

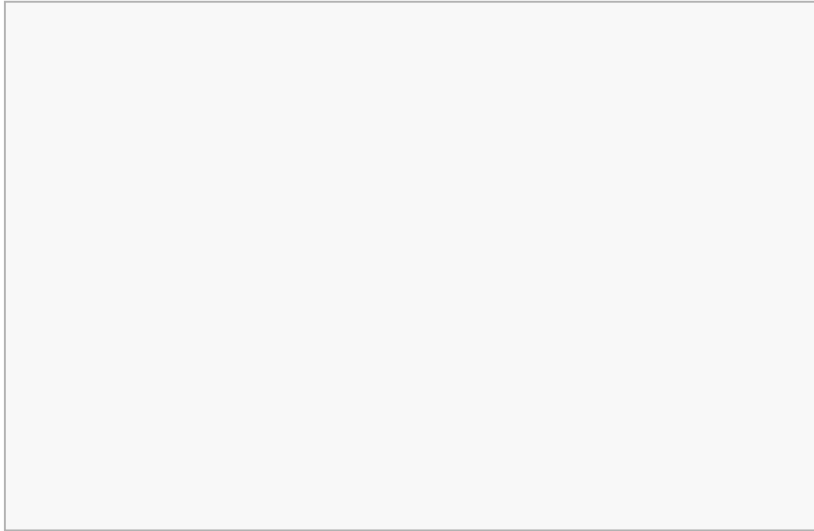
No. 5, August 2006

**Decentralization, Local
Government, and Socio-
political Conflict in
Southern Thailand**

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East-West Center
Washington



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Decentralization, Local Government, and Socio-political Conflict in Southern Thailand

The conflict in the Muslim-dominant area of southern Thailand has been running for over a century. It has waned and waxed, but by the late 1990s there were good reasons to believe that it was on an irreversible declining trend. One of the reasons for such optimism was that the central government was set to implement decentralization policies throughout Thailand that would give Thais more local control over administrative, and personnel, though not necessarily budgetary, policies. Democracy was sinking deeper roots in Thailand and Muslims were assuming high profile roles in various parties and in ruling cabinets. And even before the implementation of formal decentralization policies, prior governments had put in place unique institutional arrangements that afforded the southernmost provinces close cooperation among local elites and the Thai military.

For decades, but particularly since violence in the south began to escalate in 2001, scholars have offered a variety of explanations for the enduring separatist movements and associated conflicts. This paper contends that analyses of the southern conflict have given insufficient attention to patterns of local and regional governance as mechanisms that have mitigated violence in the south in the past and offer hope again for quelling the conflict. Informal arrangements established during the 1980s created an informal institutional setting tailored to the problems specific to the region. These arrangements were dismantled by the new Thaksin government in 2001. The new government also undermined the goals of decentralization as outlined in the 1997 constitution and in the 1999 implementing legislation. Central government resistance to decentralization was apparent throughout Thailand, but became particularly marked and

significant when increasing violence in the south diverted resources from local governments to security forces operating in the area, and to central government development priorities.

The Constitutional Drafting Assembly included the goal of decentralization in its 1997 draft in order to enhance local participation and to boost the quality of local governance. The assembly was not primarily concerned for conditions in the far south. However, decentralization might have promised to alleviate further tensions in the area. Many prior studies had argued that the cultural distance between Muslim-Malay locals and Buddhist officials of the central state brought in from other regions of the country created tensions in the region. Not until the late 1970s were Malay-Muslims appointed to official positions in the south in significant numbers.¹

The tensions in the three provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala long have been rooted in the centralized nature of the state and its forced assimilation policies. Administrative centralization dismantled the traditional local elite power structure and highlighted the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of officials drawn from the majority Buddhist population operating among a largely Malay-Muslim populace.

Greatly enhanced local autonomy and governance under the terms of implementing legislation subsequent to the constitution promised to boost the numbers of local officials and politicians who would have local roots and would therefore be more likely to be sensitive to the customs and worldviews of the local population. And because the tensions between locals and central government officials have long been such a central and persistent feature of this conflict, this paper argues that implementation of a fuller form of decentralization continues to hold great potential as a means of diminishing both the resentments that tend to fuel the conflict and the isolation of state officials that undermines

the effectiveness of the state machinery in the region.

The plausible hypothesis that decentralization can diminish tensions rooted in local opposition to externally controlled governance structures is supported by my survey and field research in Pattani. That research suggests that prevailing political attitudes and behaviors in the far south may be distinctive. My empirical findings offer tentative support for the hope that decentralization may contribute to resolution of the conflict in the south. At the very least, looking at the conflict using a political and administrative framework can add to our understanding of the conflict itself.

Malay-speaking and bilingual Malay-Muslims, when compared with Thai Buddhist speakers in Pattani, have higher levels of political efficacy, participate more in local politics, and have stronger beliefs in the potential for local governments to address their problems. Apparently, the cognitive outlooks associated with a civil society supportive of capable governance are more pronounced among the majority population of the far south than among the minority population there, and perhaps than among the Buddhist majority in other parts of Thailand.² While my findings are no more than suggestive, they not only signal the need for further research, but also underline the potential of an effective decentralization policy that builds on the apparent local potential for effective government to diminish the long standing sources of grievance in Thailand's far south.

Armed separatist activities in southern Thailand are not new phenomena. However, after diminishing substantially over the 1990s, the historically rooted conflict escalated gradually in 2001 and dramatically after January 2004. The three southernmost provinces where the majority of the 1.5 million residents are Thai-Muslims,³ are suffering the security, economic, social, and political consequences of the conflict. The causes of the conflict and its recent escalation surely are

complex, involving the interaction of many factors. Scholars doing recent research on the ongoing violence in southern Thailand have emphasized many diverse forces such as ethnic identity, economic deprivation, criminal networks, conflicts between the army and the police, the failures of the central government's development and assimilation policies, the central authorities' discrimination against Muslims, the impact of Islamism, global Islamic terrorism networks, failures to accurately analyze the situation, long term conflict among central authorities, the excessive use of force, and weak intelligence.

Surprisingly given the long standing argument that the tensions were stimulated by the insensitivities of central government officials at sea in the local socio-cultural context, analysts have not tended to give a great deal of attention to the impact of administrative and political decentralization in the region. Yet in the broader comparative political and policy literatures, decentralization continues to attract interest as a means of reducing ethnic tensions and separatist sentiments.⁴ This research aims to put the issue of decentralization policy at the center of analysis of the conflict in southern Thailand.

If all regions in Thailand are distinctive, the far south long has appeared to be more distinctive than others. Southerners, for example, apparently are more apt than other Thais to engage in party voting.⁵ Levels of lawlessness generally are higher. And my research suggests, perhaps puzzlingly, that local levels of participation and a sense of political efficacy toward local institutions are comparatively high. These latter attributes seem to be particularly marked among bilingual (Malay and Thai speakers) locals, suggesting the potential value of emphasis on bilingual education policies locally. More generally, however, my findings raise the intriguing possibility that the south may be particularly well suited, in terms of dominant attitudes and behaviors, to produce good governance at the local level. For example,

local antipathy to corruption appears to be particularly marked.⁶

This paper argues that violence in the south needs to be understood in terms of local administrative and political problems. In a context that is perceived by many locals as essentially colonial, it surely makes sense to consider ways in which enhanced self-government might contribute to better government performance and to social peace. A focus restricted to issues of religion, identity, and international terrorist networks simply is not adequate. Muslim separatist movements in Southeast Asia are often held to be motivated by concerns of identity and community as well as those of economic and political opportunity and the quality of local governance. Because the root cause of the conflict stems from the centralized state, political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization may be able to address both sets of concerns. If Muslims in Mindanao, southern Thailand, or Aceh have more voice in local governments that, in turn, have broader governance roles, many of the concerns that fuel separatist goals might be reduced.

Data gathered for this study during field research in southern Thailand provides some preliminary support for the notion that the establishment of effective and representative local political institutions has the potential to reduce tensions in southern Thailand. Ending the current violence in the south, however, also requires addressing other causes such as the lack of local input into central government policies, the ignorance of central government officials of local governments in the south and of conditions more generally, and the top-down authoritarian style of Thai government leadership today and in the past.

As I argue at length below, the history of the conflict in southern Thailand suggests that the root cause of the problem stems from the centralized state itself. Therefore, political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization policies launched over the past decade should

at least have some potential to address this cause.

In the wake of the recent upsurge of violence in the south, strategies to deal with the southern conflict have emerged from central government agencies, largely the military and the police. In this top-down, heavy-handed military approach to problem solving, central government authorities view conflict in the south in terms of a separatist movement challenging Thailand's territorial integrity. This view may be in part justified, but ignores the extent to which unrest stems from the lack of political space and limited socio-economic development in the region, to say nothing of conflicts between officials brought in from other regions and local residents. Decentralization might be a means of making local governments in the south more responsive to local demands and better expressions of local political identities.

Several scholars have argued that both democratization and decentralization tend to dampen separatist conflicts. My research in central Thailand suggested that decentralization boosted cooperation between local governments and local residents, resulting in higher levels of satisfaction with local government performance, and greater accountability and responsiveness on the part of local politicians.⁷ Contrary to expectations, however, conflict and violence in the south did not continue on their downward path of the late 1980s and 1990s. Increasing levels of violence in the south have coincided with increasing levels of democratization (through the 1980s and at least until 2001) and decentralization (since 1998). Violence began to escalate in 2001 and exploded in 2004. Why so?

A number of policy analysts and scholars have been trying to account for this upsurge in violence. These analyses point to a broad range of factors, including factors that emerged only in 2001: the new Thaksin government and the U.S.-led war against terror. This paper focuses on some of the major problems of decentralization policy in

Thailand. With the rapid implementation of decentralization policy in recent years, local governments (including municipalities and Tambon Administrative Organizations, TAOs) in Thailand have assumed more responsibilities in managing their own jurisdictions. But central authorities' reluctance to implement decentralization policies fully, and the lack of financial devolution⁸ may have made decentralization policies part of the complex set of problems feeding the frustrations in the south. With more responsibilities and few resources, limited discretion over revenue and spending may tend to make things worse. Moreover, TAOs and municipalities have been minimally involved in any of the central government initiated conflict resolution processes despite their obvious relevance as locally constituted democratic institutions in Thailand. The failure to include these local political institutions also stems from the longstanding suspicion among central government officials of local government capacities.

Beginning in the 1960s, a number of comparative scholars of revolution argued against prevailing approaches to the analysis of revolutions that focused their inquiries on the causes and prevalence of a generalized sense of grievance and injustice. Instead, argued subsequent scholars, a more political approach was needed. Skocpol's analysis of revolution insisted that the causes of revolution should be sought not so much in government oppression, but in government weakness.⁹ Here I argue the need to link these concerns. As the literature on state embeddedness demonstrates, state capacities are linked to states' abilities to sink roots into their surrounding social milieu. Government in the south of Thailand has the heavy hand of a sort of colonial presence, but, being disembedded, is weak. Poor government then feeds the local sense of grievance. Decentralization would seem to offer a means of breaking this cycle by enabling more local political participation and, in the process, enhancing the quality of governance.

This paper draws on a variety of sources. These include secondary sources and in-depth and follow-up interviews, including a closed-door seminar at the Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus. For the latter purpose, I invited local politicians to discuss the conflict, their roles in addressing it, and the current administrative structure of local governments. In addition, the paper analyzes survey research¹⁰ carried out in three Tambon Administrative organizations and one city-level municipality in Pattani. (Two TAOs with all Malay-Muslim residents, one with both Malay-Muslim and Buddhist, and one muang municipality).¹¹

The remainder of this paper is organized in three parts. The first section that follows offers an analytical history of the conflict in the south, highlighting shifts in the character of the conflict over time and the ways in which the conflict has been shaped by the centralized state's periodic efforts to exert central control over the region, including those under Prime Minister Thaksin. This history provides a basis for understanding the need to focus on the ways in which institutional flexibility achieved through informal or formal means can ameliorate the tensions in the south. We can trace the roots of local resistance from the initial efforts of displaced elites to a broader, more participatory, and more violent opposition against external control. The second section of the paper outlines the institutions of Thailand's centralized state and the implementation of decentralization legislation that followed the 1997 constitution. This section also describes the ways in which decentralization has been put into practice around Thailand and the specific problems that have confronted local governments all over Thailand. The third section reports the findings of my research in 2005 in Pattani. It emphasizes local elite grievances against ongoing central state direction of local governance and the findings of survey research that hint at strong local support for

more autonomous local governments. Finally, my conclusion briefly recaps my argument.

Historical Overview

Thailand, known as Siam until 1939, is a Buddhist country. Perhaps 95% of the population is Theravada Buddhist, with Muslims, concentrated mostly in the south, making up about 5% of the total population.¹² Most Muslims in southern Thailand speak only Malay and are ethnic Malay. They used to be part of the long flourishing, independent sultanate of Pattani, later divided into the Thai provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Satun and part of Songkhla in southern Thailand. Most of the violence has been concentrated in the three southernmost provinces dominated by Malay-speaking Muslims. In Satun and Songkhla, Muslims are less dominant and more likely to speak only Thai, rather than Malay, or both. Thai state officials see southern Thailand as a security vulnerability as the Muslim Malay speakers live along the northern border of Malaysia and most hold dual citizenship. However, state efforts to assimilate the Malays into the dominant central Thai culture created security threats of their own.¹³ Ladd Thomas argues that deeply rooted divisions between the Malay-Muslims and their Thai Buddhist counterparts cannot be eradicated through assimilation policies. Instead, those assimilation policies have always been perceived and interpreted by Malay-Muslims as attempts to weaken their ethnic and religious traditions.¹⁴ And the center's promotion of Buddhism enhanced the roles of local religious leaders in the southern resistance movement.¹⁵

Since the 1920s, Thai national identity has been defined by the three pillars of the Thai state, including nation, religion, and monarchy. During the 1930s, 'nation' was redefined in ways that emphasized the identity of the dominant Thai ethnic group with Buddhism as the main focus of the Thai national identity. However, because the monarchy sat at the top of social hierarchies and was not traditionally defined in ethnic

terms, the potential of the divisive conflict was somewhat counterbalanced. The monarchy has, for example, personally granted recognition to the leadership of Thailand's Muslim community,¹⁶ funded translations of the Koran into Thai, and presided over celebrations of the prophet's birthday. The government also provided funds for building and renovating mosques. Recently, the queen made several lengthy visits to the southernmost provinces, while the king has expressed his concerns about local conditions directly to Prime Minister Thaksin.¹⁷

The Kingdom of Pattani, comprising the current Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and Satun provinces, was a part of "Siam" between the 14th and 18th centuries. The first Chakri king in 1786 conquered Pattani, but the Siamese exercised little authority over the area. Siam relied on indirect rule, sustaining the traditional authority of political and religious elites.¹⁸ The South was under the rule of the *kalahom*, with the minister of that agency responsible for all aspects of governance in the region.

Starting in the mid-1870s, Siam appointed commissioners to perform military roles in the south¹⁹ and southern Islamic states were under indirect rule called "Monthon."²⁰ Longstanding separatist movements sought to remove the southernmost provinces from Thai rule either to become a separate Pattani State or a part of one of the states of Malaya. Other movements aimed for more self-rule.²¹ Sporadic and spontaneous uprisings headed by religious leaders have broken out since the beginning of the 20th century when Siam took possession of the southern provinces.

Thailand officially incorporated the Sultanate of Pattani in 1902 through the Anglo-Siamese treaty.²² Fearing that the Malay states in Thailand might come under other foreign influence, the British pushed the Siamese to exert more control over the area and, as a result, local autonomy began to decline. With the shift in jurisdiction over the area from local kings to the Thai central administrative system, sporadic violence

began in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat (and, less frequently, in Songkhla). In 1903 the former sultans protested against the changes. The Thai monarchy tightened its control over the region, undermining the traditional Malay ruling families, because the monarchy feared that the region would come under the control of British Malaya²³ as had other sultanates on the peninsula previously under Thai suzerainty.

The imposition of taxation, education, and Thai language and culture, including Buddhism, onto Pattani by the Thai centralizing state during the 19th century was aimed at unifying the country and overturning the "backward" culture in the south.²⁴ In the last third of the 19th century, King Chulalongkorn aimed for the first time to centralize administration throughout the kingdom. The model of administration, grafted from indirect colonial regimes, aimed at centralized control over a limited set of administrative tasks. The state-building reforms enabled Bangkok-based officials to assume many powers previously exercised by local notables. The primary substantive aims of the reforms were centralized control of government finances and the establishment of effective territorial control. In the southernmost areas, villagers, often advised by religious leaders, rallied against paying taxes, unpopular Siamese officials sent from the central government, and the central government's aggressive assimilation policy effected through its education policies during the first quarter of the 20th century.²⁵

Unsurprisingly, the strongest resistance to the central government in this period²⁶ came from those whose power was dismantled along with local power structures.²⁷ Forced assimilation policies also engendered broader resistance as the policies were seen as directly threatening Malay-Muslim identities. For example, the Muslim legal code, structured by the *Sharia* and *adat* (Malay custom), and administered by the local *Qadi* (Muslim judge) was at least nominally controlled by Thai Buddhist officials.²⁸

With the end of the absolute monarchy in 1932, the new Thai leadership pushed for modernization and nation building. General Phibun Songkhram tried to further centralize and strengthen the state, and promoted Thai nationalism, and the creation of a homogenous Thai national identity based on central Thai culture. By 1939, Siam was renamed Thailand.²⁹ The new name specifically involved the identity of the state's dominant ethnic group. Phibul also required all Thais to adopt Western dress and to change many of their traditional social practices. He extended compulsory Thai-language education.³⁰ Many Thais viewed these policies as offensive and idiosyncratic. For Malay-Muslims, they implied a direct attack on Malay-Muslim identities.³¹

Phibul's Thai Custom Decree banned the wearing sarongs, and prohibited use of the Malay language, Malay names, and Sharia law. Despite the state's expanding ambitions, contact between Thai speaking Buddhist central officials and Malay speaking Muslims in the south remained minimal.³² Penetration by the Thai state was perceived by Malay-Muslims as a threat and they refused to identify themselves with the Thai nation-state.³³ The new policies were seen as putting Malays into a "second class citizen" category, as a marginal minority within somebody else's homeland. As Brown puts it, "the state policies of centralization and assimilation, and the consequent disruption of communal authority structures, thus, engendered a sense of 'minority consciousness' in which the recognition of disunity itself provided a basis for unity, thereby modifying the sense of group identity."³⁴ Centralization and assimilation policies also nurtured links between the minority community and their brethren those across the border in Kelantan.

The southernmost provinces have not always been the poorest in Thailand, although the provinces' relative standings have slipped over the past two generations. More

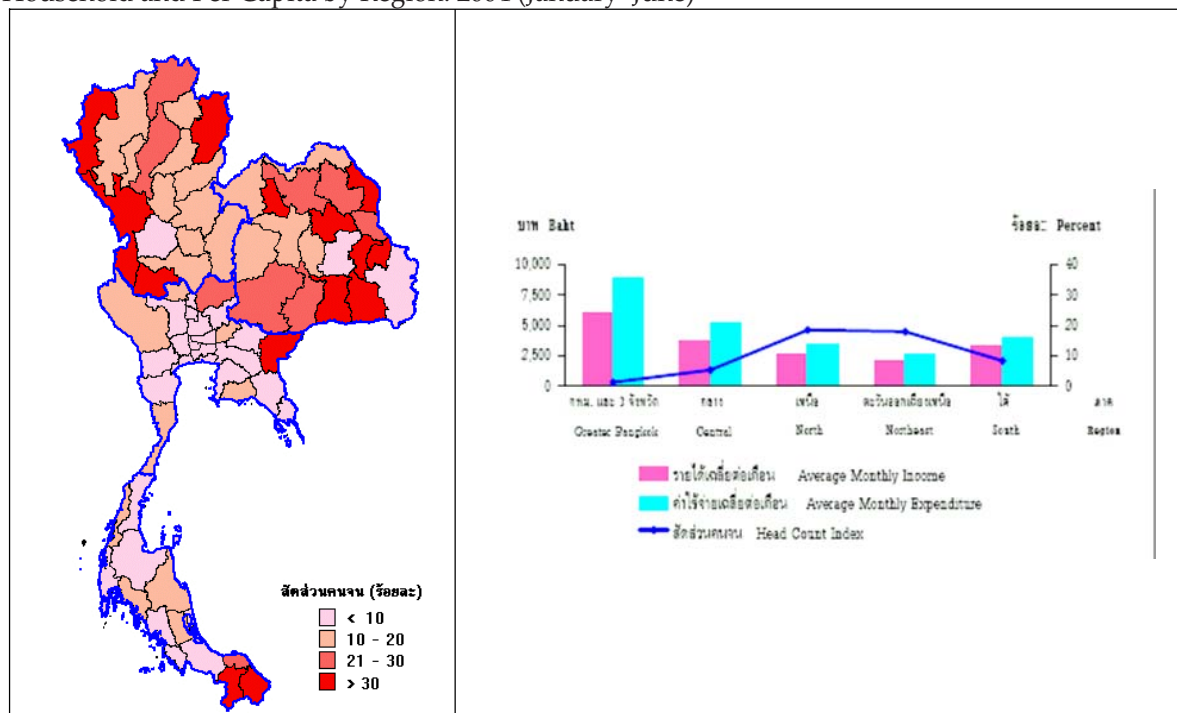
important, suggested Brown, are the gaps between Malays and Buddhists within these provinces.

Figure 1 shows that the three southernmost provinces and the southern region in general are not as poor as the north and the northeast regions. However, the differences between Malay incomes and those of well-to-do Chinese and Thais in the region can be striking. This situation encourages the Malays to perceive that they are exploited by Thais and Chinese who extracted the region's natural resources for their private benefits.³⁵ And in the 1940s and 1960s the region faced economic crisis and rice shortages when rubber prices fell sharply. ³⁶ As a result, separatist sentiments grew stronger. Relative economic deprivation, administrative centralization, and forced assimilation policies created minority consciousness in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand.

Violence in the south grew during and after World War II. While the Thais supported the Japanese, Malay-Muslims in the south supported the British. They fought against the Japanese with the British, ethnic Chinese nationalists, and with support from the Islamic Religious Council under Tun Mahmud Mahyuddin and Haji Sulong. Many Malay fighters hoped that the British would give them independence from Thailand after the war.³⁷ However, the subsequent Cold War context convinced the British (facing strong pressure from the United States) to support a unified Thai state.³⁸

Prime Minister Pridi Phanomyong took power in 1944 and softened Phibul's harsh assimilation policies. He tried to co-opt Muslim leaders into the central state bureaucratic structure. The "Patronage of Islam Act" created the 'Chula Rajmontri',³⁹ under the Ministry of Interior. The Chula Rajmontri was appointed by the king to advise him on Islamic matters. A 10-member Central Islamic Committee was established and each mosque created a Mosque Council.⁴⁰

Figure 1. Poverty Map and the Headcount Index, Average Monthly Income and Expenditure per Household and Per Capita by Region: 2004 (January–June)



Source: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, Office of the Prime Minister and National Statistical Office.

This initiative was of dubious effectiveness. To date no one serving as Chula Rajmontri has been a southerner and the local “Imam” and “Toh Kru”—religious leaders and teachers—still have strong influence on southern Muslim communities.⁴¹ Pridi introduced a system under which the Ministry of Justice appointed a couple of Islamic judges in each Muslim majority province in order to advise the state court regarding Islamic marriage law. Buddhist judges, however, still maintained ultimate authority.⁴²

Haji Sulong formed the Patani People’s Movement in 1947 aiming for self-rule, implementation of Islamic law and cultural rights.⁴³ In response to the demands, the government allowed the establishment of Friday as a weekly holiday and the use of Malay for instruction in private schools. In November of the same year, Phibun retook power from Pridi and imprisoned Haji Sulong and several of his followers. Responding to international pressure, Phibun later relaxed his policies toward the south.⁴⁴ However,

several rebellions broke out. In the “Dusun Nyiur” incident in April 1948 in Narathiwat, about 1,100 Muslim and 30 policemen were killed.⁴⁵ Haji Sulong disappeared in 1954, apparently killed by the police.⁴⁶ This incident proved to be a turning point for the resistance movement in the south. Subsequently, resistance was no longer concentrated among dispossessed elites, but took on a broader, more popular quality.

The Greater Pattani Malayu Association (GAMPAR) was organized in the 1950s to fight for the incorporation of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun provinces into Malaya. Even though the group disintegrated after the death of the group leader, it paved the way for several other separatist groups that followed.

Amid continuing violence, Field Marshal Sarit (1957–62) sustained heavy-handed policies, forcing local adoption of Thai language and other parts of the national curriculum under the 1961 Educational Improvement Program. The program forced all the “pondok” to convert into “Private

School Teaching Islam" (PSTIs)⁴⁷ schools and to take on a secular curriculum. Those that resisted the change were closed down. As a result, the numbers of pondok fell dramatically. The pondoks were placed under the Ministry of Interior.⁴⁸ In 1957, Haji Sulong's son, Amin Tomina, an MP at that time, was jailed for three years for making demands in parliament for better conditions in the south. He was charged with planning a separatist revolt.⁴⁹ In this context, the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN or the National Revolutionary Front) was formed by Haji Abdul Karim Hassan, an Ustaz (Toh Kru or Islamic teacher) in Narathiwat, with other young foreign educated Muslim intellectuals.⁵⁰

During the 1960s, the central government encouraged landless Thai Buddhists to migrate into the southern region, offering incentives such as free land.⁵¹ This policy helped generate further local resistance, including more radical and organized groups. While some of these groups were purely political, others mixed their politics with criminal activities. Separatism continued at a fairly high level through the 1960s and 1970s. A Training Center for Malay Language and Muslim Culture at Chulalongkorn University was established by the state in the late 1960s to train non-Malay central government officials. The center later shifted to Prince of Songkhla University, in Pattani before the Ministry of Interior closed it in 1977.⁵²

In the late 1960s violence in the south increased dramatically as government buildings, schools, and police stations came under attack. Kidnapping for ransom increased. As a result, the central government relied heavily on military operations in cooperation with both Buddhist and Muslim volunteers, in order to destroy the separatist networks. Armed confrontation between insurgent groups and Thai security forces rose. However, these military operations did not seem to reduce the violence. The failure of the Thai government to investigate the killing of five Malay-Muslim youths by Thai Marines on November 29, 1975, or the disappearances

of those believed to be cooperating with separatist groups, generated strong anti-government sentiment and gave an opportunity to the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) to organize a mass protest involving about 70,000 Malay-Muslims in December 11, 1975. The violence led the government to declare a state of emergency.⁵³ Rallies spread across the border to Kelantan and the Malaysian government urged support for Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand. The government offered the Malay-Muslims dual citizenship. According to Gunaratna, Acharya, and Chua, this period saw the beginning of cooperation between Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand and those in northern Malaysia. Violence in the south, on occasion spreading to Bangkok, continued.

The PULO was founded by Tengku Bira Kotanila as an armed group comprised mainly of foreign educated Malay-Muslims, with its headquarter in Mecca. The ideology of the group is based on religion, race, homeland, and humanitarianism.⁵⁴ The goal of the group can be described as ethno-nationalist rather than Islamist. Most PULO fighters are foreign trained. It has training camps in Syria and Lebanon.⁵⁵ During the 1980s, PULO started a more dramatic and violent strategy. However, the group was weakened after they lost Saudi government support. And in 1992, the group split. A new group (New PULO) was formed by Arong Mooreng and Haji Abdul Rohman Bazo in 1995. During this period, separatist groups were in decline and memberships sagged. Some groups then turned to criminal activities, particularly drug smuggling.⁵⁶ The PULO and the New PULO jointly established a group called Bersatu in order to carry out a campaign called "Falling Leaves" targeting government officials in the area.

The National Pattani Liberation Front (BNPP) was formed in 1971 as a splinter group from the BRN to promote full independence and a separate Islamic state. Group leaders include religious leaders, some of them educated in Islamic studies abroad. The BNPP focuses on militant and violent

activities and has strong ties to Muslims in the Middle East.⁵⁷ BNPP recruits members through its religious teachers who select students in the area for military training, both in the area and overseas.⁵⁸

1980s: The Period of Decline

During the early 1980s, the government and the military employed policies that had been successful in weakening the communist insurgencies in Thailand in the 1970s. Prime Minister General Prem Tinasulanond, with long experience in the south, initiated several social and economic development projects in the four southernmost provinces of Thailand, such as the introduction of electricity and water systems into remote areas. The government focused more on political than military means to deal with the violence. Efforts were made to boost local political participation and to include more local civilians into the state administrative system.

Most importantly, General Prem also initiated two major partnership institutions to monitor and coordinate negotiations between the Thai government and separatist groups in the south. The first was a Civil-Police-Military joint headquarters (CPM 43) responsible for coordinating security operation and ending the extra-judicial killing and kidnapping by security forces. CPM 43 had a strong intelligence network in the Malay and criminal communities.⁵⁹ The Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC) was formed in 1981 to enhance coordination among government agencies, reduce corruption, diminish prejudice against Malays among government officials sent to the area, and to hear local grievances. It was a special unit comprised of the army, police, and the Ministry of Interior, and included several local civilians. This unit focused on understanding Malay-Muslim culture and provided cultural and Yawi language training for non-Malay officials.

A significant source of local grievance since the 1940s had been abusive behavior and corruption by government officials operating

in the area. It has long been understood that transfer to position in government offices in the south could be a means to punish officials' misconduct or incapacity.⁶⁰ To overcome this legacy, SBPAC was also responsible for applying a performance based personnel system within government offices in the region.⁶¹ Even though SBPAC and CPM 43 did not involve particularly democratic institutions, they provided opportunities for local elites to engage with central government officials on an ongoing and systematic basis. And the SBPAC offered local residents a venue in which they could voice their grievances.

With the surrender in April 1987 and, asylum in 1989 for members of the Malayan communist party, separatism among Malay-Muslims declined dramatically. Over 1,000 received land near the Malaysian border as a result of the asylum. A more open political climate allowed those in exile to return from Kelantan. As a result, strength among separatist groups declined and violence dropped significantly.⁶² By the mid-1990s, the ethnically based separatist movement seemed to be coming to an end

Separatist activity was on the wane by the mid-1990s and prominent Muslims emerged on the national political stage. Both the Democrat Party and a Muslim political faction called "Wahdah," previously within the New Aspiration Party, have strong southern bases.⁶³ They have paved the way for Muslims to gain top positions in the government. Wan Muhammed Nor Matha of the Thai Rak Thai Party served as the first Muslim President of the National Assembly and as Deputy Prime Minister. Surin Pitsuwan of the Democrat Party was Foreign Minister.

Yet during this same period, separatist groups with an identifiable religious identity emerged. According to Scheffler, Muslim separatist movements in southern Thailand stemmed from the local institutional and historical contexts of religious and Malay cultural expression.⁶⁴ Separatist movements predated Middle Eastern Islamic revivalism.

Nonetheless, GMIP was formed in 1995 by Nasoree Saesang. Although it focuses on creating an independent Pattani state, its ties with international Islamism are quite strong. Some of the members have announced their support of Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden. Most of GMIP's funding comes from charitable or religious foundations based in the Middle East. While the group has few members, it has a close relationship with the BRN and is reported to be one of the most effective armed groups.⁶⁵ However, the number of active armed fighters was estimated to be no more than 3–500 during the 1990s.

One of the remaining critical problems in the south concerned education. Officials were still prone to see commitment to a Malay identity as a sign of support for separatist groups.⁶⁶ PSTIs did not offer Malay language as an option among elective classes. In addition, the growth of tourism and entertainment industries generated hostility among some Malay-Muslims who perceived in these developments an assault on their traditional culture. Resistance to new industries, however, reinforced a broader problem of poor relative economic performance that had been evident from the inception of the high growth era in the 1960s. Commitment to traditional education meant that few locals could find jobs outside agriculture.⁶⁷ Poor educational performance also helped explain the shortage of state officials recruited locally.

Prem's recognition of southern Thailand's distinctiveness enabled the quelling of the conflict in the 1990s. His development strategies and the creation of CPM43 and SBPAC helped to integrate southerners politically while also improving the quality of state intelligence. More democratic governments in the 1990s offered more sophisticated policy choices. Political space opened up for Malay-Muslims in the south and expanding roles for civil society helped to curb the violence. The separatist movement seemed to have disintegrated.

The Recent Upsurge

While violence had not disappeared, it had diminished over the 1990s. According to Jitpiromsri, there were 2,593 incidents of politically related violence between 1993 and 2004.⁶⁸ Of this total, well over two-thirds came during 2004 and January 2005. Violent incidents were most common in Narathiwat, following by Pattani and Yala provinces.⁶⁹

Violence has escalated since 2001 and has changed in character. Soft and civilian targets have been hit more frequently. In addition, the police have been killed regularly since 2002. Schools and other state institutions have been targets. Buddhist temples and monks emerged as targets beginning in October 2002, two weeks after three Malay-Muslim were sentenced to death by a Thai court. In December the same year, local residents protested against the proposed Thailand-Malaysia pipeline that threatened both agricultural land and fishing grounds. Malay-Muslims in general rejected the one million baht village fund proposed by Thaksin's government. His brutal campaign against drug dealers in early 2003 caused many southerners to feel that they were particularly favored victims of the extra-judicial killings. Martial law was declared in 2003, enabling indefinite detention.

In January 2004, about a hundred southern separatists carried out a series of attacks that killed military and police officials as well as civilian officials of the state, burned down 20 schools, and managed to steal some 300 weapons from the Narathiwat Rajanakarin army camp.⁷⁰ This marked a still steeper rise in violence and increased attacks on Buddhist and other civilian targets.⁷¹

On April 28, 2004 there were clashes between organized but lightly armed young Muslim militants (believed to be guided by a splinter of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional or BRN Coordinate) and security forces in Yala, Pattani, and Songkla.⁷² April 28th marked the anniversary of the clash in Narathiwat in 1948 that killed 400 villagers and 30 policemen. The militants carried on simultaneous pre-dawn

raids on 10 police stations in Yala, Pattani, and Songkhla provinces. However, the violence and symbolism around the historic Krue Se mosque in Pattani was particularly striking as it underlined religious dimensions of the conflict. Militants gathered inside the mosque while some of them went out and attacked security checkpoints and policemen. The fight accelerated and ended with General Panlop Phinmani's order to attack the mosque (against the advice of Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh.) The result was 108 Muslim militants and five security officials dead. Subsequently the government gave far more attention to *ustaz* (or Islamic teacher) network, many of them trained in Pakistan, Egypt, and other largely Muslim countries. The younger generation of teachers were recruiting their students into active resistance based on Islamist precepts. And the new approach was signaled by increasing attacks on civilians, dispensing with the traditional focus on state personnel and infrastructure.

On October 25, 2004, about 2,000 protestors gathered outside the Tak Bai district police station in Narathiwat, demanding that authorities release defence volunteers taken into custody. The authorities packed arrested protestors into trucks and 78 of them died from suffocation and other causes during the 5 hour (150-kilometer) journey to Pattani. After this incident, the violence in southern Thailand reached a new peak. Attacks on innocent Buddhist civilians rose. Indeed, the Tak Bai incident seemed to signal a further increase in the ferocity and brutality of the violence and to represent a critical turning point from which return seemed increasingly difficult.

Conflict Management Under Thaksin's Government

After the January 2004 raid, Thaksin imposed martial law in several districts of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat provinces. He declared that those who were killed in the raid on Krue Se mosque "deserved to die" and imposed an unrealistic deadline for identifying and

capturing those responsible for the raid. He also deployed 3,000 more troops to support the Fourth Army Region in the south and equipped them with powers to arrest suspects without a court warrant.⁷³ Under these pressures, security forces arrested some religious leaders and teachers from PSTIs based on scant evidence. Somchai Neelpajit, defense lawyer for several defendants facing charges for involvement in prior attacks, disappeared on March 12, 2004 after his abduction by police.⁷⁴ The case remains unresolved.

Central government officials blame the spiral of violence on the revival of armed separatist movements (BRN and GMIP) and corrupt local officials and politicians. However, for many locals, it is the security forces that pose the greatest menace and who are behind false arrests, disappearances, bombings of empty police stations, fires in empty schools, and other random killings. The longstanding conflict between police and the military seems to facilitate this belief. There is no doubt but that corrupted officials are involved in various illegal businesses around the Thai-Malay border area and at times employ force to retaliate against efforts to intimidate their business ventures.⁷⁵ Whatever the case, it is not very easy to separate incidents of criminality from those of separatist violence. The complete distrust between authority and local civilians makes things worse.⁷⁶

After the incidents on April 28, 2005, Thaksin praised the army for its fast reaction and claimed a victory of sorts. An investigation made public about a year after the incident, concluded that the use of force at Krue Se mosque was excessive and those who ordered should be held responsible. However, none of the officers responsible for the order were disciplined, though some were transferred out of the region. Many southerners were not mollified.

After the Tak Bai incident, Thaksin again praised the army and suggested that the scores of deaths were a result of the fasting

during Ramadan. Blame was later pinned on lower level military officers and families of the victims were offered 10,000 baht each. None of the higher level officers found guilty of negligence faced penalties greater than transfers.⁷⁷

Malay-Muslims view themselves as victims of injustice. While there has been some growth of feelings of pan-Islamic solidarity and local anger about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and particularly Thai troops serving in Iraq, unmet basic need for social and economic security, discrimination, and cultural suppression are much more powerful forces stimulating violence in southern Thailand.⁷⁸

Thaksin is responsible for some of the causes of the recent upsurge. The elimination of SBPAC and CPM43 (May 2002) did great damage to intelligence networks⁷⁹, the state's links to community leaders, and the balance between the security and intelligence agencies in the region.⁸⁰ His early 2003 campaign against drugs (with extra-judicial killings) resulted in over 2,500 deaths around Thailand. Thaksin initially was reluctant to talk with local Muslim leaders concerned about security forces' abuses. He offered no assurances that he would crackdown on abuses of power or try to redress grievances.⁸¹ To date, however, Thaksin has paid no political penalty for his blunders in the south. Most Thais, shocked by the violence, support his harsh policies. His party won an overwhelming majority of seats in parliament during the general election in early 2005. However, no candidate from Thai Rak Thai Party won a seat from the southernmost provinces in Thailand.

Implementation of a credible government strategy in the south would in any case have been difficult, but was made hopeless by an incredible turnover among top levels of the agencies most directly responsible. In March 2004, Bhokin Bhalakula replaced Wan Muhammad Nor Mata as Minister of Interior. Chaturon Chaisang⁸² was given overall responsibility for the south. Thamarak Isarangura, hardline Minister of Defense and

Deputy Prime Minister, was replaced in favor of General Chetta Thanajaro who has experience in army activities in the south in the 1980s. In late September, Thaksin appointed Chetta to take overall charge. Less than a week later he opted instead for Chavalit. After another four days he decided on General Sirichai. However, the latest Supreme Commander of SBPPC is General Khwanchart Klahan. The new Deputy Minister of Education is Aree Wong-araya, a Muslim.⁸³ Under the new structure, the National Security Council was for strategic policy and planning in general and Sirichai will coordinate the Fourth Army, Region Nine of the Royal Thai Police, and the miscellaneous intelligence and development agencies in the south. However, in October 2004, General Samphan Boonyanant, close to Thaksin, replaced General Chetta as Minister of Defense. At the same time, General Sant Suratanontl replaced Sunthorn Saikwan as police chief. And the leadership of the Fourth Army passed from General Ponsak Ekbansing to Phisarn Wattananongkiri (with twenty years experience in the south). At the same time, General Sirichai Thanyasiri, Deputy Supreme Commander, was appointed to take overall command of security and intelligence operations. The Southern Border Provinces Peace Building (SBPPC)⁸⁴ was led by General Panlop Pinmanee, Deputy Director of Internal Security Operations Command, until he ordered the military assault on Muslim militants holed up in a Kru Se mosque on April 28, 2004. Because of the tensions between the army (Lieutenant General Pisarn Wattanawongkiri, Fourth Army commander) and police (General Kowit Wattana, commissioner), the SBPPC never really got off the ground.⁸⁵

Thaksin recently formed an independent agency called the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), led by Former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun. The commission is composed of 48 members and focuses mainly on the process of reconciliation and negotiation among parties involved in the

conflict based on a softer approach. The NRC emphasizes diversity and the need for Thais to accept that they are not made up of one single, monolithic, unified ethnicity. As Anand Panyarachun put it, "since nobody can claim that they are pure Thai, who are we imposing the concept of 'Thainess' to people in the south?" Despite its good work, the NRC's influence on government policy has not been great. Disagreements among groups within the NRC have come to light. And a group of Buddhist monks in Pattani proposed the elimination of the NRC and claimed that in its advocacy of Malay-Muslim concerns, the NRC turned a deaf ear to the problems besetting Thai Buddhists in the region.

On July 19, 2005 the Thaksin government imposed a state of emergency on the three southern provinces. Even though there was no evidence of the benefit, the Prime Minister renewed the decree for three months on October 19. Facing so much criticism, the decree was modified into a milder version of martial law. However according to an ICG report, the new version was worse in many ways as there remained no progress in strengthening police forensic capacity and guaranteeing lawyers' access to administrative detainees. These steps might help improve the climate of fear in the region.⁸⁶

Many factors seem to be interacting to fuel the continuing violence in the south in recent years. However, a couple of the most significant causes may relate to the elimination of effective intelligence and negotiating institutions formed during Prem's administration: SBPAC and CPM 43. The ruthless, unsophisticated, and militarized strategies backed by the Thaksin government have paralyzed rule of law and failed to deliver justice. Local civilians hesitate to cooperate with state authorities in fear of possible random arrests and rough treatment by the authorities. They also fear the militants taking their lives if they are discovered cooperating with authorities. The insurgents have been able to intimidate local citizens. For example, insurgents announced that no

Muslim should work on Fridays on penalty of having their ears cut off. The fact that this threat was so effective among Muslims shows that local Malay-Muslim do not trust authorities to protect them. The result was further disruption of the already weak economy in the region.⁸⁷

These and other factors clearly help to explain the ongoing conflict. However, these factors must be understood within a context that continues to have a colonial cast. By its failures to implement a decentralization strategy vigorously, the Thaksin government has missed the opportunity to address the core causes of the conflict.

The Root Causes of the Conflict and Ethnic Nationalism

When looking back to the root causes of the conflict, it is clear that the impact of the centralized state itself explains the emergence of the separatist movement in southern Thailand. As Brown argues, the movement started with the state penetration into the peripheral areas of southern Thailand and the disruption of the local power structures. In response, these peripheral areas tried to defend their autonomy. Local elites articulated an ethnic nationalist ideology and mobilized communities against the central state in order to build communal unity, identity, and the elite's new form of legitimacy. Later on, factions within separatist groups emerged as the younger and more educated generation challenged the traditional figures as the leaders of an ethnic nationalist movement.⁸⁸ The Thai modern state penetration resulted in major change and provoked ethnic group consciousness within the peripheral Malay-Muslim community.

The starting point of ethnic nationalism in southern Thailand can be explained in terms of the "mono-ethnic" character of the state. The state excluded ethnic minorities from full membership and top positions in the state were monopolized by the dominant ethnic majority groups—Thais and assimilated Chinese. The fact that Thai national identity

has long been described in Thai-Buddhist terms tended to cast the Malay-Muslims as aliens.⁸⁹

The state's assimilation policies have been commonly perceived by ethnic Malay-Muslim as supporting the regimes' ethnic majority constituents over the minority. The feeling of being inferior is the unquestionable result. The traditional center of local power, the sultanate of Pattani, was incorporated through military means. Centralized policies during the early 1920s removed the sultanate system and replaced traditional local Malay rulers with Thai officials sent from Bangkok through the provincial governmental system.⁹⁰

Education assimilation policies, under the 1921 Primary Education Act led to the emergence of a new class of educated Malay-Muslims and the emergence of several competing militant separatist groups such as the BRN and PULO in southern Thailand. Although they are in a more privileged position compared to the previous generation, these new leaders see themselves as disadvantaged relative to ethnic Thai and Chinese in competing for jobs.⁹¹ Malay-Muslim students do not embrace the imposed Thai language taught in the schools and this leads to low standards in education. It also encourages many to travel to the Middle East for Islamic education. At the same time, as these new educated Malay-Muslims were deviated from traditional culture through secular education posed by the central government, they do not have enough legitimacy in gaining cultural prestigious status within their own ethnic group.⁹²

The Promise of Decentralization

Centralized administrative policies of the Thai state with tight central-provincial-local relations were patterned on British colonial administrative regimes. This strong central state was designed to secure control over outlying rural areas. The high degree of centralization of the Thai state survived the fall of the absolute monarchy in 1932⁹³ as a system of strong provincial administration

was imposed. Internal communist insurgency and the threat from neighboring communist countries from the 1960s to the 1980s reinforced commitment to strong central control.

This pattern, when applied in the south, eliminated the role of traditional elites within local power structures. As a result, local elites searched for new power positions from which to protect Islamic integrity, including social, economic and political interests.⁹⁴ Haji Sulong's demands included calls for administrative reforms and came in 1948 as a response to the central government's reinforced centralized administrative policies. In short, the strong resistance to Thai rule among Malay-Muslims in the south has been mainly a result of administrative centralization, the central government's forced education assimilation policies, the still low rate of Thai literacy, and the lack of local democratic institutions that provided opportunities for locals to express grievances. With no effective institutions within the political system providing democratic participation for local activists, violent separatist activities tended to emerge.⁹⁵

Violence in the south waned during the 1980s as a result of the state's development policies and the creation of the CPM 43 and the SBPAC. Although these were not particularly democratic institutions, they still provided opportunities for, and engaged local traditional elites in, the central government-dominated governing structure. These institutions also enabled local residents to voice their grievances. The elimination of these cooperative partnership organizations helped trigger the recent upsurge violence in southern Thailand.

Having reviewed the historical context and the nature of Thailand's political and administrative centralized state, I now look at prescriptions advanced as means of resolving the tensions in the far south. I argue that most proposals give surprisingly limited attention to the potential role of decentralization as mechanism in resolving the crisis in the long

run. This is true despite the prior commitment to decentralization enshrined in the 1997 constitution. And decentralization is given relatively little attention even though the root causes of ethnic nationalism and violence separatist movements in southern Thailand stem from the nature of centralized state.⁹⁶

Political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization can allow local governments to govern with wide discretion and authority, and with a minimum of guidelines or decision rules imposed by the central government. Since the 1990s, decentralization of political authority and responsibility has been widely advocated and implemented in developing countries as a means of improving governance, reducing poverty, and inducing development. Proponents view decentralization as important for administrative efficiency and political participation.

According to Arghiros, "taking fiscal and administrative control from non-elected, centrally appointed bureaucrats and giving it to locally elected residents makes the development process more effective, efficient, and responsive".⁹⁷ Crook and Manor also state that decentralization and democratization together reduce the power and the size of central state bureaucracies and eventually lead to improvements in the accountability of development planning and spending.⁹⁸ Theoretically, decentralized administration is more apt to identify local priorities, and to recognize and exploit resources to achieve them. Local government can promote democracy by expanding opportunities for political participation. Decentralization tends to enhance access to political institutions and may bolster local feelings of political efficacy. With fewer actors, tendencies to ride free may diminish. Locals learn from the political process that it is their responsibility to push their governments to serve local needs. This suggests stronger mechanisms of vertical accountability that may promote higher levels of responsiveness and reduce goal displacement. As a further benefit, enhanced local governance reduces demands on the

central government. And to the extent that decentralization fosters democratic practices at the grassroots level, political stability may be enhanced. These results, if realized, might indeed ameliorate conflict in southern Thailand. Results from my survey reported below offer some support for this expectation.

Thais have been discussing means to enhance local governments' performance for several decades. Decentralization emerged as a clear goal with the Seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (1991–96).⁹⁹ Thailand's more open political system encouraged more sustained attention to the goal of decentralization. The economic and social crisis beginning in 1997 coupled with the growing challenges associated with globalization further boosted the need for administrative reforms aimed at decentralizing, downsizing and restructuring government at all levels. In this context, the importance of good governance at the local level is apparent. A popular campaign for strong political reforms led to the drafting and promulgation of Thailand's 16th constitution in 1997.

The constitution mandates a more decentralized and participatory structure in which government institutions at all levels are intended to operate in a more transparent, accountable, and responsive fashion. Chapter 9 of the new 1997 constitution prompted steps to realize radical political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization in Thailand. It calls for the rationalization of the assignment of administrative functions across central and local administrative jurisdictions and the creation of a decentralization committee to oversee implementation of new parliamentary enabling acts. Political participation was enabled through the direct election of local representatives and the introduction of recall mechanisms.¹⁰⁰ Increasing local administrative autonomy was achieved by giving local governments more freedom in generating their own administrative, personnel, and financial policies. Local governments now have more control over local infrastructure

and services, arts, culture, education and training, managing natural resources and the environment, and sanitation.¹⁰¹ To realize these fundamental changes required significant changes in existing political and administrative institutions, processes, and cultures. Under decentralization, local communities have more opportunities to organize and to demand services. Local leaders, for their part, have incentives to mobilize the participation of local constituent groups in service delivery as means of coping with the need to provide an enlarged menu of services with limited local revenues.

Nine different laws and policies serve as base for decentralization efforts, including: 1) the National Decentralization Act of 1999, establishing the roles and responsibilities of the National Decentralization Committee; 2) the Provincial Administrative Decentralization Act; 3) the Tambon Administrative Decentralization Act; 4) the Municipalities Act; 5) the Upgrade Status of Sub-municipalities to Full Municipalities Act; 6) the Change the Status of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Act; 7) the Change the Status of Pattaya City Act; 8) the Master Plans and Procedures of Administrative Power Act; and 9) the Establish a Centralized Personnel Body of Permanent Officials of Local Administrative Organizations Act.¹⁰²

Under the new strong executive system, chairs of executive committees (in the case of TAOs and PAOs) and mayors (in the case of municipalities) are directly elected by local residents. This critical change could be of fundamental importance in the south. Concerns for enhanced local autonomy have been expressed by local Muslims for decades. For example, Haji Sulong's Patani People's Movement, established in 1946, called for "1) the appointment of a single individual with full powers to govern the four provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Satun, and in particular having authority to dismiss, suspend, or replace all government servants—this official to have been born in one of the

four provinces and elected by the people" and "2) all revenue and income derived from the four provinces to be utilized within them."¹⁰³ The new decentralized institutions meet many of these demands

There was considerable debate concerning how to implement decentralization, in particular on the question of the scale of regional governments to which responsibilities would be devolved. Ultimately the decision was made in favor of smaller units rather than provinces, in part because of the fear that granting major powers to provincial units would have the effect of strengthening separatist sentiments. The new direct elected local executive system in which the executive position of all local governments are directly elected and the transferring of administrative powers to implement central government projects and manage local government personnel, are designed to enhance the autonomy of small local communities.

Under the new legal framework, many responsibilities have been transferred to local democratic institutions.¹⁰⁴ Local executives manage local personnel. Previously, the Department of Local Administration under the Ministry of Interior had full jurisdiction in transferring local government personnel through the Committee of Municipal Personnel. Local officials tended to rotate jobs every two to four years. The Local Personnel Administration Act was amended in December 1999 to give local governments increasing authority in determining municipal personnel issues. Generally, the act gives local executives tremendous powers in making decisions in hiring, promoting, and transferring local government officials and employees.

The push for fiscal decentralization predated the major changes engendered by the 1997 constitution. The Local Fiscal Master Plan, drafted by the Fiscal Policy Office of the Ministry of Finance, was approved by the Chuan Cabinet in January 1997. The plan aimed over a five-year period to enhance local

revenues, clarify expenditure responsibilities, reform intergovernmental relations and to establish systems to transfer responsibilities, to monitor and evaluate local governments' fiscal administrations, and to build local capacity to mobilize capital for local investment.¹⁰⁵ The master plan paved the way for the subsequent decentralization process launched by the new constitution.

The 1997 constitution calls for increasing the share of local government revenues and expenditures, assigning more revenue sources to local governments, promoting local fiscal autonomy, and revising the system of intergovernmental transfers to provide grants in a more transparent and predictable way. According to the Decentralization Plan and Procedures Act of 1999, local governments were to be allocated at least 20% of the national government budget by fiscal year 2001 (October 2000–September 2001) at the end of the Eighth National Social Economic Development Plan, and at least 35% by fiscal 2006 (October 2005–September 2006) at the end of the Ninth National Social Economic Development Plan.¹⁰⁶ These specific targets have been subjects of heated debate. Central revenues no longer flow solely through the Department of Local Administration of the Ministry of Interior. The Decentralization Plan and Procedures Act of 1999 enabled local governments to receive grants from other government agencies and ministries as well, beginning in fiscal year of 2001 (Thailand Decentralization Plan and Procedures Act of 1999). Under the 2003 National Budget, the central government allocated 184,066.03 million baht, or 22.19% of the total national budget (829,495.60 million baht) to local governments.¹⁰⁷ It will not reach the 35% target for fiscal year 2006.

Decentralization facilitates local government engagement with local society. Theoretically, under decentralization, with increased political space and local autonomy, increased levels of responsiveness to local constituencies, closer relations to local residents and the reduction of gaps between

local governments and local communities, longstanding resentments in the three southernmost provinces should assume new institutional contours. Looking at the new institutional environment from the perspective of average municipal residents, they have more access to the worlds of officials and politicians than was the case in the past.¹⁰⁸

This has been the case in central Thailand. It seems also to be true in southern Thailand and could be of critical importance in diminishing separatist violence. In central Thailand, I found that in the wake of decentralization, the social gap separating typical local residents from their leaders had diminished. In addition, social networks facilitated citizen access to decision makers. Decentralization, and the new direct-elected executive system, gave local executives more control over municipal officials and encouraged grassroots participation so that municipal governments were more accessible to municipal residents. This suggests that effective decentralization could ameliorate one long-term source of grievance among Malays. Local governments¹⁰⁹ can become a place for local people to express their grievances. Survey results reported below suggest that these hopeful results have been realized in the south to some degree.

Decentralization has been under way for several years and its results in the south appear to have been positive in at least some respects. Yet, over the past four years, violence has escalated dramatically. What went wrong? A number of factors including the impact of the Thai Rak Thai government and the global war on terrorism clearly are overwhelming any beneficial effects that might have been expected to accrue from decentralization. In addition, however, some features of the ways in which decentralization has been implemented, both in general and specifically in the south, may be contributing to the conflict. The weaknesses in the implementation of decentralization are linked to fundamental ambivalence on the part of

central government officials about the goal of decentralization, particularly in the south.

The discourse about political decentralization has a somewhat ambiguous place in broader Thai discussions, however implicit, of Thailand's socio-economic and political orders. Unger argues that three broad perspectives on democracy in Thailand tend to dominate contemporary thinking and that each is associated with distinctive attitudes toward decentralization. The first perspective, represented by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, accepts democracy as the name of the political game, but is not unduly concerned about the rule of law, the development of political institutions, or widespread political participation. Unger suggests that this perspective draws its inspiration in part from the development trajectories of countries such as Singapore or South Korea and makes pragmatic judgments about the means by which the state can be used to foster an internationally competitive economy. The major goal of this perspective is to spread entrepreneurialism, including among more risk averse and traditional farmers in rural areas as a means to boost economic activity and reduce social and economic inequalities. This view is not particularly enthusiastic about decentralization, but aims to retain the center's capacity to reshape Thai society and politics.

The second perspective, in contrast, focuses on drawing more on local inspiration and wants to undo or to limit the great disruption experience by Thai rural communities beginning especially from the 1970s as a result of more intense exposure to international market forces. It aims to strengthen local communities' capacities to shape their own futures through relatively self-reliant strategies and increased abilities to control access to and exploitation of local natural resources. This perspective expresses strong support for decentralization.

The third, liberal, perspective focuses on what the 1997 Constitution seemed to promise, including transparency, more partici-

pation, more rule of law and accountability, and less corruption and official malfeasance. While proponents of this vision are fairly clear on what they want, they seem less certain how to get it. They tend to resort to ethical appeals for good behavior and the use of media to expose bad governance. Adherents of this liberal view also tend to be ambivalent about decentralization, favoring more local participation, but not trusting that the process will not be hijacked by the local special (construction) interests of local politicians.¹¹⁰

Applying this broad framework to the situation in the south, the Thaksin government's top-down strategy clearly reflects the first perspective. It is highly doubtful that such a strategy can be applied successfully to end the conflict in the south. The root of the conflict in the south stems from the nature of centralized state. As the central government perceives undue local autonomy (particularly in the south) as a threat, southerners have suffered from the disruption of local power structures and unmet basic needs for social and economic security. Efforts to suppress the force of local identities seem to offer only more conflict. Decentralization promises a better outcome, if implemented in an effective way.

The centralizing impulses of the Thaksin government are reinforced by the levels of violence and the inevitable central roles accorded to security forces. The increasing levels of concern about violence in the south and the commitment of additional resources have not been matched by efforts to engage local governments in the area. Rather, initiatives have aimed at closer cooperation among police and military forces, central government agencies, the Thai National Security Council, and numbers of intelligence agencies at the center. These steps do not address the need to recognize the conditions specific to the region and to craft policies and institutions appropriate to manage those conditions.

The southernmost provinces of Thailand are relatively underdeveloped, have poor

infrastructure, and suffer frequent flooding. In some provinces, as many as one third of the population live below the poverty line. The average household income in Narathiwat is one-tenth that of Bangkok and three-fifths of the poor in the south as a whole are concentrated in the three provinces.¹¹¹ The southernmost provinces are particularly poor, although even there poverty is not as extreme as in the Northeast of Thailand. Much economic activity in the south has centered on tin mining, rubber, and fishing. However, most of the larger businesses in these areas, as elsewhere, are in the hands of Sino-Thais.¹¹²

During the 1970s, 85 percent of village leaders could neither read nor write Thai, while the Buddhist central bureaucrats could not speak Malay. While avoidance behavior toward officials was common among all Thais, it appears to have been particularly evident among Malays.¹¹³

The south has a reputation for high levels of banditry and violence. Some scholars focusing on the region argue for distinctive leadership styles and for significant cultural differences between Southerners and other Thais, particularly in terms of a more aggressive and masculine style supposedly widespread in the South.¹¹⁴ Many acts of violence apparently have been perpetrated by young drug addicts hired by separatists across the border in Malaysia. The region is rich in illegal activities, including protection rackets, kidnappings, smuggling, assassins for hire, and gangs. Security forces may have blamed some of this background violence on separatists. The security forces themselves may have been responsible for some bombings of empty schools and police stations in a bid to boost their budgets.

Municipal and TAO officials and politicians have now become targets of violence as militants see TAO personnel as stooges of central government authorities. Central government officials, however, often perceive TAOs as inefficient and incapable, and as assisting the militants. As a result, the central government tends not to trust local

authorities to handle much of anything. Much development money goes through military or provincial government channels, denying TAOs experience in administering these programs.

Decentralization is creating a new class of political elites in the region. Perhaps partly due to the competition they pose for traditional elites, religious leaders and the new local politicians often do not get along very well. The traditional, religious leaders and some other locals note disapprovingly that presidents of TAOs in the three southernmost provinces do not wear sarongs (a traditional piece of cloth worn as a long skirt), but t-shirts and pants instead. Some residents perceive their political bosses as overly secular and look disapprovingly on their consumption of alcohol and failures to fast during ramadan. For their part, some TAO politicians regard religious leaders as being out of touch with local developments. There also are complaints that some religious leaders ask for money from TAOs to build mosques, but then pocket the funds.¹¹⁵

When local politicians walk around town, they often are invited by local residents to come in and chat and have coffee, and are expected to pay the bill. This modest expenditure serves to show their generosity and concern about the issues that local residents have in mind. Politicians also have to attend any social and religious ceremony when invited. These rituals reflect the degree to which local politicians are directly connected to local people, depending on their votes and political support.

The politicians, however, complain that their budgets are inadequate. TAOs in general have very small budgets. More substantial development funds pass through alternative channels, as noted above. While some TAO politicians acknowledge grounds for central government concerns about local governments' corruption, they note that the military, police and other state officials too are corrupt. And they maintain that local governments understand local conditions

better and are more apt to initiate and implement those development projects that reflect real local needs. Locals complain of a “Bangkok knows best” mentality as the part of central government officials.¹¹⁶

In 2003, the central government approved a large budget for security projects in southern Thailand. Instead of allocating the money to local governments, the money was channeled through the military (SBPPC), the new entity created to replace SBPAC. Locals complain that the resulting projects did not reflect local needs. For example, hydro-agricultural projects allegedly wasted some 100 million baht. Seeds ordered from Singapore (and passing through Bangkok,) were inappropriate to local soil conditions. Local leaders would have preferred funds to promote vegetable production. Locally initiated projects, however, lack funding and have not been implemented. Such problems in the south may relate in part to failures on the part of the state to involve local people in governance. Aggravating the problem, central government officials understandably are reluctant to go into the field because of security concerns. As a result, the government’s presence has an overwhelmingly security-dominated face, with only the military and police in evidence.

In March 2004, a cabinet meeting in Pattani approved a 315 million baht budget for development projects in the southernmost provinces. The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) at that time was responsible for project details. All the project plans had already been initiated through the ‘CEO governor development project’. However, Thaksin then initiated the SBPPC and designated General Sririchai to be the head of the new agency, giving it responsibility for the southernmost provinces, including the development projects initiated earlier by the NESDB and the CEO project. Authority over these projects was transferred to the SBPPC. As a result, the projects were put on hold and both TAOs and provincial governments were bypassed.

The security challenge in the south must be met in ways that do not sideline development priorities and local governments. Civilian bureaucrats from all agencies that are related to development projects are needed to implement projects and to coordinate with local governments in the south. In fact, however, even officials from provincial governments refuse to get involved at the grassroots level because of security problems.

One of the problems that emerged most clearly from interviews with local residents concerned education. Several teachers in state schools in the south have been killed by insurgents. Some teachers now refuse to teach because of the threats they face. Many locals suggest they want to send their kids to regular state schools so that they will be able to speak both Thai and Malay. However, apparently many kids are unable to read even after six years of primary schooling. This is a result, argued locals, of the poor quality of the teachers sent to the south. These teachers allegedly are not interested in teaching, often come late and leave early. Locals argued that the problem of absent teachers (and other officials) predates the intensified security threats of recent years. Officials spend their time, locals maintain, thinking about how to secure a transfer back to Bangkok or some other region.

Teachers are selected based solely on scores on a single examination. Apparently, those with lower (but still passing) scores tend to be sent to the south. Few are actually from the region. Locals actually do receive preferences in the recruitment process, but nonetheless relatively few do well enough on the exam to land jobs. The teachers coming in from other regions find the environment alien and are apt to feel insecure in the absence of a heavy security presence.

Locals also complain that teachers have patronizing views of southerners and that teachers tend to embrace the goal of making young Muslim kids into central Thais. This attitude breeds antagonism between Thai-

Malay and Thai Buddhists in the south. As a result, locals tend to keep aloof from central authorities.

These problems help to explain why Malay-Muslim parents send their kids to Pondok schools. Ustaz (religious teacher teaching in Pondok school) are mostly educated in the Middle East or South Asia. They often are committed teachers. They typically are intent on putting their charges on the moral path to reach God. Most pondok schools use a curtain to divide the room, separating male and female students, with teachers teaching from the male side.

Resolution of the conflict in conflict in southern Thailand is more likely to result from a bottom-up instead of top-down approach. Rohan suggests that some forms of political space and means to express socio-economic grievance are necessary to reduce the level of conflict.¹¹⁷ The International Crisis Group focuses on stricter application of the rule of law in order to ensure justice, including human rights.¹¹⁸ It also addresses the significance of mechanisms for addressing political and economic grievances at the local level.

Thailand's current institutional structure as defined by the 1997 constitution provides a basis for more political participation through the decentralization of state power to local democratic institutions. However, this mechanism has been overlooked due to the lack of trust on the part of Bangkok officials and their "Bangkok knows best" & "CEO mentalities." Adding to the problem is the very limited field research done at the grassroots level in southern Thailand. We do not have enough detailed studies of developments on the ground in the south. And among the small sample of available studies, few are rooted in careful empirical analysis. This makes it more likely that development policies will not be based on local realities and that local governments will be by-passed. These have in fact tended to be the results.

Breaking this vicious circle requires looking at the conflict using a different framework. We have to search for ways to reduce the existing antagonism between local society and the centralized state. Engaging local society through decentralized political institutions offers a promising alternative approach to reducing tensions. Integrating local people into political institutions as during the 1980s (albeit not in a broadly participatory fashion) proved promising. The current violence represents in significant part a movement for political, social, and legal space. The central state has failed to accommodate these needs, including the provision of justice and human security.¹¹⁹ Decentralization offers a solution as it institutionalizes broader participation for local citizens. As the root cause of the problem stems from centralization of the state, decentralization seems a promising alternative.

Thai government officials clearly do not understand the nature and the complexity of the conflict. Indeed, intelligence on just who they are fighting is very meager. Yet the central government must defeat insurgents' efforts to win local Malay-Muslim support. To date, the government has failed to do so. Instead of trying to make local residents feel comfortable expressing both their Thai and their Malay identities, the government has tried to force locals to choose between them. This lack of comfort with alternative identities is then linked to a desire to radically curtail effective decentralization of political institutions.

In addition, the central government tends not to trust the ability or the readiness of local governments to handle their new responsibilities. This further undermines central government commitment to decentralization. Indeed, most local governments in Thailand feature weak financial management, insufficient resources, inefficient planning and service delivery, and deficient public infrastructure.¹²⁰ Central government officials note widespread corruption, vote buying, and

patron-client relationship at the local level and argues that these factors slow down the implementation of decentralization policy. These major problems, in turn, result from inadequate revenue resources, poor mobilization of existing revenues, lack of technical capabilities and personnel, and a lack of clarity concerning the responsibilities transferred from the central government. Even those who are responsible for implementing the policy at the central, provincial, and local levels lack a full understanding of the processes of decentralization. As a result, central officials tend to sustain their key roles and control over local democratic institutions.¹²¹

Across Thailand, decentralization suffers from the surviving influence of the former regional administrative structures. This phenomenon impedes new local government structures. A problem particularly pronounced in the south is that central development funds often go not to local governments directly, but via regional governments and military and other agents of the central administrative structure (provincial governments, Ampor or district, Tambon or sub-district, and Mubaan or villages). Given the redistribution of political authority entailed in the decentralization policy, many of the recent losers strongly oppose these initiatives. Sub-district headmen (kamnan) and village headmen (phu yai baan) are affected directly by the establishment of the new direct elected chairman of executive committee of TAOs. Kamnan and phu yai baan previously dominated development planning in tambon or sub-district councils. Their authority has been transferred to TAOs, but they remain ready to work directly with the central government, bypassing the new political institutions.

Further problems facing decentralization, and specific to the south, are the Thai Rak Thai party's weakness in the region and the severity of the security crisis. Having no seats in the region, the party has few hopes of reaping gains by championing the cause of

local governments in the region. As a result, the government tends to exercise its direct influence through central administrative channels.

Disbursement delays are common problems for the new local governments all over Thailand. Although municipal governments now receive more funds from the central government, their discretion in administering those funds is very restricted. Local governments all over the country are facing severe constraints and difficulties in coping with these rapid changes. Problems also result from confusion over jurisdictional issues, the limited capacities of some local governments in coping with more complicated hiring and ordering processes, and a lack of local interest in some initiatives previously launched by officials at other levels of government. The greatest obstacle lies in the overlapping duties assigned among municipalities, TAOs, PAOs, and provincial and central governments. Responsibilities for the tourism industry, cultural preservation, disaster prevention and security, for example, are assigned not only to municipal governments, but also to TAOs, and PAOs.

Regardless of fiscal decentralization policies, local governments still do not have authority to set priorities and make decisions on expenditure allocations. Local government budgets need to be approved by the provincial governor or district council which are the arms and ears of the central government. General and specific subsidies to local governments allocated from the central government are strictly monitored by central agencies. Even though there has been a significant increase in the portion of the national budget allocated to local governments, most local government outflows are mandated by the central government as most of the transferred funds are earmarked for specific functions.¹²²

The problem lies not with decentralization but the ways in which decentralization policies have been implemented. This paper points out that effective decentralization tends

to be hindered by institutional arrangements and weak support from the central government.

Despite the many difficulties associated with the early years of decentralization, the policy continues to hold the potential of having a positive impact on southern Thailand. Decentralization seems the logical solution for resolving violence in the south by addressing its root cause. More attention needs to be given, however, to the implementation of the policy, in southern Thailand. The central government needs to support more coordinated planning and capacity building at the local level.¹²³

In the context of ongoing violence, the implementation of decentralization in the south has been relatively limited compared to other regions in Thailand. Martial law and the deployment of police and military forces in the area limit flexibility and delay decentralization. Suspicious of the roles of local schools (Pondok), and convinced of the importance of regional development programs, the central government is hesitant to relinquish regulatory authority over primary education or development spending. Central government officials fear, not without some basis, that local control will result in more local students lacking the skills appropriate for employment in a modern economy. The result could then be continued slow economic growth in the region. Despite these concerns, however, a stronger and sustained commitment to an effective decentralization policy is necessary.

Current Socio-political Landscape in Southernmost Thailand

My survey research¹²⁴ (see Appendix 1 for more detailed results drawn from the survey) gives a general picture of the socio-political characteristics of residents in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province. Respondents' average levels of interest in local politics have risen during the past 5 years, along with feelings of political efficacy and assessments of the importance of

political participation. Respondents' satisfaction with their TAOs' performances and their beliefs in TAOs' abilities to curb the violence in the south also are high. Respondents register support for the notion that TAOs may help to ease violence in the south. 64.4% of respondents believe that the transfer of central government responsibilities to local democratic institutions such as TAOs may help ease the conflict and violence in the south. Furthermore, 63% of respondents report that they believe that decentralization can help local governments such as TAOs and municipalities to be more responsive to local needs.

These results portray local attitudes strongly supportive of decentralization. Other findings support a general picture of high levels of civic attitudes. For example, over three-quarters of respondents indicated they pay attention to local election campaigns in deciding how to vote. And while more of them are influenced in their vote choice by vote canvassers (33%) than by the mass media (13%), they are most apt to be swayed by family or friends (62%). A very large plurality (41%) suggested that candidates' policy platforms determined their votes, as against 12% citing candidates' reputations or personalities.

We have found a statistically significant relationship¹²⁵ between education and income (with a chi-square value of 339.991, at the .01 level). We also found a statistically significant relationship between religion and income in the region (with chi-square value of 20.52, at the 0.01 level). Buddhists respondents tend to earn more than Muslims, and to have more education (with chi-square value of 11.483, at the 0.01 level).

When we shift our focus to attitudes and behaviors (see Figure 1 in appendix 2), we found that higher incomes are associated with higher levels of interest in local politics. Those earning 20,000 baht a month or more had significantly higher levels of interest (8.33 on a 10-point scale) than the mean for all respondents (6.83). The average level of

interest among the majority concentrated in the lowest income group (under 5,000 baht a month) was 6.45.

Income also influences levels of participation in local government (see Figure 2 in appendix 2). Those whose incomes are 20,000 and higher are most apt to participate in local politics. Levels of education also are related to interest in local politics (see Figure 3 in appendix 2). While respondents with only a primary level education (or less) scored 6.26 on this scale, the highest level of education (B.A. and above) was associated with a 7.4 level of interest. More educated respondents also tend to report higher levels of efficacy, though here the differences are less pronounced (7.74 for the highest of the five groups, 7.22 for the lowest.) Figure 4 in appendix 2 also shows that levels of education also are related to tendency to vote at the local level (on a 4-point scale). While respondents with only a primary level education (or less) scored 3.15 on this scale, the highest level of education (B.A. and above) was associated with 3.74 level.

Respondents were asked to what degree they agreed with the statement "local politics are matters for everyone, not only for politicians or specific special interests." While we cannot offer a comparative (regional) score against which to assess the mean score for the whole sample (8.72), it certainly seems to suggest a high level of agreement. When we differentiate among respondents, we find that levels of education predict higher levels of agreement with the statement (8.97 for the highest group, 8.36 for the lowest.) Not surprisingly, the most educated were also the most prone to endorse a statement referring to the importance of local politicians' formal educational qualifications.

Age also proved to be a variable predicting differences in attitudes among respondents (see Figure 5, Appendix 2). The relationship between age and interest in local politics is curvilinear, with the youngest (18–20) group indicating the lowest levels of interest, those in their 20s recording the

highest levels (ranging from 6.49 to 7.18) and levels of interest falling from that peak as the age of respondents rises. Those in their 20s also record the highest levels of political efficacy in response to a question asking respondents to indicate the extent of their agreement with the statement "If we all vote in local elections we might be able to change local political conditions". And this age group was prone to endorse the importance of voting in local elections. The same group is most likely to believe that TAOs could curb ongoing conflicts and violence in the south (see Figure 12 and 13, Appendix 2). Of course, many of the militants engaged in violence are drawn from the age cohort in their 20s that records the highest levels of interest in politics. This may reflect the ineffectiveness, to date, of alternative local political institutions as channels through which residents can voice political grievances. If this interpretation is correct, it suggests that putting more emphasis on local governance could be a means of engaging militants in local politics.

When looking at levels of satisfaction toward TAOs' performances on different issues, we found that the Mean score of overall satisfaction toward TAOs management and services are high (2.92 on a 4-point scale, see Table 1, appendix 1). Those residents aged 41-50 are those who are most satisfied. Respondents aged between 21-30 are most satisfied with TAOs' public health services, registration and record services, and TAOs abilities to solve local problems. However, they give TAOs a very poor grade for their work in maintaining security. (see figure 6, Appendix 2).

When we considering the differences in levels of satisfaction toward TAOs' abilities to solve local problems among those who speak different languages (see figure 7 and 8, Appendix 2), we found that those who speak both Thai and Malay are more satisfied (Mean = 2.23, statistically significant at .01 level). At the same time, Muslim respondents are more satisfied than are Buddhists. This implies that

Muslims who speak both Thai and Malay are the most satisfied group.

Summarizing some of the findings reported above, Buddhists tend to have higher levels of education and income; and higher levels of education and income are associated with higher levels of political efficacy and interest in local politics. We found, however, that we cannot then assume that Buddhists tend to have higher levels of political efficacy (see figure 9 and 10 in Appendix 2) or to participate more in local politics. On the contrary, the survey reveals that Muslim respondents hold higher levels of political efficacy than do Buddhists (7.49 against 7.17, statistically significant at the .05 level). All else equal, the lower income and education Muslims should score lower than the Buddhists on these measures. However, the results suggest convincingly that significant differences between Buddhists and Muslims in levels of political efficacy and levels of political participation more than offset the effects of the gaps in income and education.

Indeed when we look at political participation scores, greater Muslim activism is evident (statistically significant at the .01 level.) Muslims also report the highest levels of opposition to corruption. Muslims are most likely to believe in TAOs' abilities to curb the ongoing violence in the south (see Figure 13, Appendix 2). These findings are consistent with qualitative ones that emerged from interviews and observations. And they suggest strong support for the argument that the central government should be championing local governments and decentralization. High levels of local political interest and involvement might facilitate, via enhanced accountability, better governance. And higher levels of mobilization in the absence of improved governance are likely to continue to breed frustration.

We also see potentially important differences when we shift our attention from religion to language. While differences between Thai and Malay speakers on political efficacy scores are modest (7.14 and 7.36,

respectively, see Figure 14, Appendix 2), a larger gap is evident when we look at bilingual respondents (7.69.) Here again further analysis is required to discover whether this gap can be explained by other variables such as income or education. Similar results are evident when we look at levels of political participation (see Figure 15, Appendix 2). Again the highest scores go to the bilingual group and the lowest to the Thai speakers.

Conclusion

The southern Thai conflict is long running, has deep historical roots, and engages issues of identity. It also threatens to spread over Thailand's borders by creating tensions with Malaysia and by linking up with global Islamist networks. We might therefore expect the conflict to represent grave challenges to the Thai state. However, it also seems possible that the conflict can be managed and mitigated through competent political management. Chief among the policy instruments available to quell the conflict is central government encouragement of decentralization. If this argument sounds unduly optimistic, it is worth reminding ourselves that only five years ago the conflict seemed to be following a stable path of declining intensity. And it also is important to keep in mind how limited is our understanding of the causes underlying this conflict, though this last point can be used either to bolster or to undermine any specific prescription.

A successful political strategy to contain the southern conflict, including emphasis on decentralization, should be based on an understanding of conditions specific to the far south. At one level, these differences concern matters of identity. The majority of the residents of Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala are Malay-speaking Muslims with a history linked to the Kingdom of Pattani. These factors differentiate them from other Thais and often have been sources of conflict between locals and central government officials who have

come from other parts of Thailand to govern the area. It may also be important, however, to consider differences between Thais of the far south and those of other regions in terms of more abstract political attitudes and behaviors. While the research findings reported here are no more than suggestive, they provide hints of significantly higher levels of political efficacy and participation among Malay speakers and Muslims in the south, as well as more positive evaluations of experience with decentralization. Also, these same groups report attitudes more strongly opposed to corruption. These differences may simply be the response of many locals to a sense of being victims of unjust political arrangements. However, they may also stem from broader differences in political culture that have roots in a separate history and, perhaps, even Islam itself. Islam's daily reenactment of communal commitments to solidarity and its abstract commitment to the equality of all members of the *ummah* may, at least in Pattani, tend to foster political identities conducive to a stronger civil society able to sustain links with local political institutions and, in the process, to nurture better governance. It seems likely that decentralization would at least enable forms of local governance superior to those experienced by most locals in recent decades.

Endnotes

¹ Alagappa, Muthiah. 1987. *The National Security of Developing States: Lessons from Thailand*. Dover, Mass.: Auburn House Publication.

² Albritton, Robert B. et al. 1996. "Electoral Participation by Southern Thai Buddhists and Muslims." *South East Asia Research* 4 (2): 127-156.

³ Girling, John. 1981. "Thailand: Society and politics," Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 265; Yegar, Moshe, 2002. "Between integration and secession: The Muslim communities of the southern Philippines, southern Thailand, and western Burma," Oxford: Lexington Books, p. 73.

⁴ As in the case of Sri Lanka where the ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority contributes to the attempt to draw in decentralization and devolution of power in the political structure of Sri Lanka (See Gamini Samaranayake's 'Ethnic conflict and the process of decentralization and devolution of power in Sri Lanka' *Dept. of Political Science, University of Peradeniya* Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, www.decentralization.ws/icd2/papers/decent_srilanka.htm)

⁵ Albritton, Robert B. et al. 1996. "Electoral Participation by Southern Thai Buddhists and Muslims." *South East Asia Research* 4 (2): 127-156.

⁶ Albritton, Robert B., and Thawilwadee Bureekul. 2003. *Measuring Democratization in Thailand after Political Reform*. Nonthaburi: King Prajadhipok's Institute. (based on surveys on 2001 and 2002)

⁷ Chandra-nuj Mahakanjana, 2004. "Decentralization, Social Capital, and Municipal government in Thailand", Ph.D. Dissertation, Northern Illinois University.

⁸ 1997 constitution along with the implementation of decentralization Act projected that 35% of the national budget go to local government by 2006. However, it is clear that this is not to be reach (now only 25% so far).

⁹ Skocpol, Theda, 1994. "Social Revolutions in the Modern World.." Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰ The questionnaires include questions on 1) the existing levels of local resident's political participation, 2) their perspective on decentralization and conflict in the south, 3) levels of residents' political efficacy, 4) political culture scale, 5) levels of satisfaction toward local government's provided services, 6) levels of resident's confidence toward their local governments ability in dealing with conflict in southern Thailand, 7) attitude toward the effect of decentralization on conflict in southern Thailand, 8) resident's evaluation of quality of local politicians, 9) residents' evaluation of the change of the quality of local politicians and local governments after decentralization, and 10) attitude toward local political participation.

¹¹ Scientific randomly selection process is not practical due to the lack of trust, according to number of scholars down there. If researchers went to a specific household and told them they are randomly selected to answer all the questions in the survey, they would be panic and will not cooperate believing that they are on either government or separatist group's black list and refuse to cooperate. As a result, systematic random sampling was employed.

¹² Mostly Sunni with small number of Shi'a sect.

¹³ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.

¹⁴ Ladd Thomas, 1974. "Bureaucratic Attitudes and Behavior as Obstacles to Political Integration of Thai Muslims," *Southeast Asia: An International Quarterly*, 3(1): 545-568. Cited in Raymond Skupin, 2005, "Understanding South Thailand: Contributions by Ladd Thomas," Paper presented at the 9th International Conference on Thai Studies, April 2005, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, U.S.A.

¹⁵ Later harshly suppressed by authorities and fled to Malaysia. (Che Manh; Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, 1995. *Thailand: Economy and Politics*, p. 271, Oxford University Press).

¹⁶ Called the 'Chularajamontri'

¹⁷ New York Times, November 2, 2004.

¹⁸ Alagappa, Muthiah. 1987. *The National Security of Developing States: Lessons from Thailand*. Dover, Mass.: Auburn House Publication.

¹⁹ Pasuk Phongpaichit & Chris Baker, 1995. *Thailand: Economy and politics*, Oxford University Press. P.224.

²⁰ Vickery, Michael. 1970. "Thai Regional Elites and the Reforms of King Chulalongkorn ." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 29 (4): 876.

²¹ Suhrke, Astri. 1977. "Loyalists and separatists: The Muslim in southern Thailand." *Asian Survey*. 57:3: pp. 237-50

²² This treaty demarcated a border between Patani (of Thailand) and Kelantan, Perak, Kedah, and Perlis (of the British Malaya at that time).

²³ Pasuk Phongpaichit & Chris Baker. 1995, *Thailand: Economy and politics*. Oxford University Press. p. 270; Yegar, Moshe. 2002 . *Between Integration and Secession: The Muslim Communities of the Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand, and Western Burma/Myanmar* . Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, p. 87.

²⁴ Gunaratna, Rohan, Acharya, Arabinda and Chua, Sabrina, 2005, *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*. Marshall Cavendish Corp/Ccb p. 3.

²⁵ For example, the Education Act of 1921 forcing Muslim in the south to receive secular education through state primary schools in order to learn Thai language for 4 years. The curriculum also included Buddhist ethics taught by Buddhist monks. Islamic schools were forced to closed down and Muslim scholars were undermined.

²⁶ 1903—revolving against Bangkok led by Tengku Abdul Kadir Qamaruddin, the last Sultan of Patani. (the revolt was defeated and Imprisoned, later fled to Kelantan in 1915 to regroup, and then organized the biggest campaign against the Education Act of 1921). Two more unsuccessful revolts against Thai government were led by Sufi Sheikhs. See ICG "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad"; Gunaratna, Acharya, and Chua, *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*, 2005.

²⁷ International Crisis Group Report, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.

²⁸ Scupin, Raymond. 2005. "Understanding South Thailand: Contributions by Ladd Thomas." Paper prepared for 9th International Conference on Thai Studies, April 2005, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, U.S.A.

²⁹ Policies under the name of 'Cultural Mandates' or 'Thai Custom Decree' were imposed in order to forced assimilate all ethnic minority especially in the south. Malay language was prohibited to be used in government offices, all government employees were forced to take Thai names, traditional Muslim Malay dresses were prohibited. Islamic law was also withdrawn.

³⁰ True, Linda Jane. 2004. "Balancing Minorities: A Study of Southern Thailand," Paper Presented at the Concil on Thai Studies, October 2004, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, U.S.A.

³¹ Skupin, Raymond. 2005. "Understanding South Thailand: Contributions by Ladd Thomas," Paper presented at the 9th International Conference on Thai Studies, April 2005, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, U.S.A.

³² Brown, David. 1988. "From Peripheral Communities to Ethnic Nations: Separatism in Southeast Asia," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Spring, 1988) , p. 62

³³ Ladd Thomas, *Political Violence in the Muslim Provinces of Southern Thailand* (Singapore, ISEAS Occasional Paper 28, April 1975, p. 26-27).

³⁴ Brown, David. 1988. "From Peripheral Communities to Ethnic Nations: Separatism in Southeast Asia," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Spring, 1988) , p. 63.

- ³⁵ Suhrke, Astri. 1977. "Royalists & Separatists: The Muslim of Southern Thailand," *Asian Survey* 57:3 P. 241.
- ³⁶ Forbes, Andrew. 1982. "Thailand Muslim Minorities: Assimilation, Secession, or Coexistence?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 22, no. 2 (1982), p. 10.
- ³⁷ True, Linda Jane. 2004. "Balancing Minorities: A Study of Southern Thailand," Paper Presented at the Concil on Thai Studies, October 2004, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, U.S.A.
- ³⁸ Gunaratna, Rohan, Acharya, Arabinda and Chua, Sabrina. 2005, *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*. Marshall Cavendish Corp/Ccb, p. 5.
- ³⁹ Chula Rajmontri's duty is to give advice to the king regarding Islam issues.
- ⁴⁰ True, Linda Jane. 2004. "Balancing Minorities: A Study of Southern Thailand," Paper Presented at the Concil on Thai Studies, October 2004, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, U.S.A.
- ⁴¹ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁴² International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁴³ For more detail, see International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁴⁴ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁴⁵ From Gunaratna, Rohan, Acharya, Arabinda and Chua, Sabrina. 2005. *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*. Marshall Cavendish Corp/Ccb, but estimated numbers vary. For example, in ICG report, 400 Muslim were killed and thousands fled to Malaysia.
- ⁴⁶ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁴⁷ PSTIs have become more prestigious than the pondoks, but also the place where militant organizations and activities have been taken place.
- ⁴⁸ Pondoks or Ponohs are religious boarding school and the most significant institution to strengthen Malay-Muslim Identity.
- ⁴⁹ Surat Horachaikul, "The far south of Thailand in the era of the American empire, 9/11 version, and Thaksin's 'cash and gung-ho' premiership," *Asian Review*, 16, 2003, p.137
- ⁵⁰ A splinter group formed from BRN's political arm is believed to be the only organization capable of organizing and carrying out the raids of January 4, 2004, and the demonstrations that triggered the Tak Bai incident on October 25, 2004. This BRN splinter actively promotes militant operations and building its influence within the pondoks. ICG Report, 2005, P. 8
- ⁵¹ About 160,000 Buddhists moved down to the southern part of Thailand, Yegar, 1977
- ⁵² Surat Horachaikul, "The far south of Thailand in the era of the American empire, 9/11 version, and Thaksin's 'cash and gung-ho' premiership," *Asian Review*, 16, 2003, p.137; also cited in Daniel Unger's Symposium on "Divided States and Contested Territories In Southeast Asia: Retrospect and Prospect" December 4, 2004, Michigan State University.
- ⁵³ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁵⁵ Yegar, Moshe. 2002. *Between Integration and Secession: The Muslim Communities of the Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand, and Western Burma/Myanmar*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books. p. 146

- ⁵⁶ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁵⁷ Che Man, W. K. 1990 . Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand . Singapore : Oxford University Press. p.99.
- ⁵⁸ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁵⁹ True, Linda Jane. 2004. "Balancing Minorities: A Study of Southern Thailand," Paper Presented at the Concil on Thai Studies, October 2004, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, U.S.A.
- ⁶⁰ M. Ladd Thomas, 1974, "Bureaucratic Attitudes and Behavior as Obstacles to Political Integration of Thai Muslims," Southeast Asia: An International Quarterly, 3(1), pp. 545-568.
- ⁶¹ As a result, over 100 civil servants, most of them were policemen, were transferred out of the region over 17 years.
- ⁶² International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁶³ Members of the Wadah faction running under the Thai Rak Thai Party were defeated in the in the 2005 general elections
- ⁶⁴ Gunaratna, Rohan, Acharya, Arabinda and Chua, Sabrina. 2005, Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand. Marshall Cavendish Corp/Ccb, p. 9.
- ⁶⁵ Gunaratna, Rohan, Acharya, Arabinda and Chua, Sabrina. 2005, Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand. Marshall Cavendish Corp/Ccb.
- ⁶⁶ Educational curriculum in PSTIs does not offer Malay language as one of several options for students to choose for their elective classes. This implies the suppression of Malay culture. (ICG report, 2005)
- ⁶⁷ 95% of Thai-Malay-Muslim are in agricultural sector.
- ⁶⁸ Jitpiromsri, 2005, Quandary of Deep South's Conflicts: Structural or Ideological Determinant?, paper prepared for 9th International Conference on Thai Studies, April 2005, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, April 2005.
- ⁶⁹ Jitpiromsri, 2005, Quandary of Deep South's Conflicts: Structural or Ideological Determinant?, paper prepared for International Conference on Thai Studies, April 2005, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, April 2005.
- ⁷⁰ *Nation*, January 9, 2004
- ⁷¹ Possibly for their sin value (nightclubs, etc.)
- ⁷² *Nation*, April 29, 2004
- ⁷³ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁷⁴ He had been campaigning to get 50 thousand signatures necessary to end martial law. He had claimed that the army was behind the January raid and was involved in a conspiracy (True). Somchai also claimed that his clients had been tortured by the Thai police.
- ⁷⁵ Surat Horachaikul, "The far south of Thailand in the era of the American empire, 9/11 version, and Thaksin's 'cash and gung-ho' premiership," *Asian Review*, 16, 2003, p.139
- ⁷⁶ As seen in the situation when the two Thai marines were abducted, tortured, and killed by young militants in Tan Yong Li Mo village. (*Kom Chat Luk*, September 20, 2005)
- ⁷⁷ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.
- ⁷⁸ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.

⁷⁹ According to Panitan Wattanayakorn, there are numbers of intelligence agencies operating on southern Thailand issues (such as the forth army Intelligence Division, Internal Security Operations Command, National Intelligence Agency, National Security Council, Armed Forces Security Center, the Royal Thai Police, etc.) However, the cooperation among these agencies is proved to be problematic. Problems regarding their expertise (and the accurate source of information) and the collaboration of all intelligence information gathered from each agency led to the inaccurate analysis of the situation.

⁸⁰ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.

⁸¹ Surat Horachaikul, "The far south of Thailand in the era of the American empire, 9/11 version, and Thaksin's 'cash and gung-ho' premiership," *Asian Review*, 16, 2003, p.144

⁸² He is a former student radical during the 1970s.

⁸³ Davis, A. 2004. "School system forms the frontline in Thailand's southern unrest," *Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor*, November 1, 2004

⁸⁴ To cope with situation in the south, the government announced the Prime Minister's Order 68/2547 and formed the SBPPC on March 24, 2004. It later, under the Prime Minister's Order 260/2547 and 261/2547 dated October 4, 2004, gained a new status as a Committee on Southern Border Provinces Peace-Building Policy supervised directly to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister also nominated its Supreme Commander. He also has been empowered to propose reward or punishment to civil servants, military, police officers, and others who are assigned to assist that mission of the Committee.
(http://www.southpeace.go.th/eng/Origin_of_SBPPC.htm)

⁸⁵ Unger, Daniel. 2004. "Religion and Ethnic Conflict in Thailand" Symposium on "Divided States and Contested Territories In Southeast Asia: Retrospect and Prospect," December 4, 2004. Michigan State University.

⁸⁶ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Thailand's Emergency Decree: No Solution," Asia Report N°105, 18 November 2005.

⁸⁷ Thaksin's campaign is to organize the tour to the south and bring along superstar from BKK to show local people that it is ok to go to the market and shop and do business on Friday.

⁸⁸ Brown, David. 1988. "From Peripheral Communities to Ethnic Nations: Separatism in Southeast Asia," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Spring, 1988) , p. 54-55.

⁸⁹ Brown, David. 1988. "From Peripheral Communities to Ethnic Nations: Separatism in Southeast Asia," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Spring, 1988) , p. 54-55.

⁹⁰ There are three levels of government in Thailand: central (suan klang), provincial (suan phumipak), and local (suan tongtin) (Thailand National Public Administration Act of 1991). Provincial governments (76 in total--75 changwats and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration) are headed by a provincial governor appointed by the central government (except for an elected governor of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration). Governors generally are officials within the Ministry of Interior. The governor serves as head of the provincial administration (sala klang changwat) and is responsible for implementing central government policies. (In effect, however, the governor largely acts as coordinator of agencies under the direct control of other central government ministries.) Down one level are the district offices (amphor) headed by district officers (nai amphor) appointed by the central government. Further down the hierarchy are sub-districts (tambon) and villages (mubaan). Village headmen (phuyai baan) are directly elected by the villagers and the sub-district headmen (kamnan) are generally chosen from among the village headmen in each sub-district. These local leaders, however, are directly guided and supervised by provincial governors and district officers under central government control. In short, province (changwat), district (amphor), sub-district (tambon), and village (mubaan), are parts of provincial government which are viewed as parts of the central government apparatus.

⁹¹ Suhrke, Astri. 1979. "Thailand: Politics as Usual." *Current History* 77 (452): 210.

⁹² Brown, David. 1988. "From Peripheral Communities to Ethnic Nations: Separatism in Southeast Asia," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Spring, 1988) , p. 54-55.

⁹³ Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2001, Government Decentralization Reform in Deveoping Countries, March 2001, p. 49.

⁹⁴ Brown, David. 1988. "From Peripheral Communities to Ethnic Nations: Separatism in Southeast Asia," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Spring, 1988).

⁹⁵ Huntington, Samue. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press)

⁹⁶ For Example, when former PM Mahathir was in Thailand in late November, Anand Panyarachun asked him to refrain from referring to local autonomy as a possible means of defusing tensions. In Thai translation, Anand suggested, the phrase suggested the dismembering of the Thai state.

⁹⁷ Arghiros, Daniel. 2001 . *Democracy, Development and Decentralization in Provincial Thailand* . Richmond , Surrey : Curzon Press, p. 4.

⁹⁸ Crook R. C. and Manor J. 1995. "Democratic decentralization and institutional performance: Four Asian and African experience compared." *The Journal of Commonwealth & comparative politics*, 33(3), 309-335

⁹⁹ The World bank,
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/EXTEAPDECEN/0,,contentMDK:20538141~pagePK:64168427~piPK:64168435~theSitePK:1169052,00.html>

¹⁰⁰ Sections 285 – 287 of Thailand 1997 Constitution.

¹⁰¹ Sections 289-290 of Thailand 1997 Constitution

¹⁰² Cauchon, Nora. 2002. Thailand: Continuing Quest for Local Autonomy, Sourcebook on Decentralization in Asia.

¹⁰³ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.

¹⁰⁴ For more information on the list of responsibilities transferred, see Thailand Transferring Responsibility Act of 2000.

¹⁰⁵ Wiest, D. 2003. Fiscal decentralization in Thailand. Retrieved January 3, 2003, from
<http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/External/Urban/UrbanDev.nsf/0/8092DB20ECEC3F8885256937006EC6F9?OpenDocument>.

¹⁰⁶ Before 2001, only 9% of national budget was allocated to local government all over Thailand, where half of the amount went to Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. (Nora Cauchon, Thailand: Continuing Quest for Local Autonomy, Sourcebook on Decentralization in Asia. 2002, pp. 147.

¹⁰⁷ Thailand Office of Prime Minister, 2002

¹⁰⁸ Chandra-nuj Mahakanjana, Social Capital, Decentralization, and Municipal Government in Thailand, Doctoral Dissertation, Northern Illinois University, May 2004.

¹⁰⁹ There are altogether 7,951 units of local governments categorized in five different types—Municipality, Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO), Tambon (or Sub-district) Administrative Organization (TAO), Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), and the City of Pattaya.

¹¹⁰ Unger, Daniel. 2005. "Reflexion on Prime Minister Thaksin's Long Term Impact," King Prajathipok Institute, Bangkok, Thailand, September 15, 2005.

¹¹¹ Unger, Daniel. 2004. "Religious and Ethnic Conflict in Thailand," Symposium on "Divided States and Contested Territories In Southeast Asia: Retrospect and Prospect," Michigan State University, December 4, 2004

¹¹² McCargo, Duncan. 2004. "Southern Thai Politics: A Preliminary Overview," POLIS Working Paper No.3, School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, February 2004

¹¹³ McCargo, Duncan. 2004. "Southern Thai Politics: A Preliminary Overview," POLIS Working Paper No.3, School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, February 2004

¹¹⁴ McCargo, Duncan. 2004. "Southern Thai Politics: A Preliminary Overview," POLIS Working Paper No.3, School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, February 2004

¹¹⁵ Interviews with local residents.

¹¹⁶ Interviews with local politicians and residents, May-June 2005.

¹¹⁷ Gunaratna, Rohan, Acharya, Arabinda and Chua, Sabrina. 2005, *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*. Marshall Cavendish Corp/Ccb

¹¹⁸ International Crisis Group, 2005. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad. Asia Report N°98, 18 May 2005.

¹¹⁹ For more on concept of human security, see 'Human Security Now,' by the Commission on Human Security, 2003.

¹²⁰ *Decentralization and Local Government in Thailand*, p. 23, King Prajathipok Institute, Bangkok, Thailand, 2002.

¹²¹ *Decentralization and Local Government in Thailand*, p. 24, King Prajathipok Institute, Bangkok, Thailand, 2002.

¹²² Amornvivat, Sutapa. 2004. "Fiscal Decentralization: The Case of Thailand," Thailand Ministry of Finance. February 15, 2004.

¹²³ Cuachon, Nora. "Thailand" *The Continuing Quest for Local Autonomy*," Sourcebook on Decentralization in Asia, p. 143.

¹²⁴ Data analyses based on One-way ANOVA

¹²⁵ Data analyses based on Pearson Chi-Square and One-way ANOVA

Appendix 1

Table 1. Mean and Frequency table

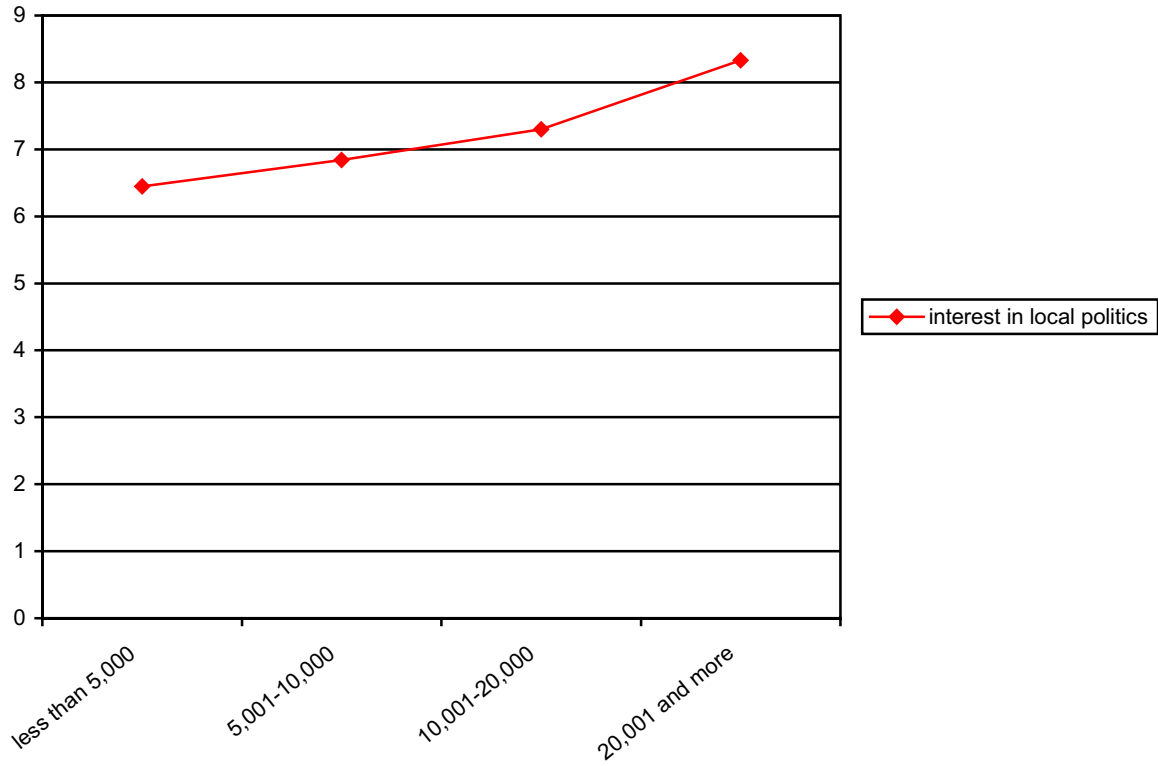
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Interest in local politics during the past 5 years (10-point scale)	6.83	1.89	997
Political efficacy (10-point scale)	7.45	1.66	990
Importance of taking part in local politics	8.71	1.80	998
Attitude toward corruption at local level	7.45	2.34	997
Importance of casting vote at local elections	6.41	2.89	998
Importance of certain characteristics of candidates in local elections that affect local voting behavior: (4-point scale)			
• Helping local residents	2.93	0.30	996
• Level of education	2.42	0.63	997
• Financial capability	1.53	1.64	998
• Vision	2.82	0.44	997
• Reputation of being Honest	2.94	0.28	997
• Ability in solving local problem	2.93	0.29	997
Level of satisfaction toward TAOs performance: (4-point scale)			
• Overall	2.92	0.56	999
• Public health	2.57	0.60	999
• Registration & records	2.69	0.66	999
• Maintaining security	2.95	1.20	999
• Solving local problems	2.12	0.79	999
Belief in TAOs' ability to curb the violence in the south (10 point scale)	5.01	1.89	999
Evaluation of how much do respondents believe local politicians care about what local people want (5-point scale)	2.45	0.96	988
Evaluation of how much do respondents believe local politicians really understand what local people want (5-point scale)	2.58	0.85	987
Evaluation of changing levels of closeness between local politicians and local residents compared to 5 years ago (5-point scale)	3.04	1.32	987
Evaluation of changing levels of how much local politicians care about local residents' opinion compared to 5 years ago (5-point scale)	3.59	0.69	987

Evaluation of changing levels of transparency TAOs operate compared to 5 years ago (5-point scale)		3.57	0.72	987
Political participation: (10-point scale)				
People should cast their vote every time there are local elections		8.91	1.22	992
People should pay attention to local political activities		7.88	1.59	992
People should take part in encouraging other people to cast their vote in local elections		6.90	2.14	992
People should provide local information and needs to local governments		7.87	1.64	992
Gender	Male	435		
	Female	558		
Age	18-20	97		
	21-30	178		
	31-40	282		
	41-50	259		
	51 and above	174		
Education	Primary & lower	168		
	Secondary	118		
	High school/technical	368		
	Certificate	182		
	BA & above	156		
Income	5,000 and lower	247		
	5,001-10,000	612		
	10,001-20,000	114		
	20,001 and above	21		
Religion	Buddhist	124		
	Muslim	870		
Language	Thai	170		
	Malay	439		
	Thai & Malay	380		

Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one municipality in Pattani Province.

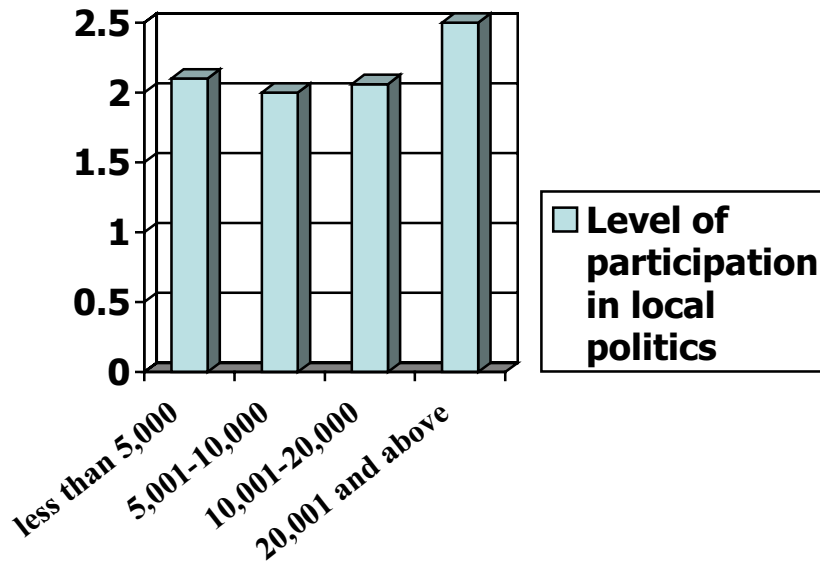
Appendix 2

Figure 1. Income & interest in local politics during the past 5 years



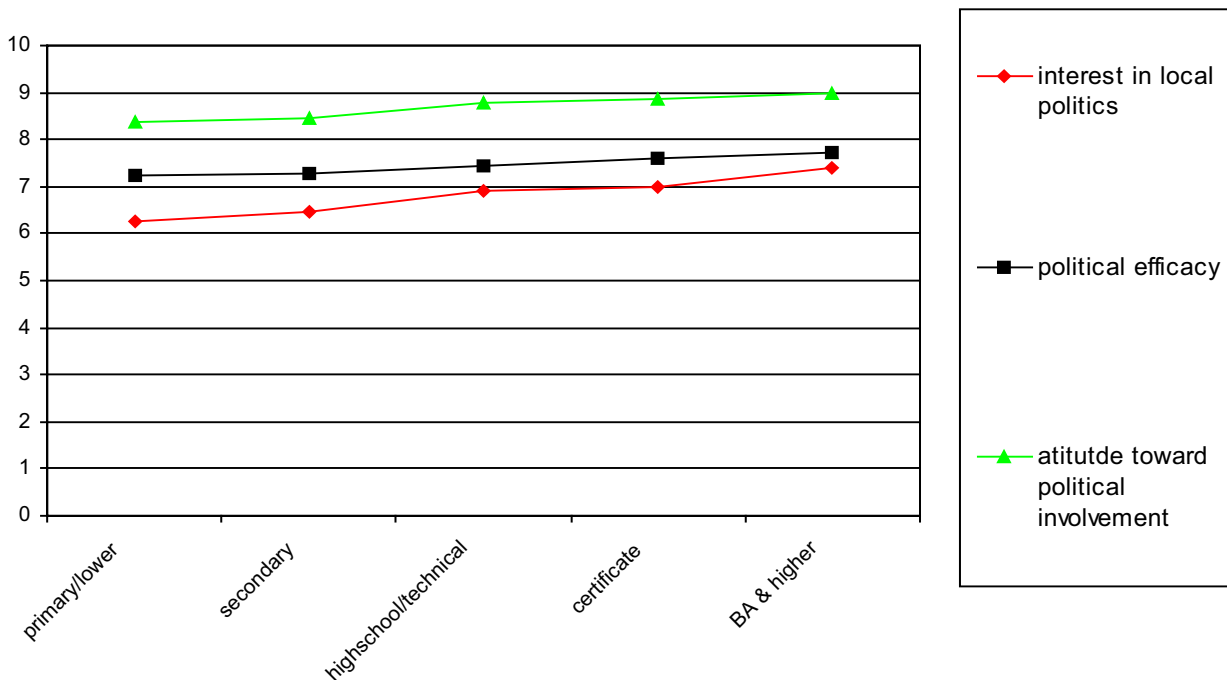
Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 2. Income & levels of participation in local politics



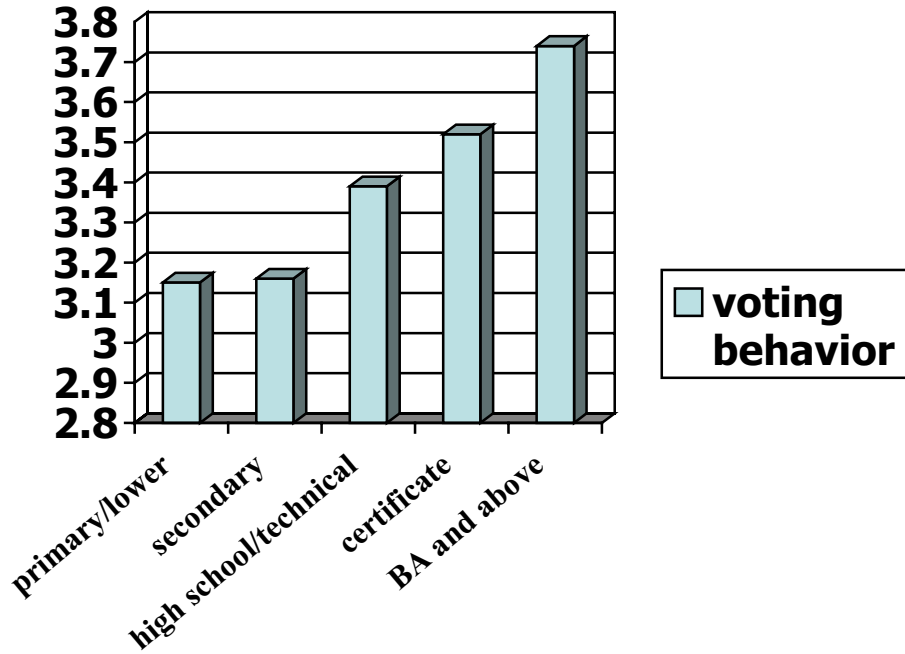
Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 3. Education & interest in local politics, political efficacy, and importance of taking part in local politics



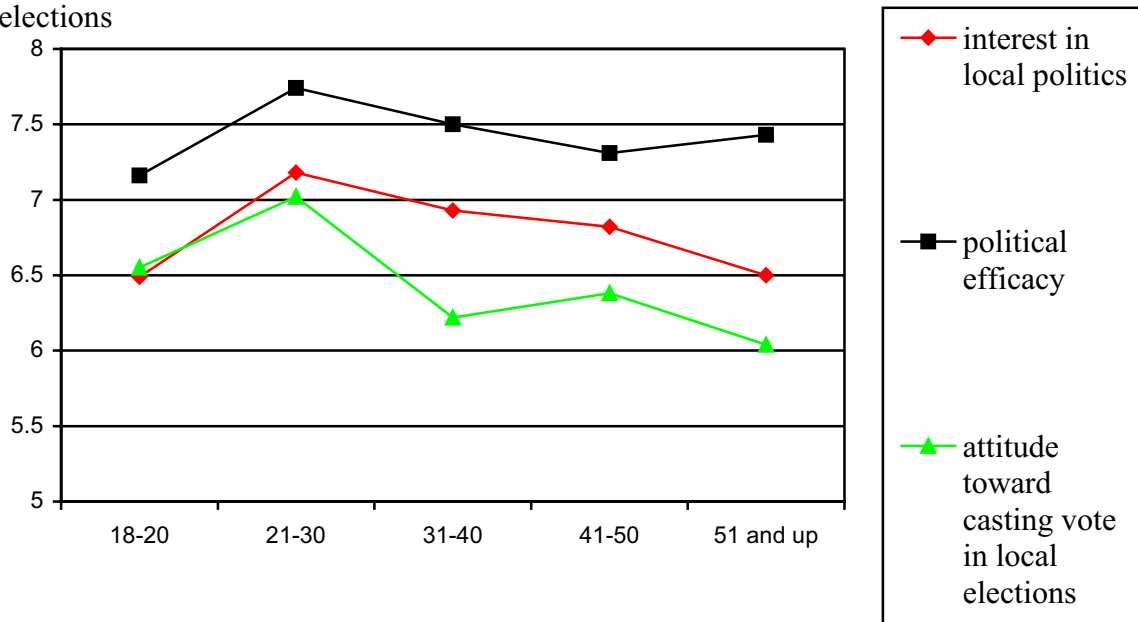
Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 4. Education & voting behavior



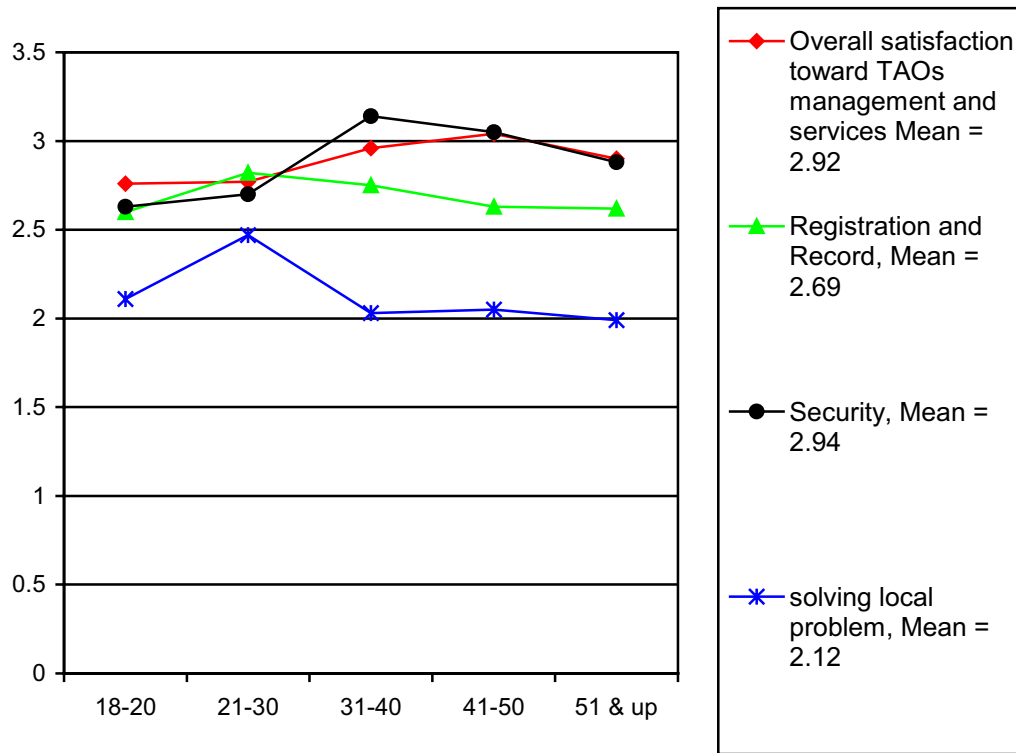
Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 5. Age & interest in local politics, political efficacy, and importance of casting vote in local elections



Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 6. Age & satisfaction toward TAOs performance



Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 7. Language & satisfaction

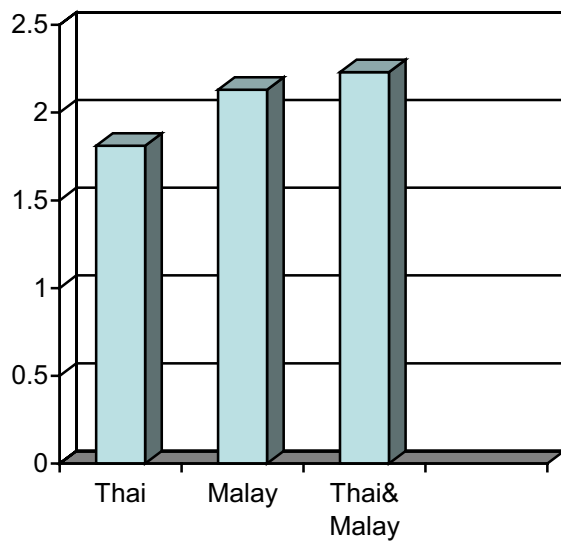
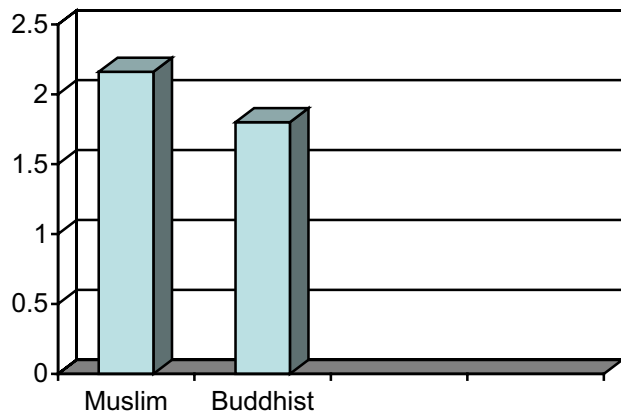
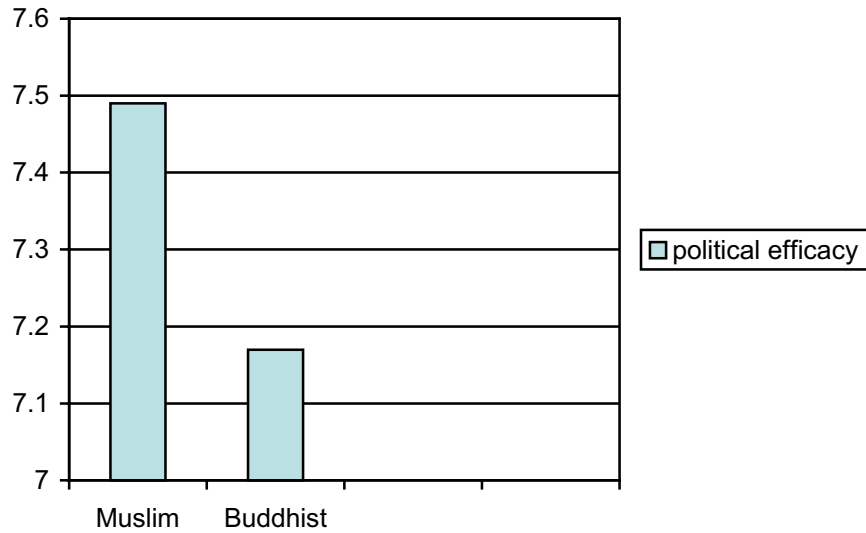


Figure 8. Religion & satisfaction



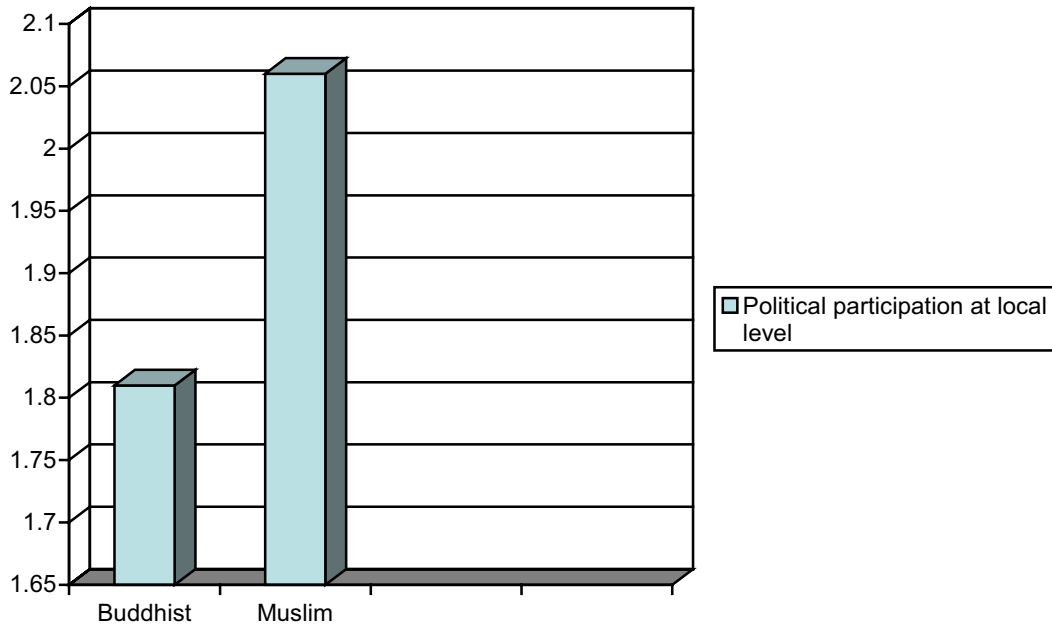
Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 9. Religion & political efficacy



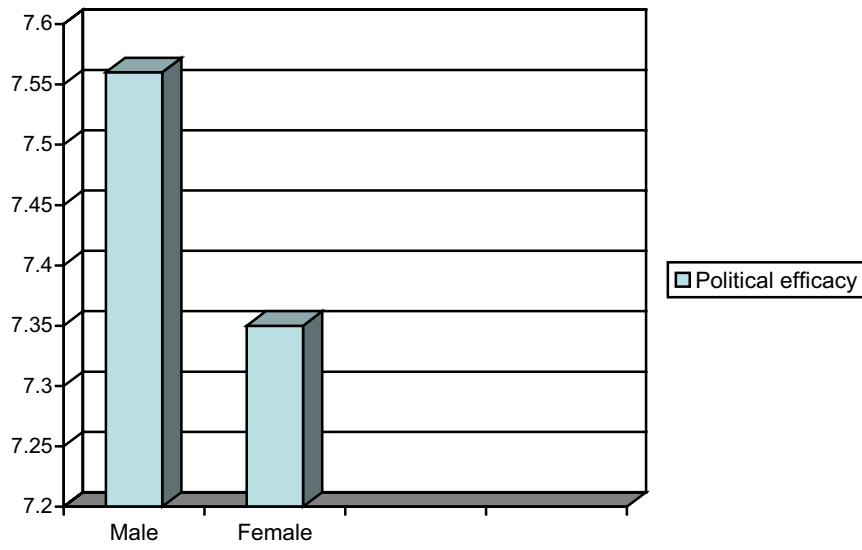
Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 10. Religion & local political participation



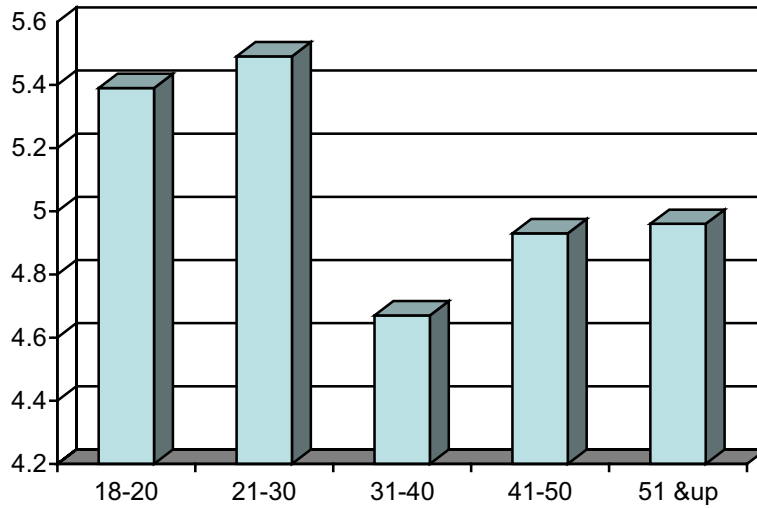
Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 11. Gender & political efficacy



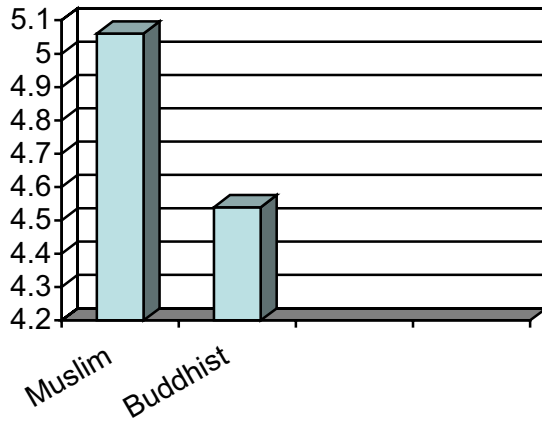
Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 12. Age & belief in TAOs' ability to curb the violence in the south



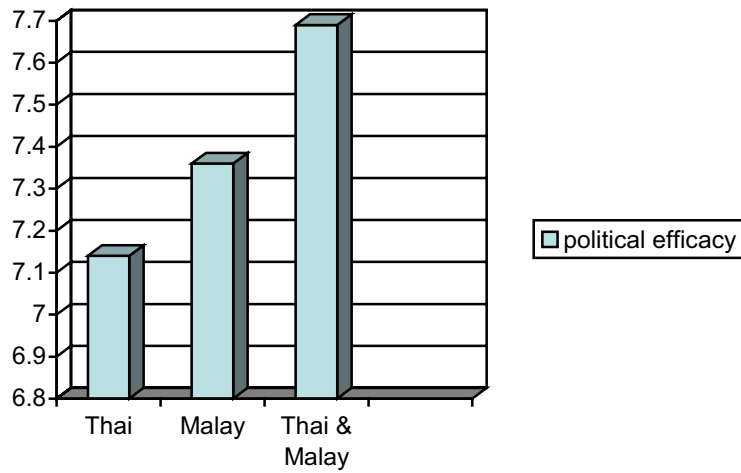
Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 13. Religion & belief in TAOs' ability to curb the violence in the south



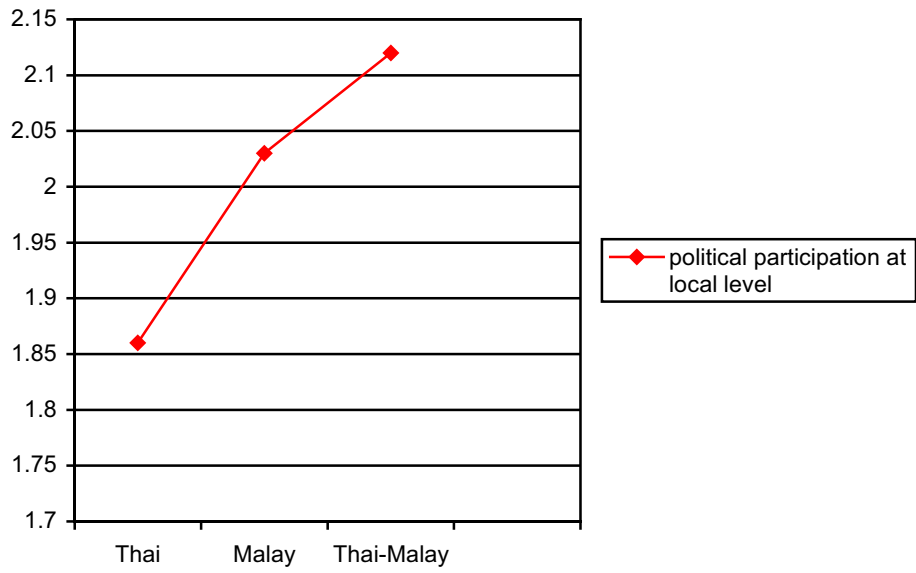
Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 14. Language & political efficacy



Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

Figure 15. Language & local political participation



Note: Data gathered from survey questionnaires in three TAOs and one city-level municipality in Pattani province.

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The Southeast Asia Fellowship Program is designed to offer young scholars from Southeast Asia the opportunity to undertake serious academic writing on the management of internal and international conflicts in the region and to contribute to the development of Southeast Asian studies in the Washington area by bringing Asian voices to bear on issues of interest to a Washington audience.

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