

NEGOTIATING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES:
BECOMING AND UN-BECOMING “THAI” MUSLIMS

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

Ornwara Tritrakarn

May 2020

© 2020 Ornwara Tritrakarn

ABSTRACT

In 2004, three violent incidents took place in the deep South of Thailand: the stealing of weapons from the army, the massacre at Krue Se mosque, and the massacre at Tak Bai. Since then, derogatory and criminalizing labels such as “Southern bandit” and “separatist” have been used not only by mainstream media, but also by lay people in daily conversations, sometimes in the form of casual remarks. These labels connote negative stereotypes that result in various forms of violence, including verbal violence against Malay-Thai Muslims from the deep South and protests against the construction of mosques in certain areas of Northeastern Thailand. Among the rhetoric that accompanied anti-Muslim sentiments in Thailand are a restricted interpretation of the three pillars of Thainess: Nation, Religion, and Monarchy, which defines “religion” to be exclusive to Buddhism and push Malay Muslims in the position of “the other.” Compounded by the selective truth-telling of mainstream media, these Malay Muslims were further made to be seen as “the fearsome other.”

Prior to today’s anti-Muslim sentiments, however, there had been ongoing state attempts to define Malay Muslims in the deep South as “Thai Muslims” by emphasizing Muslims and Buddhists’ shared loyalty towards King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Through examining mainstream news about the Southern Thai conflict in 2004 and the Ministry of Culture’s 2006 documentary about King Bhumibol’s first visit to Southern Thailand, this thesis illustrates the shifting temporal spaces that have highlighted different identities of Malay-Thai Muslims in the deep South of Thailand. Furthermore, this thesis investigates instances of conflict and reconciliation that arose during Malay-Thai Muslims’ negotiation of their multiple identities and subjectivities within the non-linear and often conflicting state-endorsed discourses. I search for signs of agency as well as its absence.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ornwara Tritrakarn was born in Bangkok, Thailand on 8 August 1996. After completing her secondary education in Thailand in 2014, Ornwara moved to Malaysia to study Malay language and pursue a bachelor's degree at the Academy of Malay Studies, University of Malaya, with a major in socio-cultural studies. The meaningful encounters she had in Malaysia motivated her to learn more about Islam and Muslims in Thailand. She moved to the United States in 2018 to pursue a master's degree in Asian Studies at Cornell University, with a concentration on Southeast Asia. As an awardee of Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs scholarship since 2014, Ornwara will return to Thailand to work as a diplomat after her graduation from Cornell University.

I dedicate this thesis to every life that has been negatively impacted by political labels
that arose in the Southern unrest

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first express my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisors, Professor Chiara Formichi and Professor Arnika Fuhrmann. Professor Formichi's teaching on performative Islam in Southeast Asia has been an integral foundation of this research. I cannot thank Professor Fuhrmann enough for introducing me to the wonders of the world of film studies and providing me the opportunities to learn things I never knew existed. Both professors have been committed in guiding me through every stage of developing this thesis. Their faith in me is something that I am forever grateful. My gratitude also extends to Professor Anne Blackburn and Ajarn Thak Chaloemtiarana for the fruitful discussion on the Nation, the Religion, and the Monarchy. These professors have offered me time and opportunity to grow in my academic journey. Their guidance and critique have been immensely helpful. All errors presented here are, however, solely my responsibility.

I would like also to thank my friends at the Department of Asian Studies and Southeast Asia Program, especially P'Ing, P'Mook, P'Mas, Fran, and P'Game for making Cornell feel like a home soon after I arrived here. Leah and Chou-san brightened my days and offered me full presence whenever I became too weak to stand on my own. Connor, Claire, and Anna's dedication to their work kept me motivated and inspired. It was Liyu and Bruno who made me laugh out loud even though I was under stress and worries. These kind souls, and many people I could not name here due to the limit of space, are the people who gave meaning to my days at Cornell. They are the people who will always be treasured in my heart.

Essentially, I am deeply grateful to Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for sponsoring me throughout my undergraduate study in Malaysia and my graduate study in the United States

as well as Cornell University's Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies and graduate school for sponsoring my summer fieldtrip which immensely helped in accessing sources that were not available in the United States. My special thanks go to my parents, my elder brother, and my partner, for attentively listening to my daily struggles and everyday discoveries. They are the cocoons who nurtured me to become the person I am today. I truly appreciate each of them for being what Robert Louis Stevenson calls "the Recording Angel," someone who never get tired of asking, "How are things going with your thesis?" but also never fail to also ask "Have you eaten?" and "Do you need a hug?" Without their unyielding love and support, it would have been impossible to complete this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biographical Sketch	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	viii
INTRODUCTION:	1
Benevolence of the King	
CHAPTER ONE:	6
Becoming “Thai” Muslims	
CHAPTER TWO:	28
Un-becoming “Thai” Muslims	
CONCLUSION:.....	55
Silence of a Man	
Bibliography	59

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure One:	2
The DVD cover of <i>Remembering the King's first visit to meet citizens around Thailand</i>	
Figure Two:.....	4
Demonstrators lie on the pavement after their arrest outside Tak Bai police station	
Figure Three:.....	7
A scene of the royal car passing by the crowd	
Figure Four:	12
A scene of Malay women performing for the royal couple	
Figure Five:.....	21
The front cover of <i>Peaceful Yala under the royal grace</i>	
Figure Six:.....	31
Samak Sundaravej while being interviewed	
Figure Seven:	35
A Facebook post of an interview with a victim of the Tak Bai incident	
Figure Eight:	36
A screenshot from the motion of no-confidence speech	
Figure Nine:	49
<i>Ya sen</i> , handmade cigarettes in the South	
Figure Ten:.....	55
One of the final scenes of <i>Manta Ray</i>	

INTRODUCTION

Benevolence of the King

A: “(I’m sorry that) I need to come to visit you during fasting month, and also on Friday.”

B: “The monarchy is an institution recognized by Islam. It’s appropriate that we come to *rab sadet* (humbly welcome someone of royal descent) you upon your visit. As for the mosque, we will go there after this.”

The conversation above is reported as an exchange between King Bhumibol Adulyadej (1927 – 2016; r. 1946 - 2016) and a Muslim in Satun province during the king’s first visit to Southern Thailand in 1959. This documentary scene features a long shot of King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit (1932-) walking through lines of people of all ages who are sitting on the ground beneath big tarpaulin tents; the queen is seen bending her back to be a little closer to the people as they converse. The people are referred to as *chao thai itsalam* (Thai Muslims) who wear eye-pleasing colorful dresses. The film only narrates the vivid color of women’s traditional attire. However, the recorded scene also shows men’s various dress styles; some wear *songkok* (Malay male hat) and some wear a white turban which is a marker of a *hajji*, a person who has completed his pilgrimage to Mecca during the holy month of Ramadan.

This is one of several instances in which Muslims are mentioned in a series of documentaries entitled *Remembering the King’s first visit to meet citizens around Thailand*. The documentary series is divided by geographical terrains; the one selected here is titled “Southern Thailand.” The documentary series was made accessible to the public in screenings in cinemas and *pappayon klang plang* (mobile public screenings) around Thailand at a time when television

wasn't a norm in 1959¹. It was later re-packaged as a DVD by the Ministry of Culture and distributed to the public in order to celebrate King Bhumibol's *barami* (royal grace) upon his Royal Highness's auspicious 83rd birthday on 5 December 2006. This objective has been prominently written on the cover of this documentary's DVD package.

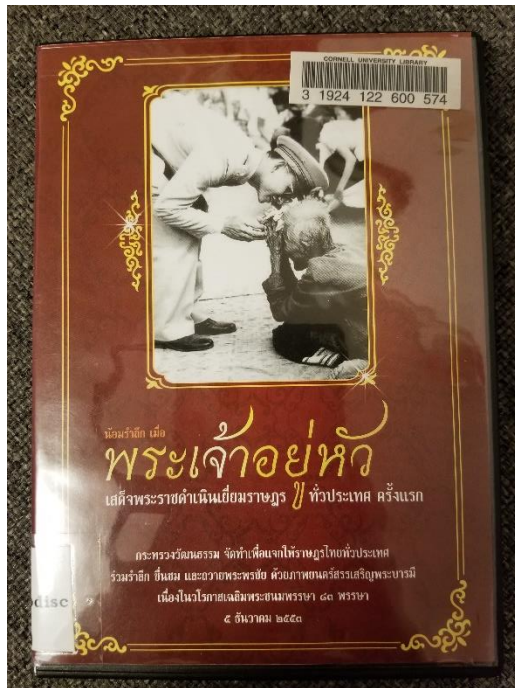


Fig 1. The DVD cover of *Remembering the King's first visit to meet citizens around Thailand* (Source: Photo taken by the author)

At first glance, the film features picturesque sceneries of Southern Thailand along with instrumental music and commentaries that can be regarded as a well-produced tourism promotion film. With a deeper look, however, the film performs functions beyond that of state-sponsored entertainment for the people of Thailand. Empirically, the documentary introduces each province of the South with its unique details to inform Thai audiences of these places' geographical background, economic strength, local treasures that represent the sovereign's power, and tangible as well as intangible cultural heritage such as local

performance and music. This film also follows King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit's arduous yet pleasurable journey to the southernmost corners of Thailand and portrays the two monarchs as painstaking and compassionate rulers. I argue that this documentary serves the twofold function of materializing the imagined Thai citizens on big screens, and reminding Thais that they all belong to the nation as fellow subjects of the King regardless of religious or ethnic difference. By coming to welcome the royal couple upon their visit, Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand

¹ According to description of the documentary as provided by Film Archive Thailand in its YouTube upload of this film on 15 October 2016

can be depicted as citizens with a sense of belonging to the state. However, this sense of inclusion to the nation comes at a price of exclusion of ethnic identity. With their ethnic and cultural identity marginalized, Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand became more vulnerable to labels of violence.

The timing of the redistribution of the film is particularly telling. In addition to representing the peak of Bhumibol's popularity, 2006 is also merely two years after the heightened spate of insurgency-related violent incidents in the so-called "deep South of Thailand." This term refers to Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and four towns in Songkhla which once constituted the independent kingdom of Patani. According to Thongchai Winichakul (2017: 121), Patani's history begins 600-700 years before Siam's. Patani was only officially integrated as a part of Siam in 1902 during the reign of Phra Phutthaloetla Naphalai or King Rama II (1767 – 1824; r. 1809-1924). Tamara Loos (2002: 78) records that Patani kingdom was forced to be classified as a *monthon* unit according to *Thesaphiban* policy ("protection over territory"), a policy created by Prince Damrong in the 1890s under King Chulalongkorn or King Rama V (1853 – 1910; r. 1868 - 1910) and effectively enforced by 1906. As a result of subsequent changes, these areas were further divided by the central government and came to be categorized as the *changwat* ("provinces") of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and Songkhla in 1931.

2004 is the year of several large-scale clashes, starting from the "January Fourth incident," "Krue Se mosque incident," and "Tak Bai incident." The January Fourth incident refers to the day when approximately 60 armed men broke into Narathiwat Ratchanakharin camp, killed four soldiers, and stole over 400 rifles; an incident which enraged the army and particularly the then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (Incumbency: 2001 – 2006) (Thanet Apornsuvan, 2008: 95). The Krue Se mosque incident took place on 28 April 2004 when the

militants' concurrent attacks on twelve security checkpoints ended with 105 militants, five security personnel, and one civilian killed, mostly in the historical Krue Se mosque itself (McCargo, 2008: xxiii). The Tak Bai incident is often remembered as a mass demonstration in Tak Bai, Narathiwat, on 25 October 2004, where seven men were shot dead and 78 protestors died of suffocation while being transported in army trucks (ibid).



Fig 2. Demonstrators lie on the pavement after their arrest outside Tak Bai police station in Narathiwat province, Thailand, Oct. 25, 2004. AFP
(Source: <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/thai/Tak-Bai-10222015155832.html>)

From 2004 onwards, derogatory and criminalizing labels such as *jon tai* (Southern bandits) and *puak baeng yaek din dan* (the separatists) have been used not only by state officials and mainstream media, but also by lay people in daily conversations, sometimes in the form of casual remarks. These labels connote negative stereotypes that result in various forms of violence, including verbal violence against Malay-Thai Muslims from the South and protests against the construction of mosques in certain areas of Northeastern Thailand (Don Pathan et al., 2018: 14, 16, 27). Among the rhetoric that accompanies anti-Muslim sentiments in Thailand is the restricted interpretation of the three pillars of Thainess: Nation, Religion, and Monarchy, which defines the term “religion” to refer exclusively to Buddhism and relegates Malay Muslims to the position of “the fearsome other” (Das, 1998, as cited in Schissler, M. et al., 2017: 377).

How, when, and why did Muslims, particularly Malay Muslims, come to be viewed as *the fearsome other* in the eyes of today's Thai Buddhists?

I aim to answer this question through examining mainstream news about instances of conflict in Southern Thailand in 2004 and uncovering implications behind the above-mentioned Ministry of Culture documentary about the king's first visit to Southern Thailand in 1959. I trace the use of labels used in describing Malay-Thai Muslims to illustrate the shifting temporal spaces that have highlighted different identities of Malay-Thai Muslims in the deep South of Thailand. Furthermore, this research investigates cases of conflict and reconciliation that arose during Malay-Thai Muslims' negotiations of their multiple identities within the non-linear and often conflicting state-endorsed discourses. Throughout this work, I search for signs of agency as well as its absence. I seek to interrogate the multiple meanings of what seems like the admirable benevolence of the king depicted in the documentary, claiming that these royal actions exceed mere acts of kindness. Rather they represent the conscious statecraft of consolidating the power of the monarchy through establishing an image of ideal citizens, particularly *chao thai itsalam* who are loyal subjects of the King. Nevertheless, this image did not materialize in the way that the state expected, as insurgency in the South challenged state's sovereignty and created the possibility of intervention from international non-governmental organizations. I argue that this unmet expectation is seen as a failure on the part of Malay-Thai Muslims and contributed to an increased degree of violence, that includes the criminalization of Malay-Thai Muslims and marginalization of their voices.

CHAPTER ONE

Becoming “Thai” Muslims through the royal theatre

The use of film as a tool for conscious statecraft is not a new phenomenon in Thailand. Cinema has been associated with the royal family and elite class from the time that it was first introduced to Siam in 1897 (Rebecca Townsend, 2017: 5). In addition to the fact that film making began as a hobby of Siamese princes, cinema heavily relied on royal support in its early days. This close connection can still be observed today in the tradition that movie audiences are required to stand up in respect to the royal anthem before screenings in Thai cinema (ibid). According to Townsend, the rapid increase in production of domestic films took place at the end of the 1950s, after Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat (1957-1963)’s 1957 coup d’état against Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram (Phibun) (1938-1944, 1948-1957). Film became an integral technology for the state to establish the image of authentic Thainess against the communist threat during the Cold War because “films so often claimed to represent and be accessible to ordinary people” (p. 8) and “[f]ilms made real the people and activities of the central Thai government and monarchy” (p. 27). Cinema’s promise to represent reality is often praised with little realization of the nature of movie whereby viewers can only see the highly selective reality of the society.

With the strong ties between film, the monarchy, and nationalism in mind, this chapter examine how it became possible to portray Bhumibol as the ideal sovereign and the impact this development has on Malay-Thai Muslims who came to be categorized as “Thai Muslims” under his reign. The Ministry of Culture’s documentary: *Remembering the King’s first visit to meet citizens around Thailand* serves as a channel to understand the promise of inclusion which comes

at the price of exclusion as experienced by Malay-Thai Muslims. This chapter thereby aims to untangle the royal family's patronage of "religion" and the way in which the meaning of this concept has shifted in Thailand and culminated in the patronage beyond the realm of religion.



Fig 3. A scene of the royal car passing by a crowd who wave the Thai national flags as they sit down to welcome the arrival of the king and the queen

(Source: Film Archive Thailand, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEGmN902AxE&t=2823s&pbjreload=10>)

Crafting the ideal monarch

According to Paul Handley (2006), half a century after Bhumibol Adulyadej became king in 1946, he and hundreds of palace officials successfully convinced the Thai people that "Thailand is culturally and corporeally dependent on a strong monarchy, and that Thais are better off for it" (p. 429). As Handley asserts, two main factors can be attributed to this remarkable achievement. First, Bhumibol was an ideal person to be trained to revive and embody the prestige of the monarchy. The America-born Thai prince who had spent a considerable amount of time in Europe is described as a person who "was more disciplined at work and more obedient to his elders [than his elder brother, King Ananda or King Rama VIII (1925 – 1946; r. 1935 - 1946)]" (p. 100).

Second, the monarchy's ability to control Thai Theravada Buddhism has contributed to Thais seeing their nation's roots based on "the dominant Buddhist tradition and... their loyalty to the institution of the monarchy" (Keyes, cited in p, 434). Bhumibol's successfully developed popularity among Thai citizens is deeply rooted in the three pillars of Thainess: *chat* (nation), *satsana* (religion), and *phramahakasat* (the king or the monarchy). Since this concept's formal introduction and propagation by King Vajiravudh or King Rama VI (1881 – 1925; r. 1910 - 1925) (Jerryson, 2010), a succession of state-endorsed projects re-emphasized this set of values. Thak Chaloemtiarana (2007) asserts that former prime minister Sarit Thanarat achieved this centralization of power through support from the army and legitimacy bestowed by King Rama IX. It was only during Sarit's regime that the monarchy was given opportunities to be prominent both in the domestic and international arenas, through grand schemes such as revival of Brahmanical rites, extensive public appearances in the country, and official visits to twenty-three countries within a span of merely five years. While the monarchy regained the power it had lost under the government of Phibunsongkhram and received intensified popular respect, Sarit justified his coup d'état by depicting Thailand as "civilized and sophisticated" (p. 315) in the eyes of foreigners through the grace of the royal couple's domestic and international tours.

The Sarit government's commitment to depicting the king as pure and popularizing Bhumibol's presence throughout the country can be understood through the lens of Clifford Geertz's "*Negara: theatre state*." According to Geertz (1980: 124), kingship is "the master image of the political life." Hence, the more exemplary the king, the more exemplary "the center" and "the realm." Since the grandiosity of state ceremonies represents not only the king's accumulated wealth, but also the kingdom's power, people who believe in and participate in these rites are

engaged neither in “illusions nor lies” but in the materialized form of their reality (p. 136).

Bhumibol’s nation-wide visits in 1959 as recorded in *Remembering the King’s first visit* appear grandiose and are claimed as sacred. The tour begins with a crowd sending him off in Bangkok; the scene is accompanied by an orchestral score that is evocative of the majestic. The tour is filled with incidents that illustrate the monarch’s supreme religious and political power, such as the offering of incense to the Buddhist landmark of *Phra Pathom Jaedi* in Nakorn Pathom province and the inauguration of a Buddhist relic at Nakorn Si Thammarat province.

Furthermore, everywhere the monarch stops, whether in a big city or small town, the documentary shows crowds gathered to welcome him upon his arrival, the local leaders offering a precious symbol of legitimacy and power of the province to the king, and the king giving a speech in front of the crowd. Each speech emphasizes the king’s appreciation of each province’s strength and his hope for its economic and social development.

Through these public acts as a patron of Buddhism and the propagation of this pious image in combination with his secular concerns for the people, Bhumibol was able to claim sources of legitimacy and sacredness, as well as power based on the concept of the *devaraja* and *dhammaraja*. (Jackson, 2010). The former derives from Brahmanical cosmology that views the king as the embodiment of the divine whereas the latter originates from Theravada Buddhist ideas that the king’s legitimacy derives from his “righteous” character (p. 35). While the king’s presence in rituals at monasteries outside of central Thailand depicts him as the true *devaraja* of the entire country, the commitment he holds for developing each region elucidates his charitable character and portrays him as a *dhammaraja*.

To better understand why this perceived embodiment of both religious and secular virtue is not exclusive to King Bhumibol, we can think about Thai people’s reverence towards him in

comparison to Thai people's devotion to the nationally famous monk, Somdet To. According to Justin McDaniel (2011), popular Thai saints are venerated for their ability to operate in both elite and ordinary worlds (p. 34). Somdet To himself is also famously known for being friendly, humane, honest, and approachable (p.47). Although Bhumibol's status does not allow him to be "friendly" or particularly "approachable," the footage of the king's interaction with the villagers in the documentary under discussion does feature several humane and honest conversations between him and the villagers. For instance, Bhumibol admits that his visit to Satun on Friday during Ramadan may cause an inconvenience to the Muslim population who needs to attend communal prayer at the mosque on that day. Unfortunately, we cannot know the ethnic background of the Muslim who had this conversation with the king. From the men's clothing styles in this particular scene at Satun, there is a possibility that this person may be of Malay origin. Nevertheless, the likelihood that he is of Thai ethnicity is also high because one usually requires a high command of Thai language to converse with someone from the royal family. This can be supported by a comment of Yoneo Ishii's (1994: 460) that Muslims in Satun possess proficiency in Thai which potentially allows them to "be integrated smoothly into Thai society." The chances for Malay-speaking Muslims to achieve such a linguistic exchange with the king remains slim.

The moving mandalas and its promise of inclusion

I argue that the choice of rousing orchestral score that underwrites the beginning of Bhumibol's journey is consciously made in order to connect his image with that of King Chulalongkorn or King Rama V. King Chulalongkorn was the first Siamese to be featured in a film (Townsend, 2017: 29-31); He was recorded "in a grand European-style royal procession in Berne,

Switzerland” (ibid). It is no coincidence that the beginning of the documentary fulfills the tradition of depicting the Thai sovereign as *siwilai* (civilized) in the same manner as the first film of King Chulalongkorn. According to Kularp (1995) and Chanvit (1996) (cited in Thongchai: 2000: 530), the term *siwilai* is used to describe conduct adapted from Westerners’ manner. Thongchai also states that the term *siwilai* has come to be used interchangeably with the term *charoen* which contains “the sense of transformation into the new age, or modernity, as opposed to the traditional the ancient, or the bygone era” (p. 531). By filming Bhumibol with majestic orchestra music, the monarch immediately gains a prestigious status as the one who continues the legacy of his revered ancestor, King Chulalongkorn who embodies civilization and modernity.

If we consider the king, the queen, and their official as a group of actors with a moving theatre, their presence represents a performance of modernity and nationhood that everyone is obliged to attend as well as serve. In this way, the royal couple represent moving mandalas of the nation. The king’s visit functions as both a fieldtrip prior to creating royal development projects and the enactment of his power as the sovereign. When people attend this royal event, they gain the legitimacy of claiming loyalty to the king, which automatically signifies devotion to the nation and receive the royal protection that being a part of “the center” of the country entails. This is a particularly alluring proposal for Malay-Thai Muslims who live in the periphery of Thailand, both geographically as citizens at the national border, and figuratively as an ethnic and religious minority in the country (notwithstanding that they are the majority population in the deep South). By witnessing the royal couple’s presence in their hometown, Malay-Thai Muslims can experience not only the sense of belonging to the center of the nation, but also accede to the promise of *khwam siwilai* or the state of being civilized and modern.



Fig 4. A scene of Malay women dressing in *kebaya* dresses while performing for the royal couple in Pattani (Source: Film Archive Thailand, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEGmN902Ax&t=2823s&pbjreload=10>)

However, there is a cost of attaching oneself to the two moving mandalas and gaining the status of ideal citizens of Thailand, or those who are loyal to the monarchy. This cost consists of the exclusion of one's ethnic, in this case Malay, identity. The limited expression of Malay identity and culture is salient in both the nation's policy for the deep South and the documentary considered here. When it comes to national policy, one prominent example is the central government's emphasis on secular education and the usage of central Thai language instead of the local Malay language (Thanet, 2008). The same assimilationist approach is evident in what is allowed and not allowed to be a part of the documentary content. The film allows for verbal and visual acknowledgement of supposedly harmless features of local culture: traditional dresses, folk and popular music, and traditional performance such as the Malay art of self-defense, *silat*. Significantly, the Film Archive of Thailand describes *silat* as *muay Islam* – Islamic boxing. With this choice of description, *silat* is made comprehensible to Thai-speaking audiences by fitting it into a pre-existing paradigm of sports. Nevertheless, the attempt to make *silat*

comprehensible to Thai-speaking audiences undermines its uniqueness and renders its characteristically Malay attributes invisible.

By contrast, things that are perceived by the state as a threat to national unity such as the local history of kingship and the Arabic-derived Jawi alphabet in the deep South's Malay language is openly repressed. The example that best illustrates this repression is the scene of the king's visit to Saiburi, a district which is on the border between Pattani and Narathiwat. The beginning of the scene is accompanied by a voiceover narrating that Saiburi had its own *chao mueang* in the past but now has come to use more Thai than other areas in the South. *Chao mueang* is a central Thai word which can be translated as "landowner" or "governor." In this case, it is likely used to replace the term *raja* which means king in Malay. There may be two reasons behind the avoidance of this term. First, the term *raja* comes with its own cosmology whereby the term *kerajaan*, or the state of being under the *raja*, can also mean government (Anthony Milner, 1982). Second, the pronunciation of the Malay term *raja* is similar to the Thai term *phra racha* which refers to the king; the term usually reserved to refer to the Thai monarchs. The narration in this documentary is thus constructed with fine attention to detail to avoid all possible links to mindsets that do not fit within the state's assimilationist framework.

Ironically, the footage from the scene with the above-mentioned narration about the past *chao mueang* and today's widespread use of Thai language is one of the only two times a non-Thai alphabet (in this case Jawi) appears in this documentary. Each province in southern Thailand has built a gate embossed with text reading, "Long Live the King", in the Thai alphabet. It is likely that the Jawi text featured in this scene is a text with the same meaning, as it is also drawn on a gate to welcome the royal couple. I propose that the documentary producers' deliberate choice to reframe Saiburi as a town loyal to Bhumibol's reign and central Thai

language devoid of its own monarch, history, or language can be analyzed through the lens of Porath (2019)'s hierarchy of sound and language in Southeast Asia.

Porath (2019: 71) states that “[h]ierarchy commonly overlaps with the processes of power and this includes the ensoundments of its social and political rejection... All forms of power relations are ensounded.” Sounds, languages, and music are constantly used to assert political or religious stances. Each genre of music has its own position in the hierarchy of music in a society. Therefore, silence is not nothing because the lack of sound still has its place in the hierarchy, whether as something lesser than the norm or beyond the common realm of perception. Modern capitalism has enabled certain sounds to be heard and certain sounds to be muted according to government policies (p. 35). This difference in accessibility is even more pronounced to the listeners in the case of state-sponsored film such as the documentary of the king's visit in the South. The only sound that could be recognized as Malay that the audience has access to are a few lines from one popular Malay song as a part of the performance of local culture for the royal couple. Malay identity is thus rendered incapable of communicating meaning and can only serve the state and its audiences as a form of entertainment. The film's conscious exclusion of any feature that has the potential to contribute to alternative forms of citizenship is part of a bigger national project, prominently inaugurated in the time of Thailand's early governments (1940-1960s).

There is much historical evidence of the Thai state's assimilationist perspective which prioritizes blurring the difference between her people. Thak (1978) records that in 1939, the then-prime minister Phibunsongkhram published many official announcements about new standards of national character for Thai people (pp. 246-249). For instance, the word “Thai” shall be used for all of the Thais regardless of geographical, ethnic, or religious divisions because

categorization such as “the Northern Thais, the Northeastern Thais, the Southern Thais, and Islamic Thais” is “not appropriate for Thailand [which] is one and indivisible.” Moreover, all Thais are required to respect the national flag, the national anthem, and the anthem for His Majesty the King. Whoever sees other Thais who don’t pay due respect to these three elements should reprimand them sternly. Furthermore, Thais are urged to consume only products originating from Thailand and strive to increase the quality of Thai products to support the nation during the time of war. Although some of his orders, such as wearing hat when walking outside or kissing one’s wife before leaving home, did not survive after Phibunsongkhram’s incumbency, many have left lasting legacies until today, including his definition of Thai citizens as unified.

The royal patronage of “religion”

As this chapter focuses on the statecraft that constructed the image of Bhumibol as the ideal monarch, it is important to understand how his popularity has been sustained, including through discourses accepted by Malay-Thai Muslims as the reasons behind their reverence for the king. Importantly, regardless of the arguments we can make about the state’s project of crafting King Bhumibol’s now omnipresent popularity and sustaining the notion of “Thainess” according to the three pillars, we cannot deny some citizens’ desire to contribute to these ideologies. I propose that we can capture the way support for the king increased among the population through McDaniel’s explanation for the widespread popularity of Somdet To.

This is not a top-down movement concocted by the elite to manipulate the masses. It is a participatory, rhizomatic movement that is sustained and fueled by many different entrepreneurs, fans, and students from various backgrounds and classes.

(McDaniel, 2011: 51)

Two examples among this “participatory, rhizomatic movement” that sustained Bhumibol’s popularity among Malay-Thai Muslims in southern Thailand are reaction of Malay-Thai Muslims who have received monarchy-sponsored awards and Muslim scholars’ interpretations of the king as the patron of “religion” in Thailand. In regard to the former case, Anusorn Unno (2019: 111-113) demonstrates Malay-Thai Muslims’ newfound awareness as subjects of the monarch through the case of “Maeh.” As a hard-working mother in Yala, Maeh initially prioritized her children’s education with little regard to the royal family. However, upon receiving “an outstanding mother award” from Princess Somsawali (former wife of then Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn) in 2008, Maeh had the opportunity to visit Bangkok for the first time to attend the award ceremony. This special moment was followed by sudden media attention. Anusorn concludes Maeh’s case study by stating that “[a]lthough it was not her wish in the first place, this rare experience reminded her of how significant and authoritative royal recognition can be.” I would like to go further and propose that such “royal recognition” is the tool used by the royal family to inculcate subjectivity and subjecthood in their citizens. When receiving a prestigious award and gaining media fame, one is expected to be grateful to the monarchs’ “benevolence” and henceforth exist as a living symbol of the graciousness of the royal family: one should live as another reminder to others why the monarchy should be revered.

A further example of the multi-faceted phenomenon which sustains the prestige of the monarchy is the idea of nation-wide religious patronage. Sarutpoom Boonma and Chaiwat Meesanthan (2019) state that King Bhumibol had performed his duty as both *akkharaputthasasanupathamphok* (the patron of Buddhism)², as required in the 1924 throne

² อัครพุทธศาสนูปถัมภก

succession law, and *akkharasasanupathamphok* (the patron of religion)³, as specified in Thai constitutions from the 1932 edition to the temporary 2014 edition. Bhumibol had supported the propagation of Islam in Thailand by initiating and sponsoring the first translation of the Koran into Thai in 1962. Six years later, the translated version was published and distributed to mosques around Thailand. Furthermore, since 1963, his majesty had been inaugurating the central Mawlid celebration⁴ of Thailand or requesting the queen or the then-crown-prince Vajiralongkorn (1952 -) to perform this task. When Wan Muhamad Noor, the first Muslim President of the National Assembly of Thailand, officially approached Bhumibol in 1997, the king openly assured him that he didn't have to follow royal protocols that are against teachings of Islam, that is, that he did not have to *krab* or bow down to the king's feet, which was required of Thai Buddhists. These acts of understanding and respect could be interpreted as his majesty's way of supporting religious diversity in Thailand. Today, the current king, Vajiralongkorn (r. 2016-), continues to inaugurate the central Mawlid celebration of Thailand, along with national Quranic recitation competitions.

According to Chaiwat⁵, anti-Muslim sentiment in Thailand has yet to, unlike Myanmar, resulted in nation-wide tendency toward genocide towards Muslims because the monarchy as the nation's fundamental institution chose to continuously encourage religious diversity instead of marginalizing Muslims.⁶ Sarutpoom and Chaiwat's thereby offer one way of interpreting the king's actions. Other interpretations might take into account the idea that the king's support for the translation of the Koran can be considered an attempt to Thai-fy teachings of Islam and

³ อัครศาสนูปถัมภก

⁴ The tradition to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad

⁵ Based on personal conversation in June 2019

⁶ His exact words were “phro sathaban mai len dui” (because the [monarchy] institution doesn't play along [with radical anti-Muslim sentiments]).

alienate religion from Arabic as well as local Malay language, and by extension, Middle Eastern influence and Malay community. The significance of this sponsored translation can be felt even more strongly when one considers some Islamic scholars' insistence that the Koran cannot be translated; according to these scholars, the Koran's beauty and wisdom lie not only in its meaning but are embedded in the correct recitation of its verses.

According to Michael Sells (1999), Islam teaches that "[h]uman beings are not born sinful, but they are forgetful" (p. 18). This forgetfulness can only be cured by *dhikr* which refers to both a reminder and the act of remembrance of God. Muslims experience *dhikr* through prayers and recitation of the Koran, particularly its Arabic recitation which is regarded by Sells as a "combination of intimacy and awe" (p. 19). Sells asserts that Muslim children typically learn the Koran orally, "often before they know Arabic grammar or the history of Islam" (p. 21). There Value is thus conferred upon listening to and reciting the Quranic verses in Arabic even without understanding their meaning. In this view, the spirit of the Koran is lost in translation. According to Sells, what could have been a consummation of power and beauty if experienced in Arabic would be "difficult to grasp, confusing, and in most English translation, alienating" (p. 11).

I do not intend to frame Bhumibol's order of translation of the Koran into Thai as a purely political scheme to alienate Thai Muslims from the true remembrance of Allah through Quranic recitation in Arabic. Certainly, the Thai translation has its own functions and would be particularly helpful to the Thai citizens who want to convert to Islam but do not have any accessible Muslim community to learn from. However, by being aware of the value that could be lost in translation of the Koran, we can better understand alternative ways of interpreting the king's order and remain cognizant of its potential consequences.

Regarding the notion of thai king as *akkhasasanupathamphok*,⁷ Ishii (1994) traces the meaning of its root, *sasanupathampok*, back to the Ayutthaya period in the seventeenth century. According to Ishii, this term used to mean the “royal protection of the Sacred Religion” (p. 455). During this period, the kings of Siam are expected to allow their non-Buddhist subjects, such as foreign merchants, to practice their religions but prohibit attempts to convert Buddhist subjects to other religion. Additionally, Ishii perceives the royal decrees during the beginning of the reign of King Phra Phutthayotfa Chulalok or King Rama I of the Chakri dynasty (1737–1809; r. 1782–1809) as a continuation to concepts in the Ayutthaya period. His interpretation of *Kot Phra Song* or “Royal Degrees on the Buddhist Sangha” is as quoted below:

Here *akkha* means “supreme,” and *upathamphok* means “he who supports, promotes, or encourages. The term *sasana* (religion) in all eight decrees, issued between 1782 – 1783, is tantamount to *Phuttasasana*, or Buddhism. In short, *akkhasasanupathamphok* in the traditional context in variably means “the supreme supporter of the Buddhist religion”; it does not refer to religion in general.

(Ishii, 1994: 455)

According to Ishii, this exclusive meaning of *sasana* only began to shift in 1932, the year in which a successful coup d’etat put the end to Siam’s absolute monarchy. Once confronted with “the modern concept of religious liberty,” Prince Wan Whatayakon suggested that the meaning of the term *sasana* should be broadened to encompass all religions; “[the King] professes the Buddhist *Faith* and is the upholder of *Religion*” (*Ahiprai Rang Ratthathammanun* [A contention on the draft constitution], 1932, cited in p. 456). I would like to claim that even though the ideology of *sasana* as referring to all religions was legally introduced in Siam since 1932, Thailand has never undertaken a complete transformation of this concept. One instance of

⁷ There is a slight difference in Ishii’s spelling from Sarutpoom and Chaiwat’s spelling. This is most likely because Ishii mispronounced the beginning of the term. อัคร should be read with three syllables but can be misunderstood as a two syllable word.

evidence of the continued equation of religion with Buddhism is found in the way that King Bhumibol's first visit to the South maintains a tradition that dates back to King Chulalongkorn's rule.

Tamara Loos (2002: 95) asserts that "Siam's modernity is imbued with a form of Buddhism practiced by royal elites." In other words, Siam's modernity has never been a purely secular one; it has been underwritten by Buddhist cosmology throughout the reigns of Siam's modernizing kings (King Rama V, King Rama VI, and King Rama IX). The strong tie between the monarchy, state power, and Buddhism can be witnessed in King Chulalongkorn's first visit to Southern Thailand in 1888 (ibid). During this visit, as well as the frequent following visits in 1889, 1890, 1896, 1898, and 1901, King Chulalongkorn repeatedly visited Buddhist temples in the South without any stops at Islamic sites. Although King Bhumibol's first visit was more diversified, none of the scenes in *Remembering the King's First Visit* show a visit at a mosque though several temple visits are featured.⁸

Royal patronage beyond the realm of religion

Even though much of the discussion of the royal patronage in this chapter has focused on religion, the much more widely known contribution of the royal family in the South has been directed toward secular issues, particularly the development of natural resources. These programs are usually called by the umbrella term *krongkananphraratchadamri*, "projects according to the royal thought or idea" or "royal projects" for short. A significant publication,

⁸ However, this does not mean that Bhumibol has never visited mosques. Upon talking with one ex-worker at Pacific Inspirational Channel, a media company which produces documentaries about the royal family based on orders from Office of the Royal Development Projects Board (ORDPB) and Office of the National Security Council, she recalled encountering several footages of Bhumibol's visit at the mosques. I found one of such footage uploaded in MCOT media's YouTube channel in 2017. Unfortunately, the footage of that visit at a mosque in Pattani was so brief that I decided not to include it in this analysis.

housed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' internal library in Bangkok, illustrates the royal projects in Yala, a province in the deep South. What is intriguing beyond its content is that the book cannot be found in large reputable domestic and international libraries such as Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University, Cornell University⁹, or the United States' Library of Congress. Due to this difficulty in finding another copy of the book, I am not sure who the intended readers of this book might be. Regardless of its lack of publishing context history, its form and content are worthy of close analysis.

This grand, colorful publication with thick paper is titled *Yalasuntisuk Tairomphrabarami* (Peaceful Yala under the royal grace). The book was published by Yala province's provincial government in 2010 to propagate and celebrate the royal family's developmental projects from 1982 – 2009. Kitsada Boonraj, then Yala's provincial governor, states in the book's introduction that the people of Yala are very grateful to King Bhumibol, Queen Sirikit, and all members of the royal family for improving the quality of life of Yala people. The book aims to offer knowledge to people who are involved in

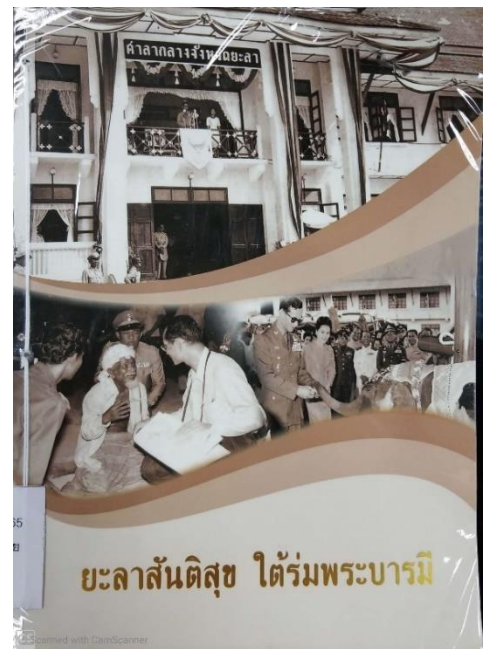


Fig. 5 The front cover of *Yalasuntisuk Tairomphrabarami* (Peaceful Yala under the royal grace) (Source: Photo taken by the author)

these projects and local people to “*damnerngan tamroi phrayukonlabath*” (follow the royal footprints), constructively continue these projects, and use these programs as a way of leading a peaceful life. Throughout these 27 years, there had been 37 projects (61 activities) which cost

⁹ Two Southeast Asian librarians at Cornell University have tried their best to help me acquire this book. To no avail, the book couldn't be found anywhere. It puzzles all of us. One of the librarians predicts that the book might be published in a small number to celebrate a special occasion and was only distributed among government organizations in Thailand.

751,473,405 Baht (23,051,333 USD)¹⁰ in total. Royal projects in Yala include development of water resources, social welfare, such as Princess Siridhorn's patronization of Islamic private schools, the "exemplary farm" project according to Queen Sirikit's remarks, Princess Ubolratana's anti-drug addiction in projects for youth, and Princess Sirindhorn's establishment of farms for overseas flowers. It is emphasized in the book that members of the royal family have been active in visiting Yala despite the conflict in Southern Thailand. The choice of the book title is particularly intriguing. It might be thought to imply that Yala is peaceful, despite prolonged conflict, as long as it is under the grace of the royal family.

What is less known to the public today is that the engagement of the royal family also extends to security issues. One prominent example is Queen Sirikit's involvement in "solving" the unrest in Southern Thailand. According to Anusorn (2019: 113 – 116), the queen extended her stay at Thaksin Ratchaniwet Palace in Narathiwat from the usual one month to two months (from September to October 2004) in order to listen to the struggle of local people since the clashes intensified. In November of the same year, she gave a spirited speech to approximately one thousand people, including Prime Minister Thaksin, cabinet members, senior government officials, and village scouts about her concerns in regard to the recent unrest. This sentimental speech brims with sentiments that deserve unpacking.

Based on the Thai version of this speech from 16 November, as published in *Prachathai* news website on the following day, Sirikit begins by reminiscing about what might be summarized as "the good old days" – the three decades before 2004 when Southern Thailand was peaceful, beautiful, and prosperous; an area from which the queen's favorite fruit originates, where she has listened to villagers' ordinary troubles and helped improve their life, a land with

¹⁰ As of March 2020

impressive and memorable “Pattani culture.” The queen emphasizes that this land belongs to all Thai people and today’s prosperity is thanks to the cooperation of people from many sectors. She also reminds people to never forget the “*Boonkun khong phandin*.” The direct translation of this term might be “favor or kindness of the land” but it should be noted that the term *boonkun* typically comes with the expectation of repayment. Moreover, *phandin* can mean more than land in a physiological sense; it connotes the sense of a homeland worthy of protection and is often associated with other royalist-nationalist terms such as *phor khong phandin* which means father of the land and refers to King Bhumibol. In short, Sirikit urges people to be grateful to the land of Southern Thailand and the effort that the king, the queen herself, and people of many sectors put into developing this land for its people. This “gratitude” is re-emphasized at the end of the speech when the queen advises her “intelligent audiences” to help her search for solutions to the unrest.

The first half of this speech serves as a strong contrast to the second half which focuses on recent unrest in the deep South, particularly the daily killings and bombing which directly affect the lives of innocent civilians. To transition to this second half, Sirikit laments that the freedom of religion and great harmony between Buddhists, Muslims, and Christians in Thailand which used to be one of the nation’s strong points has come under a threat. While recalling many tragic cases of innocent victims of the unrest, including monks who were killed while performing their daily morning alms and a young child who helplessly tried to reconnect the head of his beheaded father, the queen comments that the current violent situation is unprecedented, as the previous generation of the insurgents never targeted innocent civilians. Although the speech should be credited for capturing the terror experienced in the deep South as well as from the eyes of observers from outside of the area, its stress on the current unrest as being “unprecedented”

possesses the danger of alienating today's insurgency from a history of hundreds of years on conflict between Siam and Patani. This disconnection justifies the source of anger and disdain evoked throughout the second half of her speech. Quoted below is a part of her speech that has been selected by Anusorn Unno (2019).

... I could not stay there [Thaksin Ratchaniwet Palace] for only one month as usual. I had to stay there for two months because I am so worried about the people there. In particular, I have witnessed their livelihoods and realized that now they, whether Buddhist Thais or Muslim Thais, are suffering severely. Innocent Buddhist Thais were killed everyday and the killings are still going on even now. I talked to the subjects [*rasadorn*] in the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, and all of them said that they have lived there peacefully since their grandparents' time.

... I have accompanied His Majesty the King for more than thirty years, but I have never seen anything as cruel and brutal like this before. Sometimes they [the insurgents] posted leaflets on rubber trees forbidding villagers from tapping rubber, otherwise they would get killed. **They acted as if the land were lawless.** The villagers told me that in Tanyong Limo village, if Buddhist Thais go to tap rubber in the area, they will get beheaded and their heads will be thrown away somewhere else.

... When I paid a visit to Tanyong Limo village, the villagers, mostly women, told me it was good that I went that day, because they want to hear just one word from my mouth, whether or not they had the right to stay there... These subjects asked me to tell the government and the prime minister, please do not withdraw the troops from the three southern border provinces, because if the troops stay here, they will survive. But if the troops are withdrawn, they may die. **Then I told them I will have the marines train them at shooting long guns.**

... The country has laws, but they cannot be enforced in the three southern border provinces. I don't know why. But it is so scary... **I promise that I, at the age of seventy-two, will practice shooting a gun again without wearing glasses. I will shoot with my bare eyes.**

(*Khaosod*, 18 November 2005, cited in Anusorn, 2019: 113 – 114, emphasis mine)

In quoting this speech, Anusorn focuses on the queen's usage of the term "Thais" as a category that transgresses other ethnicity such as Chinese or Malay. By recognizing all residents of the deep South as "Thai," these residents are her *rasadorn* (subjects or citizens) who deserve to be protected so that they can live in the land of their ancestors. Her statement about

“practice[ing] shooting a gun again without glasses” then demonstrates her commitment to protect her nation and its people. What Anusorn does not discuss in detail is the queen’s aggressive stance against the insurgents and her justification of the existence of the military officers in the deep South. I find Sirikit’s stress on “lawlessness” intriguing. While she condemns the insurgents for acting as if the land has no law, she is making a statement to combat them by providing Buddhist villagers with guns and sending military officers to teach them how to shoot. What makes one civilian’s shooting lawless and another’s acceptable and even encouraged?

The queen considers supplying guns and providing training for shooting as a means for the villagers, especially women, to protect themselves from the insurgents. A headline from another news article on 7 July 2005 in *Manager Online* captures her intention as: “The Queen is grieving over civilians in the Southernmost provinces’ inability to live and work due to barbaric violence; The royal project aims to train the villagers to practice self-defense; There is no intention for Thai people to kill each other; Government officials – the army – the police – the governor are urged to cooperate with the aim to put an end to Southern fire.” Several new articles report that this royal project has contributed to establishment of volunteers who guard their own villages and a decrease in crime and death in these villages. One such news article is published in the New York Times on 19 March 2007. According to Thomas Fuller, a village headman proudly announced that his village had not face any death since the beginning of 2007, while nearby villages had had about 20 deaths; this success is thanks to the armed patrols suggested by Queen Sirikit. As most of the village militias are Buddhists, this current trend may further aggravate the divide between the Buddhist and Muslim community. Regardless of the possible consequences of the increase in gun holders in the deep South, the project of sourcing weapons to civilians was not banned. This continuity might be due to the perception that the project was

part of the royal family's solution in easing conflict in the south. It is highly unlikely that the attempt will be implemented had it has been initiated by a civilian-based government.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the conscious statecraft that has been put into portraying Malay Muslims in Southernmost provinces as a part of a constructed category of "Thai Muslims." While this can be seen as an attempt of inclusion, Thailand has never left its Buddhist modernity mindset which prioritizes consolidated power at the center of the realm, that is the monarchy. Thus, what happens simultaneously to this seemingly welcoming gesture is a gradual cropping out of aspects of Malay-Muslim identity and life, including the value of their linguistic heritage and their rights as the original inhabitants of the land.

I argue that this rendering of Malay Muslims' precarious citizenship in the 1960s becomes a breeding ground for violence in 2004, both from the side of the insurgents and the state. While the insurgents employ their ethnoreligious identity and history of repression as their justification for enacting violence, as we will discuss in detail in chapter two, the state perform its violence based on Achille Mbembe (2003)'s principle of "necropolitics." This concept is based on the idea that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (p. 11). This focus on the state's ability to dictate its people's life and death is an extension of Michael Foucault's theory of "biopolitics," how state enact its control on its citizens' bodies. The Thai monarchy's ability to create a sphere of inclusion through exclusion in the deep South corresponds with Mbembe's connection between "the generalized instrumentalization of human existence" and "the material

destruction of human bodies and populations” (p. 14) The next chapter demonstrates how generalization of the Malay-Muslim community through mainstream media and the legacy of Thai nationalism since King Rama VI’s period can materialize as deep-seeded antagonistic view towards Malay Muslims and countless loss of lives in the South.

CHAPTER TWO

Un-becoming “Thai” Muslims through mainstream news

Who were the insurgents that Queen Sirikit thought of pointing her gun at? What are the lines between citizens worth protecting and those who deserve to be persecuted? When does one stop being a citizen and become a criminal or traitor to the state? How were these violent and fearsome figures invented? In their research on the remaking of memories of Buddhist-Muslim relations in Myanmar, Schissler, M. et al. (2017: 377) base their questions on arguments originally advanced by Das (1998):

Das’s argument is that for violence at the most extreme end of Scheper-Hughes’s (2002) continuum to be made possible, there must be a shift in which the Other is made categorically fearsome. The difference is subtle but important: the category of a *fearsome Other* is what enables violence to be exacted on all those who can be placed within such a category. This is the difference between a dynamic in which particular members of groups are marked as threatening and one in which all who fit within the category Other are, by virtue of their existence, a threat.

To understand when, how, and why Malay Muslims in the deep South of Thailand have come to be viewed less humanely by the public, I revisit mainstream news reports about incidents in 2004. The topic of the unrest in the deep South was continuously documented and many news agencies even have a separate section for news about the conflict. Due to this prolonged coverage over 16 years, the media have played a crucial role in shaping the public’s memory of how the conflict developed and constructed perceptions of Thai-Malay Muslims and Islam in Thailand. In this chapter, I seek to understand the selective “truth” in Thai mainstream media, popular labels that have been attached to the insurgents, and the effects that this labeling has on the perception of Thai-Malay Muslims more broadly. I subsequently explore the notion of ethnoreligious violence and today’s social media usage of the Thai military. I conclude with the

attempt to look beyond Thailand and examine how Muslims in other parts of the world have also been subjected to Islamophobia.

Centralized truth

Phansasiri Kularb, a lecturer in the Faculty of Communication Arts at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, proposes three “contesting realities” (2016: 11) to explain conflicts in Southern Thailand: “crime and conspiracy,” “minority’s grievance,” and “Malay nationalism and Islamism.” The first paradigm considers the conflict to be a security problem and proposes state centralization as a solution. The second paradigm views the conflict as a result of the marginalization and maltreatment by government officials and proposes devolution as a solution. The final paradigm perceives the conflict as an insurgency in need of “autonomous local independent administration.” Each viewpoint identifies the militants’ goal differently. The first discourse, which is the most state-centered, is closely linked with what Phansasiri (2016: 71) calls a “Bangkok-centric mindset.” This mindset refers to pressure given to Southern-based journalists and stringers from Bangkok-based editors to deliver news with language and content that will be of interest to audiences in Bangkok and fit the dominant narratives of the Thai state, such as avoiding the word “Malay” and instead calling Muslims in Southern Thailand “Thai Muslims” (McCargo, 2007: ix).

By analyzing news on the Southern Thailand conflict from 2004-2010 in four Thai media outlets (*Matichon*, *Thai PBS*, *Manager*, and *Isara*), Phansasiri (2016: 28) concludes that almost half of the news was presented based on the “crime and conspiracy” perspective with headlines heavily focusing on security and public order (47%). This theme is dominant and consistent in all four media platforms, despite their different sources of funding and focus. Among the most

common types of headlines are those that indicate the number of casualties in each incident of violence. What can we understand from these statistics?

From a business point of view, this trend may reflect news types that are more “dramatic,” and thus more profitable. However, if we were to look at this from a socio-political viewpoint, it might be mirroring the nation’s main interest in the conflict: to pay attention to the degree of violence without trying to understand the root causes of the violence. It then becomes very difficult for the audiences of these mainstream news to see incidents surrounding Tak Bai beyond the number of casualties and attempt to comprehend the context underlying these cases. With the “truth” of the incident being centralized and mostly limited to words delivered by state authority figures, audiences who are not directly affected may overlook many important questions. For instance, why did Thai-Malay Muslim demonstrators gather at a police station in Tak Bai in the first place? Did most come out of their own will or were they forced to come by any organization or groups of militants? Were they doing it for religion? For ethnicity? Or perhaps for justice? Why did the military officers force the male protestors to strip off their shirts and lie on the ground and subsequently, put too many persons in trucks? These crucial questions are rarely featured in most Thai mainstream media during the time that violence erupted in Tak Bai.

What are alternative ways of making sense of ethnic and religion-related violence beyond a state-endorsed set of truths? Although Chris Wilson’s area and duration of concentration is different (Indonesia, particularly in North Maluku from August 1999 to June 2000), his theoretical framework is insightful for an alternative theorization of the Southern conflict. Wilson (2008: 15-20) proposes a paradigm of “elite agency vs. mass phenomena,” where a conflict may be mobilized by elites in the society or ignited by the mass due to prolonged

injustice. He further posits a “rationality vs. affect and identity” paradigm, where motivation is either based on logic or emotion. He then encourages a synthesis of these two paradigms whereby both social structures and human agency are given importance. If we were to apply this to the case of the Tak Bai incident, we can see the need to examine the voices of both people who claim to be leaders of the protestors and the protestors themselves. Likewise, it is necessary to consider both orders and justifications given by superiors among the police and the military as well as reasons given by the officers who follow those orders. Unfortunately, such entanglement is rarely handled by mainstream media, as people without political positions are often rendered nameless and voiceless.

To illustrate this void of nuances in mainstream media, I would like to examine an interview that former Prime Samak Sundaravej (incumbency: January – September 2008), gave to Al Jazeera in February 2008. The journalist asked about Samak’s view on former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra’s “pretty brutal



Fig 6. Samak Sundaravej while being interviewed in 2008 (Source: Al Jazeera, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuoqLiLSgnI>)

campaign against Muslims fighters in Southern Thailand [where] many innocent people were caught up in that violence.” She also specifically asked about “the Tak Bai incident, when many young Muslim men were beaten and rounded up, and their bodies were stacked into trucks; many of them suffocated and died.” Transcribed below is their conversation:

“Where?,” asked Samak.

“At Tak Bai,” said the journalist.

“Tak Bai? Oh, you’ve heard about that incident?”

“Of course, we’ve seen the footage.”

“There is a group of them making a violence in the South, 32 of them. And they fled to live in the mosque. And then the military ask them to come out. They doesn’t

come out. So, the military must get in. So, the mosque is a clean place that the dirty man [few incomprehensible words] kind of weapon cannot get in. But **they** just going there. So, they just killing from outside. So, 32 of them died. And that is in the Krue Se. But in Tak Bai, **they** just come to make a shouting – to make a shouting [few incomprehensible words] to bring six people out from jail. So, the whole day, it's a time of the – they don't eat anything, they don't eat in the daytime. So, thousand of them just go and get around the police station. And something like that. Then, **they** end up with the decision that, okay, will let them has the probation. Will bring them back, ah, six people. But [few incomprehensible words] in the evening time. So, they make a round up, for all those people, and put in the truck."

"Many of the families would suggest that there were many innocent people rounded up, among the men." The journalist intervenes.

"Oh... innocent people... When they have the movement around that thing, is it the innocent or not, I have no idea. But those people going in the truck, ah, if they strong enough, it's okay. But they spend the whole day doesn't eat, doesn't drink water, doesn't swallow any kind of thing because... in the month of that thing. **So, they just fall on each other.** And 78 died. So many trucks loading, running by hours time. So, that's it. It's a tragedy. It happened. Nobody intends to kill them. They died because of their physical. But yes, we caught together to get into the [an incomprehensible word]. So, so, what's wrong with that? What's wrong with the – What is the [execution?] of that? What, what is it?" Samak moved his head up and down, as if inviting a fight.

"What is wrong with innocent people died?" The journalist asks with widen eyes.

"What is the incident that has happened? Everyone in the country knows what has happened. And 70 [swallowing saliva], they fall down on each other, and then 78 died."

"So, you are saying that they died because they fell on top of each other?"

"Yes! Nobody intends to kill them."

"Not because they were packed into trucks without enough air?"

"[A pause] when people get into truck in a good shape and running, actually nobody think it will be like that. But if the people happen not to eat, not to drink, not to swallow, and then somebody fall down, the other one on the top. So, 78 died."

"Okay"

"Out of 1,300"

(Al Jazeera, 2008, transcription mine, description and emphasis added)

Based on this interview, which is not atypical coming from state authorities in Thailand, we can see that even someone in a leadership position such as the prime minister may confuse the Krue Se mosque incident and Tak Bai incident. Remarkably, there is no intention in explaining the possible motives of the gathering of over 1300 protestors. The fact that these protestors gathered because six village guards were imprisoned on the ground of stealing weapons while evidence of the crime was lacking is not acknowledged. Only their action of

“coming to make a shouting” is mentioned. The interview is given with the perception that these demonstrators represent a unified group of unreasonable people who did not listen to the police who already agreed to let the six convicts out of the prison. They are also markedly Muslims, based on their description of undergoing a fast. It is noticeable that Samak isn’t able to name the holy month of Ramadan; not even in its Thai variations of *duen buat* or *duen tee sin od*, and only able to call this time period “a time of the—they don’t eat anything, they don’t eat in the daytime.” Through disregarding their political motive of calling for justice as well as their religious motive of fasting in the holy month, the protestors are portrayed as the violent mass, far beyond comprehension. Thus, it was fairly easy to lay blame on them for dying while “falling on each other” due to physical fatigue. Moreover, the interview shows a confusing use of the pronoun “they” which seems to sometimes be used to refer to the protestors and sometimes to the police. This ambiguity might be caused partly because of the speaker’s struggle with conversing in English. However, I argue that it is a manifestation of the dominant perception of the nature of the insurgents in the South: the incomprehensible and unidentifiable mass.

To understand why the nuances within conflicts in the Deep South are rarely addressed, it is helpful to discuss the idea of “truth management” by Chaiwat Satha-Anand (2008), a political scientist known for his contribution to the study of Southern Thai conflict and the study of non-violence. Chaiwat (2008) asserts that the public’s demand for “truth” concerning violent incidents in Southern Thailand is often limited to empirical facts such as the number of casualties. Consequently, many Thai media platforms conform to this obsession with factual details and simultaneously disregard nuances of the conflict which could have been viewed as other forms of “truth.” This understanding corresponds with the quoted interview of Samak, in which the numbers of casualties in both the Krue Se mosque and Tak Bai incidents were

repeated many times. To the state officials who typically occupy the largest and the most frequent space in mainstream media, the potential of the victims being innocent is less important than the statement that a mere 78 out of 1,300 people died.

Another way to understand Samak's rather dismissive speech, and by extension, the queen's aggressive speech, is to bring in Mbembe (2003)'s concept of necropolitics. As mentioned in the conclusion of the previous chapter, the framing of "Thai Muslims" had ripped Malay Muslims off their ability to embrace their multiplex identity. By becoming "Thai" subjects under the border territory which has become under a permanent "state of exception" since 2004, the Malays are under risk of losing not only cultural heritage but also the rights to live under the protection of the law. Mbembe states that "the ways of killing" in the name of "territorialization of the sovereign state" can be considered rational once taken as a part of the state's assertion in "civilizing" its own territory. Taken this way, the promise of the South becoming more "civilized" now entails not only the king's developmental projects or the queen's women empowerment projects through support of handicraft skills and market, but also the military officers and the polices' commitment in identifying and capturing potential insurgents, including the 1300 people who gathered in front of Tak Bai police station in October 2004.

The implication of Samak's interview and his selective truth come into sharp relief when contrasted with interviews of Tak Bai victims published by human rights NGOs on social media such as Facebook. In October 2019, 15 years after the Tak Bai incident, the Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF), a local NGO working on rights of minorities in Thailand, published a series of interviews with victims of Tak Bai incidents. Among the stories collected is that of a man who only entered the protest scene because a police officer told him to get off his car and ended up losing his two legs and one of his hands, a man who got involved in the demonstration



Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF)

Oct 18, 2019 at 10:50 AM •

"วันที่ 25 ตุลาคม 2547 ผมนั่งรถตั้งใจจะไปซื้อเสื้อผ้าที่ตลาดตาดนาเตรียมฉลองวันรายอ พอขับไปถึงแถวสถานีตำรวจภูธรอำเภอตากใบ ก็ได้ยินเสียงคนยิงปืนขึ้นฟ้า...
See More



1K

92 Comments • 1.4K Shares

Fig. 7 A post of an interview with a victim of the Tak Bai incident (Source: Cross Cultural Foundation's Facebook page)

because he was praying in a nearby *sala* (a public spot for local gatherings) and had one of his eyes damaged because of the incident, and a woman who lost her husband in Tak Bai incident and whose new husband was investigated by the army years after the incident. What all of these victims share is that they received monetary compensation from the government but never felt that their pain has been probably assuaged because they have been under the close monitoring of the state officials and are still treated as potential criminals. Chanatip Tatiyakaroonwong (2019), a researcher at Cross Cultural Foundation who also interviewed the victims, describe their situation as

"Besides not receiving any psychological service in compensation for mental injuries from the government, [they are] being labeled and repeatedly violated; acts which further engrave the wound on their hearts." Samak's statements in the interview do not represent only his unique understanding of the Tak Bai incident. There are other state officials who share his perception, as we can see in one of Chanatip's interviews with a victim who lost her husband:

Around ten years after my husband died, officers called me in to participate in a meeting about receiving monetary compensation in the government. During the meeting, a police officer said something along the line of "Once you have received the money, don't bring up any old stories" and that my husband "died of hunger during the fasting period." At that moment, I stood up and scorned him, "Is it not wrong to kill someone in your religion? How dare you say this?"

(Chanatip, 2019)

While human rights NGOs such as Cross Cultural Foundation are able to amplify the feelings of pain from the Malay-Thai Muslims affected, they are also being subjected to threats from the government, both through legal means and a social media project called “IO” (Information Operation). Many websites and Facebook pages share content which demonizes the insurgents in the South as well as attack NGOs for “siding with the bandits.” In the latest motion of no-confidence debate in parliament in February 2020, Wiroj Lakkhanaadisorn, then a member of the house of representatives of the Future Forward Party, exposes the evidence of the army funding one of said websites and assigning lower level military officials to become members of “IOs,” owners of fake social media accounts to propagate sites that inflict hatred towards the insurgents and NGOs. Based on this controversial project, the current military is relying not only mainstream media but also social media to centralize the messages about the situation in the Southernmost provinces. The existence of the IO project is a manifestation of the army’s attempt to permeate society with stories that intensify violence in the South and condemn those who seem to empathize with Malay-Muslim minority.



Fig 8. A screenshot from the motion of no-confidence speech. The main texts listed here read “What is pulony.blogspot.com for?” As for the two screen shots from the blog/social media pages, the captions read “Who is the one leading citizens to hate government officers?” and “What is the relationship between Pornpen Khongkachonkiet [the director of Cross Cultural Foundation] and the southern bandit movement?” (Source: The Standard, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeTlkKiPP3g&t=447s>)

Impact of (political) terminologies

The role of the monarchy in Southern Thailand as explored in chapter one is deeply intertwined with the style of reporting and popular discourse on the Southern unrest. According to Connors (2005:526), some state officials have called for the end of daily killings and other violence in the South “for national unity in honor of the queen’s seventh cycle (seventy-second birthday) and the king’s birthday in December.” Connors asserts that this line of logic is based on the assumption or expectation that every ideal Thai person can identify themselves in “the imaginary goodness of Thai-ness, embodied in the monarchy.” Thus, one should be able to redeem oneself through doing what is best for the King and the Queen” (in this case, stop participating in the insurgency and strive for peace in Southern Thailand). Connors call this rhetoric “an infantilization of public life” where all complexities are simplified for the sake of identity production. The labels attached to the insurgents in the South serve as an example of the simplification of identities which have become a norm in the Thai public scene.

I argue that mainstream media in Thailand continues to reiterate terminologies suffused with political implications to influence the public to think in accordance with the government’s “truth.” Among the terminologies that create stereotypes about local militants in the Southern conflict, *jon tai* (Southern bandits) stands out. An example of how the term is used is found in *Matichon Daily*, a leading Thai newspaper known for its focus on political news. On 30 October 2005, the paper reports on a speech by General Panlop Pinmanee, the former commander of the Southern Peace Enhancement Center and a controversial authority figure who ordered the massacre at Krue Se mosque (Ornanong Mektairat, & Nakarin Mektairat, n.d.).

At Hotel Taksin, Klang, Muang district, Nakornsithammarat province, General Pallop Pinmanee was the speaker for the closing ceremony of the internal training of the soldiers before working in the field. The commander of Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) said that the Southern Thailand problem can be considered as *bandit* war. It is a

terrorist act, no matter how you look at it. They are cruel towards government officers and citizens, including monks and novice monks. The situation is becoming more like Iraq, yet we are unable to do anything. We have to walk one step ahead of them, a step longer than theirs. There are many groups involved right now. We have to separate *bandits* from citizens. Right now, the *bandits* are overpowering the state's power. In order to achieve harmony, the state power must be strong... **I will not let the handle of the diamond-engraved axe slip away...**

(Matichon, 2005, cited in Salae, 2008, emphasis original, italics mine, translation mine)

This excerpt showcases the language used by an influential military trainer and the ideology inculcated into the soldiers who are responsible for handling the Southern conflict. In this passage, we can witness a constant use of the word bandit (*jon*) to describe the militants in Southern Thailand. This usage is not unique as it is relatively common in media and everyday conversation, even today when the conflict is still ongoing, albeit given less media attention than in 2004 when several significant incidents took place. I experienced the gravity of verbal violence through derogatory labels on Muslims at a seminar titled “Budu sauce: Image and perception of the Southernmost provinces from the center.” This public seminar was organized by the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies at Mahidol University on 23 June 2018. This seminar began with a discussion on a sudden imprisonment of Muslim students in Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok, based on a claim that the students were using Budu sauce, Southern style fermented fish sauce, to create bombs. The seminar subsequently discussed the struggles of these students’ families in the deep South to visit their incarcerated sons in Bangkok. Eventually, the seminar became a sharing session of personal pain faced in regard to tension in the South. A female student artist who displayed her paintings of faceless Muslim women at this conference shared her experience of being insulted in another exhibition. While standing to present her work as an artist, a stranger approached her and angrily remarked that “So this is the

face of the separatist?” As someone who lost her uncle in the Southern unrest and an artist who attempted to convey Muslims’ pain through art, the insult came as a big shock.

This kind of remark is heavily linked to my second observation point. In the quoted speech, we can see the reference to the Southern conflict as a terrorist act comparable to the case of Iraq. This shows Panlop’s generalizing idea of terrorism. Although it is not stated clearly here, the extent to which he holds the image of Muslims as terrorists is questionable. Since public figures such as Panlop and Samak reiterate these notions in mainstream media, it instigates lay people to perceive Malay Muslims as a form of enemy. This perilous attitude renders these people persecutors of the state, a population capable of hunting down those who are a recognized by authority figures as a threat to national unity.

Thirdly, the phrase emphasized in the original is significant, as it draws on a common discourse of Thailand as the land of a golden axe (*dindaan kwanthong*). This image is constructed based on Thailand’s geographical shape in the map which resembles an axe. The Southern part of Thailand then is often labelled as the handle of the axe. The general’s emphasis on the area being part of the axe indirectly implies state sovereignty. To most Thais, the expression “*naklaananikom Siam*,” Hara Shintaro’s translation of “*penjajah Siam*,” or, “the Siamese colonizer,” in Malay would be jarring (Panjor, cited in Kummetha, 2016; Suwan, cited in Kummetha, 2015). Yet, the military, and arguably Thai Buddhists more broadly, seem to have no problem with the phrase “the handle of the diamond-engraved axe” and may find it sentimental. Growing up in Bangkok during the 2000s, I remember hearing people blaming “*puak hua run rang*” (the group with violent mind) and “*puak baeng yaek din daan*” (the separatists) attempting to tear apart the land of Southern Thailand. “Our country of the golden

axe would no longer be an axe if its handle were to be taken away” was a sentence I heard as I was growing up without much interest in the conflict as a child.

Two main questions arise from analyzing this news excerpt. First, what are the origins and meanings of the dominant terms used to address the Southern Thai conflict by authority figures and mainstream media? Second, while Thai news emphasize the government officers’ voices, how is the conflict addressed overseas?

Former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is frequently blamed for inciting violence in the South through his insult of naming the insurgents as *jon kra jork* (unskilled bandits). While addressing the January Fourth incident (the stealing of weapons), Thaksin was recorded as saying that, “There is no separatist; there is no idealist terrorist; there is only *jon kra jok*.” (Thai Publica, 2014). More detailed origins of the labels given to the insurgents can be found in the master’s thesis of Romadon Panjor, the editor of the “Deep South Watch” website, entitled “Politics of Words in Pa(t)tani: Constructing “Peace” in Ethnopolitical Conflict” (2016).

According to Panjor (2016, cited in Kummetha, 2016), the choices of words to describe the Southern Thailand conflict have a long history of debate. After the 2006 coup d’etat, the majority of the government estimated the conflict to be a case of separatism. However, since the government wanted the matter to be kept as a domestic affair without intervention from foreign countries or international organization, it has been very careful with terminologies. Upon receiving advice from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, approximately in 2008, the state recognized the risk of using terms like “terrorism” (*karnkorkanrai*) or “armed conflict” (*karnkadkan-tangawut*) and opted for the word “perpetrator of violence” (*phuu-kor-khwarunrang*) instead.

As for the word “Southern bandit” (*jon tai*), which is common in media, Panjor states that this term has been developed over time: from “the separatist movement” (*kabuankan-korkanrai*) in 1963 to “the terrorist bandit movement” (*kabuankan-jon-korkanrai*) in 1972 to “the terrorist bandit” (*jon-korkanrai*) in 1997, then eventually only “bandit” (*jon*). By ripping off the word “movement,” the local militants’ political power has been decreased whereas its illegal, violent, economic-aimed aspects have been high-lightened (ibid). With the term *jon tai* repeating its occurrence in newspaper headlines, militants in Southern Thailand, and arguably, Malay-Thai Muslims more broadly, are depicted as criminals who do not deserve empathy nor respect. Through this historical record of the terminologies, it becomes apparent that terminology is a highly contested field. Equally, if not more, debated are the words Pattani and Patani.

While the first refers to the modern name of a province in Southern Thailand, the second term refers to an older and larger area of a Malay kingdom, “roughly” what is now named Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat (in McCargo, 2007: iii) or sometimes includes some parts of Songkhla as well as the States of Kelantan and Terengganu in certain periods (Al-Hakim, cited in Kummetha, 2015). According to Satha-Anand (McCargo, 2007: iii), the use of the latter term to describe the modern area is often seen as a political stance, implying a sense of Malay nationalism. This becomes more evident when considering an interview with an award-winning writer from Narathiwat in 2015 and an op-ed article from a Malaysian journalist in 2004. The latter reference will also bring us back to the question proposed earlier of how the Tak Bai incident is talked about in foreign media. Zakariya Amataya, the poet who won 2014 SEA write award from Narathiwat comments in his interview with Khummetha (2015) that:

“Patani” is a political term, not one used by actual locals. “Patani” connotes a sense of territory, ethnic specificity, and individuality of those in the region as being different from the rest of Thailand or even other Malays... I have used “P’tani” to refer to farmers, orchard workers and field workers. However, I’ve never used it in terms of territory. I

feel like it's not an original term (although some comrades have told me that Patani is an original term that has been forgotten, or whose use was forcibly ended). To me it feels like this term popped up quite suddenly. Usually I use the term "Fatoni." I don't feel connected to "Patani" enough to use it in my works; it's a very new term that's usually used by educated academia. So, it's up to them as to how they want to use it."

(Amataya, translated by Thaitrakulpanich, cited in Khummetha 2015)

Two salient points can be drawn from this interview. First, in tendency, the term "Patani" is viewed by locals as a new word. There is even some confusion with the word "P'tani" which might come from the word "Petani" which means farmers or peasants in standard Malay (*Bahasa Melayu Baku*). Moreover, some people are cautious with the term usage as it is now regarded as political. Second, this offers an instructive contrast with the use of the word "Patani" in an op-ed article in the leading Malaysian newspaper, *Malaysiakini*. This article further provides a glimpse of how the Tak Bai incident was perceived in Malaysia. In an article titled "Tak Bai tragedy - Asean as helpless as victims," published on 8 Nov 2004, its author who uses a pseudonym of "Teropong Negara" uses the term "Patani" twice to describe incidents during 1910-1911 and 2004 (the Tak Bai case), as quoted here:

I am very much **saddened** at the negative response of Thai senior senator Kraisaak Choonhavan to the suggestion made by Dr Mahathir Mohamad that greater autonomy be given to the Muslim-majority Thai southern provinces... Mahathir certainly knows the Thais and the historical background of the Thai southern provinces as well... The people of Kelantan, by virtue of this Act [the Thai Provincial Administration Act of May 1897], became alienated from their families in **Pattani**, Satun, and Narathiwat. For this reason, it is not surprising that there were two serious uprisings in *Patani* in 1910 and 1911 and strong reactions from the Kelantanese from time to time especially prior to the 1950s... I am also **particularly perturbed** by the varying references the Thaksin government has been giving to these unfortunate Muslims of Malay origin. It started with 'drug addicts and pushers' to 'terrorists', 'bandits' and of late 'criminals'... The actual outcome of the latest carnage by the Thai military against the defenseless Muslims at Tak Bai on Oct 25 has been listed as follows: six persons were found dead with gunshot wounds while 78 others were killed during their transportation to the military camp in **Patani**... What is **sad** about the whole tragedy is that it has met with a conspiracy of silence by the United States and its Western allies who supposedly champion democracy and human rights.

(Teropong Negara, 2004, emphasis mine)

When “Patani” first appears in the article, it come after “Pattani,” together with other provinces in Southern Thailand. Nevertheless, the second usage most likely refers to the Ingkayut army camp in Pattani. If so, why is the term “Patani” used here? If this is not merely a typographic error, is it due to the author’s subconscious acknowledgement of the historical Patani kingdom? We might even interpret this as an announcement of his political stance and his empathy for “Malay nationalism and Islamism” (Kularb, 2016: 111). Alternatively, this might mirror the ambiguity of the term “Patani” itself. This confused usage of the terms “Pattani” and “Patani” demonstrates the ambiguous nature of the identity of Malay-Thai Muslims in the South, an ambiguity contested among Malays themselves, Thai state authorities, mainstream media, as well as foreigners interested in the Southern unrest.

Ethnoreligious violence?

In a national televised address, Thaksin dismissed claims that the Tak Bai incident was an attack on Muslim religion. “I feel sorrow for the families who have lost their loved ones. But **this incident has nothing to do with religion. It's a matter of law and order,**” said the prime minister... The army claimed the deaths were caused by suffocation and fatigue while human-rights groups and Muslim communities condemned the drama as a “holocaust” and “state terrorism.” There were many vehicles because it was weekend, explained the prime minister, referring to the fact that too many protestors have been crammed into one military truck, leading to their tragic deaths. “I fully respect all religions and free of prejudice” said the prime minister. He added the government plans to set up an independent committee to investigate the issue. The committee will include law experts, religious experts and people knowledgeable in riot control.

(Xinhua, 2004, emphasis mine)

Although the then Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, claimed that what happened at Tak Bai in 2004 had nothing to do with religion (Xinhua, 2004), records of news in recent years do not seem to correspond with this premise. Most recent news, both from Thai and foreign media, tend to fall into either a condemnation of the Thai government for its unjust treatment towards the Muslim protestors (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Abdullah, 2015) or interviews with

the victims (Benar New Staff, 2015; BBC Thai, 2017) but sometimes the two genre overlaps (Human Rights Watch, 2007; Cross Cultural Foundation, 2019). The interviews with the victims are often filled with resentment and fear towards the soldiers, with the exception of an article where the victim was satisfied with how the conflict was resolved, partly because the compensation money was sufficient for her family to begin their lives anew (BenarNews, 2018).

To what extent is the Tak Bai incident remembered as ethnoreligious violence? Based on more recent news, international media has a tendency to focus on Tak Bai's political and social aspects, pointing out that none of the authority figures were punished for the massacre, even though many people agreed that the protestors were not treated in a justly manner. One of these includes a research done King Prajadhipok's Institute, a government investigation committee that was assigned to be responsible for this case since 2004. The researchers for this investigation, Ornanong and Nakarin, (n.d.) conclude that the captivation and transportation of the protestors were done with negligence, as the commanders should not have let inexperienced lower-level soldiers handled the transportation by themselves, as they "only focus on completing the main task without consideration on other factors" (n.p.). It should be noted that despite being a government-approved research institution, researchers at King Prajadhipok's Institute, and presumably other institutions of similar manner, may not be chosen as the reference in policy making. I discovered this situation on 27 June 2019, while attending a conference on multiculturalism and the deep South which was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for representatives from 33 government offices with work scope related to the South. The representative officer from King Prajadhipok's Institute lamented that even though they are receiving support from the government, if their research finding contradicts what military officers want to hear, the army will conduct another research of its own and disregard the

research done by her institution. This anecdote demonstrates how historical narratives are contested within governmental bodies.

Besides, although the victims are always identified as Muslim, most news does not mention their ethnicity. The connection between the victims of violence and the insurgents is rarely made. Due to this ambiguity, Southern Thai conflict remains a heated yet hazy warzone, despite its relatively consistent media coverage nationally as well as internationally. To examine memories involving violence in Tak Bai as ethnoreligious violence, I propose two sub-questions. First, were the people who died in the Southern Thai conflict considered to have performed jihad? Second, how has the conflict affected relationships between Buddhists and Muslims in Southern Thailand and beyond?

In tackling “religious violence,” McCargo (2013: 4) argues that, “We need to move beyond the tendency to simply dismiss religion as a tool of manipulation. We should, as Peter van der Veer (1994, ix) suggests, “take religious discourse and practice as constitutive of changing social identities, rather than treating them as ideological smoke screens that hide the real clash of material interests and social classes.” Therefore, discussion on the concept of jihad internationally and locally is one of the ways to explore the impact of religion in the conflict. The term jihad has developed a negative connotation among Western general audiences because of the terrorist group ISIS who claims jihad as their *raison d’etre*. Among vocal critics of this perspective is the Indonesian academic Azyumardi Azra, who states that “Islam — as a religion of compassion, [which is] hospitable and peaceful for all groups — teaches a human ethics that strongly stresses universal humanity (al-ukhuwwah al-insaniyyah)” (2004: 358, cited in Fealy, G., & Hooker, V. M. (Eds.). (2006). An open “Letter to Baghdadi ISIS” (2015), signed by Muslims scholars around the world, moreover, states that “Jihad in Islam is defensive war. It is

not permissible without the right cause, the right purpose and without the right rules of conduct.”
(p. 1)

The interest in debates on the definition of jihad may be more widespread today, but this interest has a long and contested history. According to Peters (2005), the Arabic word “jihad” means “to strive, to exert oneself, to struggle” (pp. 1). In the context of religion, there are many different interpretations, with the main debate centered on “whether the Koran allows Muslims to fight the unbelievers only as a self-defense against aggression or under all circumstances” (pp. 2). The fact that this crucial part is subject to interpretation has allowed the concept of jihad to be used by fundamentalists as a justification to mobilize the crowd against leaders that are deemed as unjust. When it comes to this term’s political usage in recent decades, Chiara Formichi (2020) asserts that jihad had “carried a positive connotation of liberation” in the 1980s but has come to be used by governments as “an enabler of unquestionable repression, a convenient way for governments to tackle unrest in Muslim areas, even where struggles had been taking place for decades without much connection to Islamist aspirations” since 9/11 attacks (p. 233). Thailand falls into the latter category, as insurgent groups in the deep South prioritize their ethnicity as an identity marker and aim to earn “a degree of administrative power” from Bangkok, rather than establishing an Islamic state of its own (p. 229). Despite these circumstances, Islam is far from being only in the background. Leaflets circulated in Southern Thailand offer the ways Islam is referred to in their “fight” with the state. Among them is a leaflet signed “From Malay Muslims in Patani,” which states:

2. Our group fights for Malay Muslims against cruel enemies. Allah said in the Koran that “I give permission for you to fight against those who hurt us.”
3. We are not terrorists, nor separatists. We just try to bring back what belongs to us. Don’t ever think that our actions are terrorism.

(Malay Muslims in Patani, cited in McCargo, 2008: 170)

This excerpt shows how the intertwined identity of being Malay and Muslim can be employed by some militants to justify their use of violence and frame it as an act of protecting what is rightfully theirs. It should be noted that they are adamantly against being seen as separatists nor terrorists. In short, the publishers of this leaflet consider themselves heroes who are protecting their religious and ethnic identity. Chaiwat Satha-Anand (2007) records that such leaflets were found among the belongings of Muslims who died at Krue Se mosque. The booklet is titled *Berjihad di Patani* (Performing Jihad at Patani); it starts by declaring that “Religious warriors will rise in the land of Patani with the Light of Fighting in the course of God” (pp. 31). Based on the ideology of this booklet, the choices of weapon made by the militants, and the way their dead bodies were taken care of (as *shahid* – “those who died at the hands of non-Muslims in the battle to defend Islam”), Chaiwat implies that the militants in Krue Se incident may have been prepared to die for the purpose of jihad. This, however, does not mean that the definition of jihad is limited to the sacrifice of one’s life for the religion. Chaiwat defines jihad as “to stand up to oppression, despotism and injustice (whenever it is committed) and on behalf of the oppressed (whoever they may be)... In its most general meaning, jihad is a striving for justice and truth which need not to be violent.” (cited in Janchitfah, 2004: 97). He also suggests that Muslims be more committed to fighting an “inner jihad,” which is fighting against one’s own evils (ibid).

Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that people who participated in militant groups or events would agree with any of these scholarly interpretations. Findings from McCargo (2008: 135) contradict Chaiwat’s because none of the informants (survivors of Krue Se mosque incident) interviewed had seen the *Berjihad di Patani* booklet before. One even mentioned that he isn’t very religious and that many people were tricked to go to the location of the incident and did not have any political or religious motives for doing so (ibid). This narrative of getting

caught up in a violent incident is shared with many other informants in news reports, including one survivor of the Tak Bai incident who gave an interview to BBC in 2017 (BBC Thai, 2017). As the number of Tak Bai protestors is often regarded as high as over 1300 people, there is a high likelihood that a number of them went to the venue as a *Thai mung* which can be translated as a person who simply follows the crowd out of curiosity to see what is happening. The interviews gathered by Cross Cultural Foundation discussed above share similar recollections of their presence in the incident as by-passers who “happened to” be there but left with unforgettable trauma inflicted upon their bodies and minds.

Based on the shared stories among these individuals, we can acknowledge that many of the people who are labelled as “militants” by the government did not participate in the unrest with political or religious ideology. But this does not mean that they were bandits who were aiming for economic gain either. As many Malay-Thai Muslims were documented by the government officers as potential militants, they face difficulty in transitioning back to daily life, even after monetary compensation and several meetings with the officers. I came across such difficulties when I went to a photo exhibition titled “Gray zones” in Bangkok Art & Culture Centre (BACC) on 23 June 2019. Upon watching short films at this exhibition and interviewing Yostorn Triyos, the photographer, I learned that many Malay Muslims who are detained undergo torture, something that continues to haunt them even when they have left the prison after proven innocent. Many people struggle to secure employment and turn to drugs such as *ya sen*, a handmade cigarette, as their solace. Unfortunately, even an act of consuming *ya sen* with friends must be accompanied by a cautious act of burying these cigarettes underground. This act becomes necessary because people who were imprisoned had had their DNA collected. By leaving their cigarettes unburied, the soldiers could collect this trace and frame it as an

“evidence” of past suspects who gather to plan another act of violence. While I have no access to prove whether this post-imprisonment tracking is implemented throughout the deep South or is applied only to certain individual cases, records of such degree of fear towards authority should not be taken lightly.



Fig 9. *Ya sen*, handmade cigarettes in the South, which are going to be buried to avoid the army’s military tracking (Source: original photo taken by Yostorn Triyos; this photo taken at his photo exhibition by the author)

Skepticism plays a big role in today’s inter-religious relationships in Thailand due to prolonged conflicts, even though there is a past record of shared cosmology and ritualistic practices between Buddhists and Muslims in southern Thailand (Horstmann, 2004). In an interview of a survivor of the Tak Bai incident with BBC Thai (2017), the man reiterates the distrust he developed against military officers after the incident. Since he was detained for a week despite being innocent, he felt scared whenever military officers visit him at his home. The tension between the locals is even clearer when the monastery is involved. According to Jerryson (2010), before Martial Law was implemented in 2004, Muslims in Southern Thailand used to visit temples on special communal occasions. Today, they no longer do so because of the temple’s close association with military officers, both empirically (by hosting some officers in

the temple) and symbolically (due to Buddhism's deep-seated relations with the Thai state which oppresses them). As a result, although stakeholders may not consider themselves to act for the sake of their religion, their actions and how the conflict developed clearly affect the relationships between the two religions. Being Malay in Thailand has been and remains a "challenge," as one is required to "juggle ethnicity and national identity so as to accommodate different expectations and demands"; a burden not faced by Thai Buddhists whose identity fits into the ideal of Thainess and who love of nation and monarchy is rarely questioned (Marte Nilsen, 2012: 122).

When ethnic difference is disregarded, it becomes easier to fixate on religious identity and its stereotypes. A report titled "Understanding Anti-Islam sentiment in Thailand" which was published by an NGO called "Patani Forum" in 2018 is a case in point. According to Don Pathan et al. (2018), from 2015-2017, there have been growing records of Thai Buddhists who openly protested against the establishment of mosques in Thailand, especially in provinces in Northern and North Eastern Thailand, such as Nan, Mukdahan, and Khon Kaen. A similar phenomenon was observed in Nakhon Si Thammarat, which is in the South. Although some protesters are directly involved in the Southern conflict as families of soldiers who fell victims to the conflict, many have no direct relations neither with the conflict in the deep South nor Muslims more broadly. Upon interviewing Thai Buddhists who are against mosques in their neighborhoods, Patani Forum found some people insisting that "a Muslim can never become fully Thai and therefore, can never grasp and appreciate Thainess" (p. 29). As a result of this mindset, these Buddhists consider the existence of a mosque as an approval of the Muslim community which is a threat to their supposedly pure Thai Buddhist community and a threat to the Buddhist sovereignty of the nation. Based on this report, we can see the tendency of certain people to view the Southern conflict as purely religious to be based on the perception of all Muslims as

“fearsome others” (Das 1998). This dangerous viewpoint undermines long-standing problems of the restricted expression of Malay identity in the South and creates an extremist view against all Muslims in Thailand and beyond.

Moving beyond Thailand

Thailand is not alone in facing ethnic and religious tensions which have intensified in recent years. If we were to focus on the aspect of religion and frame the relations as Muslims vis-à-vis non-Muslims, there would be several case studies, both from Myanmar’s Rohingya crisis and what we might call Islamophobia in the West. Myanmar’s Rakhine state is a particularly interesting case of comparison for Thailand’s deep South for two reasons. First, memory of peaceful coexistence in the past still exists. Second, a number of local Buddhists admit that their current fear of Muslims is partly influenced by international news about Muslim extremist elsewhere, for instance, ISIS. (Schissler, M. et al., 2017: 383-384) Why and how have Muslims come to be seen as radicals in many parts of the world?

According to Edward Said (1980), we can understand “Islam through Western eyes” through the legacy of Orientalism. Orientalism, which Said studies mainly in France and England in the nineteenth century, stems from the West’s obsession with “the other.” The uniform image of Islam as “anti-human, antidemocratic, anti-Semitic, antirational” (n.p.) has made Muslim majority countries susceptible to military intervention. What Said wrote four decades ago still rings true today. Said establishes that US-produced media, imbued with an orientalist perspective, spread as far as Asian countries. He also mentioned why he saw this as dangerous; referring to Herbert Schiller, Said maintains that “TV’s images tend to present reality in too immediate fragmentary a form for either historical or human continuity to appear” (ibid).

In other words, people in many parts of the world now know about themselves through media created by the US, based on ideas popularly accepted within the US. To Said, questions underlying the “distortion” of Islam contains “a political question involving the use and deployment of power” (ibid).

In discussing categories given to Muslims such as “the good,” “the moderate,” and “the bad” or “the fundamentalists,” Tariq Ramadan (2010) points out how the “good” Muslims in British and French literature are those that have been cooperative towards the colonizers, while the “bad” ones are “those who “resisted” religiously, culturally or politically, were systematically denigrated, dismissed as the “other” and repressed as a “danger” (n.p.). Nur Amali Ibrahim (2018) shares this perspective and argues that even compliments of Muslims can act as a denigration to Islam. When Western political leaders compliment Indonesia for being a place where democracy can thrive alongside Islam, “[t]here is a nagging sense that the reason why “good” Muslims are “good” is that they have managed to free themselves from the tyranny of their religion” (p. 152). In the Thai case, the value of Islam is also counted in regard to other values. An indicator of a good Muslim in Thailand is not a Muslim’s level of engagement to democracy, but rather a Muslim’s level of commitment to the ideology of the Thai state. Those who are labeled as “good” are those who have successfully claimed their loyalty to the monarchy and shared this “core value” with fellow Thai citizens – people who have negotiated their multiple identities to become “Thai Muslims.” A “bad” Muslim in Thailand are those who have failed to fulfill this expectation, regardless of whether they are directly involved in the insurgency or not.

Conclusion

Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) asserts that the production of history can never be monopolized only in the hand of professionally trained historians, as “history reveals itself only through the production of specific narratives” (p. 25). This process naturally involves various actors beyond a group of historians, including witnesses of the incident who may or may not be silenced during the process of history construction. The study of the process of making history is significant for revealing the power dynamics behind the “historical” narratives. To put it in his words, “In history, power begins at the source” (p. 29). In the case of Thailand, Malay Muslims the South could be imagined as “the fearsome other” because mainstream media operate on a “Bangkok-centric mindset” in which the central government considers itself the sole narrator of what constitutes as “truth” in the deep South. This mindset perceives the series of clashes in 2004 as a national security threat and prioritizes the scale of the conflict over its underlying causes.

A salient consequence of this mindset can be seen from the way media’s labeling of the insurgents as *jon tai* (southern bandits) both delegitimizes the insurgents’ ethnoreligious motivations and criminalizes them, effectively transforming them from citizens worthy of protection to criminals who deserve to be persecuted. Due to the vague nature of the term *jon tai*, Malay Muslims have come to be seen with skepticism in the eyes of many Thai Buddhists. Today, while the Malay identity is still deemphasized in mainstream media, Muslim identity has been highlighted. The intensification of news that portray Muslims as “the fearsome other” has given birth to anti-Muslim sentiments in Thailand beyond the conflict in the south. Thailand is not alone in this growing Islamophobia, which can be observed in Myanmar and the West as a legacy of orientalism.

This phenomenon does not, by any means, ensure that the state will remain the sole narrator of what happened in Tak Bai and elsewhere. As lay people remain the most authentic source of their personal experience, historical narratives that evoke such experience constitute its own power to challenge state narratives. Even though many voices have remained silenced up until now, its existence provides a possibility of alternative understanding of what happened and what might happen from now on.

CONCLUSION

Silence of a man

A man stands facing the vast, gloomy sea – facing us, the audiences of *Manta Ray* (2018). The nameless man has big eyes with thick eyebrow, tanned skin, and broad face, features resembling people of Malay origin or South Asian origin. He is making a long, incomprehensible sound which may be interpreted as a prolonged cry of pain. There is something in his eyes. It is loneliness, hopelessness, and helplessness. His sound intertwined with other faceless people's cry. There is a haunting effect from these sounds of people we would never know – people whose voice are muted or rendered incomprehensible as mere noise in society.



Fig. 10 One of the final scenes of *Manta Ray* (Source: <https://www.slantmagazine.com/film/review-manta-ray-tells-a-story-of-friendship-with-a-necessarily-humanist-outlook/>)

Described above is one of the final scenes in *Manta Ray*, a film about an encounter between a Thai fisherman and a wounded stranger, who was later named Thongchai, in a fictional coastal town in Thailand. The first half of the story revolves around the budding relationship between the host who is willing to teach everything and the mute visitor who is trying to blend into this new world of his. It is filled with moments of intimacy developed through supporting each other while Thongchai gradually recovers from his physical pain and

adapt to a new routine. The second half, however, demonstrates the elusiveness of this promise to be integrated into a society that one does not belong, as Thongchai begins to take over the roles of the fisherman once he suddenly disappeared, only to quickly lose his places once the fisherman returns. Joshua Minsoo Kim (2019) perceives this ending as a depiction of “the hateful ideology that fuels some Thai people’s prejudice: Assimilate completely, according to *our* standards and in *our* time, or face exile” (n.p.).

Although this film announces itself as a dedication to Rohingya people, it contemplates on questions that are uncannily applicable to what has been happening in the deep South and the rest of Thailand, which is the vulnerability of inter-ethnic relationships. As the fisherman is depicted as a Buddhist whereas Thongchai is portrayed as a Muslim through their respective religious acts, *Manta Ray* offers a hope for peaceful coexistence and soon take the hope away, leaving audiences to acknowledge the brutal reality that once one party is regarded as “the host,” it is impossible for the other party to be seen as equal, in spite of their roles in the space. Malay Muslims in the three Southern provinces and parts of Songkhla are by no means a newcomer of the land. They have their own language, names, and history. Yet, their integration to Siam had rendered Patani as “the handle of the diamond-engraved axe,” a part of a tool readily to be used by its owner.

Amidst these changes, the insurgent groups function as one path to negotiation of Thai-Malay Muslims’ multiple identities. Many state authority figures occupy the space of mainstream media and propagate this path as a justification to persecute the insurgents, even in cases where evidence is still insufficient. Unlike the stateless Rohingya people, Malay Muslims in Thailand have Thai citizenship that prevents them from being exiled from their own home. However, the deep South’s status of being a “state of exception” since 2004 has made their

citizenship precarious, always under a threat of being sent to “the other side” or becoming a part of the criminalized insurgents. This assumed readiness to become part of the insurgents is encapsulated in an expression, “the people inside the area know.” According to Yostorn Triyos, the photographer I interviewed in June 2019, this sentence was often used by government officers to affirm their perception that the local citizens know when violence is going to take place because they are sympathizers of the insurgents. Once again, this perilous remark blurs the line between those who fall under and fall outside of citizenship and its ensured protection.

It is important to point out that the actor of this unknown stranger is from Saiburi, Pattani. In the interview with A Day magazine (2019), the film director, Phuttiaphong Aroonpheng, he said that he initially wanted to employ a Rohingya refugee to act this role. Unfortunately, this could not be done because of legal limitation. Phuttiaphong then relied on Facebook as an audition platform for this role. The new actor, Aphisit Hama, was chosen because of the personal life story he shared with the director. Aphisit said that he has lived in Bangkok for over ten years. Yet, he has never felt truly welcomed, as people always look at him with the eyes of skepticism whenever they know that he is from the deep South, particularly from Saiburi where many violent incidents took place. Phuttiaphong recognized that this sense of unbelonging is something shared by refugees such as the Rohingya. As an audience, I agree that his eyes and his muteness in the role of the stranger conveys something that words cannot achieve. The fact that presence of Malay-Thai Muslim actors is so scarce that the only time we can see them is through a nameless character in a movie dedicated to Rohingya people is the epitome of marginalization of voices of Malay-Thai Muslims. While there is never a lack in reproduction of the king’s benevolence in the South, there is barely chances for popular audiences to hear the voice of the majority of the residence in the deep South. I argue that the scene explained at the beginning of

this conclusion is the representation of the under-representation of Malay-Thai Muslims. Even though cinema and mainstream media constantly features contents about the deep South, there are very few occasions whereby Malay-Thai Muslims have the opportunity to represent themselves. Hidden behind the grandiose of benevolence of the king and the authority of the state is the silence of a man and the pain of his community.

Last but not least, silence should not be seen as a basis for self-victimization, as it has its potential power. Micheal Foucault (1978) states that “silence and secrecy are a shelter of power, anchoring its prohibitions; but they also loosen its hold and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance” (p. 101). With today’s increase of social media access nation-wide, mainstream media and state-sponsored films are no longer the only dominant source of history-making process. What used to be counted as silence and secrecy may eventually become acknowledged as part of the common knowledge. As we are approaching the day monopolization of narrative becomes an impossibility, the negotiation of multiple identities of Malay Muslims in Thailand remains a contested and dynamic field.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al Jazeera English. (2008, February 11). 101 East - Thailand's new Prime Minister -09 Feb 08 - Part 2 – YouTube. Retrieved April 17, 2020 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuoqLiLSgnI>
- Anusorn Unno. (2019). *“We love Mr King”: Malay Muslims of southern Thailand in the wake of the unrest*. Singapore: ISEAS, Yusof Ishak Institute.
- BBC Thai. (2017, October 22). 13 ปีตากใบ: ประสบการณ์ลืมไม่ลงของ “ไทยมุง.” [13 years Tak Bai: Unforgettable experience of one among “the gathered crowd”]. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-41713032>
- BenarNew Staff. (2015, October 22). Victims Cannot Forget Tak Bai Tragedy in Thailand. Retrieved December 10, 2018, from <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/thai/Tak-Bai-10222015155832.html>
- Chaiwat Satha-Anand. (2008). *ความรุนแรงกับการจัดการ “ความจริง” : ปัตตานีในรอบกึ่งศตวรรษ. [Violence and “truth” management: Pattani in half a century]*. Bangkok, Thailand: Thammasat University.
- Chanatip Tatiyakaroonwong (2019, October 25). 15 ปีตากใบ: แผลกดทับในใจที่ไม่เคยได้รับการรักษา. [15 years Tak Bai: Repressed wound in the heart that has never been cured]. Retrieved April 17, 2020 from <https://prachatai.com/journal/2019/10/84901>
- Connors, M. (2005), Hegemony and the politics of culture and identity in Thailand. *Critical Asian Studies*. 37(4). 523-551.

- Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF) Facebook page. (n.d.). Retrieved April 17, 2020 from <https://www.facebook.com/CrCF.Thailand/posts/2790892484291353>
- Danyal Abdullah. (2015, November 1). จากดุซงญอ กรือเซะ ถึงตากใบ สิ่งที่รัฐไทยยังไม่เรียนรู้.

[From Dusun-Nyor to Krue Se to Tak Bai: The lesson that the Thai state never learn].

Retrieved December 10, 2018, from <https://www.tcijthai.com/news/2015/11/article/5862>
- Don Pathan et al. (2018). *Understanding Anti-Islam sentiment in Thailand*. Pattani, Thailand: Patani Forum.
- Fealy, G., & Hooker, V. M. (Eds.). (2006). *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia: a contemporary sourcebook*. Pasir Panjang, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Formichi, C. (2020). *Islam and Asia: A History*. Cambridge University Press. (Forthcoming).
- Film Archive Thailand. (2016, October 15). เสด็จประพาสภาคใต้ [Royal visit to Southern Thailand] – YouTube. Retrieved December 18, 2019, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEGmN902Ax&t=110s>
- Foucault, M. (1988). *The history of sexuality*. (1st Vintage Books ed.). New York: Vintage Books.
- Fuller, T. (2007, March 19). Use of militias rising in southern Thailand. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/19/world/asia/19iht-thai.4955613.html>
- Geertz, C. (1980). *Negara: the theatre state in nineteenth-century Bali*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

- Handley, P. M. (2006). *The king never smiles: a biography of Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Horstmann, A. (2004). Ethnohistorical Perspectives on Buddhist-Muslim Relations and Coexistence in Southern Thailand: From Shared Cosmos to the Emergence of Hatred?. *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*. 19 (1). 76-99.
- Human Rights Watch, "It Was Like Suddenly My Son No Longer Existed": Enforced Disappearances in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces, 20 March 2007, Volume 19, No. 5(C), available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/461cd4fc2.html> [accessed 9 December 2018]
- Ibrahim, N. A. (2018). *Improvisational Islam: Indonesian youth in a time of possibility*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Ishii, Y. (1994). Thai Muslims and the royal patronage of religion. *Law & Society Review*. 28 (3). 453-460.
- Jackson, P. (2010). Virtual reality: A 21st-century discourse of Thai royal influence. In Ivarsson, S. & Isager, L., Eds. *Saying the unsayable: monarchy and democracy in Thailand*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies.
- Jerryson, M. K. (2010). Militarizing Buddhism: Violence in Southern Thailand. In *Buddhist warfare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Keeler, W. (2017). *The traffic in hierarchy: Masculinity and its others in Buddhist Burma*. Honolulu, the United States: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Kim, J. M. (2019, March 26). Review: Manta Ray Is a Story of Friendship with a Necessarily Humanist Outlook. <https://www.slantmagazine.com/film/review-manta-ray-tells-a-story-of-friendship-with-a-necessarily-humanist-outlook/>

- Open letter to Baghdadi ISIS (2015)
- Manager Online. (2005, July 7). “สมเด็จพระราชินี” ทรงทุกข์ใจราษฎรชายแดนใต้ไร้ที่อยู่-ที่ทำกิน.

[“The Queen” is grieving over civilians in the Southernmost provinces’ inability to live and work]. Retrieved March 4, 2020, from
<https://mgronline.com/politics/detail/9480000090655>.
- Matahari Ismail, & Maryam Ahmad. (2017, October 23). 13 ปี เหตุการณ์ตากใบ ประชาชนยัง

อยากเห็นสันติสุขที่แท้จริง. [13 years after Tak Bai: The people want still wants to see the real

peace]. Retrieved December 10, 2018, from <https://www.benarnews.org/thai/news/TH-takbai-justice-10232017140618.html>
- Mbembe, A. (2003). Necropolitics. *Public Culture*, 15(1), 11–40.
- McDaniel, J. (2014). *The Lovelorn Ghost and the Magical Monk: Practicing Buddhism in Modern Thailand*. New York, the United States, Columbia University Press.
- Milner, A. C. (1982). *Kerajaan: Malay political culture on the eve of colonial rule*. Tucson, Ariz.: Published for the Association for Asian Studies by the University of Arizona Press.
- Nakashima, E. (2004, October 27). 78 Thai Muslims Die After Protest

(washingtonpost.com). Retrieved December 10, 2018, from
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A63714-2004Oct26.html>
- National University of Singapore. (2007). *Rethinking Thailand's southern violence*. (D. McCargo, Ed.). Singapore: NUS Press.
- Nilsen, M. (2012). Negotiating Thainess: Religious and National Identities in Thailand's Southern Conflict. Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University.

- Nutnicha Decharat. (2019, July 18). ทำหนังผู้ลี้ภัยเพื่อลดอคติในใจตน ‘พุทธิพงษ์ อรุณเพ็ง’ ผู้กำกับกระเบนราหู. [Produce a refugee film to decrease his own bias: “Phutti Phong Aroonpheng, the director of Manta Ray]. A Day Magazine.
<https://adaymagazine.com/puttipong-manta-ray/>
- Office of Yala province. (2010). ยะลาสันติสุข ใต้ร่มพระบารมี. [Peaceful Yala under the royal grace]. Yala, Thailand: สำนักงานจังหวัดยะลา. [Office of Yala province].
- Ornanong Mektairat, & Nakarin Mektairat. (n.d.). กรณีตากใบ – ฐานข้อมูลการเมืองการปกครองสถาบันพระปกเกล้า. [The case of Tak Bai: King Prajadhipok’s Institute database]. Retrieved December 10, 2018, from <http://wiki.kpi.ac.th/index.php?title=กรณีตากใบ>.
- Peters, R. (2005). *Jihad in classical and modern Islam: a reader*. (2nd ed.). Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers.
- Porath, N. (Ed.). (2019). *Hearing Southeast Asia: sounds of hierarchy and power in context*. Copenhagen K, Denmark: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies.
- Phansāsiri Kulāp. (2016). *Reporting Thailand's Southern Conflict: Mediating political dissent*. London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Prachathai. (2004, November 17). พระราชดำรัส สมเด็จพระนางเจ้าฯ พระบรมราชินีนาถเกี่ยวกับสถานการณ์ภาคใต้ [The royal speech of Her Highness Queen Sirikit about the situation in Southern Thailand]. <https://prachatai.com/journal/2004/11/1246>

- Ramadan, T. (n.d.). Good Muslim, bad Muslim. Retrieved January 24, 2020, from <https://www.newstatesman.com/religion/2010/02/muslim-religious-moderation>
- Rattiya Salae. (2008). ปฏิสัมพันธ์ “ใหม่” : ชาวพุทธ-มุสลิมสามจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้. [“New” relationship: Buddhists and Muslims in the three southernmost province]. In Chaiwat Satha-Anand. (ed). *แผ่นดินจินตนาการ. [Imagined Land]*. Bangkok, Thailand: Matichon Publishing.
- Said, E. W. (1998, January 2). Islam Through Western Eyes. <https://www.thenation.com/article/islam-through-western-eyes/>
- Sarutpoom Boonma and Chaiwat Meesanthan. (2019). พระราชกรณียกิจอันเกี่ยวเนื่องกับศาสนาอิสลามของพระมหากษัตริย์ผู้ทรงเป็นพุทธมามกะในฐานะองค์อัครพุทธศาสนูปถัมภก: การบริการจัดการท่ามกลางความหลากหลายทางศาสนา. [Royal deeds related to Islam of the King as an exemplar Buddhist and the royal upholder of religions: Management among religious diversity]. In *Wasatiyyah: Islamic perspective on dealing with the differences in the Thai society*. Bangkok, Thailand: Wasatiyyah Institute for Peace and Development.
- Schissler, M. et al. (2017). Reconciling Contradictions: Buddhist-Muslim Violence, Narrative Making and Memory in Myanmar. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. 47:3. 376-395.
- Sells, M. A. (1999). *Approaching the Qur’ān: the early revelations*. Ashland, Or.: White Cloud Press.
- Teropong Negara. (2004, November 8). Tak Bai tragedy - Asean as helpless as victims. *Malaysiakini*. Retrieved from <https://www.malaysiakini.com/letters/31300>. Access on December 3, 2018.

- Thak Chaloemtiaran. (Ed.). (1978). *Thai politics: extracts and documents, 1932-1957*. [Bangkok]: Social Science Association of Thailand.
- Thak Chaloemtiarana. (2007). *Thailand, the politics of despotic paternalism*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.
- Thai Publica. (2014, September 18). ทักษิณ กับวาทกรรม “โจรกระจอก.” [Thaksin and the discourse of “*jon ka jork*”]. Retrieved April 17, 2020 from https://thaipublica.org/jabted_issue/ทักษิณ-กับวาทกรรม-โจรกร/
- Thanet Apornsuvan. Malay Muslim “Separatism” in Southern Thailand. In Montesano, M. J., & Jory, P. (Eds.). (2008). *Thai south and Malay north: ethnic interactions on the plural Peninsula*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Thaweepon Kummetha. (2016, September 16). สัมภาษณ์ รอมฎอน ปันจอร์: การเมืองของถ้อยคำในชายแดนใต้/ปาตานี | ประชาไท. [Interview with Romadon Panjor: Politics of Words in Pa(t)tani | Prachathai]. Retrieved December 10, 2018 from <https://prachatai.com/journal/2016/09/67938>
- The Standard. (2020, February 20). ความจริงมีเพียงหนึ่งเดียว วิโรจน์ แฉกระบวนการ IO กลางสภา. [There is only a single truth; Wiroj uncovers the mechanism of IO at the center of the parliament] – YouTube. Retrieved April 17, 2020 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeTlkKtPP3g&t=447s>

- Townsend, R., & Loos, T. (2017). *Cold Fire: Gender, Development, and the Film Industry in Cold War Thailand*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: ProQuest Information and Learning.
- Thongchai Winichakul. (2000). The Quest for “Siwilai”: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam. *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 59 (3). 528-549.
- Thongchai Winichakul. (2017). คนไทย/คนอื่น: ว่าด้วยคนอื่นของความเป็นไทย. [Thai people/other people: on the others within Thainess]. Nonthaburi, Thailand: Fa Dieo Kan.
- Trouillot, M.-R. (1995). *Silencing the past: power and the production of history*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press.
- XINHUA. Thai PM says tak bai incident has nothing to do with religion. (2004, Oct 29). *WorldSources Online*, Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.cornell.edu/docview/340517206?accountid=10267>