

The Importance of the Claimsmaking Process in Introducing Social Care in Society: Evidence from Channa Industrial Area, Thailand

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Abstract

The Claims-making process is important to the implementation of social care in that, it lays out the foundation of why such care is needed. This has emerged as a critical challenge for marginalized groups that have less capacity to voice their needs. Many times, their claims are overlooked by the dominant power in their home county, resulting in a depressed quality of life. In search of this challenge, I attempt to fill this gap through a scope review taking theories around the claims-making process into consideration with the evidence from the marginal groups who protested in Bangkok about the construction of the Chana industrial area in 2020. We found that there are three factors that can potentially influence their claims' achievability including with: advocacy, dialogue and negotiations, and moral responsibility. We recommend that to successfully claim for social care, there must be a larger number of members who are directly affected by the problem.

Keywords: Claims making, Advocacy, Social Care

Introduction

The introduction of social care into society is essential for creating a healthier, more supportive, and more balanced community (Buckner et al., 2013; Cornell et al., 2020). In order to make social care a reality, the claims-making process is a crucial step (Clapton et al., 2013; Series & Clements, 2013). This process involves building awareness of the need for social care, connecting stakeholders who can help introduce social care into a community, and setting agendas around the issue. Through this process, individuals or groups of people can make a claim that social care should be made available and present it to decision-makers and the public (Drover & Kerans, 1993). By doing so, they can generate widespread support for the cause by highlighting the potential benefits that social care can bring to everyone (Ochieng, 2011). However, introducing social care into a community is not always straightforward, and the importance of the claims-making process should not be underestimated. Understanding the claims-making process can help ensure that social care is successfully implemented in society.

Claimsmaking has been an important factor in introducing social care into society (Dean, 2010; Drover & Kerans, 1993). Despite the considerable research that has been conducted in this area, a research gap remains (Laenen et al., 2019). In particular, there is a need for research that examines the influences between claimsmaking on social care and economic structure, particularly in relation to capitalism. The current lack of understanding of how claims shape social care implementation and reception has hindered the ability to gain meaningful insight into the effects of societies, especially in regard to capitalist economies. To fill these research gaps, further research are required to explore the relationship between claimsmaking and economic structure, which in turn can provide beneficial insights into how capitalist economies are impacted by social care.

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This study highlights the importance of claimsmaking in introducing social care in capitalist society, with evidence from Chana, Thailand. Located in the south of the country, Chana is a coastal town with a growing Muslim population that relies primarily on fisheries and agriculture. In 2018, the Thai Cabinet approved the Chana Industrial Park project, a large-scale industrial development that included industrial facilities, deep-sea ports, and biomass power plants. Despite this, the local community was not involved in the decision-making process, raising concerns about potential negative impacts on their culture, way of life, and environment.

By analyzing this evidence, this paper demonstrates how claims-making is a key step to developing social care in response to the progress of capitalist society. We employ a qualitative approach, leveraging the contents analysis of the claims-making framework, to analyze how social care can be introduced effectively. Through this analysis, we aim to provide evidence to stakeholders and decision-makers that the social care system being proposed is well-planned, feasible, and sustainable. To do this, we draw on secondary information such as data, facts, and figures to demonstrate the need for services and prove that claims-making will not only benefit the target group, but also the larger community.

Claimsmaking and Social Care Nexus

The claims-making process is considered one of the most crucial aspects of designing a social policy (Béland, 2019). Not only will it designate the vulnerable group the policy is targeting, but it also addresses why people should care if those in power are reluctant to do it for some reason (Ray et al., 2023; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). It is human nature to try and ignore a problem that you perceive as not your own, therefore, claims-making is basically giving reasons why you should care about the problem (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Claims-Making is extremely important to social care since nowadays nobody cares (Drover & Kerans, 1993).

The claims-making process involves three steps, each with its own set of questions, in order to establish the foundation for a policy. These include: who is the policy targeting, why are they important, and who should handle the problem (Drover & Kerans, 1993). The first step is to compare the current situation to others to emphasize disparity and understand the alternative options that could be implemented with the policy. If this comparison is not made, it can lead to doubts regarding the necessity of the policy or the risks associated with it. For instance, if a young person in primary school asks their parents for the same shoes that their friends have, their parents may decline due to reasons such as “your shoes are still usable”, “do I look like a rich person? Money doesn’t grow on trees”, or “Why does it have to be that brand?” The last question is the most important one to consider.

The claims-making process consists of three steps, each with its own set of questions that will determine the foundation of a policy, such as: who is being targeted? Why are they important? and who should deal with the problem (Drover & Kerans, 1993). The first step is to compare your situation to others. This is done so that disparity is emphasized and we get to see the parallel alternative we could’ve had should this policy be implemented. If this comparison is not made, it could give rise to doubts about whether the policy is needed or not, or if it will be risky or not.

Claims-making process is a concept in the implementation of social policy. It branched out from the social constructivist theory; which argues that a body of knowledge is known only through the acceptance of society. It relies on the acknowledgement of the people in that society to make something a “real” thing. In claimsmaking, that body of knowledge includes the social problems that are confronting people, and the solution that is proposed to solve those problems. And through laying the justification for intervention through claims-making, the social problem becomes “known” to society and accepted as such. This kickstarts the momentum for introducing social care and welfare.

Claims-making process is the right process for seeking better care. For example, if you were a young person in your primary school years and all of your friends had a certain type of shoe, leaving you with your old, uncomfortable, and crumbling-at-the-seams pair, you might be met with resistance if you asked your parents for the same style of shoe. Your parents may cite reasons such as “your shoes are still usable” and “do I look like a rich person? Money doesn’t grow on trees”, or they might simply

wonder “Why should deserve it?”. To combat these doubts, you can provide reasons why this particular brand is popular, how it is more beneficial to your health, or that it is your right as a child and school student to have it. It is also important to note who is responsible for such policies, which in this case is likely the government. It is then necessary to ask whether entitlement to the policy comes from being a part of a certain group, or if everyone is entitled to the same policy, such as in the case of the necessity of shoes for health and safety (Banks et al., 2020; Zahariadis, 2019).. Ultimately, it is important to emphasize that everyone deserves to have their basic rights met, regardless of the world's imperfect enforcement of human rights.

The mode of delivery for social care is a critical component of claims-making. Existing research suggests that the way in which social care is provided to recipients is of utmost importance (see Hadley & McGrath, 2021; Mishna et al., 2021; Nyashanu et al., 2020). Not only must the care be provided in a reasonable way, but it must also be decided upon by policymakers. A good example of this process is the ongoing debate surrounding how to address poverty. Some propose giving money, while others suggest it could be used for drugs, and still others argue that public housing is too expensive (Chou & Dancygier, 2021; Moffitt & Ziliak, 2019). Ultimately, social care can only be effective when it is delivered, and it can only be delivered when the decision makers deem it necessary.

Social care policies are often overlooked by the top-down policy on their recipients of support, who may already have a solution to their problem that only requires support (Patrick & Simpson, 2020; Peckham et al., 2022). This tendency is often caused by the false sense of superiority held by policymakers, which is rooted in bias and prejudice (Demirtaş-Madran, 2020; Richardson, 2021; Rosenfeld, 2018). This is especially true in countries where authoritarian leaders have the power to create and implement policies based on their own ideologies (Von Soest, 2015; Von Soest & Grauvogel, 2017). This authoritarian mentality can lead to policies that miss the true underlying causes of the problem. This is seen in many developing countries, where the central government must approve all budgeted projects before they can be implemented; only minor projects can bypass this requirement (Li et al., 2019; O'Connor et al., 2019). This type of governance is indicative of leaders who prioritize their own power and authority over the wellbeing of their constituents.

Theoretical Consideration around the Claims-making Process

The growing complexity of our global society has brought about a multitude of challenges for individuals and communities seeking to have their voices heard. As a result, new strategies have emerged for both individuals and groups to have their needs met and their claims heard. Advocacy, dialogues and negotiations, and moral responsibility are then three key elements that have been influencing the claims-making process, which addresses the interests of individuals and groups in various contexts (Liévanos, 2012; Linder, 2001; McCormack, 2020). These three elements, in other words, are processes of collective action used to make and defend claims for rights, justice, and resources.

Advocacy is an important tool for achieving social reform and involves the use of public opinion and legal pressure to influence decision-makers and other stakeholders (Gen & Wright, 2013; Rosewarne et al., 2021). While there is no definitive theoretical framework to analyze the role of advocacy, two key dimensions are generally discussed: power dynamics and forms of participation. By taking a power dynamic-oriented approach to advocacy, it is possible to identify the limitations of certain actors and the areas where they can effectively advocate for reform (Wright et al., 2019; Young, 2009). An example of advocacy in developing countries is the work of grassroots organizations to advocate for improving local livelihoods and quality of life, such as access to healthcare and public participation (Muriu, 2013; Wahid et al., 2017). Through the use of power dynamics, these organizations have been able to identify areas where decision-makers are limited in their ability to advocate for reform and have used this leverage to create meaningful change. In terms of forms of participation, communities can actively engage in advocacy efforts through both formal (e.g., involvement in government hearings, filing of public records requests) and informal (e.g., attending local meetings, mobilizing networks of contacts) strategies (Wulz, 1986). This function can also allow

them to use their existing resources and capabilities to successfully advocate for the causes they deem important (Sanoff, 1999).

When engaging in dialogue and negotiations for social welfare benefits, it is important to understand the political, social, and human elements at play (Appadurai, 2001; J. Boonstra & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 1998; Parton & O'Byrne, 2000). With regards to the political environment, it is essential to understand the history, interests, and strategies of the dominant political group in order to effectively negotiate for social welfare benefits (Petersen, 2015; Somer, 2016). Additionally, one must consider the existing social conditions, such as demographics, economic conditions, and geographical divisions, which can affect the distribution of power within society (Carleton & Hsiang, 2016; O'Neill et al., 2017). It is also important to take into account the needs and desires of all affected by negotiations, including those potentially disadvantaged by the outcome (Butler & Adamowski, 2015; Ostrom et al., 2015). Finally, human nature must be taken into account, with an understanding of both rational and irrational elements of human behavior, as well as consideration of individuals' beliefs, negotiation styles, and the implementation of empathy (McGrath, 2018; Zerilli et al., 2019). Through understanding and accommodating these components, one can effectively craft mutually beneficial solutions for the distribution of social welfare.

In developing countries, dialogue and negotiations for social welfare benefits are illustrated through the negotiation process between the government and civil society groups (Corson et al., 2015; Howell & Pringle, 2019). As civil society groups are often the most affected by limited access to social welfare benefits (Panican & Johansson, 2016), they have a vested interest in negotiating with the government for increased access. As evidence from India shows, civil society groups have been negotiating with the government for greater access to welfare benefits, such as food security and health care (Raju et al., 2021; Saxena, 2018). In this process, the political environment of the country, such as the history and interests of the dominant political group, are taken into consideration. Additionally, existing social conditions such as demographics, economic conditions, and geographical divisions are assessed to understand the power dynamics of society. Furthermore, the goals and desires of all affected by the negotiation process are taken into account, including those that may be disadvantaged by the outcome. Finally, an understanding of human nature, including biases, motivations, and limitations in cognition and understanding, is necessary to craft more effective solutions for the distribution of social welfare.

Lastly, the concept of moral responsibility is an essential factor to consider when evaluating the rights and obligations of marginalized groups with regards to social welfare benefits. Utilitarianism, deontology, and consequentialism all provide different perspectives on the moral implications of making a claim on behalf of a marginalized group. Utilitarianism examines the consequences of a particular action, allowing us to determine whether the benefits outweigh the possible negative outcomes (Raju et al., 2021; Savulescu et al., 2020). Deontology focuses on the intentions, duties, and motives of a moral agent, allowing us to assess the potential influence of a claim on the level of moral duty of those in need (Browning, 2015; Holyoak & Powell, 2016). Lastly, consequentialism takes into account the long-term results of the action taken and how it will bring the most positive outcome for all involved (Altman, 2021; Card & Smith, 2020). In several cases, when considering the claim of a marginalized group for social welfare benefits, one must consider the short-term and long-term implications to ensure that the welfare of those in need is weighed against the overall well-being of society (Bostrom, 2017; Savulescu et al., 2020). Regarding utilitarianism, it can be used to determine whether the benefits outweigh the potential negative consequences, and deontology can be used to assess the moral implications of the claim. Meanwhile, consequentialism can be used to evaluate the long-term effects and potential outcomes of the action taken. This is an important step to gain a better understanding of the moral and ethical considerations that must be taken into account when making claims on behalf of marginalized groups for social welfare benefits.

In conclusion, advocacy, dialogues, negotiations, and moral responsibility are essential components to any successful claims-making process. These elements help to ensure that the interests of individuals and groups are properly represented in any given context. By taking a comprehensive approach to the claims-making process, meaningful solutions can be reached that are acceptable to all parties involved.

Evidence from Chana's Claimsmaking for Social Care

1. Advocacy

Channa people's claims-making process began with the protest by Save the Channa group on December 10th 2020 (Bangkokbiz News, 2021). It began with a few locals from the area waiting on the steps of Songkhla City Hall where Channa district is located. More particularly, a young advocate, Qireeyah Ramanya wrote an open letter on Facebook addressed to then-prime minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha, titled "Letter to Uncle Prayuth" (BBC, 2020). In the letter, she vividly describes the childhood she had and the connection her family and community have to the sea. Though never explicitly written in the letter, it is inferred that through the creation of the industrial estate, the damage to the environment will be catastrophic. She also directly blamed the decisions of the National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO) for setting up community engagement during COVID and Ramadan. What all of this in the letter means is that: One, they are saying that the lives of people in the area will get worse without them being comprehensively consulted with, comparing what is currently the situation with the potential future that might happen.

Two, the hegemonic groups are marginalizing them for their own interests, they are claiming that they deserve to have quality of life as a right, or at least be informed of the changes. And third, since the letter was posted on Facebook, it is clear that the intention is to draw in more people to join the cause. Considering the political context of that time, it can also be argued that the target inference to the wider society is not just the prevention of environmental damage, but to challenge the political power of the hegemonic group, which has ruled with an iron fist since the start of their terms. The protest on December 10th in Bangkok, reflected the intentions of the letter in that, it first made the wider public aware of the problem they are facing and made the community of Chana not just reduced to one person, but made the people who lived there more tangible to the wider society of Thailand.

2. Dialogues and negotiation

The protestors demanded two concessions from the government: first, the suspension of the industrial estate program and second, the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) report, which, through historical precedent, is only written to give the hegemonic group the justification to go ahead with their plans. And that a study of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) should be used instead. These demands are taken into consideration by the government which appoints Captain Thamanat Prompow to oversee the negotiations between the protestors and the government. The result of which is that cabinet concludes that the initiation of the project goes against the cabinet's policy and is temporarily suspended. This seems like a victory for the protestors, however, this proved to be simply a delaying tactic where the government wait for the momentum for the claim of the Channa people to die down. one year later, on December 6th 2021, the people of Channa came back to protest in Bangkok, citing a lack of progress on the agreement (Bangkokbiz News, 2021).

It was discovered that not only was the project not halted, but plans were drawn up to change the classification of agricultural and conservation land to industrial areas. The EIA report was also still being conducted which breached the terms of the agreement. On the night of December 6th, police arrived to put down the protests, which led to the arrest of participants. Public outrage ensued, which led the government to concede again, leading to the announcement of the SEA report on 2021 (Thairath Online, 2022). To this day, the report is still being conducted, with its result still pending. The villagers have stated that they do not oppose the industrialization of the area, but it should be light industry that takes place, not heavy manufacturing as initially planned.

3. Moral responsibility

After the election of 2019 and the "transition" to democracy, it seemed weird that the government that once held absolute power plans to do something that is so unpopular without said power. The reason behind this is that the areas of the southern provinces are prone to insurgencies as

happened in 2004. This led to many programs being initiated by governments of all political spectrum, to address the issue, the current one being the “Stable, Wealthy, Sustainable Triangle”. This encompasses three districts in the province: Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala. It can be argued that the government has the responsibility of stabilizing the region and preventing separatist movements in line with the constitution. However, if this is so, then it is also the government’s responsibility to protect those who are innocent and to preserve their welfare and well-being despite the circumstances and situations around them.

Results and Discussion

1. The Crucial Role of Advocacy in Achieving Social Reform

Chana communities have been more likely to be marginalized for area development. From systemic inequities in access to economic opportunity to frequent occurrences of policy exploitation, they have long been facing numerous disparities that make their fight for social reform all the more challenging. That's why advocating for their rights and wellbeing is of the utmost importance.

The ability to speak out against injustice is fundamental to achieving social reform. Advocacy organizations in the area are working to give a voice to people who may not be able to speak up on their own behalf. Through public protests and educational campaigns, advocacy groups are raising awareness and gaining support for the issues their communities face. In this way, they are likely contributing to a cultural shift and initiating change. The involvement of civil society groups and nonprofits is also crucial when it comes to addressing the disparities that marginal communities face. These organizations can offer resources and aid, such as consulting services and legal support. They also create opportunities for collaboration, connecting those in need with resources, creating a safe environment for discussion, and inspiring individuals to take part in positive action.

Advocating for the rights and wellbeing of minority communities is also a critical element in encouraging others to become active and engaged. However, when others witness chana citizens advocating for change, they are less likely to feel empowered to do the same. This is as a result of the claims proposed by Chana’s organizations which are foreseen to impose the country’s development plan. This discourages a movement that empowers a broader range of individuals in other parts of the country and, as a result, contributes to depressing more lasting and effective reforms. Due to this, it's important to acknowledge that in many cases, advocacy is not just a call to action, but has to identify the limitations of certain actors and the areas where they can effectively advocate for reform (Wright et al., 2019; Young, 2009). Especially, the organizations’ advocacy from formal involvement such as participating in government hearings, filing public records requests, or informal involvement, e.g., attending local meetings, mobilizing networks of contacts strategies must be intensified in order to empower their claims (Wulz, 1986). This function can also allow them to effectively collect their power and capabilities to successfully advocate for the causes they deem important (Sanoff, 1999).

2. The Small Impact of Dialogues and Negotiations

The introduction of mega industrial projects in southern Thailand has exacerbated the vulnerability of Chana citizens, simply because of their social context. Without proper consideration for social welfare, their basic rights are often neglected, and their ability to achieve equitable standards of living is compromised. As a result, members of this community are engaging in dialogue and negotiations with governing authorities in order to acquire the necessary benefits to lead healthy and productive lives.

Although dialogue and negotiation can help those who are unfairly excluded from power systems, the effects of these initiatives on achieving social welfare benefits are often limited due to economic disparities, unequal access to resources, racism, and systemic oppression (Appadurai, 2001; J. Boonstra & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 1998; Parton & O’Byrne, 2000). As a result, progressive social

change initiatives are often hindered, making it difficult for those attempting to make claims for social welfare benefits to succeed (Dean, 2010; Drover & Kerans, 1993). Moreover, lobbying has become a major concern for grassroots organizations, as it gives a certain political group an unfair advantage in the negotiation process (Carleton & Hsiang, 2016; O'Neill et al., 2017). The dominant political groups may use their influence in the lobbying process to secure their own interests, while leaving the local communities/organizations feeling powerless and unheard. This has caused a major breakdown in trust between the two sides, and has made it difficult for the grassroots organization to hold their own in the negotiation process (Butler & Adamowski, 2015; Ostrom et al., 2015). This was obviously seen when they came to protest the project in Bangkok, rather than to protest within the province.

3. Moral Dilemma of Making Claims

At first glance, making a claim on behalf of Chana as a marginalized group seems like a laudable act, but there are some who argue that such actions could be detrimental in the long run to the national economy. By making claims on behalf of a marginalized group, a claimant is essentially advocating for that group to be considered less of a priority than another group in the allocation of resources. This brings up a moral dilemma.

By making a claim on behalf of a marginalized group, Chana's organizations have attempted to bring awareness to the unequal distribution of resources that has been so pervasive throughout history (Linder, 2001; Sanoff, 1999). However, their intentions are more unlikely to support a claim on the level of moral duty of those in need. This might be the effect of the general public's perception of the welfare of those in need being weighed against the overall well-being of society (Bostrom, 2017; Savulescu et al., 2020). On the other hand, some argue that it can perpetuate the notion that certain people are more deserving of resources than others, which could cause a dangerous "othering" of the people claiming on behalf of the marginalized group (Drover & Kerans, 1993).

In the current Chana case, the accuracy and trustworthiness of claims have been called into question due to the presence of asymmetric information. Making unsubstantiated claims can be seen as deceptive and can lead to a decrease in public trust in the source of the claims (Raju et al., 2021; Savulescu et al., 2020). This issue has been demonstrated by the numerous published reports and news stories about Chana that have not been verified for accuracy. As a result, many public interests may be swayed by the dissemination of false information, which can have serious repercussions for the credibility of organizations representing Chana.

Concluding Remark

To conclude, we think that the Chana community's movement did not go as far as it could've had. This may be due to one, two, or combination of deficiencies of all three factors we have laid out. The Advocacy of the Chana community could've been impeded due to neglect by the wider media, causing their awareness campaign to falter. The wider Thai society can also be unsympathetic to the cause in that, they think that national progress should trump some local concerns since the area is known for having separatist movements. Or it could be other external factors in that, many of the local people and the people of the surrounding areas have lobbied for and agreed to the project. This leads to Chana being the outlier and being seen as "troublemakers". All in all, from all the factors that go into claims-making, we think that ones we raised are the most important factors that should be considered in the process of social care implementation.

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