic society. Therefore this approach manages to comprise the complexity of all issues aimed for in this thesis. This framework led to the conclusion that development and upgrading are necessary measures but have to be balanced with the socio-economic development of the surrounding communities in order to grant an equal and participatory development of the urban structure.

However, there are still some issues that were not explicitly aimed for but seem important after covering all abovementioned issues. These points will be raised in following section.

### **7.2. New framework**

The analytical framework aimed to grasp the impact of transition on urban heritage as the theme of this thesis commands. However, as interesting seems the contribution of heritage to transition. Therefore, a new framework should include the aim to identify what contribution heritage makes to the people in the process of transition. Also, how well-known infrastructures and social structures should be sensibly adapted to needs of a new time. This idea is based on the claim that heritage can function as anchor of society. Especially in a volatile environment people need institutions of their daily lives they can count on and they can plan with. Urban heritage as the Theingyi Zay still provides such stability although it is contested since changes have not been very deep yet. Such an extension to the approach would be extremely sensible for the people in

the downtown area to cover the broader picture. Furthermore, a new framework should include the street vendors more deeply. Is it a lack of alternatives or a really good business opportunity for these individuals. This could be alluded to the claim raised in chapter 2.1. that economic development needs to be allocated rather equally in order to approximate democracy.

### **7.3. Positioning in the State of the Art**

Chapter two has elaborated on the difficulties and chances of transition processes. It has been pointed out that external pressures and lack of capacities lead to lack of governance. In theory and in practice this lack of governance endows powerful actors and suppresses weak actors. Concerning Myanmar it has been shown that institutional structures operate officially as well as unofficially which leads to a lack of transparency in some cases. Despite some insight view, the author would not dare to claim to have fully comprehended the empirical background of this study due to the lack of information and transparency. Therefore, such study should be embedded more deeply in background information which however cannot be provided yet. Hence, acquainted studies or researches should further investigate and provide political, institutional, economic and social developments on multi-level scales to ensure future thesis to be deeper rooted in background information.

Chapter three has presented the state of Urban Heritage research. This chapter comes to the conclusion that heritage needs to be seen in its vertical and horizontal network based on the idea of a multi-dimensional contextualism. In order to give more detailed information about the interaction of heritage and transition and not only the impact of transition on heritage, there are more detailed information of the downtown area urgently needed. Only through basic information, such as an accurate census, or more detailed information, such as the population's socio economic capacities, the full impact of transition on heritage as well as heritage's potential contribution to coping with transition can closely be estimated. Therefore, the author hopes that current research projects of the whole downtown area will reveal such information soon in order to open a new dimension to afore presented context.

## 8. Operational and personal reflection

Operational and personal reflections are closely linked to each other. Therefore the following chapter wants to combine these ideas. Rethinking the three phases of this study as presented in chapter five, it becomes clear that embarking on an urgent topic during an adventurous time for the people of Myanmar was a great contribution to my personal trove of experiences. Each of the trips to Myanmar changed focus of my lens because I was able to have great experiences with special people. Especially the two month field work from August 15 to October 15, 2012 and their reflection afterwards made me readjust personal attitudes. During monsoon season living condition in Yangon are rather rough because the air humidity lowers one's own working condition. The humidity was accompanied with fever and stomach issues and led to a loss of weight of 10kg. Furthermore, the climate led to mold in the buildings and regular flooding of the streets which prohibited visits to the market. Even the laptop stopped working properly due to heat and moisture. Despite these difficulties, the heartiness of the people retained motivation.

In regard to qualification aims of this study, I definitely underestimated the effort in the beginning, to fly there, to find a place to live, to deal with local difficulties, to document properly, etc. However, I would claim to have severely improved my academic skills during this time because as student to become a teacher the focus lies on didactics on not primarily on methods. This is why I had to deal with academic operational issues on the fly which cost a lot of effort also. The empirical data would consist of more interviews to be able not to identify trends only but maybe be able to some more general prediction.

Nevertheless, starting the empirical phase again, I would have more confidence in the thought up way in order to sharpen the catalogue of questions for the interviews. Moreover, I would start working with appropriate software, such as F4 and MaxQDA from the very beginning and not to try to make my own thing. In addition, I would be more confident in requiring information because seeing local officials for dinner, conducting interviews with local entrepreneurs and having several cups of tea at the market strengthened my self-esteem. In the end, I was able to overcome all these difficulties and lacks of academic skills during the course of this thesis (at least to a sufficient level that allowed me to continue working) but one question still remains

unanswered in completion. It is about one's own position in the general context of Myanmar. It is about dealing with a government that still is not completely transitioned and remains oppressive in many ways. This leads to a rather ethic question, whether one is helping a criminal government or helping the people of Myanmar through solid increase of information. I for myself decided on not being able to answer this issue but go with a practical way. The alternative would be not to reward the change in Myanmar and reject offers and projects and thus reject people. If one can decide that the project's aim is ethically clean, there is no need to reject it.

## **9. Conclusion**

The study focuses on the Theingyi Zay, a colonial market established in downtown Yangon by Indians under British rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For today the study has illustrated that the market is still a focal point for local and regional, long term as well as short term day to day trade and a significant representative of the colonial heritage of Myanmar.

Furthermore, beyond its original function of trade the social function of Thein Gyi Zay is of immense importance. As Yangon can be regarded as a melting pot of a variety of ethnic groups and religions the Thein Gyi Zay market reflects this heterogeneity. It is operated and used by people with Burmese, Indian and Chinese ancestry as well as Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, and Christian religious backgrounds. While the downtown area of Yangon is characterized by ethnic segregation, the Thein Gyi Zay assembles this heterogeneity in a very dense space. Furthermore, it also reflects to a great amount the socio-economic gradient of Yangon's citizens as people of all social classes come here to pursue their business.

The study has put the market organism in the context of the spatial, administrative and social structures of the downtown area. Since the initialising of transition in Myanmar in 1988 through political and economic reorganization this process has reached a stage of unprecedented velocity which sets a volatile frame for urban heritage within the context of urban development in Yangon and consequently for the future of Thein Gyi Zay, as well. This development has led to a variety of urban planning challenges because it demands a readjustment of local infrastructure (traffic, electricity,

social housing, etc.). At the same time the study has depicted social and economic developments at the market. These findings correlate with the theories introduced in chapter two because there it has been stated that transition progresses in different dimensions and at different velocities. Changes in these dimensions could have been proven.

Moreover, various developments implied by transformation theories in chapter two such as the increase of individual choice, increase of prices, increasing globalisation influences, etc. have been detected and illustrated at the Theingyi Zay. However, other theoretical implementations of chapter two, such as the deep changes and reorganisation of the state system could not be shown at Theingyi Zay but have been pointed out in the Empirical Background to depict that there is a transition progress in Myanmar at the first place. Therefore, the theoretical foundation proved well to meet the demands for the theme of the thesis.

In summary, the main conflict of the whole study is whether keeping the market as anchor for local communities or replacing it with alternatives that meet readjustment demands is the better option. From my point of view, Theingyi Zay's importance is currently even increasing since it provides economic livelihood for local communities who cannot afford alternatives. All alternatives would exclude and negatively impact too many people. At the same time one needs to realize that there is demand for an business improvement for market sellers who need to step ahead in order to keep their business competitive to modern standards. Therefore, one should reconsider in future because at current, the market is too valuable to be lost forever.

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## 10. Appendix (on DVD 1 and DVD 2)

### 10.1. List of formal interviews

Transcripts on DVD 1

| Shop No.              | Date       | Code | Further Information        |
|-----------------------|------------|------|----------------------------|
| Manager A and B Block | 04.09.2012 | FI 1 |                            |
| Manager C Block       |            | FI 2 | Mp3 only                   |
|                       |            |      |                            |
| <b>A Block</b>        |            |      |                            |
| 411                   | 04.09.2012 | FI 3 | Traditional Medicine saler |
| 317                   | 04.09.2012 | FI 4 | Dry Goods vendor           |
| 121/122               | 05.09.2012 | FI 5 | Meat seller                |
| 59                    | 05.09.2012 | FI 6 | Fishery Equipment saler    |
|                       |            |      |                            |
| <b>B Block</b>        |            |      |                            |
| 230                   | 07.09.2012 | FI 7 | Traditional Clothes        |
| 336                   | 13.09.2012 | FI 8 |                            |
| 338                   | 13.09.2012 | FI 9 |                            |

### 10.2. List of shop profiles (2005)

Originals on DVD 1

| Shop Number              | Commodity                  | Code  | Authors of Profile <sup>27</sup> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| No shop number mentioned | Balls: cane and plastic    | SP 1  |                                  |
| A 85                     |                            | SP 2  |                                  |
| A 198                    | Aroma, Fragrance           | SP 3  |                                  |
| A 268                    | Spice and Fruit Pickle     | SP 4  |                                  |
| A 284ab                  | Fishery Equipment          | SP 5  |                                  |
| A 387                    |                            | SP 6  |                                  |
| A 414_6                  | Fragrance, fragrance woods | SP 7  |                                  |
| A 426_7                  | Variety of Cordial         | SP 8  |                                  |
| A 426 7-1                |                            | SP 9  |                                  |
| A 563_4                  | Cordial and Bakery         | SP 10 | Aung Swe                         |
| A 565                    | Sandi Pharmacy for         | SP 11 | Ma Myo Myo                       |

<sup>27</sup> Authors are only named where known

|           |                                 |       |                                   |
|-----------|---------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|
|           | indigineous medical ingredients |       | Khine                             |
| A 565F1   |                                 | SP 12 |                                   |
| A 565F1-1 |                                 | SP 13 |                                   |
| A 603     | Fragrant wood                   | SP 14 | Myo Myo Khine                     |
| A 604     |                                 | SP 15 |                                   |
| A 618a    | Spices and beans                | SP 16 | Ma Tin Tin Mya,<br>Ma Tin Tin Nwe |
| A 684-5   | San Pya dried tea leaves        | SP 17 | No information                    |
| B 93      | Pillow cases                    | SP 18 | No information                    |
| B 93-1    |                                 | SP 19 |                                   |
| B 207     |                                 | SP 20 |                                   |
| B 316_7   |                                 | SP 21 |                                   |
| B 332     |                                 | SP 22 |                                   |
| B 340     | Pipe and Petrol Match           | SP 23 | New Yin Min                       |
| B 341     |                                 | SP 24 |                                   |
| B 347     | Royal Blanket Shop              | SP 25 |                                   |
| B 357     | Fabrics                         | SP 26 | No information                    |
| B 357a    |                                 | SP 27 |                                   |
| B 365     | Bag shop                        | SP 28 | Khaing Le Win                     |
| B 382     | Clothes, underwear              | SP 29 | Ma Khin Mar Yee                   |
| B 386     |                                 | SP 30 |                                   |
| B 387     | Japanese clothes                | SP 31 | No information                    |
|           |                                 | SP 32 |                                   |

### 10.3. List of informal talks

- 1) Hlaing Maw Oo, Director in DHSHD, 09.10.2012
- 2) U Toe Aung, Head of Urban Planning, YCDC, 04.10.2012
- 3) Prof. Kyaw Latt, Consultant Senior Advisor, YCDC, 14.12.2012
- 4) Prof. Frauke Kraas, Professor University of Cologne, Germany; Professor University of Yangon, Myanmar, several informal talks
- 5) Myo Thant, former Supreme Court Lawyer, Yangon Citizen, several informal talks
- 6) Group of fishery equipment sellers, TGZ A Block, 28.12.2012
- 7) Vice director of the YHT, Daw Moe Moe Lwin, 08.01.2013

## 10.4. List of Maps

Originals on DVD 1

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## 10.8. Change From-To Matrices

Originals on DVD 1

## 10.9. List of Charts

Originals on DVD 1

Chart 1: Pie Charts Theingyi Zay.pdf

## 10.10. Description of commodity categories

### **The categories used in this study are defined as follows:**

The legend of the map is organized in a hierarchical order. Every commodity group is given a decade, for instance “Fabrics” is marked with 110. All subcategories of a main commodity group are ordered at the unit position of the legend.

1 Category one is called “meat and vegetables” (10) and has got the subcategories “Meat, Vegetable and Fish”. Because of historical reasons the market has a strong Muslim community which religious rules are widely respected. Therefore, there is no pork being offered within the market halls. Thus, the subcategory “meat” (11) refers to mutton, sheep, beef, and chicken only. The subcategory “Vegetables” (12)<sup>28</sup> refers to a range of products including tomatoes, potatoes, lettuce, cucumber, or mangos and dragon fruit. All kinds of fish and shrimps as well as mussels are sold as exclusive product of shops and therefore categorised under “Fish” (13). Category one belongs traditionally to the wet sector of a market.

2 The category “Traditional Medicine” (20) includes a broad range of natural or lithoidal products, such as aluminium sulphite, which for instance is used to sanitize water. Other products are kinds of shell, dried fish, barks, or roots. In general products of this category are used by local doctors (Beindaws) or other skilled persons to produce homemade medicine. Some shops in this commodity group do not only offer raw materials but sell finished traditionally produced goods, too. A famous good of this category is the raw wood Thanaca, a traditional paste which protects the skin of the sun. Thanaca is won from the bark of the Southeast Asian *Murraya* and *Limonia Acidissima* trees. Originally this commodity group would be located in the dry sector of a market. SANDALWOOD

3 Category three is called “Chemicals, Flavours and Oils” (30) and contains of three subcategories. According to the hierarchical order of the categorization, number 31 is chemicals because it is the most frequent shop subcategory. Since A Block originally had been a foods related market only, chemicals mostly mean substances to chemically

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<sup>28</sup> The numbers in brackets indicate the commodity group categorization in the legends of the maps of the market. e.g. (10)= Meat and Vegetables

influence food, such as food colours. Other chemicals are for industrial purpose, such as raw acids. More specialized is the category flavours (32). Flavours include solid as well as fluid commodities, such as aromas. Oils (32) and coconut fats that are sold at the market are mainly used for cooking or baking.

4 The category “Dye and Paints” (40) could have been placed in category 30 but has been outsourced to highlight the non-food purpose. Sellers offer this commodity groups in solid powders or fluids. In most shops paints can be let mixed. Paints include substances for coating building, paint wood or other purposes. Dye is traditionally used to colour all kinds of textiles. Both, dyes and paints, are sold for industrial and private usages.

5 All kinds of fishery equipment forms commodity group 50. It contains of professional and semi-professional products. It hence ranges from thick ropes (7cm diameter) to fishing cords, from heavy ocean fit nets to spoon nets. Moreover, this category includes hooks, fishing rods, rolls, buoys and floaters.

6 The main commodity group “Dry Goods” (60) is divided into three subcategories. 61 indicates food related dry goods and includes beans, lentils, dried fruits, several types of nuts (mostly peanuts and cashew nuts), and several breeds of rice (white, brown, brown sticky, long rice, paddy). These products are mainly sold unpacked and by weight. Also wheat, vermicelli, noodles, glass noodles and potatoes are located in this category. Moreover, this subcategory includes packed or canned food which can strikingly be called supermarket goods. This category intersects in many cases by name with the category “household goods” (101). However, this subcategory includes only non-food dry goods which are sold accompanied by food related dry goods and the shop sells mainly food related assets. The subcategory “Spices” (62) intersects often with category 61. It refers to spices like raw curry roots, chillies, cinnamon, vanilla, peppers, dried fish, ngapi (fermented seafood) and often special spice mixtures of the specific shop. In many cases Burmese families create their own spices by combining several different spices. There is a great variety in spice mixture as it reflects the diversity of Myanmar’s ethnical minorities. The subcategory Eggs (63) includes besides chicken eggs pidgeon eggs at least at one shop.

8 Main Commodity group “Fast Food” (70) stands for a service oriented group of shops which supply sellers of other shops or customers with food. Because they do not provide seats since the market is too narrow, they bring the food to the shops. There are a variety of dishes cooked on small coal stoves. Traditionally, guests or some customers are offered Burmese tea, which is ordered at one of these fast food shops and brought to the demander.

9 Warehouses or storage rooms are recorded in main commodity group 90. In most cases these units correspond to shops within the market. However, in some cases they provide storage room for shops in the surrounding area. It is impossible to eliminate misjudgements because some warehouses look like closed shops and could not be identified as one of those due to language deficits.

10 “Others” (100) refers to shops that only occur in small numbers and are not food related. This means subcategory 101 covers all kinds of household goods, such as brooms and wipers or hangers, 102 includes shops specialized on pipes and 103 contains rubber bands for or complete sling shots which are widely used for bird hunting in Myanmar. Subcategory 104 sells different products from the metal ware sector ranging from wires for construction, metal brushes, bicycle parts, to metal poles

and raw material used by fitters. Other shops which products could not have been identified are categorized in 105 “Undefined”.

11 “Fabrics” (110) is a main commodity group frequent in the textile sector of the market (B-Block). As 100 it needs to be divided in self-explanatory subcategories. “Raw fabrics” 111 include fabrics used for sewing clothes. Subcategory 112 contains blankets and towels. Blankets are seen as domestic goods and can be divided in cotton and wool blankets (smooth and rough), cotton (wada) blankets and Mudon smooth cotton. Subcategory 113 sells mosquito nets, 114 pillows, 115 hats, and 116 bags ranging from traditional Shan shoulder bags to modern backpacks.

12 The main commodity group 120 “clothes” has not been subcategorized because the data from 2005 does not provide detailed information about the kind of clothes which are sold. To maintain comparability the 2012 data has not been subcategorized either. Therefore, “clothes” include underwear, pants, shorts, shirts, sports-gear, dresses, partially longyis, and school uniforms.

13 “Longyis” (130) determine the traditional male and female way of dressing in Myanmar. This commodity group includes traditional male longyis in rather dark and decent colours as well as light coloured Longyis for women.

14 The main commodity group “Cosmetic Goods” (140) refers to rather imported western, Chinese or Indian cosmetic products in contrast to traditional Myanmar cosmetics like thanaca (20). It includes shampoos, soaps, toothpastes and other hygienic products and perfumes.

15 “Paper and Stationary” (150) deal with a broad range of office supplies but school books, also.

16 Myanmar people traditionally wear sandals or slippers as food wear. All kinds of models are categorized in the main commodity group “Slippers” (160)

17 “Plastic Decoration and Toys” (170) Decoration means a range of goods from plastic flowers to festoons. Besides plastic toys of all kind this category contains the traditional Myanmar bast ball used for playing soccer tennis or similar games.

18 The main commodity group “rolled thread” 180 includes two subcategories. “rolled thread” (181) and “sewing supply” (182). 181 contains thread for spinning, garments and candle production. “Sewing Supply” embraces, buttons, needles, garn, decoration for garments and sewing machine parts.

### **10.11. Scans on Theingyi Zay**

Originals on DVD 1

1. Commodity Flow Maps of Theingyi Zay
2. YCDC Information

### **10.12. ForUm presentation 2012**

Original on DVD 1

## **11. Erklärung zum selbstständigen Arbeiten**

Ich versichere, dass ich die schriftliche Hausarbeit – einschließlich beigefügter Zeichnungen, Kartenskizzen und Darstellungen – selbständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Alle Stellen der Arbeit, die dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinne nach anderen Werken entnommen sind, habe ich in jedem Fall unter Angabe der Quellen deutlich als Entlehnung kenntlich gemacht.

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Köln, den 18.03.2013, Christian Günther