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**An Analysis of the Role of Civil Society in Building Peace
in Ethno-religious Conflict:
A Case Study of the Three Southernmost Provinces
of Thailand**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
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Abstract

The 'Southern Fire' is an ethno-religious conflict in the southernmost region of Thailand that has claimed thousands of innocent lives since an upsurge in violence in 2004. Although it does not catch the world's attention as much as other conflict cases in the same region, daily violent incidents are ongoing for more than a decade. The violence in the south has multiple causes including historical concerns, economic marginalisation, political and social issues, religious and cultural differences, educational opportunity inequities, and judicial discrimination.

According to a framework for conflict resolution, for Thailand's case, the state's policy alone could not resolve the conflict as it focused mainly on implementing a 'peacekeeping' strategy by increasing the number of security forces and pursuing a 'peacemaking' strategy via peace talks. However, to create lasting peace in this region, civil society actors need to be involved in a 'peacebuilding' strategy in order to keep the balance of socio-economic structures and prevent violence from happening again. More than a hundred civil society groups are involved in attempting to build peace in the southernmost provinces. Since the resurgence of violence, some civil society groups have accumulated their experiences and played significant roles in the area. These groups have become a strong network which could reduce the tensions in this region.

The research aims to promote the civil society sector as a tool of a non-violent approach; to study the role of the civil society sector in building peace in the southernmost provinces; and to strengthen civil society groups attempting to find a solution to the insurgent problem. This research used the qualitative method employing in-depth interviews and documentary research. The data was collected through person-to-person interviews with representatives of twenty-nine civil society groups. This research examines the role of the civil society sector in building peace in southern region; the efficacy of civil society groups; the problems of civil society groups active in the south; and puts forward recommendations on how to improve the work of the civil society groups.

One of the main findings was that bridge-builder, academic and relief worker are the most significant roles civil society groups play. The efficacy of the civil society sector in peacebuilding in the deep south shows that it has the potential to grow. It has a number of strong internal factors and many external opportunities that can increase capabilities and help the groups to perform better. There are, however, four important problems including human resources, time management, influence from funding sources, and political and safety issues, which can have a serious impact on the civil society sector. The three key recommendations that can help to enhance the performance of civil society groups are building trust in the communities, understanding the needs of the locals, and working with a clear strategy.

This research concludes that the civil society sector plays various roles in attempting to create peace in this region. Together with other actors, the civil society sector can be an important part of the effort to reduce the violence and can play a major role in building sustainable peace in southern Thailand when the violence eventually stops.

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Glossary and Abbreviations

Bersatu	United Front for the Independence of Pattani
Bilal	Imam's assistant
Changwat	Province
Falduin	Basic religious knowledge
Haji	An honourific title given to a Muslim person who has successfully completed the Hajj to Mecca
Hajj	An Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca and the largest gathering of Muslim people in the world every year
Halal Food	Foods that Muslims are allowed to eat or drink under Islamic Shari'ah
Hijab	The manner of dress for Muslim females
Imam	An Islamic leadership position in Muslim community
Khatip	Imam's assistant
Kubo	Muslim cemetery
Lamard	Muslims pray five times a day
Langkasuka	Area containing the three southernmost provinces of Thailand in the past
Monthon	Country subdivision in the past (Outpost)
Muang	City
Ponoh	Islamic religious school
Ramadan	Fasting month for Muslims
Shari'ah	Islamic religious law
Sultan	King of Malay Kingdom
Tadika	Religious school for children (Taman Didikan KAnak kanak)
Thai Ratthaniyom	Thai Customs Decree
Ulama	Religious intellectuals
Ustaz	Islamic religious teacher
Yawi	Pattani Malay dialect
Zakat	The amount of money that every adult has to provide as support to the poor and needy

ABRIP	Angkatan Bersenjata Revolusi Patani
AMAN	Asian Muslim Action Network
ARF	Asian Resource Foundation
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
BIFF	Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
BNPP	Barisan Nasional Pemberbasan Patani or Patani National Liberation Front
BRN	Barisan Revolusi Nasional or National Revolutionary Front
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CPM 43	Civilian-Police-Military Task Force 43
CrCF	Cross Cultural Foundation
CSCC	Center for the Study of Conflict and Cultural Diversity in Southern Thailand
CSCWG	Civil Society Coordinator Working Group
DPP	Dewan Pimpinan Parti
DSCC	Deep South Coordination Center
DSRR	Deep South Relief and Reconciliation Foundation
DSW	Deep South Watch
EU	European Union
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement)
GMIP	Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Patani or Islamic Mujahidin
ICNPO	International Classification of Nonprofit Organisations
IHRP	Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISA	Internal Security Act
ISOC	Internal Security Operations Command Region 4
JPF	Justice for Peace Foundation
KMM	Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia
K4DS	Knowledge for Deep South
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MAC	Muslim Attorney Centre Foundation
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front

MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NHSO	National Health Security Office
NPKC	National Peace Keeping Council
NRC	National Reconciliation Commission
NSC	National Security Council
NZD	New Zealand Dollar
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
PPP	Patani Peace Process
PPP	People's Power Party
PPPB	Persatuan Pembebasan Patani Bersatu
PULO	Patani United Liberation Organisation Movement of Patani
PMIPTI	Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Patani (Selatan Thailand) Indonesia
PMP	Pemuda Merdeka Patani
PANYOM	Patani National Youth Movement or Gerakan Pemuda Kebangsaan Patani
SBPAC	Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre
SBPDAB	Southern Border Provinces Development Administration Bureau
SBPPC	Southern Border Provinces Peace-building Command
SMF	Sanjukta Mukti Fouj
SoO	Suspension of Operations
THB	Thai Baht
TRRF	Thai Rural Reconstruction Foundation
TRT	Thai Rak Thai Party
ULFA	United Liberation Front of Assam
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The violence in southern Thailand¹ is one of the most prolonged ethno-religious conflicts in Southeast Asia. Although the conflict in southern Thailand does not catch the world's attention as much as other cases in the region, almost every day innocent persons have been killed since the upsurge in the insurgency in 2004. It has proved difficult to find a win-win solution between conflicting parties.

The conflict, called the 'Southern Fire' in Thailand, has claimed almost 4,000 lives in over a decade. The violent situation seems to be continuing and an end to the conflict is not being reached. Both state and non-state actors have played important roles in attempting to resolve the conflict with civil society actors seen as necessary to any resolution. As a civilian living in southern Thailand, the researcher realised that the civil society sector, which is formed by the local people and outsiders who are keen to see peace in the country, could make some positive changes in these areas.

In fact, it was agreed by the worldwide academics' network in general that civil society can play an important role in reducing violence and building peace in some conflict cases. However, the concept of the civil society sector is still new in Thai society and has different perspectives from Western ones.

After exploring some relevant thesis and research works in Thailand, it was found that the topic about the southern conflict is one of the most popular research topics among university students and scholars. These topics can be classified into various fields such as religion (e.g. role of Muslim leaders in the southern violence), education (the development of

¹ Southern Thailand comprises of 14 provinces. The violent incidents happen mostly in the three southern border provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and in four districts of Songkhla.

teachers' skills in these southernmost provinces), political science (e.g. public opinion on the autonomy model in the southern border provinces), culture and customs (e.g. ways of life of Buddhists in Muslim communities in the deep south), and public health (e.g. mental health of teenagers in this conflict area).²

An article from the Deep South Watch website³ tried to survey and classify all civil society groups working on the southern violence issue in order to build a database of civil society sectors involved with the southern conflict resolution. Interestingly, the article found that quite a large number of civil society groups were active in the south; approximately 300 groups. There have been some attempts to classify civil society groups but none of them has analysed their roles or evaluated their performances. After reading much academic research about how civil society is involved in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in many other parts of the world, the researcher wanted to find out more about how Thai civil society operates and in what ways they too could help with reducing violence and building peace in Thailand.

This thesis is important because the civil society sector is the largest sphere in the society which has a high potential to make changes in the community. Nevertheless, the civil society sector needs to be developed in the right direction. This thesis is designed to study and analyse the role of civil society groups attempting to build peace in the southernmost provinces of Thailand. After estimating the status of civil society groups in each category, the ultimate goal is to improve the civil society sector to be able to work on peacebuilding activities more efficiently. Eventually, the researcher hopes that this thesis can somehow contribute to the solution to the southern conflict and bring peace to the region.

This chapter begins with the purposes of the thesis and the research questions. Following on from this, an overview of the conflict including facts about Thailand, history of the region, the new round of violence and the

² Thai National Research Repository, Website. http://www.tnrr.in.th/rir/index.php?page=search&topic=keyword&search_input=สามจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้ (accessed 18 June 2014).

³ Deep South Watch, "Civil Society and Peace Process (Vol. 3): The Database of CSOs in the Deep South," <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3203> (accessed 28 May 2012) [in Thai].

development of the violence are discussed. Next, a brief overview of the concept of civil society in building peace is also introduced. The chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis structure.

1.2 Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of the thesis is threefold: first, to promote the civil society sector as a tool of a non-violent approach which could help create a sustained peace in these provinces; secondly, to study the role of the civil society sector in building peace in the southernmost provinces; and thirdly, to strengthen civil society groups attempting to find solutions to the insurgent problem in this region.

1.3 Research Questions and Hypothesis

Research questions

In keeping with the purposes of this thesis, the research questions are as follows:

- 1) What is the role of the civil society sector in building peace in the ethno-religious conflict in southern Thailand?
- 2) How efficient are civil society groups in attempting to build peace in the region?
- 3) What are the problems for civil society groups active in the south?
- 4) What are the recommendations to improve the civil society groups to work more efficiently?

Research hypothesis

As it has been agreed by peacebuilding scholars that the civil society sector should be included in the conflict resolution in southern Thailand there is no doubt that civil society groups have tried to get involved, the questions arise as to which roles and how successful they are.

The hypothesis of this thesis is that the civil society sector can play a significant role in building peace in the ethno-religious conflict in southern Thailand.

1.4 Introduction to the Conflict

Before seeking suitable solutions to the conflict, the background to and the history of the conflict should be clearly understood. This section aims to introduce facts about Thailand, the history of the region, and an overview of the new round of the violence in order to begin to address the research questions. However, more details concerning the conflict will be considered in Chapter 4.

1.4.1 Facts about Thailand

The Kingdom of Thailand was formerly known as Siam. Thailand is one of eleven countries in the Southeast Asian region. It is the only country in Southeast Asia that has never been colonised. Thailand is a Buddhist-majority country with a strong central government functioning as a constitutional monarchy. King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) has reigned since 9 June 1946, making him the world's longest-serving current head of state and the longest-reigning monarch in Thai history. The king is officially titled Head of State, the Head of the Armed Forces, an Upholder of the Buddhist religion, and the Defender of all Faiths.

Thailand is bordered to the north by Myanmar and Laos, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, to the south by Malaysia, and to the west by the Andaman Sea and southern Myanmar. Its maritime boundaries include Vietnam in the Gulf of Thailand to the southeast and Indonesia and India in the Andaman Sea to the southwest.

In 2013, Thailand's population was approximately 66 million. The majority of the population is Theravada Buddhism where 93.4% of the population are Buddhist, 5.2% are Muslim and 1.4% are Christian and others.⁴ Geographically, the Muslim population is concentrated in southern Thailand; particularly in the provinces of Pattani,⁵ Yala, Narathiwat and four districts (Chana, Sabayoi, Thepa and Natawee) of Songkhla province. Approximately 75% of the population is ethnically Thai; 14% is of Chinese

⁴ National Statistical Office, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, *Statistical Yearbook Thailand 2013* (Bangkok: Statistical Forecasting Bureau, 2013), 15.

⁵ Pattani may be written as Patani (with one 't'). This is the Malay spelling used to refer to the past Malay Sultanate and Kingdom of Patani. In this research, Pattani was used as it is a transliteration for the Thai word.

origin; and 3% is ethnically Malay: the rest belong to minority groups including Mons, Khmers and other tribes. The country's official language is Thai.⁶

1.4.2 History of the Region

In the past, the area containing the three southernmost provinces of Thailand was called 'Langkasuka' which had a long relationship with Siam. Pattani was geographically important as it was located between the East and the West, so it became a major maritime trade route. Pattani's culture flourished, especially the Hindu and Buddhist cultures. The influence of Islam came into this region later and became the religion that bound the ethnic Malays to the region. Pattani's status as a colony of Ayutthaya, and the prosperity derived from being a centre of trade and religion, were the major factors which made it seek separation from Ayutthaya.

Generally, the history of Thailand can be divided into four eras, namely: Sukhothai (1238-1438), Ayutthaya (1350-1767), Thonburi (1768-1782) and Rattanakosin (1782-present). For the purposes of this thesis, the history of relations between Siam and the southern area will be presented by dividing it into four periods including Sukhothai Era, Ayutthaya Era, Thonburi Era and Rattankosin Era (King Rama I-V), and Rattanakosin Era (King Rama VI-present).

1) Sukhothai Era

Sukhothai was the first kingdom of Siam existing from 1238 until 1438. From 1200, the Monthon⁷ of Nakhon Si Thammarat ruled all twelve southern outposts from Kor Kod Kra⁸ to Kedah, which was included in Pattani (Langkasuka). In 1281, Nakhon Si Thammarat combined with the Sukhothai Kingdom. From that time, the twelve outposts were part of the Sukhothai Kingdom. In 1365, Langkasuka came under two powerful kingdoms: Siam in the north and Majapahit in the south. After the Majapahit Kingdom collapsed, Pattani became autonomous and was ruled by Rajas.

⁶ ConstitutionNet, *Constitutional History of Thailand*, <http://www.constitutionnet.org/country/constitutional-history-thailand> (accessed 31 August 2011).

⁷ The term 'Monthon' was used as a country subdivision of Siam or 'Outpost' in the past.

⁸ Kor Kod Kra is the narrowest part of the Malay peninsular.

Pattani became a maritime trade centre which was famous among merchants.⁹

In 1438, Sukhothai became part of Ayutthaya. Some of the outposts which were under Sukhothai became autonomous, while Pattani and other outposts were claimed as part of Ayutthaya.¹⁰

According to Thomas D. Fraser, the relationship between Siam and Pattani during the Sukhothai Era meant that Pattani was Siam's tributary. Later on, Malacca became very powerful and prosperous and, as a result of that, Pattani was included as part of Malacca. Until 1511, Malacca was ruled by Portugal. After that, Pattani came under Siam again in the Ayutthaya Era.¹¹

2) Ayutthaya Era

Ayutthaya was a Siamese Kingdom that existed from 1350 to 1767. The status of Pattani was as a colony of Ayutthaya. Although Pattani was located far to the south of Ayutthaya, it was necessary to keep Pattani for strategic reasons because of its unique location and its prosperity from being a popular maritime trade route. Pattani was allowed to maintain its way of life, laws, culture and religion. As Ayutthaya's colony, Pattani promised to pay a tribute¹² every three years, and also had to provide additional manpower, weapons and food to Ayutthaya during time of war. The relationship between Pattani and Ayutthaya had been good until conflict between Siam and Burma erupted in 1548.¹³ The Sultan of Pattani led some troops to reinforce Ayutthaya, but then decided to invade Ayutthaya instead. After that, the relationship between them depended on the strength of their rulers.¹⁴ The prosperity derived from being a centre of trade and religion was the major factor that led Pattani to try and separate itself from Ayutthaya. Moreover, civilians in Pattani did not accept the King of Siam and resisted officials assigned by Siam. Also, Pattani invaded some

⁹ Klongchai Hattha, *Langkasuka Kingdom: History of Southern Border People* (Bangkok: Prince of Songkla University, 2009), 98. [in Thai].

¹⁰ Ibid., 99.

¹¹ Ibid., 105.

¹² The tribute that Pattani had to give to Ayutthaya was gold and silver flowers.

¹³ Asia's World, Website, <http://www.thailandsworld.com/th/thailand-history/central-thailand-history/kingdom-ayutthaya-burmese-wars/index.cfm> (accessed 22 December 2014).

¹⁴ Klongchai, *Langkasuka Kingdom*, 106.

outposts in the south such as Patthalung, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Songkhla.¹⁵

3) Thonburi Era and Rattanakosin Era (King Rama I-V)

Rattanakosin was the fourth Thai Kingdom and it succeeded the Thonburi Era (1767-1782). Thonburi was the capital of Siam for a short time during the reign of King Taksin the Great, after the capital Ayutthaya was ruined by the Burmese. King Rama I of the Chakri Dynasty who founded Rattanakosin moved the capital to Bangkok on the other side of the Chao Phraya River in 1782.¹⁶

King Rama I appointed the Monthon of Nakhon Si Thammarat to rule Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu while Pattani was under the Monthon of Songkhla. In 1785, Pattani failed to pay the tribute that was due to Siam. In response, King Rama I sent a naval force to attack Pattani which resulted in a high death toll among its people. Eventually, Siam forced Pattani to surrender.¹⁷

During the reign of King Rama III, Siam decided to return power to the Sultan of Kedah as the British wanted to trade with Kedah. Siam wanted to keep a good relationship with Britain in order to be protected from the prospect of a French invasion. In 1892, during the reign of King Rama V, a significant change occurred with the modernisation of the Siamese nation-state. Siam undertook major administrative reforms through the centralisation of power and tax reform based on new Finance Ministry regulations and the Sultanate system in the south was dissolved. One consequence of the reforms was conflict between the central authorities and regional leaders over the loss of vested interests and prestige on the part of the local leaders.¹⁸

In 1902, Pattani, Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis were announced as a 'Monthon' of Siam and were called 'Monthon Pattani'. This centralised administration policy was strongly rejected by the Sultan of

¹⁵ Ibid., 110

¹⁶ Thailanddaddy, *Thonburi Kingdom 1767-1782*, http://www.thailanddaddy.com/thonburi_kingdom.html (accessed 3 October 2011).

¹⁷ Klongchai, *Langkasuka Kingdom*, 117.

¹⁸ National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), *Overcoming Violence through the Power of Reconciliation*, Report, 16 May 2006, 35.

Pattani, Tengku Abdul Kadir who was then detained in Bangkok and released in 1905.¹⁹ As Britain tried to increase its role, especially with respect to the economy and trade, in the northern Malay states, Siam was afraid that the British would incite the sultans to rebel against Siam. This centralised administrative restructuring was a turning point in Siam's administration and was as a result of British and French colonisation.

In 1906, Siam revamped the public administration again by dissolving seven outposts: Pattani, Nong Chik, Yaring, Raman, Yala, Saiburi and Rangae, which were created by King Rama I,²⁰ into four outposts including Pattani, Yala, Kedah and Narathiwat.

The Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 was signed between the British and Siam during the reign of King Rama V.²¹ The agreement in effect divided the northern Malay states into two. The state of Greater Pattani, as it was known then, remained under Siam's rule, while Siam surrendered its claims to sovereignty over Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis, and Terengganu to the British. This decision was planned by the British in order to keep Siam as a friendly neighbour, utilising their adjacent position as a buffer between the British Malay states and French Indochina.

4) Rattanakosin Era (King Rama VI-present)

Between 1910-1922 (King Rama VI), resistance and rebellion in the deep south erupted many times. As a result of the centralisation policy of King Rama V, in 1916 '*Muang*' (city) was changed to '*Changwat*' (province). During that time, Monthon Pattani included the provinces of Pattani, Yala, Saiburi and Narathiwat. Then, in 1931, Saiburi province was degraded to a district of Pattani province. Later, in 1933, Monthon Pattani was dissolved and only the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat have remained under the Ministry of the Interior since then.²²

During the reign of King Rama VII, Thailand became a democracy with national elections providing more channels for Muslims to participate in political activities. Unfortunately, the democracy in Thailand was not ideal

¹⁹ Klongchai, *Langkasuka Kingdom*, 121.

²⁰ National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), *Overcoming*, 35.

²¹ Jeff Upward, *Insurgency in Southern Thailand: The Cause of Conflict and the Perception of Threat* (Victoria: University of Ballarat, 2006), 5.

²² Klongchai, *Langkasuka Kingdom*, 122.

as power fell into the hands of various military governments including the one under Field Marshal Phibulsongkhram. In 1939, Phibulsongkhram's government introduced the '*Thai Ratthaniyom*' (Thai Customs Decree),²³ which forced all Thai citizens, including minority groups, to conform to a set of common cultural norms. Muslims were prevented from adopting Muslim names or using the Malay dialect and men and women were forbidden to wear traditional Malay-Muslim dress in public. The '*Shari'ah*'²⁴ was replaced by Thai Buddhist laws of marriage and inheritance.

As a consequence, in 1948 Muslim elites in Narathiwat formed the first resistance movement against the central Thai authority. This was known as the '*Dusun Nyur Rebellion*' and was led by Haji Sulong bin Abdul Kadir who was presumed to have been killed by the police in 1954.²⁵ Since then, the struggle of Malay-Muslims has developed into various movements. There were more than 60 militant groups operating in the south in the 1960s and 1970s; some political, some criminal, some a mixture. Violent incidents reached a peak in the mid-1970s, but by the mid-1980s the violence had decreased. It was mostly caused by overhauling the government strategy in handling the situation. Key initiatives included the establishment in 1981 of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) to enhance consultation with, and reduce prejudice among, local Malay people and state officials in the deep south, and also the establishment of the Civilian-Police-Military Task Force 43 (CPM 43) to coordinate the security forces in the region.

1.4.3 The Resurgence of Violence in 2004

In 2001, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was widely criticised for his mishandling of the situation because of his hardline approach. The

²³ Rohan Gunaratna, Arabinda Acharya and Sabrina Chua, *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005), 4.

²⁴ Shari'ah is the body of Islamic religious law. The term means "way" or "path to the water source." It is the legal framework within which the public and private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on the Islamic principles of jurisprudence and for Muslims living outside the region. Shari'ah law deals with many aspects of day-to-day life, including politics, economics, banking, business, contracts, family, sexuality, hygiene, and social issues. Source: Theological Dictionary, "Sharia," <http://tdwotd.blogspot.com/2010/03/sharia.html> (accessed 22 January 2012).

²⁵ Surachart Bamroongsook, *Insurgency in Southern Thailand* (Bangkok: Square Prince 93, 2008), b. [in Thai].

dismantling of the long-established SBPAC and CPM 43 in 2004, plus the transfer of internal security responsibilities in the south to the police, seen by Thai people as generally heavier-handed than the army, all contributed to the rise in the insurgency. The first sign of a return to violence occurred after nine separate bomb incidents in the southern border provinces in June 2001. The level of unrest gathered pace during the subsequent two years. Eventually, in 2004, there was a sudden upsurge of violence in the provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat. Three major violent incidents occurred in 2004 and saw the beginning of a new round of violence.

The first major incident, in January, was the army camp raid in Cho Airong, Narathiwat. The second event was on 27 April which involved several attacks on police posts and army checkpoints across Pattani, Yala and Songkhla and ended in a bloody incident inside the Krue Se Mosque, Pattani, when the Thai army gunned down 32 men. By the end of the day, 105 militants, one civilian and five members of the security forces were dead. The last tragic incident was on 25 October when approximately 1,500 Malay-Muslims gathered outside the Tak Bai police station, Narathiwat to protest the arrest of six Malay-Muslims who the protestors claimed were innocent. Around 1,300 protestors were stacked in trucks up to five or six layers deep with their hands tied and taken to the Inkayuth Army Base in Pattani. Almost eighty protestors were dead of asphyxiation when the trucks arrived at the army camp.²⁶

1.4.4 An Overview of Developments in the Violence

Incidents of unrest in the south from January 2004 to the end of 2013, of which there were a total of 15,713 (an average 4.31 incidents per day), resulted in approximately 3,705 deaths²⁷ and 9,076 injuries. The top three

²⁶ International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad," *Asia Report* no. 98 (18 May 2005): 29.

²⁷ Isra News Agency has reported the death toll monthly since 2004. From 2004 to the end of 2013, the widely publicised death toll was approximately more than 5,000. However, in January 2014, the Southern Border Provinces Police Operation Center investigated and reclassified the data by removing the cases which were not related to the national security and the new death toll was reduced to 3,705. Source: Isra News Agency, "Ten Years of Southern Fire," <http://www.isranews.org/south-news/scoop/item/26320-tenyears.html> (accessed 15 March 2014) [in Thai].

violent incidents were caused by shootings, bombings and arson attacks, respectively.²⁸

From 2004, the level of violence in the deep south has clearly escalated. In 2004, there were 1,154 incidents; in 2005, 2,078; in 2006, 1,934 incidents and in 2007, 2,475 incidents. After 2007, however, incidents of unrest showed a significant decline. In 2008 and 2009, there were approximately 1,300 incidents each year. In 2010 to 2011, the violent incidents dropped slightly before increasing to 1,465 incidents in 2012. The insurgency entered a new phase when official peace talks between representatives of the Thai government - the National Security Council (NSC) and the main militant organisation - Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) were announced on the 28 February 2013. Despite the talks, the unrest appears to be increasing again, as there were approximately 1,639 incidents in 2013 which is the fourth highest in a decade.²⁹

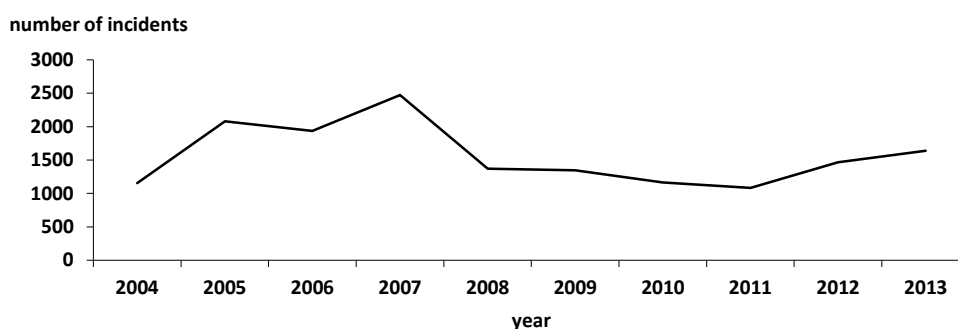


Figure 1.1 - The Violent Incidents in Southern Thailand from 2004 to 2013

Source: Adapted from Isra News Agency, <http://www.isranews.org/south-news/stat-history/item/26389-10subjects.html> (accessed 4 March 2014).

The insurgency in the south has been ongoing for ten years involving seven governments, six prime ministers³⁰ and a coup d'état. The violence can be divided into four phases. Phase One, from 2004 to mid-2007, saw a sudden upsurge in violence. A rapid escalating wave of attacks led to a higher number of deaths and injuries and the severity of the incidents

²⁸ Isra News Agency, "Ten Data Categories: Ten-year Southern Fire Anniversary," 7 January 2014, <http://www.isranews.org/south-news/stat-history/item/26389-10subjects.html> (accessed 4 March 2014) [in Thai].

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Thaksin Shinawatra served as prime minister for two terms from 2001 to 2006.

increased. The violence at the time was of high frequency and intensity, particularly after the 2006 coup d'état.

In Phase Two, between July 2007 and 2010, the situation started to change because of tactical adjustments by the state and the increased presence of military troops in these provinces after the dramatic escalation of violence between 2006 and early 2007. Furthermore, the Thai military had a clearer idea about the insurgents' strategy known as 'people's war'.³¹ It was believed that because of the military strategy, all kinds of insurgent attacks dropped sharply as the militant groups struggled to adapt and then slowly rebuild.

In Phase Three, from 2011 to 2012, the statistics for deaths and injuries were quite stable. This period was marked by the clear emergence of a more tightly organised and increasingly professionalised guerrilla movement. Incident numbers, however, did not rise considerably.

Phase Four, from 2013 to present, is impacted on by two new factors which are demanding major tactical changes on both sides. First, is the influence of the peace talks between the Thai government and the BRN. The second is the growing government counter-insurgency measures and especially intelligence operations. The result is that in 2013, the number of casualties of military, police and militant warriors became higher than that of civilians who used to be the main targets for the insurgents.³²

1.5 Why is Civil Society Important to the Conflict?

The government has put a lot of effort, manpower and money into trying to stop the violent situation in the deep south which has been ongoing for over a decade. Unfortunately, the solution for the conflict remains difficult to find. However, civil society's involvement and public participation are the options which have become more active and important in southern

³¹ The basic concept of People's War is to maintain the support of the population and draw the enemy deep into the interior where the population will bleed them dry through a mix of mobile warfare and guerrilla warfare. Source: Srisompob Jitpiromsri, "Sixth Year of the Southern Fire: Dynamics of Insurgency and Formation of the New Imagined Violence," *Deep South Watch (DSW)* 3-6, http://www.oss.net/dynamaster/file_archive.

³² Anthony Davis, *Thai Insurgency Enters New Phase*, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/SEA-01-231013.html (accessed 4 March 2014).

Thailand. This section will give a brief introduction to the concept of civil society and a more in-depth analysis will be given in later chapters.

1.5.1 What is Civil Society?

This question is still a complicated one to find an explicit answer to as the concept of civil society remains unclear, complex and difficult to define. The diversity of meanings, interpretations and schools of thought has influenced theoretical debates and empirical research.³³

Civil society organisations are the “wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations”.³⁴ The term can be defined into a broad range of organisations such as NGOs, community groups, women’s associations, youth groups, labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organisations, foundations, faith-based organisations, independent media, professional associations, think tanks, educational institutes and social movements. More concepts of civil society will be analysed in Chapter 2.

1.5.2 Civil Society in the South

An overview of civil society in Thailand, described fully in Chapter 7, will be useful for a better understanding of the concept of the civil society sector in Thailand and also the groups which are active in the conflict area.

The civil society sector in the southernmost region has created a new and important space between the Thai state, the insurgents and the local communities. Civil society organisations including for example, academics, students, lawyers, journalists, conflict victims and former detainees have been active in initiating and mobilising various activities. The purposes of these civil society groups are diverse, but they mainly aim to help victims of the violence.

³³ World Bank, *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Potential, Limitations and Critical Factors*, Report no. 36445-GLB Social Development Department, Sustainable Development Network, (20 December 2006), 2.

³⁴ The World Bank Social Development Department, Website, <http://worldbank.org/participation> cited in *ibid*.

The size of the civil society sector in the southern border provinces has enlarged quickly since the new round of the violence. Various forms of civil society can be found in this region such as working groups, networks, NGOs and institutes. This diversity has made it difficult to classify civil society groups involved in the southern conflict. However, in Chapter 8 the categories of civil society used for this research will be described.

1.5.3 Role of Civil Society in the Conflict

It has been widely agreed that civil society has the potential to play an important and effective role in building peace during all stages of conflict. The civil society sector has contributed often positively to the reduction of violence, the negotiation of settlements, and the facilitation of peace in post-conflict circumstance.³⁵ This idea will be proved in Chapter 5 which presents the role of civil society in five conflict areas in South and Southeast Asia.

In numerous cases of violent conflicts, local people and civil society groups in conflict areas show that they can be more than victims and observers. The role of civil society in peacebuilding has gained increased recognition in the last decade. Chapter 6 will present more topics to analyse the importance of the role of civil society in building a peace process. Some of the questions that will need to be asked would be, for example, how to develop the potential of civil society, what are the roles of various actors in the civil society sector, what are critical factors and pre-conditions for their efficacy, and how can external actors best provide support?³⁶

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of ten chapters which are divided into four parts. The details are as follows:

Part One: Theories, Framework and Methodology

There are three chapters in this first part which are an introduction, theoretical and literature reviews, and research methodology.

³⁵ Thania Paffenholz, "Summary of Results for a Comparative Research Project: Civil Society & Peacebuilding," CCDP Working Paper no. 4 (The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, 2009), 6.

³⁶ World Bank, *Civil Society*, v.

Chapter 1 has introduced the purpose of the thesis as well as the research questions and the hypothesis. It also describes the background to the violence in southern Thailand and the brief concept of civil society.

Chapter 2 outlines the main theoretical perspectives and is divided into three sections. First, the concepts of civil society which provides its theories, definitions, characteristics, positions, categorising and a typology of its actors. Secondly, perspectives on ethnic conflict including its definitions and relevant terms, a typology of ethnic groups, the types of ethnic conflict and levels of analysis. Thirdly, the links between civil society and ethnic conflict which covers four topics: civil society and conflict management, civil society and peace negotiations, the role of civil society in conflict areas and models of ethnic conflict resolution. A conceptual framework for this research is also created in this chapter.

The research methodology for the fieldwork is described in Chapter 3 and includes the research design, sources of data, details of the research samples, the methods for data collection, and tools for data analysis (i.e. grounded theory, mind map and the SWOT Analysis). Also, the limitations and recommendations for future fieldwork are included in this chapter.

Part Two: Ethno-religious Conflicts

This part includes two chapters which study cases of violent conflict and insurgencies. Chapter 4 examines the nature of ethno-religious conflict in the deep south of Thailand including the background to the conflict; the significant incidents relating to the conflict from the beginning of the resistance movement to the new round of violence in 2004; an introduction to the ten major militant groups; an overview of the government's policies relating to the conflict; key state agencies in the south; and the three laws issued during the conflict.

Chapter 5 explores the dynamic of violent situations in South and Southeast Asia by presenting an overview and the nature of ethno-religious conflict in this region. It also explores the five cases of ethno-religious conflicts and the roles of civil society. There are: India (the Assam conflict), Sri Lanka (the Eelam War), the Philippines (the conflict in Mindanao), Indonesia (Aceh) and Myanmar (the Hill Tribe conflict).

Part Three: Civil Society and Peace Process

Part Three focuses on the relations between civil society and peacebuilding and also presents an introduction to civil society in Thailand. Most importantly, the roles of civil society used for this research analysis are classified in this part.

Chapter 6 describes the concept of peacebuilding and the role of civil society in the peace process including the origins, definitions, theoretical approaches, dimensions, and phases of peacebuilding. The next topic is peace building in action which describes its actors, levels of leadership, its approaches and its relations with the dynamics of conflict. Moreover, this chapter analyses the importance of civil society to peacebuilding. The roles of civil society in peacebuilding are eventually classified into eight categories in this chapter.

The overview of civil society in Thailand is presented in Chapter 7 which begins with the emergence of civil society in Thailand and then the specific characteristics (i.e. its position in Thai society, its formalising and its categorisation) of Thailand's civil society which are examined from its historical and cultural circumstances. The factors which challenge and promote the civil society sector in Thai society are also analysed in this chapter. Those factors have affected the formation and development of civil society in Thailand.

Part Four: Research Findings, Analysis and Conclusion

This final part consists of the findings and analysis. After combining all knowledge from the preceding chapters, this part will answer the main research questions and provide the conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter 8 provides the details of respondents, interview questions, and an overview together with the characteristics of the civil society groups involved in building peace in the south. Also, this chapter presents the data from the fieldwork in Thailand which were collected from in-depth interviews of civil society groups involved in building peace in the conflict area. The findings are presented according to the eleven categories of civil society organisations.

The findings from the interviews, documentary evidence and the researcher's experience were analysed by selected research tools in

Chapter 9. It begins with the analysis of stages of the conflict and the types of actors. This chapter aims to answer the main research questions, so it includes roles of civil society, its efficacy, the difficulties, and recommendations to improve civil society's performance. Finally, the chapter ends by looking at the future of civil society in the south which includes the trend of civil society's work, positive trends, new issues and the people's expectations of civil society in the future.

Chapter 10 is the conclusion of the thesis. This final chapter summarises the key components including the nature of the conflict; theoretical review and methodology; and the main findings including the role of the civil society, its efficacy, the difficulties it faces, how to improve it and other findings. The chapter ends with recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the theories and definitions of civil society and ethnic conflict from Western and Thai perspectives. Civil society is a diverse term which has various meanings according to, for example, the histories, theories, origins and circumstances of a state. Ethnic conflict is also categorised into various types. This chapter also explores the works of some scholars which have examined the contributions of civil society to resolving ethnic conflict.

The main purpose of this chapter is to describe the two core elements of this thesis which are civil society and ethnic conflict as well as their relationship. Therefore, this chapter is divided into three main sections: the concepts of civil society, perspectives on ethnic conflict and the links between civil society and ethnic conflict. Finally, the conceptual framework of this thesis is also established from theories and literature reviews.

2.2 The Concepts of Civil Society

The first section is an overview of civil society which includes Western and Thai theories of civil society, the characteristics of civil society, the position of civil society in the community, the different categories of the concept of civil society, and a typology of civil society's actors. This will help to clarify the complex nature of civil society which will be analysed further in the later chapters such as the role of civil society in South and Southeast Asian countries (Chapter 5); the relationship between civil society and the peacebuilding process (Chapter 6); and civil society in Thailand and its role in building peace in the deep south (Chapter 7-9).

2.2.1 Theories and Concepts of Civil Society

There is no commonly agreed definition of the term civil society beyond the basic idea of civil society being an arena of voluntary, non-

coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes, and values.³⁷ The term civil society appears to operate within blurred boundaries. There have been, however, attempts to determine the definitions of civil society in different ways. The idea of civil society emerged from western states and expanded to Thailand using different perspectives.

- **Western Theories**

Over two thousand years ago, scholars argued about ideas involving communal life in the state. Three important philosophers in the classical period, including Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, expressed views concerning an early concept of civil society. Socrates advocated that issues be resolved by public argument until they achieved a reasoning that could not be refuted. Plato's ideal state was rule by philosopher-kings, who made decisions based solely on the common good. According to Aristotle, the best state is a polity which is ruled by the middle class.³⁸

In general, civil society was central to the work of some of the most important political thinkers from the 17th century onwards. Some of them distinguished between the state and civil society; that is, an organised society over which the state rules. The distinctive importance of civil society as a concept originates with the state of nature theorists, especially Hobbes and Locke. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) believed that people live in a society of all against all who are competing for scarce resources. This led people to seek a new basis for society predicated upon civic virtues. A state must be created under the consent of the people to safeguard the peace and to secure the rights of all citizens.³⁹ Civil society, then, is the framework within which those without political authority live their lives: this includes economic relationships, family and kinship structures, and religious institutions. Therefore, it is considered a purely analytic concept because "civil society does not exist independently of political authority, nor vice

³⁷ Thania Paffenholz, ed., *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publisher, Inc., 2010), 3.

³⁸ Rory O'Brien, *Philosophical History of the Idea of Civil Society*, February 1999, www.web.net/robri/papers/civhist.html. (accessed 16 June 2011).

³⁹ Ibid.

versa, and it is generally believed that neither could long continue without the other; therefore, no clear boundary can be drawn between the two".⁴⁰

For Western scholars, civil society concerns the balance of power between state and civil society. John Locke (1632-1704), saw civil society as a protector of individual rights and property from the potential abuses and arbitrariness of state power.⁴¹ Locke stressed that civil society should be understood as a body in its own right, separate from the state.⁴²

Similarly, Charles de Montesquieu (1689-1755) argued for a balance between state authority and civic associations.⁴³ His model of the separation of powers distinguished between political society and civil society. Montesquieu, however, presented a far less sharp contrast between the two spheres.⁴⁴

G.W Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) raised civil society to an entirely new level, and the theme of his enlightenment work was radically extended and modified. Hegel included economic society within civil society, but he also set down legal frameworks for public authority, corporations, bureaucracies, state assemblies and public opinion. Hegel's civil society included economic relations, but it also included other organisational and legal forms.⁴⁵ Hegel viewed civil society as a position between the spheres of family and state. Civil society thus comprised a huge variety of actors, including the market economy, social classes, corporations, intellectuals and civil servants. In Hegel's view, civil society actors are not always in harmony, but rather are in conflict. Therefore, civil society must be controlled by a strong state that is supposed to act in the common interest of the population.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ David Robertson, *A Dictionary of Modern Politics* (London & New York: Europa Publication, 2002), 75.

⁴¹ Martina Fischer, *Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Ambivalence, Potentials and Challenges*. (Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, October 2006), 21.

⁴² Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 4.

⁴³ Fischer, *Civil Society*, 21.

⁴⁴ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 4.

⁴⁵ Wayne Hudson, "Problematizing European Theories of Civil Society," in *Civil Society in Asia*, eds. David C. Schak and Wayne Hudson (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003), 11.

⁴⁶ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 4.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) advocated self-government and civic participation as a means for counteracting power abuses by the state and/or other social majorities.⁴⁷ He placed an emphasis on the role of independent associations within civil society and saw associations as schools where democratic thinking could be learned by citizens with the aim of protecting and defending individual rights against potentially authoritarian and tyrannical regimes within society. Ultimately, these associations should be built on voluntary participation at all levels (local, regional and national).

Marx's approach was very different. For Karl Marx (1818-1883), civil society is a development to meet the needs of the 'bourgeoisie'. Marx reduced civil society to economic relations and theorised it as a temporally and historically specific sphere; the contradictions of which could not be internally resolved or reconciled at the level of the state. Instead, civil society required transformation through a revolution.⁴⁸ He viewed civil society as the structural base while the state belonged to the superstructure that ensured capitalist domination by force.⁴⁹

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was one of the most important Marxist thinkers in the 20th century. The state was not to be understood in the narrow sense of government; instead, Gramsci divided it between 'political society', which is the arena of political institutions and legal constitutional control, and 'civil society', commonly seen as the 'private' or 'non-state' sphere, differentiated from both political society and the economy. He stressed, however, that the division was purely conceptual and that the two, in reality, often overlap.⁵⁰ In contrast to Marxist theory, Gramsci saw civil society as part of the superstructure in addition to the state, but with a different function: the state served as the arena of force and coercion for capitalist domination, and civil society served as the field through which values and meanings were established, debated, and contested.⁵¹ For Gramsci, the complex nature of modern civil society meant that a 'war of position', could

⁴⁷ Fischer, *Civil Society*, 21.

⁴⁸ Hudson, "Problematizing European Theories," 11.

⁴⁹ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 5.

⁵⁰ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1999), 506.

⁵¹ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 5.

be carried out by revolutionaries through political agitation, trade unions, advancing proletarian culture, and other ways of creating opposition to civil society necessary alongside a 'war of manoeuvre'- a direct revolution- in order to have a successful revolution without the danger of a counter-revolution or degeneration.⁵²

Jurgen Habermas (1929-) focused on the role that civil society should play within the communication process in the public sphere. According to his understanding, the state needs an articulation of interests in the public space to put different concerns on the political agenda. Political representatives, however, need to obtain informed public opinion beyond the established power structure.⁵³ Reaching democratic opinions and decisions through political parties, associations and parliaments demands an exchange with "informal public opinions". These can only be formed in the context of a politicised public sphere that develops independently of the power structures of the state.⁵⁴ Therefore, the ability to organise within civil society is needed particularly by marginalised groups as a means to articulate their interests.⁵⁵ According to Habermas' idea, civil society excludes state institutions, political parties, as well as economic interest groups and the business community. The core of civil society is formed by spontaneous associations, organisations and social movements that articulate social problems and grievances to a political public.⁵⁶ Consequently, some scholars, like Merkel and Lauth, proposed a more realistic concept of civil society, defined as a sphere of action beyond the state that consists "of a variety of plural organisations and associations which have been founded on a voluntary basis, and who articulate their particular material and normative interests and organise autonomously. These are located in the space between the private sphere and the state".⁵⁷

Today, civil society is commonly described as "a sphere of voluntary collective activity encompassing shared interests, purpose, and values of

⁵² Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 495.

⁵³ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 6.

⁵⁴ Fischer, *Civil Society*, 21.

⁵⁵ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 6.

⁵⁶ Fischer, *Civil Society*, 21.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

civility. This sphere is furthermore distinguished from state, market, and family institutions. These boundaries are, however, blurred, complex and negotiated in reality as civil society covers a wide range of spaces, actors and institutional forms”.⁵⁸ Some of the functions of civil society that Beverly Woodward noted are: to create a sphere of autonomous social activity, to campaign and agitate on behalf of political and social objectives, to provide a counterweight to governmental power, and to oppose the illegitimate exercise of governmental power.⁵⁹

Additionally, Merkel and Lauth distinguished “a *political sphere* (i.e. state administration, political parties and parliaments), an *economic sphere* (i.e. business and companies) and *private sphere*, defining civil society as the space where all these overlap”.⁶⁰ They suggested that civil society is “the space in between” social actors who can be related to other specific sectors, but also act in civil society.⁶¹

Finally, since the growth of civil society has been one of the most important issues in international development, a definition of civil society by the World Bank has been added. This is because it is an international organisation which has interacted with state development and civil society since the 1970s.⁶² *Civil society organisations (CSOs)* refers “to non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethnic, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. This includes a wide of array of organisations: community groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, and foundations”.⁶³

⁵⁸ Pierre Nikolov and Daniel Semcesen, *A Comparative Case Analysis of Civil Society and Ethnic Conflict in Thailand and Malaysia* (Lund: Lund University, 2008), 7.

⁵⁹ Beverly Woodward, “Civil Society in Transition,” in *Rethinking Peace*, eds. Robert Elias and Jennifer Turpin (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1994), 226.

⁶⁰ Fischer, *Civil Society*, 4.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² World Bank, *The World Bank and Civil Society*, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/> (accessed 21 March 2014).

⁶³ Fischer, *Civil Society*, 4.

- **Thai Concepts**

Civil society in the West has been well developed and it has led to changing relations of power between the state and people. The state has less influence on people in Western states while the Thai state has an almost absolute power on ruling the country.⁶⁴ Consequently, Thai scholars have some different points of view concerning civil society.

Civil society is a new social concept for Thai people. The concept of civil society in Thailand was first introduced in 1981 by Surapong Chaiyanam who derived his ideas from Gramsci. Although civil society can be transcribed into various Thai words, 'Prachasangkom' is an accepted general term. Until the early 1980s, civil society had not interested Thai scholars because the society was controlled by the state and social structures were different from the West in the 18th century.⁶⁵

As Thai civil society structures are still in their infancy, various parties have different ideas and understandings of it. There is, thus, diversity in its activities or operations. Although Western civil society emphasises the strength of citizens and the public sector, the Thai version of a civil society could not ignore the state. Rather, it seeks to find ways to work with the state. Furthermore, the joint venture between civil society and the state may be important to measure good governance, a concept which is constantly addressed in Thailand today.⁶⁶ The meaning of civil society in Thailand is different from the Western one which stresses concepts which are opposite to the state. The following are the concepts of civil society from well-known Thai scholars.

The first definition is from Chaianan Samutwanit who is a former Professor of Political Science at two leading universities in Thailand. He was one of the key drafters of the 1997 Constitution of Thailand. According to Chaianan, civil society means every sector of society, including the state and people working together in partnership. His idea focuses on a 'civic movement' where various groups use activities and functions as a centre,

⁶⁴ Kritisada Boonchai, "Concept, Theory of Community and Civil Society," *Krirk University Journal* 17 no. 1 (June-September 1998): 32. [in Thai].

⁶⁵ Kritaya Archavanitkul and Anuchat Pongsomlee, *Thai Civil Society: The Making of Thai Citizens* (Nakhon Pathom: Mahidol University, 1999), 5.(2). [in Thai].

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

without political establishment. This strategy is called Area-Function-Participation (AFP) which emphasises the participation process in hosting activities. This cooperation is participated in by every partnership from sub-areas (i.e. provinces, districts, or villages).⁶⁷ This makes civil society from his view different from the Western concept where the state is separated from civil society.

Similar to Chaianan, Chuchai Suppawong viewed civil society as a gathering of civic groups including government, business organisations or citizen sectors. They cooperate with one another in order to resolve crises or complicated problems within their community partnerships. Additionally, the civic sector works together largely in an atmosphere of harmony and unity.⁶⁸

In contrast, Paiboon Wattanasiritham gave meaning to civil society as any part of society which excludes the state.⁶⁹ Civil society does not depend on any laws, like the state, or expect any profit, like business sectors. He viewed civil society as a society where people are involved in managing routine matters via organisations, through systems, processes and various activities held in citizen sectors.⁷⁰

Thirayuth Boonmi is one of the country's foremost social thinkers. He was a freedom fighter and a prominent student leader in the October 14, 1973 uprising. He argued that to solve the basic problems in Thai society, the third power, or civil society sector, must be involved. A strong society in his view focuses on diffusing powers which should cover every class, variety of career, income levels and all regions across the country.⁷¹

Anek Laothamatas is a Thai political scientist. Civil society in his view encompasses all people and levels in society and focuses on the following issues: unity, the middle class, public participation, public commitment and citizenship awareness. As most Thai people believe they are clients or

⁶⁷ Yuthana Varoonpitikul and Supita Reungjit, *Citizen Awareness: Essays of People Involved in Civil Society* (Bangkok: Civil Society Learning and Development Foundation, 1999), 96. [in Thai].

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Anuchat Pongsomlee and Viraboon Visartsakul, *Civil Society: The Ideas, Concepts and Definitions* (Bangkok: Local Development Institute, 2007), 6. [in Thai].

⁷¹ Ibid., 4.

followers, to have a good and peaceful community there needs to be good rulers. This mindset results in people lacking citizenship awareness.⁷²

Kasian Tejapira viewed civil society as an institution beyond the state, but includes the private sector (economic units and markets), institutions (schools, temples and families) and social movements. If these groups are not the state, then they are counted as a part of the civil society sector.⁷³

The last influential Thai social critic worth mentioning is Prawase Wasi, who commands much respect from activists and bureaucrats alike. He had an important role in setting up several development agencies, which are today major domestic funders for Thai NGOs. He pointed out that Thai society was imbalanced because only two sectors, that is, the state and private organisations, were strong while the civil society sector was weak. To maintain balance of the whole society, citizens and communities needed strengthening. He proposed the idea of civil society as a way to solve problems caused by the state.⁷⁴

- **Definition Used in this Research**

As the term civil society has been used in various ways for diverse purposes, the definition of civil society used in this research should be clarified.

This research categorises civil society as non-profit voluntary groups working for the same purpose and interest. The groups may be formed by members who have the same motherlands, cultural beliefs, religious affiliations, and occupations. The groups could be initiated and then supported by local people, the state, and private sectors. Due to Thailand's circumstances, it is difficult for a civil society to be created entirely by the citizen sector, without having the government involved. This is why this research has included some civil society groups which are part of state agencies or supported by the government and business sector.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Vichet Taweek, *Development of Laws of Promoting Civil Society*. Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, <http://thaicivilfund.com/stock/report1.pdf> (accessed 25 January 2014). [in Thai].

⁷⁴ Anuchat, *Civil Society*, 4.

2.2.2 The Characteristics of Civil Society

After exploring the various definitions of civil society from both Western and Thai perspectives, it can be seen that these definitions lead to some common characteristics which can be considered and developed to strengthen the civil society sector.⁷⁵ They are:

1) Diversity

Diversity is an important characteristic because diverse community relations create a suitable environment for learning and developing. Diversity can be classified into two types. First, structural diversity means a variety of groups gathered around a region (e.g. province, district, village, school or business groups), level of membership (e.g. club, organisation, association, foundation or committee) and characteristics of members (e.g. gender, age, nationality, religion, education, career or status). Secondly, diversity of content means various groups' activities and skills (e.g. publication, research or development), and different interests/problems (e.g. politics, environment or agriculture).⁷⁶

2) Community

A definition of community in the civil society sphere is broader. It covers not only small communities in rural settlements, but also urban areas, middle-class involvement, and business and academic networks. Members in communities connect to one another through a genuine desire to make things better, common interests and/or benefits.⁷⁷

3) Public Consciousness

Public consciousness is an essential factor which strengthens the civil society sector. In fact, there are various groups in Thai society, such as self-interested groups, public-interest groups, pressure groups and volunteer groups, who operate but are not strong enough to make changes to the society. This is because the state is the main actor for most matters in Thai society making it necessary to develop citizenship awareness and

⁷⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 13.

public consciousness in order to support civil society so it can play a greater role in the community.⁷⁸

4) Continuous Activities

A variety of group members alone is not enough if they cannot coordinate activities together. In today's dynamic society, it is important for civil relations to have a learning society with continuous activities also a vital factor in building strong communities. Society needs a modern tool to support learning in communities such as 'interactive learning through action' which helps and develops the continuity of activities.⁷⁹

5) Communications and Networks

To have a strong and sustained civil society, efficient management, communication strategies and network facilities are necessary factors. Ideally, civil society is strengthened by bringing small diverse groups together and turning them into strong networks.⁸⁰

2.2.3 The Position of Civil Society

It is also important to clarify where civil society is placed in the community. According to civil society concepts and theories put forward by various scholars, the civil society sector has been positioned differently and plays diverse roles according to political and cultural norms. Understanding this will help in analysing civil society in Thailand in Chapter 7.

The first concept which was mentioned by Paffenholz considered civil society as a separate sector consisting of a variety of mainly voluntary organisations that have different objectives, interests and ideologies. Civil society is seen as different from the political, the business, as well as the private sectors as it is a non-state actor that is not purely driven by private or economic interests. Therefore, the civil society sphere is formally and legally independent from the spheres of the state, economy and family. However, the civil society sector interacts closely with these other sectors, especially the state/political sector, as civil society makes political demands toward the state agencies (see figure 2.1).⁸¹ Although civil society interacts

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 7.

with these sectors, it does not replace these actors, but rather aims to improve their effectiveness and responsiveness.⁸²

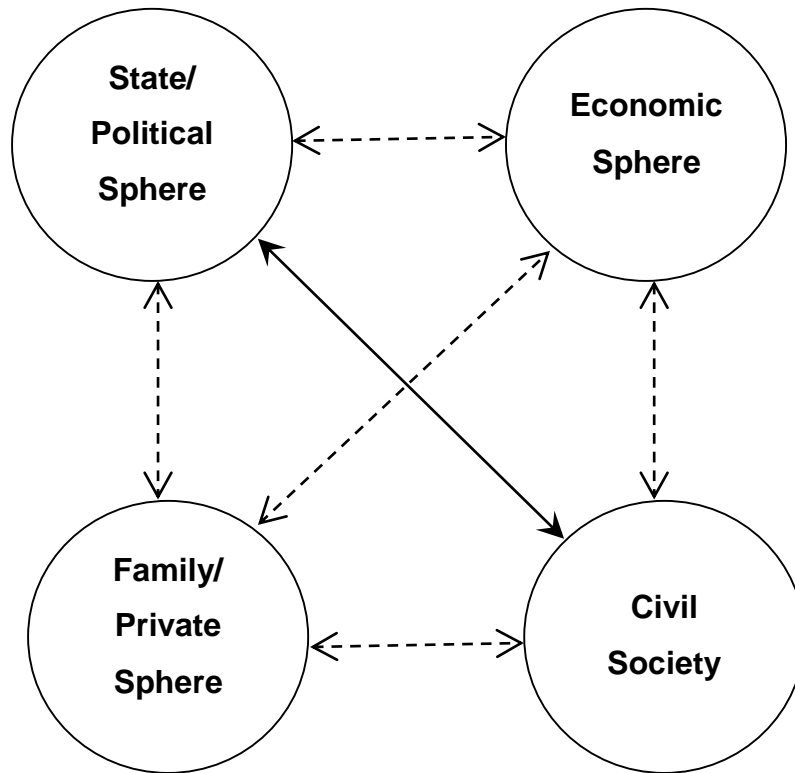


Figure 2.1 - Civil Society as a Sector

Source: Thania Paffenholz, ed., *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publisher, Inc., 2010), 7.

Some of the research agreed that specific actors in general contributed to specific sector areas, but occasionally can also act as civil society. This concept characterises civil society as the space between the sectors. Therefore, civil society is the public realm between state, economy and family sectors (see figure 2.2).⁸³

⁸² Croissant cited in Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk, "Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding," *Social Development Papers* no.36 (Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction, World Bank, October 2006), 3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

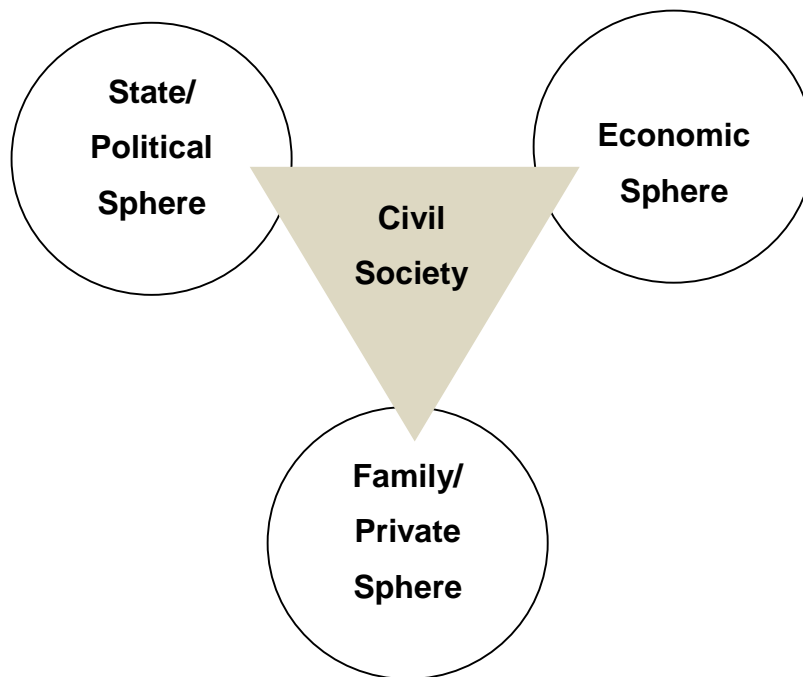


Figure 2.2 - Civil Society as an Intermediate Sphere

Source: Thania Paffenholz, ed., *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publisher, Inc., 2010), 7.

According to the World Alliance for Citizen Participation, civil society can be defined as “the sphere of institutions, organisations and individuals located between the family, the state and the market, in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests”. Additionally, it can be said that neither civil society nor the different sectors of society are isolated phenomena (see figure 2.3).⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Nikolov and Semcesen, *A Comparative Case Analysis*, 7.

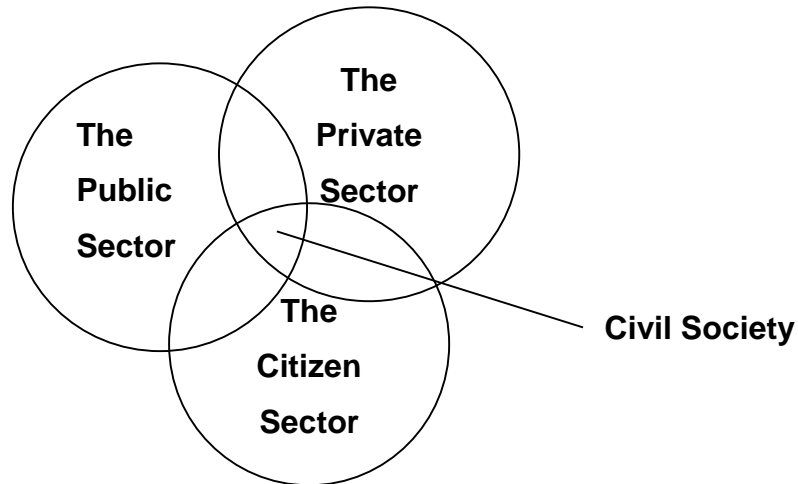


Figure 2.3 - Civil Society as an Overlapping Sphere within the Sectors

Source: Pierre Nikolov and Daniel Semcesen, *A Comparative Case Analysis of Civil Society and Ethnic Conflict in Thailand and Malaysia*. (Lund: Lund University, 2008), 7.

2.2.4 Categorising the Concept of Civil Society

This chapter has, thus far, described the basic concept of civil society and shown that this term is diverse and complicated. A Thai academic, Kritsada Boonchai, has classified the concept of civil society according to its key ideas and theories. Five concepts of a civil society category are explained as follows:

The first category is ‘*State-centred Civil Society*’ often seen in developing countries. This idea is different from Western perspectives where civil society is independent from state influence. In those countries, the state remains the most powerful sector for decision making. However, the state offers opportunities for citizens to participate in some matters.⁸⁵

‘*Capitalist Civil Society*’ is the second concept which aims to reduce the role of the state in economic and social sectors. It focuses on a civil society where the middle-class seek competitive markets to increase the potential of the business sector. Civil society under this concept should be free from state control with the market system able to negotiate with the state.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Boonnak Tivakul, *Thai Rural Areas: The Development to the Civil Society*, 3rd ed. (Nakhon Pathom: Silpakorn University, 2003), 86. [in Thai].

⁸⁶ Vichet, *Development of Laws*, 9.

Thirdly, '*Liberal Civil Society*' focuses on 'citizenship' which means democratic awareness of citizen rights. It stresses middle-class demands, volunteer activities and independent association. It tries to reduce the role of the state in public activities. The government is a mediator that has a duty to respond to people's needs.⁸⁷

Fourthly, a concept of '*Community Civil Society*' was developed from an idea of 'strong community' which means cooperation between various community interests. This cooperation will lead to a strong citizen society. This concept does not deny state assistance, but, in fact, the state plays a key role in helping civilians.⁸⁸

Finally, '*New Social Movement*' is a new concept which aims to make changes in a community through political society by using public participation. This leads to changing structures, rules and social ideals such as the capacity for civic disobedience. This concept does not aim to seize state power or fight through the political system (i.e. parliament, political parties, the law and the bureaucracy), like in the past. Instead, it uses political public spaces to make changes and adjust relations between the state, private and citizen sectors.⁸⁹

2.2.5 A Typology of Civil Society Actors

Last, but not least in the civil society sector, it is important to get to know more about the various actors in the civil society sphere. Manuel Mejido Costoya has provided the principal attributes of the four types of civil society actors: Non-governmental organisations, Social movements, Networks and Plateaus. It needs to be stated here that the networks and plateaus categories of the typology are homologous with the NGOs and social movements.⁹⁰

1) Non-governmental Organisations

NGOs are the most institutionalised and also hierarchical groups in the civil society sector. The structural attributes of NGOs are typical of the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Boonnak, *Thai Rural Areas*, 86.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Manuel Mejido Costoya, "Toward a Typology of Civil Society Actors: The Case of the Movement to Change International Trade Rules and Barriers," Programme Paper no. 30 (Research Institute for Social Development, United Nations, 2007), 14.

bureaucratic rationalisation that strengthens hierarchical institutions. NGOs have a formal division of human resources as represented by their paid, professional staff. NGOs also have an established financial infrastructure and a continuous financial flow that is driven by donor contributions, investments, grants and memberships. Formalised by official annual reports, this financial dimension binds NGOs to the economic and legal framework of a country. These relationships to the institutional framework can be seen when NGOs attempt, for example, to assure a certain tax status, qualify for financial assistance or make certain investments.⁹¹

2) Social Movements

The attributes of social movements are opposite to the characteristics of NGOs. Unlike the highly formalised NGOs, social movements do not have formal structures, chains of command and hierarchical patterns. Compared to NGOs, social movements lack a formal division of labour, an established financial infrastructure and a continuous financial flow. Social movements manage problems through an empathetic and shared-lived experience and operationalise their solutions through direct action.⁹² Moreover, Social movements are less institutionalised and more horizontal than NGOs. They resemble clientele-based groups, extended family structures and religious associations rather than modern hierarchical institutions. This is why they are often described as grassroots organisations.⁹³ Unlike NGOs, social movements are less bound to the economic and juridical frameworks of a society and do not attempt to build institutional ties with the system.⁹⁴

3) Networks

Networks of civil society actors are the third category of the typology. Networks are information-age extensions of NGOs.⁹⁵ Networks attempt to use the information technology revolution and, more specifically, what is referred to above as social forms of network to improve their effectiveness.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Ibid., 15.

⁹² Ibid., 16.

⁹³ Ibid., 17.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 19.

Networks continue to understand social problems within the frame of reference of the specialised, technical and intellectualised discourse of NGOs, but to this perspective they add the postmodern or post-industrial problem of pluralism - that is, networks give pride of place to the importance of a pluralistic discourse.⁹⁷

4) Plateaus

The fourth category of civil society actors is the plateaus which, like networks, attempt to use the information technology revolution and, more specifically, the interconnectivity and decentralisation of the network social form to link up civil society actors. Plateaus use this information technology in the belief that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. These new organisational forms point to the growing complexity of civil society. Networks are the information-age correlates of NGOs; plateaus are information-age correlates of social movements. Plateaus, on the other hand, function in a similar way to the pre-institutional logic and intuitive knowledge of social movements. NGOs become more flexible, and they link up to form networks of CSOs. Social movements become more expanded and link up to form plateaus of civil society actors.⁹⁸

2.3 Perspectives on Ethnic Conflict

Following the section on civil society actors, we turn to the perspectives on ethnic conflict. To understand the characteristics of ethnic conflict this section includes definitions, a typology of ethnic groups, the types of ethnic conflict, and levels of analysis of ethnic conflict. These topics will help explain the ethnic conflict cases in southern Thailand as well as some countries in South and Southeast Asia which will be analysed in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

After the end of the Cold War, armed inter-state conflicts decreased globally, while armed intra-state conflicts increased dramatically. Ethnic groups continue to fight over various issues, including territory, economic resources, cultural identity and political rights. Furthermore, ethnic groups

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 20.

within states asked their ethnic kin in other states for support to fight their governments.⁹⁹ This section explores the information concerning ethnic conflict. It will give an overview of definitions, typology and offer levels of analysis about ethnic conflict.

2.3.1 Definition of Ethnic Conflict and Relevant Terms

First of all, let us define the term 'ethnicity' which most scholars agree is "that part of a person's identity which is drawn from one or more 'markers' like race, religion, shared history, place, social symbols or language".¹⁰⁰ An ethnic group, therefore, "is a group of people bound together by a belief about common kinship and group distinctiveness, often reinforced by religion, language, and history".¹⁰¹

Tolerance between ethnic groups can be challenged over matters such as autonomy, language rights, education, religion, national symbols and political representation, however, most ethnic groups strive for rights and progress without violent means.¹⁰² Most ethnic conflicts are conducted through political institutions and channels. Violence, however, can become a factor when struggles or competition between ethnic groups are repositioned outside the political arena.¹⁰³

According to Anthony Smith in *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, an "ethnic community" is "a named human population with a myth of common ancestry, shared memories, and cultural elements; a link with a historic territory or homeland; and a measure of solidarity".¹⁰⁴ Six criteria must be met before a group can be called an ethnic community. First, the group must have a name for itself. A lack of a name reflects an insufficiently developed collective identity. Second, the people in the group must believe in a common ancestry. This is more important than genetic ties, which may exist, but are not essential. Third, the members of the group must share

⁹⁹ Neal G. Jesse and Kristen P., Williams. *Ethnic Conflict: A Systematic Approach to Cases of Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2011), 1.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Sandra Joireman, *Nationalism and Political Identity* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 1 cited in Nikolov and Semcesen, *A Comparative Case Analysis*, 9.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Anthony Smith cited in Michael E. Brown, "Causes and Implications of Ethnic Conflict," in *Ethnic Conflict and International Security* ed. Michael E. Brown (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 4.

historical memories, often myths or legends passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. Fourth, the group must have a shared culture, generally based on a combination of language, religion, laws, customs, institutions, dress, music, crafts, architecture, even food. Fifth, the group must feel an attachment to a specific territory, which it may or may not actually inhabit. Sixth, the people in a group have to think of themselves as a group in order to constitute an ethnic community; that means they must have a sense of their common ethnicity.¹⁰⁵

Hizkias Assefa's commonly used definition of an ethnic group is that it is a collectivity of people who share the same primary characteristics such as ancestry, language, culture and religion. Ethnicity then, refers to the behaviour and feeling about oneself and others that supposedly emanates from membership of an ethnic group. Finally, ethnic conflict has come to mean cleavages between groups based on differentiations in ethnic identities.¹⁰⁶

According to Daniel Byman, "An ethnic conflict is a violent conflict between ethnic groups or between an ethnic group and government forces that consists of one or more different ethnic groups". He also added there are two main types of conflict: group versus group conflict, with the government acting as a third party of some kind and group versus government conflict, where the government is an active party acting on behalf of one ethnic group".¹⁰⁷

Imtiyaz Yusuf analysed the ongoing events in southern Thailand from an ethno-religious dimension, focusing on the need to understand how the Malay-Muslims in the south perceive their identity in ethnic and religious terms. Ethnicity is the defining characteristic of a group's identity which sets it apart from others in its own and others' views. Religion often can be used for ethnic interests as a tool to make conflicts. Thus, the conflict in the south has an ethno-religious dimension, similar to the conflicts in some countries in South and Southeast Asia. The combination of ethnicity and religion often

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Hizkias Assefa, "Ethnic Conflict in the Horn of Africa: Myth and Reality," in *Ethnic and Power in the Contemporary World*, eds. Kumar Rupesinghe and Valery A. Tishkov (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1996), 32.

¹⁰⁷ Williams. *Ethnic Conflict*, 7.

results in explosive conflicts in the political arena to which solutions are not easily found.¹⁰⁸

2.3.2 A Typology of Ethnic Groups

Why does ethnic diversity cause conflict? Perhaps it is because each ethnic group has its own unique characteristics which are different from other groups or the majority of the community. A typology is very useful to understand the link between ethnic groups, the causes of ethnic conflict, and the means to resolve the conflicts. It will also help us to understand the common characteristics of the ethnic groups in southern Thailand which will be analysed further in Chapter 4. Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr have provided a typology of ethnic groups found within states. These include five groups: ethno-nationalists, indigenous peoples, ethno-classes, communal contenders and dominant minorities.

Ethno-nationalists are large ethnic groups based on historical traditions of political autonomy and/or territory. These groups often have an organised political leadership.¹⁰⁹

Indigenous peoples are descendants of inhabitants of lands that were colonised or conquered. They tend to live on the margins of the modern nation-states, surviving in small tribes or communities.¹¹⁰

Ethno-classes are distinct ethnic groups that represent a social class in a society. They normally lack direct political party representation.¹¹¹

Communal contenders are ethnic groups that wish to share governance with other ethnic groups in the same state. They typically have been the victims of discrimination or marginalisation. Thus, they press for greater political participation.¹¹²

Finally, *dominant minorities* represent those ethnic groups that are minorities within their own state but have typically controlled and dominated the state.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Imtiyaz Yusuf, *the Southern Thailand Conflict and the Muslim World* (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 2006), 11.

¹⁰⁹ Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr cited in Williams, *Ethnic Conflict*, 8.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

2.3.3 Types of Ethnic Conflict

Understanding the differences between ethnic groups helps to explain the types of conflict caused by ethnic diversity. Ethnic conflict has various involved actors and different motivations which may lead to violence. Therefore, ethnic conflict can be divided into three broad categories: civil rights conflicts, ethnic rebellions and inter-communal violence.

1) Civil Rights Conflicts

Civil rights conflicts occur when a group feels it is denied access to state resources or to cultural rights. Civil rights contests may start with non-violent protests, strikes and political mobilisation. Three possible ways to escalation can then occur. First, the demands may not be met, in which case the group may itself turn to violence. Secondly, the state may instigate violence, including repressive or extra-judicial measures. Thirdly, retaliatory violence may be initiated by rival ethnic groups, particularly where these are aligned to the state. Civil rights conflicts can escalate, depending on the political geography, into full secessionist or civil wars.¹¹⁴

2) Ethnic Rebellions

Ethnic rebellions take a number of different forms, depending on the goals of the militant groups and the governmental approach to what may be peaceful civil protest. The majority of modern ethnic conflicts contain some form of separatist element where an ethnic group seeks to detach or distance itself politically from the state in which it currently resides. A number of conflicts are regarded as part of the unfinished business of post-Second World War issues.¹¹⁵

3) Inter-communal Violence

Although inter-communal violence is often extremely brutal, it is rarely purely random or mindless. The participants will collectively recognise some injustice against themselves, and these underlying sentiments will frequently be harnessed by political leaders for their own ends. Therefore,

¹¹⁴ Stuart A. Notholt, *Fields of Fire, an Atlas of Ethnic Conflict* (London: Stuart Notholt Communications Ltd, 2008), 1.08.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

prolonged inter-communal fighting always comes together with a broader political agenda or set of demands.¹¹⁶

2.3.4 Levels of Analysis of Ethnic Conflict

Before designing a research methodology in Chapter 3, it was first necessary to clarify units and levels of analysis. The level of analysis approach to ethnic conflict is usually classified into three levels: international (e.g. balance of power and international systemic issues); domestic (e.g. problems within legislatures, bureaucracies and political history); and individual (e.g. political elites and leaders).¹¹⁷ In this research, only the domestic level will be described as the case of conflict in southern Thailand is mainly caused by factors within the state system. An exploration of the domestic level of analysis provides useful tools for a better understanding of the ethnic conflict.

Factors of Violence at the Domestic Level

Michael E. Brown has set out four key categories that indicate the predisposition for violence: structural; political; economic/social; and cultural/perceptual factors.

1) Structural Factors

The three structural factors have been noted. First, *weak state structures* often result from government corruption and ineptitude. Weakened state structures make for a more permissive atmosphere for conflict to emerge between groups. Leaders may be engaged in power struggles, extensive human rights abuses occur, an inability to control borders is evident, and ethnic groups push for their demands as well as compete with each other for resources. Consequently, a weak state is unable to respond effectively to their demands, with conflict being the likely result.¹¹⁸

In terms of *intrastate security concerns*, mistrust reinforces the negative perceptions each group has of the other, especially the perception

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 1.09.

¹¹⁷ Williams. *Ethnic Conflict*, 31.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 45.

of hostile intentions, and thus each group may be inclined to threaten the other leading to counter threats and a spiral in escalation of the conflict.¹¹⁹

The last structural factor is *ethnic geography*. Brown asserts that “states with ethnic minorities are more prone to conflict than others, and certain kinds of ethnic demographics are more problematic than others”.¹²⁰

2) Political Factors

Political issues are about the control and status of territory – and which ethnic group has control of the state institutions. When the political institutions of a state favour one group over another, the out-group is likely to feel resentment and seek to change the discriminatory institutions.¹²¹

3) Economic/Social Factors

Economic and social factors cover, for instance, economic problems, discriminatory economic systems and economic development which can lead to resentment if one ethnic group is favoured over another. Economic and social factors, in which inequities between ethnic groups in access to jobs, economic resources or employment are prevalent, can lead to conflict.¹²²

4) Cultural/Perceptual Factors

Cultural discrimination against minority ethnic groups can serve as a trigger for conflict. Ethnic conflicts are often the result of conflict over language and religion. Group histories and group perceptions of themselves and others are also involved in causing conflict. In fact, these cultural and perceptual factors are about identity. While resource issues are sources of conflict, scholars increasingly note the importance of intangible factors, such as identity, as sources of conflict.¹²³

2.4 The Links between Civil Society and Ethnic Conflict

After the earlier two sections describing the concepts of civil society and ethnic conflict, the following section will describe the relationship

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 46.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Williams. *Ethnic Conflict*, 47.

¹²³ Ibid., 48.

between them and how civil society supports building peace - which is so central to in Chapter 9. This section includes civil society and conflict management, civil society and peace negotiation, civil society's roles in conflict areas and models of ethnic conflict resolution.

With the eruption of ethnic wars in Europe, Asia and Africa, the role of civil society as a tool to resolve ethno-religious conflict has been significant. Numerous politicians, scholars and practitioners around the world anticipated that civil society would be the initiator and sustainer of peace processes.¹²⁴ The following will provide some examples of the links between civil society and ethnic conflict.

2.4.1 Civil Society and Conflict Management

Academics emphasise the role of civil society groups involved in conflict management as discussed below.

In Thania Paffenholz's view, in the *Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction*, civil society, civic engagement, and peacebuilding have important roles to play in peacebuilding. Based on an analysis of civil society functions, this study concluded that civil society can make important contributions to peacebuilding in the short, medium and long terms. The most important function of civil society in peacebuilding seems to be advocacy, particularly in terms of making the voices of civil society heard and bringing important issues to the peacebuilding agenda. Other civil society roles are also important for peacebuilding, especially human rights monitoring which contributes to the protection of civil society, through joint activities that can build bridging ties across divided societies.¹²⁵ Civil society, however, needs a functioning state to perform its role efficiently.¹²⁶

According to an article *Agents for Change: Civil Society Roles in Preventing War & Building Peace*, Catherine Barnes agreed that within any society, civil society is a potentially powerful force that can mobilise to either

¹²⁴ Nikolov and Semcesen, *A Comparative Case Analysis*, 5.

¹²⁵ Paffenholz and Spurk, "Civil Society," 34.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

escalate conflict or facilitate its resolution.¹²⁷ In addition, preventing conflict and building sustainable peace requires strategies that address structural causes of conflict and enable partnerships between civil society actors at the local, regional and global levels to interact with governments, inter-governmental organisations and businesses.¹²⁸ In the conflict cycle, civil society organisations play various roles at different stages from prevention, early operational crisis response during violent conflict, peacemaking, prevention reoccurrence and post-settlement peacebuilding.¹²⁹

According to Martina Fischer in an article called *Civil Society in Conflict Transformation: Ambivalence, Potentials and Challenges*, the potential contributions of civil society actors for peacebuilding and conflict transformation is important.¹³⁰ Support for civil society should be further developed as a key element of development and peace politics.¹³¹ Peacebuilding and conflict transformation require an integrated approach that addresses state institutions, economic structures and civil society.¹³²

Raffaele Marchettia and Nathalie Tocci analysed the relationship between civil society and conflict in an article called *Conflict Society: Understanding the Role of Civil Society in Conflict*. Their study provided an analytical framework to reveal this complex relationship and assessed the impacts which civil society may have on conflict. Moreover, it examined more specifically the role of civil society in ethno-political conflicts. Finally, the article specified the identification of different factors determining the impact of civil society on conflicts, including political identities, frameworks of action and political opportunity structures in which civil society actors operate.¹³³ In conclusion, three main macro-impacts of civil society in conflict can be outlined: fuelling conflict, holding conflict in the short-term and peacemaking impacts.¹³⁴ This research focuses only on the impact on

¹²⁷ Catherine Barnes, "Agents for Change: Civil Society Roles in Preventing War & Building Peace," Issue Paper 2 (The Netherlands: European Centre for Conflict Prevention, September 2006), 21.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 26.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 28.

¹³⁰ Fischer, *Civil Society*, 2.

¹³¹ Ibid., 24.

¹³² Ibid., 25.

¹³³ Raffaele Marchetti and Nathalie Tocci, "Conflict Society: Understanding the Role of Civil Society in Conflict," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 21, no. 2 (June 2009): 201.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 216.

peace resolution which civil society organisations may be involved in post-violence situations such as capacity-building, reconstruction and rehabilitation.¹³⁵

2.4.2 Civil Society and Peace Negotiations

While the work *Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Confronting Exclusion* of Anthony Wanis-St. John and Darren Kew has focused on the importance of civil society's role in post-conflict peacebuilding, it is also useful for the ongoing conflict in Southern Thailand. Although the exclusion of the civil society sector from peace negotiations may make the process less complicated, the absence of civil society voices at the negotiating table can negatively impact on the sustainability of a peace agreement during peacebuilding.

This research proposed a framework of comparison for more than twenty different peace negotiations across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. According to this research, there were three levels of civil society involvement at the peace negotiations stage. Civil society groups had *high* involvement in the peace negotiations directly by having a certain place at the negotiation. They could have *moderate* involvement but influence the negotiations indirectly through parties who were officially assigned to the talks. Finally, *low* participation of civil society groups means having little or no access or influence upon the parties in the negotiations.¹³⁶ The cases in which civil society groups actively engaged in official peace negotiations tend to achieve more sustained peace.¹³⁷ It can, however, be concluded that some common relationships between civil society involvement in peace negotiations and the sustainability of peace agreements is necessary for success. All cases (i.e. Guatemala, Liberia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone) with a high civil society involvement in the negotiations have resulted in sustained peace in the peacebuilding phase.¹³⁸ Surprisingly, most of the cases (i.e. Bosnia, Burundi, Congo, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Israel-Palestine,

¹³⁵ Ibid., 213.

¹³⁶ John Wanis-St., Anthony and Darren Kew, "Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Confronting Exclusion," *International Negotiation* 13 (2008): 25.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 1.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 28.

Kosovo, Liberia, Nepal, Nigeria, Rwanda and Tajikistan) of low civil society involvement experienced a resumption of warfare or unsustainable peace.¹³⁹

Clearly, a relationship between civil society participation in peace negotiations and the durability of peace settlements exists. Civil society groups have a direct or indirect role in peace negotiations and excluding them tends to undermine the peacebuilding process.¹⁴⁰

2.4.3 The Role of Civil Society in Conflict Areas

Chapter 5 will analyse more cases of the role of civil society in conflict countries and will provide further information from various sources. The following will introduce three significant individual works focusing on civil society's roles in the countries facing ethnic conflict: the main theme of this thesis.

- **Civil Society and Ethnic Conflict in Thailand and Malaysia**

Pierre Nikolov and Daniel Semcesen's research in 2008 on *A Comparative Case Analysis of Civil Society and Ethnic Conflict in Thailand and Malaysia*, aimed to contrast and explain the role of civil society in relation to ethnic conflict in Thailand and Malaysia. A comparative case analysis was applied across four analytical dimensions: space, structure, values, and impact. Nikolov and Semcesen's study demonstrated that coercive regimes suppressed civil society and communities remained intra-ethnic in both countries. Although civil society was weakened in both cases, inter-ethnic government policies secured ethnic peace over five decades in Malaysia, whereas the absence of similar policies has prolonged ethnic violence in Thailand.¹⁴¹

Taking a Hegelian perspective, the authoritarian governments of Thailand and Malaysia have restrained the civil society sector resulting in fierce competition which leads to violent conflict. In the Malaysian case, the regulating state has managed to prevent ethnic violence and intra-state conflict. Without regulations, fundamentalist religious groups find financial

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 30.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.,10.

support to further their homogenisation agenda and provoke ethnic violence. Thailand, on the other hand has used homogenisation policies, which have provoked intra-state conflicts. According to Gramsci's ideas, civil society is a sphere of contestation between the civil society sector and coercive state institutions. In the Malaysian context, civil society is restrained by the state, with the electorate continuing their silent consent, and where the values of a coercive regime become socialised in civil society and the hegemonic ideology is maintained. Gramsci also underlined that civil society can be a strong site of rebellion against coercive institutions. This Gramscian perspective sees the civil society sector in Thailand as a sphere of periodic shifts between mass rebellion and periods of consent for the coercive regime in power.¹⁴²

- **The Role of Civil Society in Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast**

Another piece of work concerning the role of civil society in conflict resolution was written by Samir Kumar Das which was called *Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of Civil Society*.

Northeast India is a geographically distinctive region connected to the rest of India by a narrow corridor. This constitutes barely one per cent of the boundaries of the region, while the remaining ninety-nine per cent of its boundaries are international – with China's Tibet region to the north, Bangladesh to the southwest, Bhutan to the northwest, and Myanmar to the east.¹⁴³

Although the roles of civil societies are far too complex to be fitted into any one category, a classificatory scheme for understanding and explaining the role of civil societies in making peace in a region is still useful. There are four types of organisations and initiatives that help to explain the role of civil societies in building peace in India's Northeast.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ibid., 22.

¹⁴³ Samir Kumar Das, *Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of Civil Society* (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center, 2007), 3.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 42.

1. *Civic Representatives*. The first approach refers to those civil society groups that make claims of representing an ethnic community and thereby get involved in conflicts.
2. *Peace Groups*. A second category of civil society organisations are those expressly set up with the objective of making the necessary preparations for peace dialogues between conflicting parties, working out ceasefire details, and facilitating a process that often culminates in the signing of peace accords.
3. *Bridge-builders*. A third segment of civil society consists of groups and organisations that play an active role in building bridges at the local level and thereby makes the peaceful coexistence of different communities possible.
4. *Popular Initiatives*. Finally, civil society's role in making peace is also located in some as yet disorganised, or loosely organised, popular initiatives that mark its emergence as a force autonomous from both the state and insurgents.

Civil society groups and initiatives play diverse roles in the conflicts afflicting India's Northeast. Their role in making peace is limited largely to a support role. Civil society has largely remained in the background, and its role has been restricted to doing the groundwork necessary for the conflicting parties to stop hostilities, brainstorming for ideas, and seeking a negotiated settlement to their problems.¹⁴⁵

- **The Role of Civil Society in Forging Sustainable Peace in Mindanao**

Steven Rood's study has investigated the role of civil society in forging sustainable peace in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines. It argued that civil society groups have the potential to make significant contributions to the management of the insurgent conflict in the southern Philippines and in terms of forging a lasting peace. Civil society in this study has included a wide range of organisations such as NGOs, church-based groups and business associations. All of these organisations are involved in efforts to manage the conflict in the southern Philippines. In this context,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 53.

the study has argued that civil society in Mindanao can contribute significantly in terms of managing the conflict and achieving sustainable peace in Mindanao. The main activities of civil society found in Mindanao are promoting dialogues between Christian and Muslim communities, creating space for peace process and involvement in an official peace process.¹⁴⁶

A study by Niklas Hansson was mentioned in this work to support the idea that there is a strong correlation between civil society's success and access to the peace agreement process. Some countries in Africa which involved the civil society sector in their peace processes tended to be successful in their peace agreements; these included Mozambique, El Salvador, South Africa and Guatemala.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, the role of civil society in peacebuilding is important and should be developed.

However, there are some limitations to civil society impacting on macro political process. Instead, civil society's involvement tends to have indirect effects which are involved in facilitating the atmosphere of peace process such as broadcasting discussion of the root causes of conflict; arguing in the media and with policy elites against pursuing victory and in favour of developmental changes; and providing political space for government officials to manoeuvre toward a settlement.¹⁴⁸ Despite these limitations and weaknesses, local and international civil society organisations can help bring about lasting peace in the regions. This study made several recommendations to improve the potential of civil society in building peace in Mindanao. First, Muslim civil society should be strengthened to rectify an imbalance of Muslim and Christian communities. Also, civil society networks involved in the peace process should be strengthened to help transform them into formal organisations capable of bringing Muslims and Christians together. Finally, civil society organisations should work with policy elites to reach a wider public and to expose citizens to issues involved in the peace talks.

¹⁴⁶ Steven Rood, *Forging Sustainable Peace in Mindanao: The Role of Civil Society* (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center, 2005), 21.

¹⁴⁷ Niklas Hansson cited in *ibid*, 29.

¹⁴⁸ Rood, *Forging Sustainable Peace*, IX.

2.4.4 Models of Ethnic Conflict Resolution

The links between civil society and ethnic conflict, and some cases, have now been examined in the earlier sections. Several models have been created by Ryan and Cordula-Reimann to include ideas to demonstrate how civil society and citizen sectors work together to resolve conflict or build peace. These two models - the Peace-building Model and the Third-party Strategies with Conflict Transformation - are useful for this research as they support the idea of the importance of civil society which will be linked to the role of civil society in peace building in Chapter 6.

1) Peace-building Model

Stephen Ryan has combined the peace strategies introduced by Johan Galtung, and developed by Michael Harbottle, and has added another tripartite system suggested by Christopher Mitchell (see figure 2.4).

Problem to be addressed	Strategy	Target Group
Violent behaviour	Peace-keeping (military activity)	Armed groups (warriors)
Perceived incompatibility of interests	Peace-making (political activity)	Decision-makers (leaders)
Negative attitudes and socio-economic structures	Peace-building (socio-economic activity)	Ordinary people (followers)

Figure 2.4 - A Framework for Conflict Resolution

Source: Adapted from Stephen Ryan, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations* (Hants: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1990), 52.

i. **Peace-keeping and the reduction of violent behaviour**

Peace-keeping is an activity which involves the interposition of military and/or police forces between armed groups either to stop violence or to prevent it. The public will tend to be less committed to such a course

of action, and will tend to share or reject such values as the general intercommunal situation and the activities of the warriors' changes.¹⁴⁹

When ethnic groups are engaged in a violent conflict, peace-keeping is often the most urgent and necessary of all peace strategies for it is the only one which deals directly with the warriors on all sides who are engaged in mutual destruction.¹⁵⁰

ii. Peace-making and the reduction of conflicting interests

Peace-making is concerned with the search for a negotiated resolution of the perceived conflicts of interests between the parties. There are three main ways by which the parties can try to deal with such conflicts of interests.

The first approach is to try and impose a solution either through violence or through power. The second approach of trying to resolve ethnic conflicts is through the law. There are several problems with such approaches. Using power to impose a solution to the conflict does not deal with the perceived incompatibility of interest which underlies the conflict. As these root causes are left unresolved, the conflict will simply be suppressed and will re-emerge in the future. Thus, this approach may be effective only for a short term. Also, trying to resolve the conflict by using the law will be not a popular option, especially if the instruments of legal enforcement are deemed to be biased. The various problems with the use of violence or power and the inappropriateness of the recourse to law has led many to regard the third one, negotiation, as the best peace-making strategy.¹⁵¹ The negotiation should focus on the interests of all relevant parties and final agreements should be based on objective criteria or fair standards acceptable to all parties.¹⁵²

iii. Peace-building and the reduction of negative attitudes

Peace-building is the strategy which most directly tries to reverse the destructive processes that accompany violence. This involves a shift of focus away from the warriors, with whom peace-keepers are mainly

¹⁴⁹ Stephen Ryan, *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations* (Hants: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1990), 51.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 79.

concerned, to the attitudes and socio-economic circumstances of ordinary people. Therefore, it tends to concentrate on the context of the conflict rather than on the issues which divide the parties. Most peace-building strategies involve greater inter-party contact. So whereas peace-keeping is about building barriers between the warriors, peace-building tries to build bridges between local people in communities.

The most simplistic approach to peace-building is the contact hypothesis, defined as “the widely held belief that interaction between individuals belonging to different groups will reduce ethnic prejudice and inter-group tension”.¹⁵³

2) Third-party Strategies with Conflict Transformation

Cordula–Reimann is concerned with three approaches to conflict management: conflict settlement, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The role of three-track actors and their strategies are applied in the three approaches. The third-party strategies consist of three actors called Track I, Track II and Track III.

Track I activities include official and non-coercive measures, such as fact-finding missions, facilitation, negotiation, mediation and peacekeeping, to more coercive measures, such as power-mediation, sanctions, peace-enforcement and arbitration. In contrast to Track I, *Track II* refers to all non-official and non-coercive activities, such as facilitation, consultation and mediation. Finally, *Track III* refers to all activities initiated and undertaken by actors involved in grassroots training, capacity building and empowerment, trauma work, human rights, development work and humanitarian assistance.¹⁵⁴

The three approaches to conflict management engage different actors and adopt multiple strategies taken. First, ‘*Conflict Settlement*’ refers to all strategies for achieving an outcome that ends direct violence, without necessarily addressing the underlying conflict causes.¹⁵⁵ The second approach, ‘*Conflict Resolution*’, refers to all process oriented activities that

¹⁵³ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵⁴ Cordula Reimann, *Assessing the State-of-the-Art in Conflict Transformation*, (Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, October 2006), 4.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 8.

aim to address the underlying causes of direct, cultural and structural violence.¹⁵⁶ The deepening of conflict analysis and the widening of strategies will also require a greater number of actors involved in the process. These can be drawn from civil society groups, academic institutions and all forms of civil mediation or citizen diplomacy groups, including local and international conflict resolution NGOs operating at Track II level.¹⁵⁷ The last approach, '*Conflict Transformation*', refers to outcomes, processes and structures oriented toward long-term peacebuilding efforts, which aim to overcome revealed forms of direct, cultural and structural violence. The goal of conflict transformation moves beyond the aims of both the previous approaches.¹⁵⁸ The Track III strategies aim to support local struggles for social justice and thus for radical, structural change.¹⁵⁹ Whereas Track I and Track II actors in the conflict settlement and conflict resolution approaches tend to view the civilian population and grassroots levels as passive, Track III strategies put them as a centre-stage actor of conflict resolution.¹⁶⁰ It is clear that Track I or Track II approaches alone cannot provide an efficient solution for contemporary violent conflicts. Therefore, Track III strategies need to be included in the peacebuilding process.¹⁶¹

In summary, conflict transformation is an open-ended, long-term, multi-track and dynamic process, which significantly widens the scope of actors involved. It combines Track I, II and III activities and is thus likely to engage a wide variety of actors, including: official, military and political leaders (Track I); informal conflict resolution experts, INGOs and NGOs working in conflict resolution (Track II); and grassroots, local NGOs providing development cooperation and humanitarian assistance (Track III).¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁶² Ibid.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

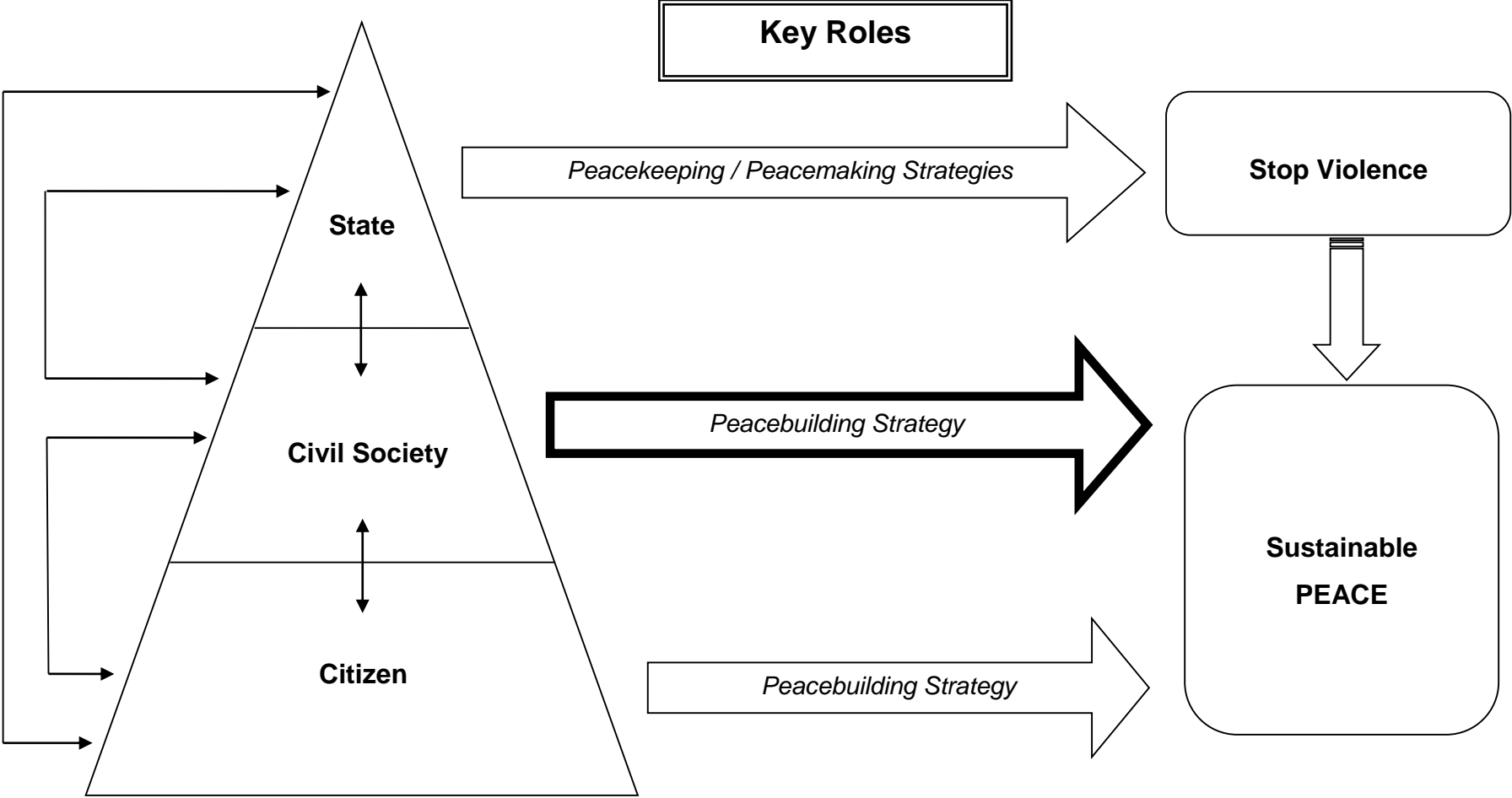
The concepts of civil society and ethnic conflict described in this chapter, together with the models of ethnic conflict resolution, have been synthesised into a conceptual framework which will be used for this research. In conflict management and peace building processes, there are normally three main actors: state, civil society and citizen. Each actor has different roles which contribute differently to the conflict solution. These actors interact closely with one another in order to figure out the best possible solutions for the conflict. However, the outcomes of each actor and strategy are varied.

The state consists of a small number of people at the top who have the most power in making decisions. The main role of the state is dealing with approaches like the *Peacekeeping and Peacemaking Strategies*. These approaches would stop violence or conflict immediately, but could not guarantee how long the peace would last. This chapter has showed that there is a relationship between civil society and ethnic conflict. To achieve an ultimate goal which is sustainable peace, many variables need to be considered. Moreover, civil society and citizen sectors should be involved in conflict resolution which is known as a *Peacebuilding Strategy*.

This research defines peace as situations in which there is no violence or armed conflict in the area. Local people can return to their normal daily routine. Furthermore, the feeling of discontent and discrimination experienced by the local Muslim people should be resolved. Only then can a lasting peace be achieved.

The conceptual framework used for this research, which aims to find out the role of civil society in building peace in the southern border provinces of Thailand, is illustrated in figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 - Conceptual Framework



2.6 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the theoretical perspectives from the past to the present which are relevant to this research. Although there is no common definition of civil society which can be agreed upon by scholars, the concepts of civil society from both Western thinkers and Thai scholars have been examined and a definition for this research has been set down. The differences in meanings and interpretations about civil society and ethnic conflict which resulted from their origins and histories have influenced the theoretical perceptions and empirical research. This chapter also included the relationship between civil society and ethnic conflict and examined models of ethnic conflict resolution. The conceptual framework for this research has also been identified in this chapter. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology which provides an overview of data collection, research sample groups and the process of data analysis.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology which includes the following areas: research design; sources of data; an overview of research samples; plans and methods for data collection; research tools for the process of data analysis; and the limitations and recommendations of the fieldtrip undertaken for this research.

3.2 Research Methodology

The research is concerned with analysing meanings and experiences rather than expressing numbers or statistical findings, so a qualitative method is used. This qualitative method employs in-depth semi-structured interview with open-ended questions together with documentary research.

To increase the credibility and validity of the data, this thesis makes use of both primary and secondary data which is called 'Data Source Triangulation'.¹⁶³ This strategy can help strengthening the thesis by increasing the overall validity and credibility of the collected data and the information used. This method of combining different aspects of research from multiple places.

This thesis makes use of both primary and secondary data:

1. *Primary Data*. This was collected through person-to-person interviews with the leaders or representatives of civil society groups in Thailand. The interviews adopted a non-random sampling procedure using purposive sampling. The interviews adopted a non-random sampling procedure using purposive sampling. This sampling method was selected because of two principal aims which are: to ensure that there are diversity

¹⁶³ Write Content Solutions, Website, <http://www.write.com/writing-guides/research-writing/research-process/data-triangulation-how-the-triangulation-of-data-strengthens-your-research/> (accessed 12 December 2014).

among all key samples and to ensure that all the key samples are covered. There are a range of different approaches to purposive sampling, this thesis has adopted an approach called ‘maximum variation sampling’. It began by identifying diverse characteristics or criteria for constructing the sample.¹⁶⁴ In this case, civil society groups were classified into eleven categories. Then, the researcher selected at least one group for each category which have played significant roles in attempting to build peace in the southernmost provinces. This helps to ensure that the research covered all aspects of civil society’s activities.

2. *Secondary Data*. This includes data obtained from published books, academic journals, newspapers and articles posted on websites.

3.3 Research Design

Types of Information	What the Research Requires	Method
Factual information	Facts about Thailand, the history of the region, of conflict, the background of militant groups, government counter-insurgency policies and strategies, laws passed during the conflict, the restructuring of key government agencies, the background of civil society in Thailand, and case studies of ethno-religious conflicts in South and Southeast Asian countries	Document review
Theories	Ideas concerning Western and Thai civil society and ethnic conflict concepts, models of ethnic conflict resolution, concept of peacebuilding, and the strategic role of the civil society sector in peacebuilding	Document review

¹⁶⁴ Michael Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1990) 172.

Types of Information	What the Research Requires	Method
Perceptual information	Characteristics of civil society groups in attempting to build peace in the south, the role of civil society groups, the efficacy of civil society groups in building peace, difficulties and recommendations	In-depth interviews and document review

3.4 Sources of Data

1) In-depth Interviews

The main findings have been analysed from in-depth interviews with members of twenty-nine civil society groups. They were classified into categories depending on their main purposes. At least one civil society group as a representative from each category was selected for an in-depth interview.

2) Internet

Online sources were necessary to search for updated information which is the most convenient tool to reach most databases. The information sourced includes relevant academic journals in Thailand and internationally, Thai newspapers and statistical information on the unrest in Southern Thailand. There are many reliable internet websites that are good sources for data and news concerning the conflict in the southern provinces such as the Isra News Agency and the Deep South Watch Centre.

3) Library

Library sources provided books and journals to address the research methodology, theories of civil society, theories of peace studies, concept of peacebuilding and cases of ethno-religious conflicts in other countries.

3.5 Research Sample

The theories and concepts of civil society analysed in Chapter 2 were used to select sample groups for this research. Most civil society groups in Thailand could be categorised as '*State-centred Civil Society*' which means the state remains powerful in some matters in the civil society sector. These sample groups have three levels of connections with the state or political sphere.

The first group is civil society groups in Thailand that are compatible with Western concepts where they position themselves as a separate sector as mentioned in 2.2.3. These include the organisations which may depend mainly on foreign donors or are self-funding, for example, the Muslim Attorney Centre Foundation (MAC), the Chamber of Commerce, and the Islamic Culture Foundation of Southern States.

The second group consists of most of the civil society groups in Thailand which have close links with the government to varying degrees as was mentioned in 2.2.1 - the Thai concept. Some are very independent in managing their groups' activities, but somehow still related to the government such as being partly funded or academically supported by the government. Most of the sample groups are examples of this concept.

The final group, according to the concept of civil society put forward by Thai scholars is one where the government is included into the civil society's sphere totally. Thus, two government agencies (i.e. SBPAC and the Civil Society Coordinator Working Group (CSCWG)) which work closely with the local civil society groups are included in the research sample groups.

Twenty-nine civil society groups were selected, mostly from the three southernmost provinces although some were from Songkhla and the central provinces. These groups were selected based on the researcher's opinion that they played significant roles in relation to the southern conflict, and have been considered good representatives of each category of civil society. The following is an introduction to the civil society groups that were selected for in-depth interviews.

1) Southern Natural Resources Network

The Southern Natural Resources Network consists of five small groups concerned with natural resources issues such as the Pattani Bay Conservative Movements and the Saiburi Watershed Project. The network was formed by Asst. Prof. Nukul Rattanadakul, a lecturer at Prince of Songkla University under the support of the Yadfon Foundation in Trang province. The network was formed before the upsurge of violence in 2004. Representatives started working in three villages in 1992, and today its network covers 50 villages. The initial purpose of the network was to promote public participation in natural resource management within communities by using a strategy of working together with villagers in partnership. After the insurgent violence became a problem in this area, the network has reduced their role in natural resources and paid more attention to the issues of peace and human rights.¹⁶⁵

2) Muslim Attorney Centre Foundation (MAC)

In 2004, a group of Muslim lawyers formed a Muslim Attorney Club headed by a renowned lawyer, Somchai Neelapaijit. Its initial objective was to help the accused on charges relating to the violation of national security. Since late 2005, national security cases in the southernmost provinces have increased exponentially with the group establishing a 'Muslim Attorney Centre'. From 2007, MAC expanded their branches into four provinces: Bangkok, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. Today, the purposes of the centre are to promote, encourage and publicise knowledge about human rights and law to the people; to assist villagers charged with national security breaches and human rights violations; to strengthen a network of lawyers and human rights activists; and to build relations with the network of human rights organisations at both national and international levels.¹⁶⁶

3) Justice for Peace Foundation (JPF)

The JPF was founded in June 2006 as a network of human rights and peace activists which was formerly known as the Working Group on Justice for Peace (WGJP). The WGJP engaged in human rights monitoring

¹⁶⁵ Respondent 20, Interview. Southern Border Natural Resources Network. 4 July 2012.

¹⁶⁶ Muslim Attorney Centre Foundation, Website, <http://th.macmuslim.com/> (accessed 11 December 2013).

and advocacy as well as encouraging grassroots movements and supporting victims of human rights violations in their fight for justice. In December 2009, WGJP was registered as a Foundation with the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority, later changing its name to the Justice for Peace Foundation. Today, the objectives of the foundation are to raise public awareness on issues of justice, the rule of law, national human rights and international human rights standards; to strengthen the capacity of victims and their families to fight for justice and of communities; to protect human rights using non-violence; and to advocate nationally and internationally for the Thai government to address human rights violations and digressions from the rule of law in order to end impunity and provide remedies to victims and their families.¹⁶⁷

4) Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF)

The CrCF is a non-profit and non-governmental foundation located in Bangkok. CrCF was founded by a group of lawyers and registered under the Ministry of Culture in 2002. Since then, it has coordinated several activities with its working partners such as the Lawyer Council of Thailand, the Thai Volunteer Services Foundation, the Rule of Law and Reconciliation Center and the Justice for Peace Foundation. It aims at promoting cross-cultural understanding on issues concerning the protection and promotion of human rights and democracy. CrCF also works to promote and protect the rights of marginalised groups in Thailand such as ethnic groups, migrant workers, stateless people and victims of conflict.¹⁶⁸ The foundation has played a greater role in the deep south since 2004 when the renowned Thai-Muslim lawyer and human rights activist, Somchai Neelapaijit disappeared. It provides legal and other aid to victims, particularly Muslims, affected by violence in the southern border provinces.¹⁶⁹

5) Bungaraya Group

The Bungaraya Group is a civil society organisation established in early 2009 by a group of Prince of Songkla University students based in

¹⁶⁷ Justice for Peace Foundation, Facebook Page, <http://www.facebook.com/JusticeforPeace> (accessed 11 December 2013).

¹⁶⁸ Cross Cultural Foundation, Website, <http://www.crcf.or.th/en/about.php> (accessed 3 June 2011).

¹⁶⁹ Respondent 15, Interview. Cross Cultural Foundation-CrCF. 29 June 2012.

Pattani. The group has created a website, called '*bungarayanews.com*',¹⁷⁰ which has publicised journals, interviews, histories and research concerning southern Thailand in three languages: Thai, Melayu and English. The website presents views from the southern region including social, economic, educational and religious information to outsiders in order to make them understand the situation in the conflict area.¹⁷¹ The initial activity of this group was related to media work and later expanded to the academic field as well. The main objectives of the academic field are to develop skills and to increase the potential of teachers in these provinces.¹⁷²

6) Deep South Watch (DSW)

The DSW group was established in 2006 by a group of professionals with backgrounds in academia, medicine and the media. The Director of DSW is Asst. Prof. Dr. Srisompob Jitpiromsri who was one of the founders and it is based in Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. The aims of DSW are to raise awareness concerning the conflict in southern Thailand and to use non-violent means to constructively transform the conflict. In order to achieve this goal, DSW has planned its own action based on three 'modules'. *Module 1: Public Communication Module* emphasises the creation of channels of communication for the local people and simultaneously builds a communication network that reflects the perspectives of a variety of people, particularly voices from inside the conflict areas. *Module 2: Knowledge Formation Module* is the process of understanding the situation while trying to find a solution based on the knowledge and experiences through the formation of study groups, think tank forums, workshops, and seminars. *Module 3: Civil Society Mobilisation Module* refers to the process of supporting the civil society sector to mobilise a political space through networking and creating a 'common space' that will facilitate proposals based on the local people and enhance the power to negotiate on the basis of public interests.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Bungaraya News, Website, <http://www.bungarayanews.com> (accessed 13 May 2011).

¹⁷¹ Komchadluek News, Website, <http://www.komchadluek.net/detail/20090823/25403/> (accessed 13 December 2011).

¹⁷² Respondent 4, Interview. Bungaraya Group. 20 June 2012.

¹⁷³ Deep South Watch, Website, <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/about> (accessed 13 May 2011).

7) Center for the Study of Conflict and Cultural Diversity in Southern Thailand (CSCC)

On 29 April 2009, the Faculty of Political Science, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus, together with five other authorities including Prince of Songkla University, Faculty of Management Sciences, Faculty of Communication Sciences, College of Islamic Studies and Peace Studies Institute, established the CSCC. Asst. Prof. Dr. Srisompob Jitpiromsri is one of the founders who was selected to be the Director of CSCC. Its mission is to strengthen the university in order to be a centre of social and political conflicts studies and research in the south. Moreover, this centre is a cooperative institute for researchers from Thailand and overseas, looking at topics related to the deep south and problems occurring elsewhere in Southeast Asia. The centre has proposed policy solutions to the government for the southern conflict and aims to be a knowledge warehouse for research and referencing. It is also the first institution to centre on collecting public policies concerning the resolution of the deep south conflict.¹⁷⁴

8) Institute for Peace Studies

The Institute for Peace Studies was initiated by scholars of Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus in 2004 with their main purpose being to create and develop a body of knowledge about Peace Studies as well as creating human resources specialised in this field.¹⁷⁵ The founders realised that a number of researchers tended to focus on the violence in the conflict areas rather than non-violent solutions and mediating peaceful solutions. This institute aims at resolving conflict by focusing on psychological relief and adopting 'contemplative studies'.¹⁷⁶ Their main tasks are teaching and

¹⁷⁴ Prince of Songkla University, "Center for the Studies of Conflict and Cultural Diversity in Southern Thailand," <http://mis-pattani2.pn.psu.ac.th/mail/mail2/looknote.php?&Did=01387&PHPSESSID=20ce29785630645190663beacbb22180> (accessed 13 May 2011).

¹⁷⁵ Institute for Peace Studies, Website, <http://peacestudies.psu.ac.th/ips/> (accessed 10 December 2013).

¹⁷⁶ The Contemplative Studies Initiative is a group of Brown faculty with diverse academic specialisations who are united around a common interest in studying the underlying philosophy, psychology, and phenomenology of contemplative experience, across time, cultures and traditions. Source: Brown University, *Contemplative Studies*, <http://www.brown.edu/academics/contemplative-studies/> (accessed 27 December 2013).

producing research works about peace studies, especially about the deep south conflict.¹⁷⁷

9) Knowledge for Deep South (K4DS)

The K4DS Project was initiated in 2007 by Dr. Worasit Sornsriwichai, a lecturer of the Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus. The main purpose of the project is the creation of databases about three southernmost provinces including research publications, theses, projects, bibliographic information and news. The core tasks of the project are to map and brainstorm with people from various professions including the media, academics and practitioners from both government agencies and civil society networks. The database has been updated systematically and regularly. This online database was designed for users who can access material via the internet faster and more efficiently.¹⁷⁸

10) Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies (IHRP)

The IHRP is the result of a merging between Mahidol University's Center for Human Rights Studies and Social Development (established 1998) and the Research Center for Peacebuilding (established 2004). IHRP's activities focus on the fields of peace, conflict, justice and human rights studies, in the Asian Pacific region and beyond. The mission of the IHRP is the advancement of human rights and peace by educating human rights and peace practitioners, promoting programmes to community and international organisations, and conducting research on important issues.¹⁷⁹ Based in Mahidol University, Nakhon Pathom Campus, it is one of the institutes outside the conflict areas that has played a significant role in the southernmost conflict. The institute provides high quality research on peace issues in order to offer a better understanding of the root causes of the ethno-religious conflict in the south and to promote peaceful methods of conflict resolution as an alternative. The institute brainstorms many levels

¹⁷⁷ Respondent 5, Interview. The Institute for Peace Studies. 22 June 2012.

¹⁷⁸ Knowledge for Deep South, Website, <http://k4ds.psu.ac.th> (accessed 10 December 2013).

¹⁷⁹ Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Website, <http://www.ihrp.mahidol.ac.th/> (accessed 6 January 2014).

of opinion from Thai society from high-level leaders to local people in order to find a means to create a sustainable peace.¹⁸⁰

11) Deep South Coordination Center (DSCC)

The DSCC was first established in June 2006 by lecturers and alumni of Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. Later, two branches were established in Narathiwat and Yala.¹⁸¹ The purposes of the centre are to create academic database and to assist victims escaping from unrest in the southern provinces. The database consists of information on violent situations, lists of victims, types of assistance, relevant organisations, and academic articles. This database aims to help relevant aid groups in the conflict area, especially widows and orphans, and is also advantageous for long-term monitoring and for creating a body of knowledge for the future.¹⁸²

12) Graduate Volunteer Training Centre

The Graduate Volunteer Training Centre is based at the Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus. One of the important missions at Prince of Songkla University is to create academic leaders who have knowledge and skills relevant to the potential of local people. Even though a number of research works have been produced by the university, not much research actually fulfils local people's needs. As a result of this, the Institute of Research and Development for the Health of Southern Thailand together with Prince of Songkla University established this centre after realising the importance of working closer with graduates and the community. It is very useful for graduates to have a chance to learn together with locals. This benefits future research relevant to what the community wants. It also helps grow a volunteering spirit in the younger generation and new graduates.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Insight on Conflict, *The Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies*, <http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/thailand/peacebuilding-organisations/research-centre-on-peace-building/> (accessed 27 December 2014).

¹⁸¹ GotoKnow, *Three Centres of Deep South Coordination Centre*, <http://www.gotoknow.org/posts/257030> (accessed 11 December 2013).

¹⁸² Deep South Coordination Center, Website, <http://www.deepsouthrelief.org/> (accessed 11 December 2013).

¹⁸³ Graduate Volunteer Training Centre, Website, <http://volunteer.psu.ac.th/index.php/about-us.html> (accessed 11 December 2013).

13) Islamic Committee of the Talakorbagong Mosque

Talakorbagong Mosque is one of more than 70 Mosques located in Nong Chik district, Pattani province. This mosque was selected because it was recommended by the sample groups' network that it is well supported by the community. An Islamic Mosque Committee is normally based in every Muslim community that has a Mosque in their village. The main purpose of the committee is to manage religious matters and events in communities. Mosques are places where villagers pray, have community meetings and teach religion to children on weekends. The committee consists of fifteen members selected by villagers who are over 30 years old and have sound moral character.¹⁸⁴

14) Thai Muslim, Buddhist and Chinese Association

This association was founded after an informal conversation between two local renowned seniors, Kleun Poompuang, a manager of a Buddhist school and Seng Baimad, an Islamic teacher.¹⁸⁵ Later, the Thai Muslim, Buddhist and Chinese Association was formed by twenty-one members from three main cultural groups in the deep south: Buddhist, Thai-Muslim and Thai-Chinese. Seven charismatic members were selected by each cultural group. The main purpose of this association is to find a peaceful way to resolve the conflict in the southern provinces. The activities focus on establishing a better understanding between cultures about how to live peacefully in a multicultural society. The youth training project is an example of how their activities strengthen relations between youths from different religions. This association aims to nurture civil society groups even more strongly into networks able to act as linkages between state and militant groups.¹⁸⁶

15) Islamic Culture Foundation of Southern States

The Islamic Culture Foundation of Southern States was established by Police Major General Jamroon Den-udom in 1997. In the past, the main objectives of the foundation focused on religious and cultural matters as well

¹⁸⁴ Respondent 27, Interview. Islamic Committee of Talakorbagong Mosque. 6 July 2012.

¹⁸⁵ Deep South Watch, "Introduction to the Thai Muslim, Buddhist and Chinese Association," <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/dsj/2256> (accessed 6 January 2014) [in Thai].

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

as law and justice issues. After upsurges in violence, the vital missions sought to focus more on assisting Muslims who faced injustices and to promote civil politics as an option for a southern conflict solution. Today, the main activity is broadcasting radio programmes called “Social Window” five hours per week. The foundation produces three different radio programmes on varied issues, such as politics news, civil society activism and government policy in the three southernmost provinces. Moreover, they have their own member network to promote public participation and to support a concept of ‘Pattani Metropolitan’.^{187 188}

16) Pattani Chamber of Commerce

The Pattani Chamber of Commerce was established under the Acts of Chamber of Commerce in May 1985 by twelve founders led by Chao Pongthanakorn.¹⁸⁹ The Chamber represents the private sector and coordinates relations between government and business sectors. The main activities of the Chamber concern matters of industry, agriculture, trade, tourism promotion, finance and the economy. Although its main purpose is not to resolve the conflict in the deep south, its activities help in reducing poverty which is considered one of the root causes of problems. Moreover, it provides assistance and promotes charity in communities.¹⁹⁰

17) Civil Organisation for Peace and Sustainable Economy of Narathiwat

The Civil Organisation for Peace and Sustainable Economy was established in July 2004 by a group of community representatives and volunteers such as village public health volunteers, village development volunteers, disability development volunteers, community cooperative centre members, professional representatives, youth representatives and religious leaders. The group was first supported by Lt. Gen. Pichet

¹⁸⁷ Pattani Metropolitan is a concept of special local administration for the three southern border provinces. This may include its own law which allows the locals to keep their identity, religion and ways of life under the constitution of Thailand. Source: Pakorn in <http://www.oknation.net/blog/print.php?id=534942> (accessed 25 May 2014). [in Thai].

¹⁸⁸ Respondent 25, Interview. Islamic Culture Foundation of Southern States. 6 July 2012.

¹⁸⁹ The Thai Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade of Thailand, *History of the Pattani Chamber of Commerce*, <http://www.thaichamber.org/Pattani/static1.asp?Tag=2> (accessed 6 January 2014).

¹⁹⁰ Bangkokpost Newspaper, “The Pattani Chamber of Commerce,” http://www.bangkokpost.com/business/8080_info_the-pattani-chamber-of-commerce.html (accessed 11 December 2013).

Wisaichorn (Army Area Deputy Commander during that time). The group focuses on applying his Majesty's Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy¹⁹¹ to use in their community working together to strengthen the civil society sector. This group is classified as an economic civil society group because it aims to improve local people's well-being and develop agriculture in this area by promoting organic fertiliser. The organisation has three branches located in Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat.¹⁹²

18) Pattani Provincial Health Security Coordinating Center

The Pattani Provincial Health Security Coordinating Center was established by the National Health Security Office (NHSO) in 2005. The main purpose is to help people understand their rights and health security services in order to guarantee minimum protection from diseases and unhealthy lifestyles. The main tasks are to be a linkage between people and relevant health organisations, and to cooperate among service providers, people and local administrative organisations.¹⁹³ This also promotes a 'Health Assembly' which delivers a process of health public policy development based on public participation. Opportunities for people and relevant government agencies to exchange and share views which could lead to the development of public policy for the well-being of people are encouraged.

19) Deep South Women Association for Peace (Deepeace)

The Deepeace is a Yala-based civil society group which aims to be a centre for cooperation and assistance for women and orphans in the

¹⁹¹ Although His Majesty King Rama IX has been promoting self-reliant or sustainable farming since the 1950s, it is generally accepted that the idea of Sufficiency Economy had been brought up in the 1970s in His Majesty's speeches. Sufficiency Economy is a philosophy based on the fundamental principle of Thai culture. It is a method of development based on moderation, prudence, and social immunity; one that uses knowledge and virtue as guidelines in living. Significantly, there must be intelligence and perseverance which will lead to real happiness in leading one's life. Source: The Chaipattana Foundation, *Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy*, http://www.chaipat.or.th/chaipat_english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4103&Itemid=293 (accessed 28 December 2013).

¹⁹² Civil Organisation for Peace and Sustainable Economy of Yala, Website, <http://www.yalacsop.com/ko1.html> (accessed 15 May 2011).

¹⁹³ National Health Security Office, Website, http://www.nhso.go.th/files/userfiles/file/PR/134_2556.pdf (accessed 12 December 2013).

southern border provinces.¹⁹⁴ The Deeppeace was initiated in a community of Pattani central mosque by a group of students from Bangkok in 2008. The group started with relief work in the conflict areas assisting many women and children in the area who became victims of the southern violence. Subsequently, an official association was formed not only to help the victims financially, but also to allow victims to get back to their normal daily routines and be leaders in the future.¹⁹⁵

20) Civic Women's Network for Peace in the Deep South

The Civic Women's Network for Peace in the Deep South was founded in 2010 by Soraya Jamjuree who is known as a representative of modern Muslim women. The network gathered twenty leaders of women's civil society groups formed before and after the resurgence of violence in 2004. Groups formed before 2004 mostly work on local products while groups formed after 2004 mainly aim to assist victims of the unrest. The main purpose of gathering all the heads of these women groups is to empower the leaders between the networks and their communities with the same main mission to bring peace back and to stop all types of violence. Therefore, the network would be able to publicise their mission more widely. This women's group is based in Pattani.¹⁹⁶

21) Southern Youth Network

In the past, youth groups in the southern provinces were active and already had some activities but lacked coordination among groups in different areas. In 2004, youth civil society groups networked to resolve problems by using the power of youth in the conflict area. The aim is to create a new generation capable of volunteering and develop the potential to be leaders in their communities.¹⁹⁷ This youth group also works for orphans which was a problem that the government had overlooked. This

¹⁹⁴ Deep South Women Association for Peace, Website, http://www.womandeepeace.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=2 (accessed 13 May 2011).

¹⁹⁵ Muhamad Dueramae, "Introduction to Deep Peace Women association for Peace," *Prachathai*, 26 April 2013, <http://prachatai.com/journal/2013/04/46433> (accessed 13 December 2013) [in Thai].

¹⁹⁶ Respondent 14, Interview. Civic Women's Network for Peace in the Deep South. 28 June 2012.

¹⁹⁷ Southern Youth Network, Website, http://www.youngkhidmat.com/2013/04/blog-post_23.html (accessed 17 December 2013).

network is based in Pattani and also looks after the networks in Narathiwat, Yala and Songkhla.¹⁹⁸

22) Association of Children and Youth for the Peace in the Southernmost Provinces of Thailand (Luuk Rieang Group)

The Luuk Rieang Group has been operating since 2002. This Yala-based group was formed by youth initially working on drug issues, reproductive health, and HIV/Aids.¹⁹⁹ Since 2004, some members of the Luuk Rieang group have lost family members in the southern conflict. The mission has now shifted to relieving activities for women, youths and children affected by the violence. Today, their main task is to provide relief to victims and stop violence against children and youths through training programmes and healing activities.²⁰⁰ In 2011, the Luuk Rieang Group registered as the “Association of Children and Youth for the Peace in the Southernmost Provinces of Thailand”. Being registered offers them a better chance to access more funding sources and more sustainable financial support.²⁰¹

23) Youth Voluntary Heart Group

The beginning of this Youth Voluntary Heart Group was initiated in 2004 by a group of students of Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus and financially supported by the Family Network Foundation in Bangkok. From a small number of members, today the group has about twenty main volunteers. The group started with relief work such as visiting victims affected by violent incidents and later shifted to assist children and cover youth issues.²⁰² Their activities are mainly to visit communities, to develop skills and to grow a volunteering spirit in youths. This Narathiwat-based group covers four provinces including Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala and Songkhla.

¹⁹⁸ Respondent 12, Interview. Southern Youth Network. 28 June 2012.

¹⁹⁹ Luuk Rieang Group, *Background and Activities*, <http://www.luukrieang.com/main/background-activities.php> (accessed 10 December 2013).

²⁰⁰ Luuk Rieang Group, *Introduction to 'Luuk Rieang Group'*, <http://www.luukrieang.com/main/about.php> (accessed 8 May 2011).

²⁰¹ Luuk Rieang Group, *Background and Activities*.

²⁰² Respondent 1, Interview. Youth Volunteer. 19 June 2012.

24) Deep South Relief and Reconciliation Foundation (DSRR)

The DSRR was established under the Faculty of Medicine, Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai Campus after the violence erupted in 2004. The foundation is run by committees who have experience in relief work, are flexible and able to respond to victims' needs more efficiently. Relief work operates in many ways, in short- or long-term and material assistance or physical, mental and social assistance. Material assistance, for example, comes in the form of funding and assistance with accommodation; while social assistance includes offering chances for new careers, and strengthening the community by using temples, mosques and ponoh schools as the centres. This foundation also aims to organise knowledge and research to retrieve creative knowledge and give feedback to the policy makers and local people.²⁰³

25) Asian Resource Foundation (ARF)

The ARF was established in 1996 under the Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) with the aim of promoting a spirit of caring and sharing in cultural and spiritual values. Holistic development supports and empowers the poor and other marginalised and vulnerable groups. Work is done to strengthen cooperative actions among the people of Asia and beyond for a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.²⁰⁴ The foundation started working in Thailand's southernmost region in 2005. It is based in Bangkok, but coordinating officers are found in each southernmost province. This foundation is categorised as a multi-purpose civil society group covering various tasks such as encouraging peace, assisting local people, promoting human rights and supporting projects for women.²⁰⁵

26) Civil Society Council of the Southernmost Thailand

The Civil Society Council of the Southernmost Thailand was first initiated by twenty civil society groups in August 2011.²⁰⁶ The president of

²⁰³ Deep South Relief and Reconciliation Foundation, Website, <http://www.dsrrfoundation.org/about-us.html> (accessed 3 June 2011).

²⁰⁴ Asian Resource Foundation, Website, <http://www.arf-asia.org/arf.php> (accessed 3 June 2011).

²⁰⁵ Respondent 11, Interview. Asian Resource Foundation. 27 June 2012.

²⁰⁶ The twenty groups comprise of 1) Confederation of Teachers in Southern Border Provinces, 2) Hilal-Ahmar Foundation, 3) Fasai Centre, Youth Network, Yala, 4) Wetland Research Project, Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus, 5) Young Muslim Association of Thailand, 6) Islamic Culture Foundation of Southern States, 7) Foundation

the council is Prasit Megsuwan. The purposes of the council are to create a space for public brainstorming for conflict resolution; to enhance the capability of the civil society sector; to determine directions in resolving the conflict; and to develop the southernmost area sustainably. The council determined a vision toward 2021 that aims to achieve a strong special autonomous administration²⁰⁷ which could create peace and develop the southernmost provinces. To obtain this goal, there are four strategies including enhancing democracy; retaining the justice system; improving the quality of life of the locals; and supporting the identities, religions and cultures of every community.²⁰⁸

27) Sukaew Foundation

The Sukaew Foundation was established in 2004 by Dr. Rung Kaewdang and some renowned seniors originally from the three southernmost provinces. It is uncommon to find a civil society group based in this region where most members are Buddhists. The foundation works together with government authorities and private organisations to resolve conflict in the provinces. It believes that the insurgent problem in the south is a national issue and it is the whole country's responsibility.²⁰⁹ This multi-purpose civil society group is based in Yala. Its projects and initiatives carry

of Genius Orphanage, 8) Halal Consumer Protection Assembly, 9) Fund for Families Who Work for Volunteering Work, 10) Al-salam Institute, Yala Islamic University, 11) Drug Rehabilitation Centre (New Life Home), 12) Jariyatham School Foundation, 13) Deep South Watch, 14) Civic Women's Network for Peace in the Deep South, 15) Pattani Provincial Health Assembly Coordinating Centre, 16) Deep South Civil Society Media Network, 17) Faith Community Network, 18) Local Development Institute of Pattani, 19) Civil Society Centre of Yala, and 20) Deep South Provinces Community Radio Network. Source: Isra News Agency, Website, <http://www.isranews.org> (accessed 25 August 2012).

²⁰⁷ The concept of a special autonomous administration may be divided into three approaches: 1) Regionalisation – which involves the creation of new regional administrations which have greater authority over their own affairs; 2) Administrative reform - which emphasises the way power is organised at the level of the state. This might involve the creation of a new agency to oversee the southern region or new budgetary mechanisms; and 3) Devolution. The emphasis of this approach is on creating new representative mechanisms at the local or regional level, on shifting power to the people in a given area. Source: Duncan McCargo, "Autonomy for Southern Thailand: Thinking the Unthinkable?," *Pacific Affairs* 83, no. 2 (June 2010): 269.

²⁰⁸ Isra News Agency, Website, <http://www.isranews.org/south-news/south-slide/item/> (accessed 11 December 2013).

²⁰⁹ Sukaew Foundation, Website, <http://www.sukkaew.org> (accessed 3 June 2011).

out diverse work such as a goat bank project and a youth leadership development project.²¹⁰

28) Civil Society Coordinator Working Group (CSCWG)

The CSCWG is a military working group under the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) Region 4 that was established in January 2006 and is responsible for security in the southern border provinces. It is based in Inkayuth Army Camp, Pattani. Although it is a state authority, it is one of the research samples because it works closely with local people and civil society groups in conflict areas.²¹¹ It is a small working group that aims to create a better understanding between people and the state, to monitor situations in the conflict area, to coordinate the relevant authorities in order to help victims recover from the violence, and to promote bottom-up approaches by proposing information from the locals to policy-making levels.²¹²

29) Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC)

The SBPAC is a government authority under the Ministry of Interior which was established in 1981 with the goal of increasing the participation of people across Thai society in the establishment of peace in the southern border provinces. It emphasises development and education around peace and social justice issues in order to resolve the root causes of conflict and ease the after-effects, while improving government officials' understanding of the region. The SBPAC works with all parties involved in the conflict including local and national government, the army, universities, and local people by offering a range of services such as training, consultancy, and funding for peace activities. The ultimate goal is to find a sustainable, peaceful end to unrest in the region.²¹³ This Yala-based centre was selected as a research sample although it is a government agency because it is a key organisation that has played a significant role and cooperated with the

²¹⁰ Respondent 24, Interview. Sukaew Foundation. 5 July 2012.

²¹¹ Internal Security Operations Command, Website, <http://www.isoc.thaigov.net> (accessed 3 June 2011).

²¹² Respondent 13, Interview. Civil Society Coordinator Working Group of the Internal Security Operation Command (CSCWG). 28 June 2012.

²¹³ Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre, Website, <http://www.sbpac.go.th/> (accessed 3 June 2011).

civil society sector in creating peace in these provinces for more than 30 years.

3.6 Plans and Methods for Data Collection

Data collection is a very important stage of doing research and it is where many researchers feel the 'real' research occurs.²¹⁴ It is important to limit mistakes during the fieldwork as the researcher had limited resources such as time and money. Good planning with the right research tools helped the data collection go smoothly. The in-depth interview was the most suitable tool compared with other research tools (e.g. focus groups or questionnaires) for this research because it enabled detailed information to be obtained about each civil society group without being interrupted by people from other groups. By visiting their environment the respondents were more relaxed and it was also a good opportunity for the researcher to observe their activities.²¹⁵

There were five stages in developing and using the in-depth interview which was the main research tool for this thesis.

1) Drafting the interview questions

The semi-structured interview with open-ended questions was used in this research. Questions were predetermined, but there was sufficient flexibility to allow the interviewee an opportunity to shape the flow of information.

2) Developing an interview guide

An interview guide is a list of questions used by the interviewer, mainly as a memory aid during the interview. The interview guide used in this research had the following structure: 1) introduction about the research topic and the researcher; 2) background information about respondent(s) and their civil society group; 3) key questions about administration, funding source, activities, problems and how to improve their group's performance;

²¹⁴ Graham Birley and Neil Moreland. *A Practice Guide to Academic Research* (London: First, 1998), 40.

²¹⁵ The ethics approval completion was required by the University of Waikato before the research could proceed.

- 4) general opinions about the role of civil society in the southern region; and
- 5) closing questions/additional information.

3) Selecting the sample interviewees

The researcher first selected approximately twenty research samples based on internet sources. To ensure that selected groups existed, the researcher made some long-distance calls to get brief details about these selected groups. More civil society groups were introduced during the fieldtrip and ultimately twenty-nine civil society groups were interviewed. These civil society groups were classified by the researcher into eleven categories according to their main targets and activities. Chapter 8 will analyse further the characteristics and roles of each category.

- **Natural resources issues:** Southern Natural Resources Network;
- **Human rights:** Muslim Attorney Centre Foundation (MAC), Justice for Peace Foundation (JPF), and Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF);
- **Media:** Bungaraya Group, and Deep South Watch (DSW);
- **Academic:** Center for the Study of Conflict and Cultural Diversity in Southern Thailand (CSCC), Institute for Peace Studies, Knowledge for Deep South (K4DS), Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies (IHRP), Deep South Coordination Center (DSCC), and Graduate Volunteer Training Centre;
- **Religion and culture:** Islamic Committee of Talakorbagong Mosque, Thai Muslim, Buddhist and Chinese Association, and Islamic Culture Foundation of Southern States;
- **Economic:** Pattani Chamber of Commerce, and Civil Organisation for Peace and Sustainable Economy of Narathiwat;
- **Public health:** Pattani Provincial Health Security Coordinating Center;
- **Women:** Deep South Women Association for Peace (Deepeace), and Civic Women's Network for Peace in the Deep South;

- **Youth:** Southern Youth Network, Association of Children and Youth for the Peace in the Southernmost Provinces of Thailand (Luuk Rieang Group), and Youth Voluntary Heart Group;
- **Multi-purpose:** Deep South Relief and Reconciliation Foundation (DSRR), Asian Resource Foundation, Civil Society Council of the Southernmost Thailand, and Sukaew Foundation; and
- **Government agencies:** Civil Society Coordinator Working Group (CSCWG), and Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC).

4) Pilot testing of the questions

The interview guide was tested on a selected civil society group in order to establish the effectiveness of the interview questions. One civil society group, the Kampong Sanae Youth Project, was selected for this purpose. An interviewee was the manager of the project located in Narathiwat. This group was selected because it was under the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies which has been working in this area for quite some time. The pilot testing was useful as it helped with the flow of questions, clarification of the questions, possible additional questions and timing for the interview session.

5) Conducting the interviews

The fieldtrip to Thailand took approximately six weeks. The interviews were conducted mostly in the four provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla. The numbers of participants were no more than three people in each interview session. This included the researcher and one or two representative(s) from the civil society group. Most respondents were the leaders of civil society groups or representatives assigned by leaders to attend the interview. Each respondent was asked to share knowledge, experience and insights into their particular speciality. First of all, the participants were introduced to the researcher, the research topic, the background of the thesis and the purposes of the research. Before the interview started, the respondent was asked to sign a consent form. The interviewing session was conducted in the Thai language. Each session took approximately 45 minutes to an hour. During the interviews the

researcher took written notes. Face to face interviews were also recorded on a digital voice recorder.

3.7 Data Analysis

After completing the fieldwork and data collection, the next step was data analysis. This research adapted some techniques from grounded theory, mind mapping, and the SWOT Analysis which combined the 7S Model together with the PEST Analysis.

3.7.1 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is a process for developing empirical theory from qualitative research that consists of a set of tasks and underlying principles.²¹⁶ In this research, grounded theory was adopted for the data analysis process as it provided a set of flexible guidelines and a process for textual data analysis that is well suited to understanding organisational behaviour. The main purpose of using grounded theory was to analyse the interview transcripts by screening the important points out of the raw data. It can also group data that uses different words but has the same meaning together. It was applied as an approach to analyse data using the following steps.

First, with preparing transcripts which capture both the words spoken by the participant(s) and the interviewer. The interviewing was conducted and transcribed in the Thai language by the researcher soon after conducting the interview which made it easier to pick out what was being said.

The second task of data analysis using grounded theory is creating codes. Coding is a process that involves the labelling or indexing of all the data using the codes listed. The process of coding involves a careful reading of data, considering which codes are discussed in that section of data and then labelling each section with relevant codes manually.

²¹⁶ Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods* (London: Sage, 2011), 208.

The list of respondents, the topics from the interview questions and the findings were coded. All respondents were coded into numbers from 0 to 29 according to the dates of the interview.²¹⁷ Coding for the interview questions was classified into four main sections: 1) the characteristics of civil society groups (i.e. establishment, founder, main purpose, target group, membership, and definition of civil society from each group's perspective); 2) the roles of civil society groups (i.e. groups' policies, main activities/projects, groups' network, and the importance of civil society in their opinions, participation from the community); 3) the efficacy of civil society (i.e. groups' performance evaluation, sources of income, groups' structure and funding); and 4) problems and recommendations (i.e. difficulties and how to improve groups' performance). Next, the findings were coded according to the elements from SWOT Analysis which will be further explained in 3.7.3. Finally, the researcher went through all transcripts and matched them together with the codes.

3.7.2 Mind Map

After coding using grounded theory, mind maps were used to organise and categorise the coding data. The coding of respondents, questions and findings was drawn in the form of mind maps. Mind mapping is known as a useful aid of diagrams with connecting lines, colours and symbols working together to boost visual perception of the physical map and to increase memory retention of the information.²¹⁸ The term 'mind map' was first introduced in 1974 by Tony Buzan, a famous British psychology author and television personality.²¹⁹ It speeds up the process of generating thought, making decisions, solving problems and studying ideas. It is very useful when there are a number of data sources which need to be managed.²²⁰

In this research, diagrams of mind mapping were chosen to help outline the data from the literature reviews and the interviews. The mind

²¹⁷ Respondent code no.0 is a group for the pilot test.

²¹⁸ MindmapsNet, *History of Mind Maps*, <http://www.mindmaps.net/history-of-mind-maps> (accessed 26 December 2013).

²¹⁹ Mind Mapping Blog, *Mapping History*, <http://www.mind-mapping.org/blog/mapping-history/roots-of-visual-mapping/> (accessed 22 December 2014).

²²⁰ MindmapsNet, *History of Mind Maps*.

map is a very flexible means to collect and organise information during the literature reviews. For some sources that include a large amount relevant data, the mind map was used to summarise all the data the researcher might need on one page. Also, some topics that include information from many sources, the researcher used this diagram to combine all relevant data. The next steps of data analysis are to describe, compare, categorise, conceptualise and develop the findings. The mind map was used to compare the data from the interviews which turned qualitative data into data one can be calculated. It made the process of data analysis fast, systematic and easy for browsing.

3.7.3 The SWOT Analysis

In this research, the SWOT Analysis was chosen for evaluating the present status of the civil society sector because it is very comprehensive and suitable to this topic. It also uses the internal (the 7S Model) and external (PEST Analysis) criteria as the guidelines for evaluating the potential of civil society groups active in the conflict areas. In order to analyse the efficacy of civil society, the SWOT Analysis enabled the researcher to transform an abstract, like efficacy, into concrete factors that could be measured.

The SWOT Analysis is a tool from organisational and strategic management theory used for assessing both internal and external factors about an organisation. Thus, it was sometimes called situation analysis.²²¹ SWOT Analysis was initiated by Albert Humphrey who led a research project at Stanford University in the 1960s and 1970s using data from many leading companies in the United States.²²² Many people assume that SWOT Analysis is only relevant for business, but in fact it can be useful for other types of organisation as well or for making decisions in daily life.²²³

²²¹ Organizational Theory and Strategic Management, Blog, 4 October 2012, <http://promrucsa-dba04.blogspot.co.nz/2012/10/swot-analysis-swot-swot-humphrey-swot-2.html> (accessed 4 September 2013).

²²² RAPIDBI, *SWOT Analysis*, <http://rapidbi.com/swotanalysis/> (accessed 17 September 2013).

²²³ Lawrence G Fine, *The SWOT Analysis*, 2009, <http://lawrencefine.com/downloads/SWOT%20-%20PDF.pdf> (accessed 4 September 2013).

Overall, SWOT Analysis is a technique for understanding ‘Strengths’ and ‘Weaknesses’ of the civil society sector, and for identifying both the ‘Opportunities’ open to the groups and the ‘Threats’ they encounter.²²⁴ The details of four elements are as follows.

- **Strengths** – the advantages that an organisation has over other organisations. These factors are within the organisation’s control and need to be maintained.
- **Weaknesses** – the disadvantages that an organisation has internally compared with other organisations. These limitations detract from the groups’ ability to achieve their goals. These factors are under the organisation’s control and need to be changed or improved.
- **Opportunities** – current external trends which are waiting to be taken advantage of. These factors exist in the environment and represent the reason for the groups to develop.
- **Threats** – external circumstances which may cause a problem or have a negative impact on an organisation. These factors beyond the groups’ control, which could lead the groups’ mission to be at risk. Threats need to be minimised and managed.^{225 226}

The 7S Model

The 7S Model was used for examining internal factors (Strengths versus Weaknesses) of the civil society sector which could be problems or benefits. The 7S Model was designed by the American consulting firm McKinsey.²²⁷ This model is a strategic model that generally can be used for examining the current workings, improving organisational performance, understanding the most influential factors in an organisation’s strategy and

²²⁴ Mind Tools, *SWOT Analysis*, http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm (accessed 1 June 2013).

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Creatly, *SWOT Analysis VS PEST Analysis and When to Use Them*, 27 March 2012, <http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/swot-analysis-vs-pest-analysis/> (accessed 9 October 2013).

²²⁷ Toolshero, *7S Framework (McKinsey)*, <http://www.scienceprogress.info/diagnosis/7s-model-mckinsey> (accessed 9 December 2013).

determining a new strategy for an organisation.²²⁸ This model is mainly used to trace performance problems in an organisation in order to maintain or improve these factors.²²⁹

- **Strategy** – This is the organisation’s plan for using resources and capabilities advantageously by using mission and vision statements.
- **Structure** – This describes how the organisation is structured and which hierarchical layers exist. This includes roles, responsibilities and accountability relationships.
- **Systems** – This is the technical infrastructure that employees use on a day to day basis to accomplish their aims and goals. It includes all formal and informal methods of operation, procedures and communication flows.
- **Shared values** – This is a set of traits, behaviours, and characteristics that the organisation believes in. It also includes standards and values and other forms of ethics within an organisation in which vision, corporate culture and identity are the key elements.
- **Style** – this is about leadership management styles and the culture of interaction.
- **Staff** – this is about the employees, staffing plans, their competences and job descriptions.
- **Skills** – This is the ability to do the organisation’s work. It reflects in the performance of the organisation. These factors concern both the skills of the organisation and those of the employees.

PEST Analysis²³⁰

PEST stands for Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors.

- Political – Laws, global issues, legislation and regulations which may have an effect on the organisation either immediately or in the future.

²²⁸ The Organizational Strategist, Blog, 24 April, 2011, <http://whittblog.wordpress.com/2011/04/24/mckinsey-7s-model-a-strategic-assessment-and-alignment-model/> (accessed 9 October 2013).

²²⁹ Toolshero, *7S Framework (McKinsey)*.

²³⁰ PEST can also be known as PESTLE which includes Legal and Environmental factors.

- Economic – Taxes, interest rates, inflation, the stock markets and consumer confidence all need to be taken into account.
- Social – The changes in lifestyle, media, major events, ethics, advertising and publicity factors.
- Technological – Innovations, access to technology, licensing and patents, manufacturing, research funding, global communications.²³¹

PEST Analysis is often linked with SWOT Analysis as PEST Analysis helps organisations to understand circumstantial factors which can affect the organisation's performance. PEST Analysis looks at overall external factors (Opportunities versus Threats) which help organisations to conduct directions for change in order to handle environments which are beneficial or detrimental.²³²

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Internal Factors	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<i>Analysed by 7S Model</i>	
External Factors	Opportunities	Threats
	<i>Analysed by PEST Analysis</i>	

Figure 3.1 - The Data Analysis

Source: Adapted from Lawrence G Fine, *The SWOT Analysis*, 2009, <http://lawrencefine.com/downloads/SWOT%20-%20PDF.pdf> (accessed 4 September 2013)

²³¹ Creatly, *SWOT Analysis*.

²³² Ibid.

3.8 Limitations and Recommendations for the Data Collection

Although the researcher planned the fieldtrip carefully, some difficulties were predicted. The following are some limitations of this fieldtrip and recommendations for future fieldwork.

- **Challenges of the methods**

Grounded Theory. This coding technique, going word-by-word, is time consuming. Dividing the data into individual words might cause the analysis sometimes to become lost within the minutia of data.²³³ Another concern is this tool might not be able to detect or to prevent researcher-induced bias.

Mind Map. Although a mind map will help to review and recall information, creating the map may take time and it is sometime difficult to incorporate large chunks of text.

The SWOT Analysis. One drawback to the SWOT analysis is that it gives equal weight to every factor. It does not give weight to the specific factors that might be much more relevant or have a greater impact.²³⁴ Thus, the researcher has to consider how to weigh each factor, which in this research was weighed by frequency.

- **Sample groups**

Before conducting the fieldtrip, the researcher was based in New Zealand and had to rely on data about civil society groups in Thailand from internet sources. As there are so many civil society groups in Thailand, the researcher had to contact them to make sure those groups still existed. It was also a good opportunity to introduce the research and to see how keen people were to be part of the interviews. When the researcher went on the fieldtrip, it was found that there are many more civil society groups that play significant roles in these provinces although their data did not appear on internet databases. With the snowball sampling technique,²³⁵ an additional

²³³ George Allan, *A Critique of Using Grounded Theory as a Research Method*, www.ejbrm.com. (accessed 16 December 2014).

²³⁴ Michael Firth, *Limitations of SWOT Analysis*, <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/limitations-swot-analysis-58212.html> (accessed 16 December 2014).

²³⁵ Snowball sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which the researcher begins by identifying an individual perceived to be an appropriate respondent. This respondent is then asked to identify another potential respondent. The process is

long list of potential samples came up. One recommendation in order to meet various people involved in the civil society sector is to attend any seminars or conferences about the southern conflict where most of the key players would be present. Most of them were keen to give information about their groups as well as sharing their opinions about the role of civil society sector.

- **Time**

As the researcher wanted to make the most of her time during the fieldtrip, all appointments with the civil society groups in each province were made during one trip. However, it was not easy trying to arrange all appointments in one area at the same time. Some civil society groups were quite difficult to arrange an appointment with because they were busy with seminars or projects. The researcher had to make two or more visits to each province. The researcher also had to make sure that there was a gap between each interview because if any of the participants were late, it would have affected the next interview. Furthermore, travelling in this conflict area needed good plans and arrangements. Public transport was not convenient and it was better to travel with someone who knew the area well in order to save time between the meeting places.

- **Safety**

Although these provinces are considered safe to visit, violent incidents happen almost daily. Safety was an important issue during the fieldwork when going to the area of conflict. The location of the civil society groups had to be considered and decisions made if it was safe to travel there or not. The interview venues were normally chosen by the interviewees which were mostly at their offices. If not, appointments were made to meet at other places which were safe and convenient for both sides. This is to ensure that participants felt comfortable and safe to take part in the interviews. Advice from the local people about how to stay safe in this area was kept in mind.

repeated until the researcher has collected sufficient data. Source: Paul Oliver, *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/the-sage-dictionary-of-social-research-methods/n192.xml> (accessed 24 May 2014).

3.9 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has provided a detailed description of the research methodology used in this thesis. A qualitative research methodology was employed to illustrate the role of civil society in building peace in the ethno-religious conflict. This chapter also introduced the background of twenty-nine civil society sample groups. Two data-collection methods were employed including document review and in-depth interviews. Some techniques including grounded theory, mind maps, and SWOT Analysis were applied in the process of data analysis. Finally, some limitations and recommendations for further research were outlined. The next chapter provides an overview of the insurgency in the deep south including the origins of the conflict, important violent incidents, the background of militant groups and how past Thai governments have handled the situation by issuing new laws and restructuring key government agencies.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATURE OF THE INSURGENCY IN THE SOUTH AND THAI GOVERNMENT POLICIES RELATED TO THE SOUTHERN CONFLICT

4.1 Introduction

In the past, the southern border region of Thailand was known as a place for corrupt and incompetent civilian and military officials. This made the predominantly Thai Muslim population feel an even greater degree of alienation as a result of government misadministration. Additionally, daily life, particularly in urban areas, was continually plagued by a higher level of banditry and lawlessness than in the other regions, which made it very difficult for the authorities to differentiate between criminal lawlessness and insurgent acts commissioned by domestic Thai criminals or Muslim separatist groups.

This chapter will begin by looking at the background to and the causes of, the conflict. The following section describes some of the most significant violent incidents which were considered to be the beginning of the resistance movements and the new round of violence in 2004. The nature of the militants, including their demands and tactics, as well as an introduction of the ten major militant movements active in these provinces are also examined in this chapter. The next section contains an overview of government policies and restructuring of key agencies related to the problem in the south. Additionally, the special laws issued during the conflict are discussed in the last section as these laws were widely criticised by the public and the locals as having caused even more tension in the area.

This chapter aims to create a deeper understanding about the conflict; to examine the attempts of the Thai state to resolve the conflict; and to discuss why some of these national policies were not successful in reducing the violence. It is obvious that the state alone cannot create peace as the violent incidents are still ongoing in these provinces.

4.2 Background to the Conflict

The southern violence has been ongoing for more than a decade. It is now one of the most violent conflicts in the Southeast Asian region and the least talked about in the international media. Unfortunately, no solution appears to be in sight - in part, because few people understand what is happening and what the root cause of the conflict is.

First of all, the nature of the conflict should be clearly understood. According to the types of ethnic conflict in Chapter 2, the southern conflict cannot easily fit into one category as it has some elements which merge many categories. It, however, can be classified into *Civil rights conflict* and *Ethnic rebellions* as both types focus on applying pressure on government.²³⁶ The conflict is absolutely not *Inter-communal violence* because it is not a war between the Muslim and Buddhist communities. Some have misunderstood this and have tried to link the conflict with religion.

According to the *Civil right conflict*, the local Muslim people feel they are denied access to state resources or to cultural rights as these provinces are among the least developed regions of the country. As mentioned in *Ethnic rebellions*, the conflict has an element of wanting to separate itself from the state and ideally seek for the establishment of an independent state or some form of special autonomous region. The conflict also takes on the form of militant attacks which aims to challenge directly the central government.²³⁷

In order to understand the background of this prolonged conflict, this section provides the terminology of the conflict, the identity of Muslims in this region and the root causes of the conflict.

4.2.1 'Insurgency'- A Term Describing the Situation in the South?

The situation of violent unrest in the southernmost provinces is officially called in Thai 'khwam mai sa-ngop' which means turbulence or disturbance. In this context, the term 'insurgency' is more suitable than 'terrorism' or 'separatism' when considering the definitions, goals and scale

²³⁶ Notholt, *Fields of Fire*, 1.06.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.08.

of the violence. Chris North has defined insurgency (drawn from a US Air Force definition) as “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and/or influence over the relevant populations”.²³⁸ Furthermore, violence in southern Thailand is based on the following three elements of insurgency: “(1) ideology or legitimacy claims supporting insurgent action; (2) an organisation (however loose and decentred); and (3) a guerrilla-style campaign to contest state authority, together with the use of violence and intimidation to gain control over people and territory”.²³⁹

The official term ‘*khwa mai sa-ngop*’ refers to violent actions which may have a political objective, but may also simply aim to create chaos for pragmatic ends through threatening leaflets, blocking the traffic by spraying nails on the road, and arson attacks (e.g. on schools, public telephone booths and car showrooms). The Thai state uses the expression ‘*khwa mai sa-ngop*’ as a soft euphemism for the unrest, which tries to elide the political dimension of the violence by ignoring the insurgent goals of militant groups.²⁴⁰ This is why Thai officials are reluctant to use the English term ‘insurgency’ in briefings with foreign officials and audiences on the current turbulence.

Today, the Thai government has still not given a clear-cut term to be used for violent incidents in the south. However, ‘*khwa mai sa-ngop*’ has been explicitly matched to the English expression ‘insurgency’ which has become a widely used term for journalists and academics to summarise the violence in southern Thailand.

4.2.2 Muslim Identity in Southern Thailand

Over 1.5 billion people, or about 23 per cent of the world’s population, are Muslims. The Muslims in southern Thailand have the same characteristics as Muslims in Malaysia. The local Muslims in southern Thailand could be defined by the term ethnicity as described in Chapter 2 because they share history, place, religion, race and other social symbols (e.g. language, food or dress). Moreover, the typology of ethnic groups

²³⁸ Chris North cited in Marc Askew, “Fighting with Ghosts: Querying Thailand’s Southern Fire,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32, no. 2 (2010):119.

²³⁹ Askew, “Fighting with Ghosts,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 119.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

shows that Muslims in the south have some of the characteristics of *Ethno-nationalists* because these are based on historical traditions of territory and violence carried out by militant groups. The Muslims have also the characteristics of *Indigenous peoples* as they are locals who live in the far south which is one of the most underdeveloped areas in the country.

The factors determining the identity of Muslims in the southern border provinces are as follows:

1) Islam – religious rules

The majority of the Muslim population in the three southern border provinces, like most of the Muslim world, are Sunni Muslims, not Shia.²⁴¹ The core beliefs of Islam are that there is only one God and that Muhammad is his prophet. The Muslim way of life is bound by the following five religious rules. Muslims pray (Iamard) 5 times a day; they pay zakat;²⁴² they fast every year during the lunar month of '*Ramadan*'; and those who are able to go to Mecca do so in order to perform the Hajj.²⁴³ Furthermore, Muslims have their dietary practices which are based on Halal food. In Islam, other forbidden food items include pork and all its products; animals improperly slaughtered; alcoholic drinks, including all forms of intoxicants; carnivorous animals; birds of prey; and any food contaminated with any of these products.²⁴⁴

2) Culture – way of life

The Thai Muslims in the southern border provinces are of Malay descent. They speak the Pattani Malay dialect (yaw), which is close to Kelantan Malay. The manner of dress for Muslim females is strict. It is centred on the '*Hijab*' which requires that the whole body, except face and hands, is covered in public and that the only accessories allowed for women is gold.

²⁴¹ Approximately 75-90% of Muslims in the world are Sunni and 10-20% are Shia.

²⁴² Zakat is the amount of money that every adult, mentally stable, free, and financially able Muslim, has to provide as support to the poor and needy.

²⁴³ National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), *Overcoming*, 32.

²⁴⁴ Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America, Website, <http://www.ifanca.org/halal/> (accessed 1 December 2011).

Cleanliness is considered pious in Islam. Muslim houses must be clean so as to provide a place for performing religious rites such as prayers and reading Al Qur'an. Dogs and their saliva are considered unclean.²⁴⁵

3) Mosque – community centre

Besides being a place for performing religious rites, the mosque is also a centre to promote and support activities in the community, and a place where Muslims can seek justice. It is also a place to host wedding ceremonies. The '*Kubo*', the Muslim cemetery, is normally located near the mosque. The mosque is at the heart of the Muslim community from birth until death.

Another important role of the mosque is to provide Islamic studies for community members. Activities hosted by the mosque include some religious teachings by an imam, or khatip, during lunchtime at Friday prayers, basic religious knowledge (Falduin) for children from 5-12 years old is also provided at the *Tadika*²⁴⁶ which is normally found in the mosque compound, and Islamic studies which focus on morals as well as ethics and not only academic subjects.

4) Ponoh – religious education

Religion is an essential component of education for Muslims. It is compulsory for Muslims to study religious teachings and to follow the regulations in their daily lives. Ponohs have been the most important informal educational institutes providing religious education for the people in the region. The teachers at ponohs, called '*ustaz*', are normally very well respected by the local people.²⁴⁷

4.2.3 Causes of the Conflict

Ethno-religious violence in Thailand has multiple causes including historical concerns, economic marginalisation, political issues, social and cultural differences, educational opportunity inequities and judicial discrimination. These have resulted in local grievances and a latent crisis in inter-ethnic relations.

²⁴⁵ National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), *Overcoming*, 33.

²⁴⁶ TADIKA (Taman Didikan KAnak kanak) means religious school for children.

²⁴⁷ Aurel Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand: Contours, Causes, and Consequences Since 2001," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 1 (2005): 30.

Historical Issues

The political history between Siam and the Patani Kingdom was overlaid with different perceptions between the Thai state and Pattani. While the Thai government in Bangkok perceives Pattani's history negatively in terms of a rebellious place, local people see the region as having a positive and brave history related to fighting for independence and an Islamic identity. In this sense, the political history of Pattani can be described as a "discrepancy of perspectives".²⁴⁸ The memory of past political history is used by local people to mobilise their sentiments against the state. Muslim people's perception of history shows Siam as having tortured Muslims and treated them badly. One of the stories relates to how their ancestors were captured and enslaved by the Siamese. Their achilles tendons were pierced and chains run through them. They were then sent to dig a main canal route in Bangkok.²⁴⁹ This kind of anecdotal history has been passed on from one generation to another and it has created prejudice amongst Muslims in the south against the state.

Economic Issues

Thailand's wealth disparities between the centre and the rural areas have resulted in the economic underdevelopment of the south. While the northeast is the poorest region, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat are among the least developed provinces in the country.²⁵⁰

According to statistics from the National Economic and Social Development Board in 2011, the poverty incidence in the three southern border provinces was Pattani 33.49%, Narathiwat 24.73% and Yala 13.38%. Each was higher than the country's average of 13.15%. Although the trend is more positive from 2006, poverty incidence in the past showed that the three southern border provinces had a high rate compared to other provinces in the south and provinces elsewhere.²⁵¹ The unemployment rate

²⁴⁸ Aek Tangsupvattana and Ora-orn Poocharoen, *Problems of the Three Southern Border Provinces: Policy Recommendations* (Bangkok: Chula Press, 2009), 121. [in Thai].

²⁴⁹ Duncan McCargo, *Tearing Apart the Land: Islam and Legitimacy in Southern Thailand* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 150.

²⁵⁰ Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 27.

²⁵¹ The National Economic and Social Development Board, *Social and Quality of Life Database System*, http://social.nesdb.go.th/SocialStat/StatReport_Final.aspx?reportid=515&template=1R1C&yeartype=M&subcatid=72 (accessed 11 March 2014).

in these three provinces was continuously high, particularly, in Narathiwat (1.87%) where the rate was the highest in the country in 2011 while the whole country's average was 0.68%.²⁵²

The government has failed to develop the economy according to the local peoples' needs because of a lack of understanding between the state and the people. The government perceives Muslim communities as being difficult to access because most people cannot communicate in the Thai language which makes it difficult to reach people and develop policies. At the same time, Muslim communities perceive outside investors as purely motivated by self-interest who are destroying the religious and social identities of the Muslim community. An example is the fishing industry, where all the owners are non-Muslims, but the labourers are mostly Muslims in the community.²⁵³ Only the business owners gain advantage and become wealthy while the local people still have a poor quality of life.

Another aspect of the problem is the top-down approach of processes of development that are not appropriate for the local culture and religion. This is because policies and projects are usually all predetermined by the central government without participation from the local people. Moreover, several key reasons for consistent poverty in the region are related to high birth rates, a lack of education, the lack of local communities' rights in managing their own natural resources, and vocational training that does not meet the needs of employers.

Political Issues

Although religion is not a direct cause of problems in the south, it is used as a political tool to create conflicts. According to ideas in Buddhist cosmology, religious rituals and practices are determined and standardised by the state in order to securitise and consolidate its power. In Islam, however, it is believed that the roles of religious leaders are above the state. In the Thai Buddhist state, it is the state that has a role to play and the power to regulate religion. Therefore, these different religious frameworks are used to credit each side's own actions and discredit those of the other. When the

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Aek, *Problems of the Three*, 133.

idea of a Buddhist cosmology is used in the three provinces in the south, where the majority is Malay Muslim, a bias is created.

On the other hand, the ignorance of the state's mechanisms about the Muslim way of life produces bias against the state, for example, security forces use sniffer dogs to search the homes and schools of local Muslims who consider that they are being disregarded and feel offended as dogs are seen as impure and ritually unclean.²⁵⁴ It is undeniable that one of the reasons for the unrest in the south is the way the state's mechanisms operate. It is questionable whether the state truly understands Malay Muslims in the south. An assimilative policy, which has been successfully used to resolve problems with minorities in other places, has not reduced violent incidents in the southern region.²⁵⁵

The failure of the Thaksin government to remedy problems in the south indicated that the government was not on the right path. It failed to resolve problems by relying too much on political popularity around gaining votes.²⁵⁶ The current crisis, however, is also a result of government policies that have aggravated the situation in the region. The insurgency problem in the south re-emerged after the Thai Rak Thai party-led government decided to impose greater central control over a region traditionally dominated by the main opponent, the Democratic Party. Upon taking office in early 2001, Prime Minister Thaksin announced his intention to make major changes in the government's policy in the south.

Another measure to strengthen the new government's control over the region was the cabinet's decision in March 2002 to dismantle the successful intelligence and suppression operations against separatist groups. Even though the weakness of intelligence has been an obstacle in Thailand's security for decades, inconsistencies in the handling of the crisis by the Thaksin government aggravated the problem.²⁵⁷

The state's response to the insurgency has been hampered by a lack of training in counter-insurgency methods, a lack of understanding of local

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 119.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 122.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 31.

culture, and rivalry between the police and the army. The army has responded to insurgent attacks with heavy-handed raids on Muslim villages which only resulted in reprisals. Insurgents have provoked the inexperienced Thai government into disproportionate responses, generating sympathy among the Muslim people. As most governments only had a short term in office, it was hard for them to produce tangible outcomes. As the government in Bangkok fails to resolve other urgent problems, it is doubtful that the southern conflict will receive the serious attention it deserves.

Social and Cultural Issues

As stated already, Islam is not only a religion, but also a way of life for Muslims. Therefore, religion and culture are inseparable for people in the southern border provinces. People's identity in the region is very different from that of Thais in other parts of the country due to differences in language and religion. People in the region feel very much connected with those in Malaysia because they share similarities in terms of religion, language, ethnicity, culture and history.²⁵⁸

Government officials who are sent to the deep south have very little knowledge about the culture and identity of local people. For example, some important Muslim regulations which people from outside should be aware of are dress and dietary practices which should not be ignored or violated.

The religious issue is very delicate one which the state must try to understand and attach importance to.²⁵⁹ Many Thai people think that in Thai society people should all be the same, and those who are different should change so as to be the same as the majority of the people.²⁶⁰

While the vast majority of the population are Thai-speaking Buddhists, the southern Muslims are ethnically Malay and speak their own dialect (yawi), which few non-Muslims can speak or understand. Social capital and civil society are significantly weaker in southern Thailand than in the rest of the country. The south also has a reputation as a troubled region characterised by a high crime rate, lawlessness, endemic corruption

²⁵⁸ Aek, *Problems of the Three*, 139.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 123.

within the bureaucracy, smuggling, small-arms trading and other forms of illegitimate business.²⁶¹

Education Issues

Ponohs play the most important role in maintaining and sustaining Muslim communities, Islamic teachings, Muslim culture, the Malay language, and Muslim ways of life in the region. Because of an imbalance among academic, vocational and religious education, only a few graduates from ponohs are able to further their professional degrees at the universities.

The state has tried to control the activities, curricula and management of ponohs. There were a number of attempts to control and transform these ponohs into regular public schools which are normally under the control of the Ministry of Education. While most are registered with the Ministry of Education, some are beyond official supervision. Funded by private donations and founded by ustaz who themselves have undertaken religious studies in Pakistan and the Middle East, some ponohs became breeding grounds for potential radical Muslims. According to Thai government sources, in the past 15 years, 5,000 Thai-Muslim students have graduated from religious schools and various Islamic universities in the Middle East and South Asia. After returning home, only a few graduates get professional jobs with the rest becoming religious teachers at ponohs in local communities, thereby contributing to the spread of more intense doctrine and radical versions of Islam, such as Wahhabism²⁶² and fundamentalist Islam. Politically radical young ustaz and their students have become part of the movement toward militant groups in southern Thailand. This has resulted in an expanded pool of aggressive youths who have become the main targets for recruitment by extremists.²⁶³ Ponohs,

²⁶¹ Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 29.

²⁶² Wahhabism is a religious movement or a branch of Sunni Islam. Wahhabism emphasises Islamic culture and the importance of avoiding non-Islamic cultural practices. Wahhabism is quite strict in what it considers Islamic behaviour. It forbids some activities that some other Muslim groups/schools do not. Source: David Krusch, *Islam: Wahhabism*, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/wahhabism.html> (accessed 22 December 2014).

²⁶³ Croissant, "Unrest in South Thailand," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 30.

therefore, are seen as a threat to national security because they enhance “fundamentalism”.²⁶⁴

Judicial Issues

It is agreed that one factor which stimulates problems in the southern border region is injustice, often originating from state officials’ discrimination. A lack of understanding and acceptance of differences between the dominant Thai culture in Bangkok, leads to discrimination against other cultural norms. Injustice that derives from discrimination is demonstrated by a lack of knowledge and inefficiency to resolve conflict in Thai society.²⁶⁵ As a result, people in the south have no faith in national laws and do not rely on the state’s justice process.

People in the south have always thought they are not Thai citizens and that they have been ignored by the central government. They consider themselves to be second class citizens. There are some cases showing that Muslims have been treated unjustly including the tragic examples of the Krue Se Mosque and Tak Bai incidents, and the disappearance of lawyer Somchai Neelapaijit who represented cases for Muslims and was tortured by the state. State officials were suspected in these cases but it seems no one has been held responsible for these tragic incidents.²⁶⁶

According to the report of the JPF between 2002 and 2011, it has documented 22 incidents of enforced disappearances which took place in southern Thailand, involving 33 people. All victims are Malay Muslim men and mostly were under 40 years old.²⁶⁷ Several other measures taken by the security forces such as intrusions into unregistered ponohs, the arrests of teachers and the army’s frequent search-and-arrest hunts have caused mistrust among the locals and state governments and eroded local people’s willingness to cooperate with the security forces.²⁶⁸

State officials have mainly used violent means to solve the conflict. Although heavy-handed means might stop immediate violence, the root causes of the problems has not been resolved. Violations committed by the

²⁶⁴ Aek, *Problems of the Three*, 145.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

²⁶⁷ Justice for Peace Foundation. *Enforced Disappearances in Thailand*, 2012, 23.

²⁶⁸ Croissant, “Unrest in South Thailand,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 33.

police and the military have provoked fear and anger and strengthened the cause of the insurgents.

4.3 The Beginning of Resistance Movements

The beginning of the conflict in the south was when the policy of administrative centralisation was introduced in the late nineteenth century.²⁶⁹ The government policies of nationalism and centralisation affected Malay-Muslims in every aspect. Tensions between governments and local Muslims in the south continued and sometimes intensified. The first recognised uprising was the '*Dusun Ngur Rebellion*' and then many resistance movements were formed and active in this area in the late 1960s.

4.3.1 The Dusun Ngur Rebellion

The chairman of the Pattani Provincial Islamic Council, Haji Sulong bin Abdul Kadir, established the Patani People's Movement in early 1947. Haji Sulong was a modernist religious leader educated in Mecca, Saudi Arabia and heavily influenced by a strict Muslim society. The Movement petitioned for seven requests including local autonomy, language and cultural rights, and implementation of Islamic law.

Fifty-five leaders in Narathiwat followed Haji Sulong's lead and presented a similar list of demands. Before Prime Minister Pridi Banomyong²⁷⁰ had a chance to respond to their requests, General Phibulsongkhram mounted a coup and re-took office in November 1947. The military government's response was to imprison Haji Sulong and several other religious leaders on treason charges in January 1948.

Haji Sulong's imprisonment was the beginning of serious resistance to Thai rule. Malay officials in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat boycotted meetings with Thai administrators and planned to boycott the 1948 national election. Rebellions broke out in the three provinces, including a mass protest outside the police station where Haji Sulong was imprisoned. He

²⁶⁹ John Funston, *Southern Thailand: The Dynamics of Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: East – West Center, 2008), 8.

²⁷⁰ Pridi Banomyong, was the seventh Thai Prime Minister. He was one of the prominent leaders in the 1932 coup that changed the absolute monarchy in Thailand to a constitutional one.

was moved out of the southern provinces for trial, but the protest did not end. Riots erupted all over Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. The biggest one was known as the '*Dusun Nyur Rebellion*' in Narathiwat on 26-28 April 1948. Hundreds of men were led by a religious leader, Haji Abdul Rahman, against the police resulting in the deaths of some 400 Muslims while thousands more fled to Malaysia.

Haji Sulong was eventually released from prison in 1952, but disappeared along with his eldest son, Ahmad Tomeena, in 1954, and was presumed to have been drowned by the police. The expansion of Malay resistance in the 1950s was accelerated and consolidated by the formation of militant groups.²⁷¹

4.3.2 1960-1990 Rebellion and Conciliation

Conflict intensified after the 1957 coup led by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat who strengthened assimilationist policies, resettled ethnic Thais in the region, and tried to assert control over Islamic schools. As a result of that, local Malays formed several militant movements to respond against the state and to try to gain independence.²⁷²

Over 60 armed groups, including Muslim separatists and Thai and Malaysian communists, were operating in the south in the late 1960s. Their tactics, including extortion, kidnap, murder and arson, were identical. The goals of the armed separatist movements were broadly similar, but they rarely cooperated. There was no leader who could command broad support like Haji Sulong had done. Attempts to coordinate all these armed groups were ultimately unsuccessful, and internal conflicts significantly weakened the major groups.²⁷³

After almost two decades of intense campaigns against separatist and communist insurgencies in the south, the government realised that its battle had to be political as well as military. In 1981, the government of Prime Minister General Prem Tinsulanond overhauled security policies and administrative structures to pursue political accommodation. The new

²⁷¹ International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad," *Asia Report*, 5.

²⁷² Funston, *Southern Thailand*, 9.

²⁷³ International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad," *Asia Report*, 6.

approach, which emphasised public participation and economic development rather than a purely military strategy, was effective. Although violent incidents never ceased completely, they were greatly reduced. Hundreds of militants, communists and separatists, accepted an amnesty and decided to participate in Thai politics.²⁷⁴

4.4 New Round of Violence

A new round of violence opened on the night of 24 December 2001 with five well-coordinated attacks on police posts in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat that left five officers and a village defence volunteer dead. The simultaneous attacks were more well-planned than the sporadic extortion, arson and kidnapping for ransom seen for more than a decade, and set a pattern that has continued. This pattern has seen coordinated attacks on police posts and raids by masked gunmen to capture weapons.

According to the Ministry of the Interior's statistics, insurgency-related incidents rose from 50 in 2001 to 75 in 2002, 119 in 2003 and then, in a dramatic escalation, to over 1,000 in 2004.²⁷⁵ Since the beginning of 2004, a series of violent events have showed that the insurgency has revived.

4.4.1 The Army Camp Raid

The first major incident in 2004 was a raid on the Royal Thai Army's 4th Engineering Battalion in Cho Airong district, Narathiwat on 4 January. In a carefully planned, well-coordinated series of attacks at around 2 a.m., at least a hundred assailants stormed into the army development battalion base and seized some 400 weapons, including assault rifles, machine guns, pistols and rocket launchers. The raiders killed four Buddhist soldiers guarding the arsenal, but none of the Muslim guards. Not only was the camp raided, but insurgents also launched arson attacks on twenty schools and three police posts across eleven of Narathiwat's thirteen districts. Within 24 hours, on 5 January, it was found that several bombs had been planted

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid,16.

around the Pattani province. Police defused some, but two bomb squad officers were killed attempting to defuse another. The sophistication and scope of these simultaneous attacks, as well as the numbers involved, troubled the intelligence agencies and security forces.²⁷⁶

4.4.2 The Disappearance of Lawyer Somchai Neelapaijit

Somchai Neelapaijit, a prominent human rights lawyer, disappeared on 12 March 2004. He was a Muslim lawyer who, for over 20 years, had played a significant role in defending Muslims accused of involvement in violence in the southern border provinces. He was representing several of the suspects in the January army camp raid who claimed that they had been tortured in custody. One month after his disappearance, five police officers were arrested in connection with Somchai's case and charged with coercion and robbery. None have been charged with the more serious crimes of abduction or other offenses connected to the enforced disappearance. On 11 March 2011, the Appeals Court dismissed the case against all other defendants citing a lack of evidence against them. At present, Somchai's case is under consideration by Thailand's Supreme Court.²⁷⁷ Since the appearance of Somchai, Angkhana Neelapaijit, the wife of the missing lawyer, has played an important role in seeking the explanation for her husband's disappearance and in pursuing human rights issues in the region.

4.4.3 The Battle of Krue Se Mosque

On the 28 April 2004, a group of assailants led by Hama Salae attacked some security checkpoints where the assailants stabbed one police officer and one soldier to death.²⁷⁸ The Commander of the Pattani Special Task Force immediately dispatched a patrol team to assess the situation. The soldiers blockaded the mosque with a tank and tried to persuade the militants to surrender, but their leader repeatedly stated that they would fight to the death. Soldiers and militants exchanged gunfire

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁷⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Thailand: Lawyer's 'Disappearance' Unsolved 10 Years On," 11 March 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/03/11/thailand-lawyer-s-disappearance-unsolved-10-years> (accessed 18 December 2014).

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

which lasted around an hour. After negotiations failed, Special Forces troops were ordered to storm the mosque and shoot to kill.

The battle at Krue Se Mosque was not the only clash that day. Ten small groups congregated before dawn in mosques across Yala, Pattani and Songkhla and, after prayers, launched simultaneous pre-dawn raids on rural checkpoints, police stations and army bases.²⁷⁹ At the end of the day, five policemen and soldiers were killed, while 106 militants lost their lives. This included casualties from the siege of Krue Se Mosque in which all 32 militants who took refuge in the mosque and exchanged gunfire with authorities were killed.²⁸⁰

4.4.4 The Tak Bai Protest

On the morning of 25 October 2004, during the fasting month of Ramadan, approximately 1,500 people gathered outside the Tak Bai police station in Narathiwat. They gathered to protest the detention of six village defence volunteers who were on charges of allegedly stealing guns from the local defence forces. Protestors at Tak Bai claimed the men were innocent and had been detained unjustly.

In fact, not all the protestors were at the police station that day out of concern for the six detainees. Some had been asked to come by friends, others by their village heads or imams, for a host of different reasons: to hear a lecture by the '*chularajmontri*²⁸¹ on Islam; to break the daily fast; to attend a '*sembayang hajat*²⁸² for the detainees; to be on hand when Prime Minister Thaksin came to hand out money; and to attend a protest. Many were simply curious passers-by and got caught in the crowd.²⁸³

Around 11 a.m., some protestors tried to enter the police station but retreated when soldiers fired warning shots. High ranking army and police officers came to assess the situation and offered to arrange bail for the six detainees. Demonstrators continued to demand their release and refused to disperse. According to the International Crisis Group, protestors claimed

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 23.

²⁸⁰ National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), *Overcoming*, 46.

²⁸¹ Chularajmontri is head of all Muslims in Thailand.

²⁸² Sembayang hajat means mass prayer.

²⁸³ International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad," *Asia Report*, 27.

that even if they had wanted to leave, they were trapped. Army trucks and tanks were blocking each end of the street and there was a river behind. Some claimed soldiers and even the protest leaders prevented them from leaving.²⁸⁴

After some protestors tried to break through the police barrier, warning shots, fire engines, water cannon and tear gas were used to disperse the crowd. Seven protestors, including a 14-year-old, died while another two were shot, but survived. Police and soldiers ordered protestors to lie face down on the ground and then tied their hands behind their backs. Approximately 1,300 protestors, stacked in trucks up to five or six layers deep, were taken to Inkayuth army base in Pattani for questioning. The 150-kilometre journey to Pattani normally takes approximately one hour and twenty minutes, but the trucks took up to five hours. When all the trucks arrived at Inkayuth Camp, 78 protestors were dead, mostly of asphyxiation. Many others had broken and dislocated limbs and other ailments.

The majority, which were around 1,172 people, was released on 30 and 31 October 2004. 58 were charged with possession of unlicensed weapons, coercion of officers to act or refrain from action with force and weapons, destruction of public property, assembly of more than ten people, and causing turmoil, but they were all released on bail on 12 November.²⁸⁵

In 2009, following the result of an inquest into the 78 deaths in Tak Bai, the Songkla Provincial Court ruled that the deaths were caused by suffocation, but did not elaborate on the manner of death as required by law. Relatives of the victims subsequently challenged the Provincial Court's ruling at the Central Criminal Court, the Appeal Court and later at the Supreme Court. In August 2013, the Supreme Court upheld previous court rulings on the incident, saying that despite the deaths, security personnel were blameless and had only been performing their duties.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 28.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 29.

²⁸⁶ Amnesty International, Website, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/thailand-government-fails-provide-justice-victims-tak-bai-killings-2013-08-01> (accessed 21 December 2014).

4.5 Background of the Militant Groups

The nature of the militant groups remains a matter of dispute. Many questions concerning the movements behind the violence in these southern provinces have never been clearly addressed by conflicting parties or relevant actors. None of the militant groups have officially announced their responsibility for the violent incidents in the deep south. These unidentified groups and unclear objectives make it difficult for the state to resolve the conflict. However, the following section will help explain some important views of the militant movements active in this area.

4.5.1 The Purposes of the Militant Groups

“What do the militants want?” seems to be one of the most popular questions constantly raised. The militants have consistently declined to claim responsibility for any violent action in these provinces. In the past, these political movements were commonly called ‘separatist groups’ as their main objective during that time was to gain independence. In practice, an independent, tiny Patani state sandwiched between Thailand and Malaysia seems impossible in reality.

Over time, the main purpose of the new round of violence has been changed. An independent Islamic state is no longer their ultimate goal but more have called for autonomy and justice as well as the need to boost Muslim representation in local politics. A demand by militant groups to settle for some form of autonomy has been discussed widely, but it is not easy to reach a common solution for the conflicting parties.²⁸⁷

4.5.2 Tactics of Militant Groups

Violent incidents carried out with a wide-range of different tactics occur in this area almost every day. Most incidents are caused by ambush, bombing and arson. Additionally, three main tactics identified by the police authorities are mixed tactics, focused tactics and special tactics.²⁸⁸

The examples of mixed tactics are the January 2004 army base attack and the April 28 Krue Se Mosque Incident. These incidents included

²⁸⁷ McCargo, *Tearing Apart the Land*, 152.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

a mixture of targets and different mode of activities, such as arson, obstruction, shooting and weapons heists in the same complex attack.²⁸⁹

Focused tactics mean tight, specific targets in a limited area, for example, a bomb outside the house of a judge in Yala or a series of small bombs at key government offices. The use of daily killings and repeated small-scale attacks aim to create a sense of constant distrust among the population.²⁹⁰

Besides these two tactics, special tactics include, for example, the use of bombs in busy areas which were set off simultaneously in different places and the beheading of innocent victims. This targeting of civilians who were not working for the state was a new aim of the militants to create a heightened sense of fear.²⁹¹

4.5.3 The Ten Major Militant Groups

Besides these ten major militant groups, more than 60 other groups have existed and operated in this area since the late 1960s. It was, however, difficult to ascertain whether they were insurgent organisations which reflected actual factionalism and divergent agendas or just a division of labour in the struggle for a common goal. The following are the ten major militant movements active in the deep south and some of them remain influential in today's violence.²⁹²

1) The Barisan National Pemberbasan Patani (BNPP) or Patani National Liberation Front

This group was considered the first organised armed resistance group.²⁹³ It was founded in 1959 by Tengku Abdul Jalal, also known as Adul Na Saiburi, but its origins can be traced to a local revolt which took place in 1947 in Narathiwat. The main purpose of the group was to gain independence from Thailand: autonomy, or joining Malaysia, were unacceptable. The strategy of the group focused on guerrilla war. Since 1990, the group has turned to supporting international separatist

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 155.

²⁹² Ibid., 152.

²⁹³ Global Security Organisation, *Thailand Islamic Insurgency*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/thailand2.htm> (accessed 4 February 2011).

movements and has renamed itself the Barisan Islam Perberbasan Patani (BIPP). From 1989 to 2002 the movement was largely inactive. It was believed by Thai state security agencies that the group was involved in the attacks in 2003, but the group's participation in a series of violent events in 2004 could not be confirmed.²⁹⁴

2) The Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) or National Revolutionary Front

The original BRN was established on 13 March 1960. There were a number of co-founders, but the important ones were Haji Amin Tohmeena, Tengku Yalal Nasir, Adul Na Saiburi, Ustaz Karim, Haji Karim Hasan (who was a former ponoh teacher in Ruesoh district, Narathiwat) and Abdul Kayom (who initiated the first Dawah group²⁹⁵ in Thailand and also an army group called Angkatan Bersenjata Revolusi Patani (ABRIP) in 1968) At the beginning, the BRN ideology was based on socialist rule, but later turned to religious ideology. Since 1978 there have been some internal conflicts and the group has split into three politically more moderate factions, namely: BRN Congress (armed force); BRN Ulama (religious force); and BRN Coordinate (political and religious force). Today, it is believed that BRN Coordinate has been the main group active on the ground. The ultimate goal of this group was to have independence, but they refused to negotiate with the Thai government in any way. They normally attacked any Buddhists or Muslims who cooperated with the state.²⁹⁶ However, in 2013, BRN was the only militant group who agreed to have peace talks with representatives of the Thai state.

BRN-Coordinated maintained a number of underground cells, which were known as Runda Kumpulan Kecil, or 'small patrol groups'. These appeared to not be a separate organisation but simply the operative arm of BRN-Coordinate. The BRN-Coordinate's village militia forces were also

²⁹⁴ Surachart Bamroongsook, *Contemporary Terrorism and Insurgency* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2008), 556. [in Thai].

²⁹⁵ A Muslim practises *dawah*, either as a religious worker or in a volunteer community effort.

²⁹⁶ Surachart, *Contemporary Terrorism*, 557.

commonly known as Pejuang Kemerdekaan Patani, or Patani Freedom Fighters.²⁹⁷

3) Persatuan Pembebasan Patani Bersatu (PPPB) or Patani United Liberation Organisation (PULO)

Formed on 22 March 1968, by Tengku Bira Kotantila and Kabir Abdul Rahman, PULO was the most active group in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁹⁸ Although there had been some internal conflicts since 1985, it was confirmed recently that the group has been reunited again since June 2005 after the group split for a while into 'old' and 'new' factions. Later, PULO became an alliance with Bersatu. Today, most of PULO's activities are focused on political matters on the international stage rather than engaging in violent attacks. In the early 2000s, it operated mainly from exile in Syria, where Tengku Bira lived, and Sweden, where its foreign affairs department was located. Exiles in Sweden have maintained a number of websites that carried news from the region as well as political statements. PULO claimed to have a working relationship with BRN-Coordinate. However, the Thai state agency continues to watch closely because the PULO movement appeared again noticeably in mid-2006.²⁹⁹

4) Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Patani (GMIP) or Islamic Mujahidin Movement of Patani

The fourth insurgent group was formed in 1995 by Afghanistan war veteran, Nasoree Saesaeng. The group derived its name from an earlier, now inactive group, the Gerakan Mujahidin Patani (GMP). According to Thai intelligence sources, the GMIP was linked to the Malaysia-based militant organisation Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM), or the Mujahidin Group of Malaysia, which, in turn, was alleged to have close ties with the mainly Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiya. It was, however, uncertain how much remained of the KMM after a massive crackdown by Malaysian authorities in 2001.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁷ Global Security Organisation, *Thailand Islamic Insurgency*.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Surachart, *Contemporary Terrorism*, 557.

³⁰⁰ Global Security Organisation, *Thailand Islamic Insurgency*.

5) The United Front for the Independence of Pattani (Bersatu)

This group was commonly known as 'Bersatu', which means 'united' in the Malay language. It was formed on August 31, 1989 by four leaders of BRN, PULO, GMP and BIPP. They first agreed to set up an *Umbrella Organisation* which has changed in 1991 to Bersatu and was presided over by Dr. Wan Kadir Cheman. According to Thai state security agencies, Bersatu had no power to command any groups, but it served as a strategic planner so each group could work in the same direction.³⁰¹

6) Pemuda Merdeka Patani (PMP)

This movement was established by BRN Coordinate with most leading members being Ulama (religious intellectuals). 'Pemuda' means 'youth' in Malay and had been adopted as the name of a youth movement closely associated with BRN-Coordinate. Pemuda members, however, rarely had access to firearms, but rather assisted the BRN-Coordinate with logistical support and intelligence gathering, and occasionally sprayed separatist slogans on walls or took part in arson attacks.³⁰² They have developed a new dimension since 1992 by training militant youths and setting up armed forces both inside and outside the schools. They promoted fighting for Jihad, or holy war, in order to prepare for civilian war or guerrilla war. Their operations have been hidden in tadika or ponoh schools and in some government institutions as well as local mosques. Their activities since 2001 have included armed robbery and ambush. It was believed that this group was linked to other groups such as PULO, BRN Congress and GMIP.³⁰³

7) Ulama Patani Daruslam

This is a group of Ulamas who graduated with higher degrees in religion from the Middle East and Indonesia. They were normally religious teachers, imams and owners of private Islamic schools. The most important leader was the founder, Haji Sulong bin Abdul Kadir. He also established the first Islamic school in Thailand which was located in Pattani province. During the past several decades, the role of the Ulama group was dropped

³⁰¹ Surachart, *Contemporary Terrorism*, 559.

³⁰² Global Security Organisation, *Thailand Islamic Insurgency*.

³⁰³ Surachart, *Contemporary Terrorism*, 560.

until 24 January 2002 when a group of Ulama established Ulama Patani Daruslam. The 29 members were selected from leading religious teachers and provincial Islamic committee in three southern border provinces.³⁰⁴

8) Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam Patani (Selatan Thailand) Indonesia (PMIPTI)

It was founded in 1968 by a group of students in three southern provinces who graduated in religion from Indonesia. The first purpose of this group was to coordinate education and political issues. Later on, some leaders of BRN intervened and distorted the group goal to focus on separatism and militant training. Until now, this group has not had less than 3,000 members mainly teachers, imam, khatip, bilal,³⁰⁵ ustaz and provincial Islamic committee representatives.³⁰⁶

9) Patani National Youth Movement (PANYOM) or Gerakan Pemuda Kebangsaan Patani

It was believed by the Thai state security authorities that this group had been established a long time ago, but its operations were secretive. In 1997, the movement first became apparent by leaving a threatening letter in the Pattani area and in 1998 by distributing information through the internet. Its content included religious, racial, cultural and historical issues that incited Thai Muslims to resist the Thai government. It also advertised news and activities of other insurgent groups in order to be accepted on the international stage.³⁰⁷

10) Dewan Pimpinan Parti (DPP)

This group has served as a strategic, policy and decision maker. It was the one which derived the seven steps of revolution³⁰⁸ which used religious motivation to persuade the Muslim community to take action

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Khatip and bilal are commonly considered assistant Imam.

³⁰⁶ Surachart, *Contemporary Terrorism*, 561.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 562.

³⁰⁸ These seven stages are: 1) create public consciousness of Islam, Malay-ness, Patani homeland, Siamese invasion and struggle; 2) galvanise support and organise members through religious schools, sport clubs and cooperatives; 3) set up secret organisations to carry out activities; 4) set up an armed group of about 3,000 fighters; 5) cultivate nationalist ideology among Malay Muslims, including government officials and those living in Malaysia; 6) prepare to begin waves of attacks or 'light the firework of revolution'; and 7) carry out a revolution. Source: International Crisis Group, "Recruiting Militants in Southern Thailand," *Asia Report* no. 170 (22 June 2009): 19.

against the Thai government. It could be said in fact that DPP was the government of the insurgent groups. The organisational structure was divided into regional, provincial and village levels. The ultimate goal of the revolution was to establish a new state of Patani. Its territory could cover the three southern provinces and some parts of Songkhla and Satun.³⁰⁹

4.6 Overview of the Government's Policies and Strategies Relating to the Southern Conflict

The stability of Thai politics is considered low and there are always short-term governments. Since the resurgence in violence, there have been seven governments led by six prime ministers in over a decade. The national policies involving the southern conflict from the government of Prime Minister Thaksin until the most recent Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra,³¹⁰ are described next. Besides these six prime ministers, the two governments led by Prime Ministers General Phibulsongkhram and General Prem Tinsulanond are also examined as their policies affected the southern situation significantly.

4.6.1 General Phibulsongkhram

Phibulsongkhram was the third Prime Minister of Thailand and was in office from 16 December 1938 to 1 August 1944 and from 8 April 1948 to 16 September 1957. In 1938, Phibulsongkhram consolidated his position by rewarding several members of his own army clique with influential positions in his government. Phibulsongkhram began to increase the pace of modernisation in Thailand and he also supported fascism as well as nationalism. Together with Luang Wichitwathakan, the Minister of Propaganda, he built a leadership cult in 1938 and thereafter. Photographs of Phibulsongkhram were to be found everywhere, and his quotes appeared in newspapers, were shown on billboards and were repeated over the radio.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 563.

³¹⁰ Yingluck was removed from office by the Constitutional Court of Thailand on 7 May 2014, on charges of abuse of power. She was replaced by an interim prime minister, Niwatthamrong Boonsongpaisan, who was expected to hold the position until general elections occur in July. However, there was a military coup on 22 May 2014.

The State Conventions served as the commandment from the government for all people to observe. During the six years, from 1938-1944 the government passed twelve conventions such as changing the name of the country from 'Siam' to 'Thailand' to go along with the nationality of the people. Thais had to learn to respect the National Flag, the National Anthem and the Thai Royal Anthem. From Phibulsongkhram's perspective, these policies were necessary for Thailand so as to change the minds of foreigners who thought that Thailand was an undeveloped and barbaric country. One motto that clearly projects the Field Marshal's policy was: "Believe in the Leader and the Nation Will Survive".³¹¹

These modernisation policies were a big change in terms of culture and way of life for all people in the country. It affected Muslims in the south unavoidably. Muslims were not allowed to wear traditional dress such as the sarong, people were not allowed to speak in their dialect or Yawi, and Islamic courts were closed.³¹² This was the beginning of resistance in the south as his modernisation policy affected all aspects of the Muslim way of life.

4.6.2 General Prem Tinsulanond

General Prem Tinsulanond was the 16th Prime Minister and served for three terms from 1980 to 1988. Under General Prem, Thailand established a new system of government in which the military shared power with parliament through the mediation of the monarchy.³¹³

The government also initiated a number of administrative and political initiatives for the socio-economic development of the provinces in the south. In 1981, the Prem administration constituted the Southern Border Provincial Administrative Centre (SBPAC), a special unit of the army, police, together with the Interior Ministry and the Civilian-Police-Military Task Force 43 (CPM 43), to oversee security in the region and to work as an advisory body to the policy-making establishment in Bangkok. Economic and

³¹¹ Picture Lanna, Website, http://library.cmu.ac.th/ntic/en_picturelanna/detail_picturelanna.php?picture_id=265 (accessed 19 September 2011).

³¹² Funston, *Southern Thailand*, 9.

³¹³ Thailand for You, *Prem Tinsulanonda*, http://www.th4u.com/prem_tinsulanonda.htm (accessed 28 September 2011).

industrial development projects were also implemented to develop the south and to eradicate poverty and backwardness. At the political level, democratisation was used as a means to allow the Malay-Muslim community to enter into parliamentary democratic politics.³¹⁴

4.6.3 Thaksin Shinawatra

Thaksin Shinawatra is a businessman who served as the Prime Minister from 17 February 2001 to 19 September 2006, when he was deposed by a military coup and convicted in a case of conflict of interest. He started his career in the police service, and later he became successful in the telecoms industry and went on to become one of the richest people in Thailand. He entered politics in 1994 and founded the Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party in 1998. After a landslide election victory in January 2001, he became prime minister and the country's first ever to serve a full term. Thaksin introduced a range of partly effective and highly popular policies to alleviate rural poverty. His main support base was in the north and northeast of the country.

From the start of his first term in 2001, Prime Minister Thaksin never paid much attention to the simmering unrest in the south. This was despite the fact that there were the three aforementioned brutal incidents in 2004. His responses, particularly his comments, to the incidents made the situation even worse.

Following the army camp raid in Narathiwat, in which four soldiers were killed, Thaksin initially dubbed the suspects "common bandits".³¹⁵ Thaksin told the press that the soldiers on guard deserved to die for failing to prevent the raid. After that, he imposed martial law in the three provinces and set a seven-day deadline for the authorities to identify and capture the perpetrators. He ordered the deployment of an additional 3,000 troops to the Fourth Army Region that covers fourteen provinces in the south, including Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, mandating them to make arrests without a court warrant. The government insisted that the mounting violence

³¹⁴ Gunaratna, R., Acharya A., and Chua S., 2005, 7.

³¹⁵ Pathmanand, U., "Thaksin's Achilles' Heel," in *Rethinking Thailand's Southern Violence*, ed. McCargo, D. (Singapore: NUS Publishing, 2007), 70.

in the southern border provinces was the work of petty criminals and drug dealers and dismissed any suggestion that separatist groups may have been re-activated. Obviously, the sophistication of the 4 January operation made this untenable. Thaksin later admitted the assailants were not ordinary bandits, and that they were professional and well trained.³¹⁶

Thaksin's response to the battle of Krue Se Mosque was to praise the army for its swift response but to play down the political aspect: "There is nothing to be afraid of. These are drug addicts," he said. His response to the bloody suppression of the attacks was "victory has been achieved".³¹⁷ For the Tak Bai protest, Thaksin's first reaction was to suggest that the deaths in the army trucks were the Muslims' own fault for fasting during Ramadan: "It's normal that their bodies could not handle it. It's not about someone attacking them".³¹⁸

Thaksin, eventually, sought to create positive news about attempting to resolve the southern conflict by asking Thais to produce millions of origami cranes to be scattered over the south. This gesture, indicating the popular desire for peace, was his initial response to the royal admonitions³¹⁹ and was a piece of pure political theatre.³²⁰ The tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004 eclipsed news of the southern unrest for a couple of weeks, allowing Thaksin the space to launch his election campaign in early January 2005.

Following his landslide election victory in February 2005, Thaksin seemed re-emboldened to tackle the unrest in the south – where the TRT had been decisively rejected by the voters. Thaksin immediately announced that he was sending 12,000 more troops to the southern border provinces. Three other initiatives followed in quick succession. The first one was a proposal to divide the three provinces into coloured zones based on their degree of loyalty to the Thai state, depriving the 358 villages designated 'red

³¹⁶ International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand," *Asia Report*, 17.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

³¹⁹ On 24 February 2004, the King urged Thaksin to deal with the southern crisis by using the principles of 'Understanding, Reaching out, and Development'. The King called in Thaksin again on 1 November, advising him to handle the troubled region "with care".

³²⁰ McCargo, "Thaksin and the Resurgence," 57.

zones' of government development funds.³²¹ The second proposal was a plan to send 25 TRT ministers and MPs down to the south to assess the situation and report back. The third proposal was the decision to allow a rarely convened joint session of the Senate and Lower House to debate the crisis in the south.³²²

These three moves, however, were not enough to satisfy Thaksin's large number of critics which grew after the zoning villages idea was first introduced to the public. Thaksin's plan to cut funding to villages deemed to support militants in the troubled south had been widely criticised. Thaksin defined red zones as the most violence-laden, least cooperative and most difficult areas to access, where most people were sympathetic to the insurgents. Yellow represented moderate resistance to state authority and green zones were simply obedient to the authorities. Religious leaders said the plan would push ordinary villagers into the hands of the insurgents. Local people questioned the zoning method, saying officials might show bias when categorising villages.³²³

Although the categorisation of villages was only Thaksin's proposal, and not a policy, it caused further resentment among southern Muslims, who already saw themselves as second-class citizens in a mostly Buddhist country.

Thaksin also announced an escalation of military and police activities in the region. In March 2005, Thaksin established the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) to oversee efforts to bring peace to the south. Instead of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) that was dissolved by his government, Thaksin established a Southern Border Provinces Peace-building Command (SBPPC) in April 2004.

Lastly, in July 2005, Thaksin enacted an Emergency Decree to manage the three troubled provinces. The decree was an attempt to strike a balance between tough security measures and enhanced legal

³²¹ Out of 1,580 villages in the deep South, 358, including 200 in Narathiwat alone, are classified as red zones, 200 villages as yellow zones and the rest green.

³²² McCargo, "Thaksin and the Resurgence," 60.

³²³ The Nation, Website, 17 February 2005, <http://www.thenation.com/>.

protections.³²⁴ It offered some safeguards and transferred overall control from military to civilian officials, but bestowed wide-ranging powers on the Prime Minister and his designated competent officials; with few provisions for parliamentary or judicial oversight. Several human rights organisations, such as Human Rights Watch, expressed their concerns that the decree might be used to violate civil liberties.³²⁵

Massive protests, however, occurred in February 2006 because of controversies including alleged conflicts of interest due to his family's holdings in Shin Corporation³²⁶ and violent heavy-handed measures on the anti-drug policy. Then, on 19 September, a military junta overthrew Thaksin's government in a bloodless coup while he was abroad.

4.6.4 General (ret.) Surayud Chulanont

General (ret.) Surayud Chulanont was the head of Thailand's Interim Government in 2006 and became the Prime Minister from 1 October 2006 to 29 January 2008. He was a former military officer who had been Army Commander, Supreme Commander, and was currently a Privy Councillor.

The first significant thing that Surayud's government did to reduce tensions in the south was that Surayud apologised to the people of the south for the past abuses, injustices, and the hardline measures committed by the previous government in combating the insurgency. He also specially affirmed that Islamic law should be given a bigger role in the south and explicitly recognised the need for a long-term strategy that combined three main strands: reconciliation, security (with a mix of hard and soft approaches), and dialogue.³²⁷ These various gestures represented an abrupt change in tack from the policies of the previous Thaksin government, which consistently refused to engage in talks with the insurgents.

There were several immediate efforts that the government undertook including: working with local Muslim leaders to proactively identify and

³²⁴ International Crisis Group Asia Report No.105, 18 November 2005, *Thailand Emergency Decree: No solution*, 2.

³²⁵ Human Rights Watch, Website, <http://www.hrw.org> (accessed 12 December 2009).

³²⁶ Shin Corporation (today it is called 'InTouch Plc') is one of the largest conglomerates in Thailand and was founded by Thaksin Shinawatra in 1983.

³²⁷ Peter Chalk, *The Malay-Muslim Insurgency in Southern Thailand: Understanding the Conflict's Evolving Dynamic*. (California: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2007), 21.

manage communal-religious tensions; prioritising the development of sustainable conflict-resolution mechanisms that were adequately equipped to address Malay-Muslim grievances and focusing on human-rights training, socioeconomic development; furthering harmonious civil-military relations and fostering a better understanding of rules of engagement by reviving the old government networks;³²⁸ and exploring the possibility of granting an amnesty to militants in the Malay-speaking south as part of a government strategy to restore peace in the Muslim-majority region. An amnesty would guarantee that the surrendered insurgents would not face further legal charges for their participation in the insurgency.³²⁹

Furthermore, the government announced a special economic development plan for the five southern provinces in an effort to use economic means to improve the situation. On the international front, the government successfully engaged with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to allay concerns of mistreatment of borderland Muslims and undercut insurgent claims that the problems in the south were based on religious issues.³³⁰ Surayud was praised for his formal apology, although his policies failed to produce tangible results and it was followed by a sharp escalation in violence. The day after he issued his apology, 46 violent incidents were recorded, compared with a daily average of 9 in the previous month and the casualty rate in 2007 was the highest since the violence surged in 2004.³³¹

An increase in military spending by 35% in 2007, (compared to 2006) was approved. The 2008 budget for the Ministry of Defence totalled 140 billion baht, 24% higher than 2007 and represented 8.6% of the total 2008 budget. In addition, Surayud received an extra request from the Army for an additional 17.6 billion baht to fund counter-insurgency efforts in the far south over the next four years on top of an additional 456-million-baht secret military budget.³³² Surayud's Cabinet also gave the staff of the ISOC an

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ The Nation, Website, 23 April 2007, <http://www.thenation.com/>.

³³⁰ Marc Askew, "Thailand's Intractable Southern War: Policy, Insurgency and Discourse," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no. 2 (2008): 192.

³³¹ International Crisis Group, "Thailand: Political Turmoil and the Southern Insurgency," *Asia Report* no. 80 (28 August 2008): 5.

³³² The Nation, Website, 5 April 2007, <http://www.thenation.com/>.

84.3 million baht 'extra allowance' as reward for their hard work with increased responsibility, handling national security threats and promoting loyalty to the monarchy.³³³

When the military was assigned the duty to handle the insurgency in the south, General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, the Army Commander, expressed confidence that he could resolve the insurgency. He claimed that he would take a new and effective approach to the crisis. After being appointed Army Commander in 2005, Sonthi was granted an extraordinary increase in executive powers to combat unrest in the southernmost region. Up to 19 September 2006, however, the Army admitted that they had no idea who the insurgents actually were. The drastic escalation of the insurgency during his leadership of the Army led to much public criticism of the Army's efforts.³³⁴ In 2006, Surayud claimed that the insurgency was being financed by a network of restaurants and stalls selling Tom Yum Kung in Malaysia, however, there is no evidence to prove this claim is true.³³⁵

Although the government made some attempts to correct Thaksin's heavy-handed measures, Surayud's government was accused of economic mismanagement, human rights abuses, and being unreliable on numerous policies.

4.6.5 Samak Sundaravej

Samak Sundaravej served as the Prime Minister from 29 January to 8 September 2008, as well as the leader of the People's Power Party (PPP). The government of Samak struggled for political survival and handed the military full responsibility for tackling the insurgency. The political turmoil in Bangkok continued to distract attention from the violence in the south. Samak's government was threatened on several fronts. Samak designated himself as Defence Minister and chose veteran politician, Chalerm Yubamrung, as Interior Minister who held a meeting about the southern situation with security officials, provincial governors and the director of the

³³³ Bangkok Post, Website, 23 July 2007, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/>.

³³⁴ *The Nation*, 19 September 2006, <http://www.thenation.com/>.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 21 November 2006.

SBPAC. As a result of the meeting, various proposals were made on issues surrounding the southern crisis.

Samak's government endorsed the importance of continuing the reconciliation measures by adopting the King's guidelines of 'Understanding, Reaching out, and Development'.³³⁶ During Samak's government, the military was left to lead operations in the deep south and made some progress in reducing violent attacks in the first half of the year. However, the 'sweeping operations' from June 2007 had involved the indiscriminate detention of thousands of suspected insurgents and sympathisers, and there were credible reports of detainees being tortured.³³⁷

The issue of special autonomy for the southern border provinces hit the news headlines briefly following a comment by Chalerm on the desirability of a public hearing on possible forms of special administration, but the idea did not get much attention from the prime minister who declared that it was too soon to talk about it, and then the matter was dropped. The rapid dropping of the question of special autonomy indicated that Samak was deferring to General Anuphong Paochinda, the Army Commander, who viewed special autonomy as a dangerous first step to the separation of the border provinces.

General Anuphong announced a four-year-plan for resolving the violence in the south in October 2007. The first phase, October 2007-September 2009, was designed to end violent incidents by emphasising aggressive military actions; the second, October 2009-September 2011, was to focus on development and community strengthening. Under Prime Minister Samak, the military controlled the ISOC with the SBPAC playing a useful role, but it was still weak. Thus, the military played the main role and had the most power to proceed in any matters relating to the southern conflict.³³⁸

³³⁶ Askew, "Thailand's," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 201.

³³⁷ International Crisis Group, "Thailand: Political Turmoil," *Asia Report*, 1.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

4.6.6 Somchai Wongsawat

Somchai Wongsawat entered politics after the 2006 coup unseated the government of his brother-in-law, Thaksin Shinawatra. He joined the People's Power Party (PPP), which won the December 2007 elections, becoming Minister of Education and Senior Deputy Prime Minister. After the government of Samak Sundaravej was terminated, Somchai was successfully nominated as the Prime Minister from 18 September to 2 December 2008.

Somchai said in his first policy statement that his new government was committed to tackling the ongoing insurgency by reaching out to the different communities and promoting economic development. He agreed that the southern unrest was an urgent agenda. The situation in the south had improved according to his sources during that time. He said urgent priorities in the troubled southern provinces were improving safety for security officials, upgrading their equipment, improving education and increasing the price of rubber, the south's key crop.

His government had to deal with the political crisis as well as the global financial crisis. However, Somchai's government lasted for only three months. The PPP was eventually dissolved by the Constitutional Court on 2 December 2008 and its executive members were prohibited from participating in politics for five years due to a vote-buying case. Therefore, the policies concerning the southern conflict could not be implemented seriously.³³⁹

4.6.7 Abhisit Vejjajiva

A coalition government, led by Abhisit Vejjajiva of the Democrat Party, took office in December 2008 during the political crisis. After Prime Minister Somchai was removed and his party was dissolved, the MPs of the parties which had been in coalition with the PPP forged a new coalition with the Democrat Party, which had been in opposition until then.

³³⁹ Bangkok Pundit, "Somchai Visits the Deep South," *Asian Correspondent*, 29 October 2008, <http://us.asiancorrespondent.com/bangkok-pundit-blog/2008/10/somchai-visits-deep-south.html> (accessed 30 December 2009).

While Prime Minister Abhisit declared that politics should take the lead over military solutions to the southern problem, however, his power for manoeuvre in this matter was quite limited. This deal had at least tacit support from the military, which had refused to take instructions from the Samak and Somchai administrations. The Abhisit government faced a wide range of challenges, the first of which was to bridge the huge social divides of the past three years that had developed between the 'pro-Thaksin' (red shirt) and 'anti-Thaksin' or 'pro-monarchy' (yellow shirt) sides. Other challenges included the economic downturn and the public request for political reform, including the drafting of yet another new constitution. Abhisit could not afford to give the south priority over these other challenges.³⁴⁰

The main initiatives and policies announced by the Abhisit government in relation to the south were as follows. First, a 'southern cabinet' would be created. It was a committee of ministers and senior officials who would be responsible for the southern conflict. Secondly, it would revamp the SBPAC to make it a permanent body backed by legislation to give it greater power and authority. Thirdly, a programme of socio-economic development projects would address material needs in the area, as part of a 'total development concept'. Fourthly, the government would renew emphasis on the issues of human rights and proper behaviour by government officials. Fifthly, it would increase the use of forensic science, CCTV and other technologies to support evidence-based arrests and prosecutions. Finally, local people would be encouraged to participate in their own security arrangements.³⁴¹ However, it was contended that the policy of this government did not connect enough with the local communities, but instead chose to interact with academics who had the same views as the government.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Srisompob Jitpiromsri and Duncan McCargo, "The Southern Thai Conflict Six Years On: Insurgency, Not just Crime," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32, no. 2 (2010): 170.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 172.

³⁴² The Secretariat of the Senate, *Two Year of Abhisit's Government*, <http://www.senate.go.th/committee2551/committee/files/committee5/2%20Year%20Apsit.pdf> (accessed 24 March 2014).

4.6.8 Yingluck Shinawatra

Yingluck Shinawatra was the first female prime minister and also the Minister of Defense from August 2011 to 7 May 2014. She was highly criticised as the sister of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and was deemed responsible for creating some of the deepest political divisions in contemporary Thai society. The government's policy statement which was delivered by Prime Minister Yingluck to the parliament listed the southern unrest problem as one of its 16 urgent policies. However, this government encountered political crisis and other urgent problems such as the flood crisis, protests and investigations into her corruption. Therefore, the southern violence has not received much attention from the government. The policy statement concerning the southern conflict said, in essence, that the government promised to promote the local administration model which could be compatible with the local characteristics, but there was still no tangible outcome. Furthermore, the direction of the government concerning policy in the southernmost conflict was confusing.³⁴³

Having said all this, the government marked an important turning point in the southern conflict's resolution when the first official peace talks were held on 28 February 2013 between the Thai state's representative led by the Kingdom's National Security Council (NSC) Secretary-General, Paradorn Pattanathabut and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) headed by Hassan Taib. After one year, both sides have had three official peace talks facilitated by Malaysia, but it still seems a long way from success. Also, these peace talks still had some weaknesses, for example, no cooperation among relevant Thai authorities (i.e. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ISOC, the Royal Thai Army and the National Intelligence Agency); the main actors in the peace talks lacked experience, clear plans, roadmaps or timeframes; the Thai delegation lacked full powers over making decisions from the government; and the talk processes lacked public participation.³⁴⁴

³⁴³ Pakorn Puengnetr, "One Year of Yingluck's Government-Southern Fire Solution?," *Thai Post*, 30 July 2012, <http://www.thaipost.net/news/300712/60289> (accessed 16 March 2014) [in Thai].

³⁴⁴ Pakorn Puengnetr, "One Year after Peace Talks," *Bangkokbiznews*, 19 March 2014, http://www.bangkokbiznews.com/home/detail/politics/opinion/prakorn_kob/20140319/569688/ (accessed 20 March 2014) [in Thai].

Moreover, the BRN is not the only insurgent group active in the south. Negotiation with only one group could create more tension among the other militant groups.

4.7 The Restructuring of Key Agencies in the South

As conflict areas like these southernmost provinces are sensitive and needed extra attention from the state, several state agencies have been initiated in this region. These authorities were established by different governments for various reasons. The following will give an overview of some of the key state authorities operating in the deep south.

4.7.1 The Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC)

Prime Minister Prem established a new administrative system to coordinate a shift from confrontation to negotiation. The SBPAC was originally established in 1981 to help contain the local communist insurgency, but it also became effective in managing separatist tensions. The SBPAC was responsible for designing and implementing political, social and economic policies so as to improve community relations and draw support away from the insurgents.³⁴⁵

The SBPAC was initially under the Fourth Army Region Commander, and later the Interior Minister. There was a particular emphasis on understanding Malay-Muslim culture so training programmes were provided for non-Malay officials in cultural awareness and the local Pattani Malay language.

The SBPAC was designed to address two major problems in the administration of the southernmost provinces: poor coordination among agencies, and corruption and prejudice among officials. The SBPAC enhanced mutual understanding and trust between the central government in Bangkok and the ethnic Malay-Muslim community, while also improving intelligence gathering and coordination among various elements of the Thai authorities and security forces. The SBPAC was well known for being able

³⁴⁵ Southern Thailand: the Impact of the Coup," *International Crisis Group Asia Report* no. 129 (15 March 2007): 13.

to listen to complaints from the local Malay Muslims concerning corrupt, abusive, or inept government officials, and was believed to be able to order the transfer of those officials within a day. Over the 1980s and early 1990s, violence dropped off significantly.³⁴⁶ By the year 2000, the Thai authorities were confident that the ethnic Malay-Muslim insurgency had largely been quelled.³⁴⁷

After its dissolution in 2002 by Thaksin's government, the SBPAC was re-established during Surayud's term under Prime Ministerial Decree 207 on 30 October 2006. The new SBPAC was directed to: "urgently facilitate civilian activity in the border provinces"; "compile and propose projects and budgets for government agencies"; "direct and coordinate action in the area of justice, the preservation of freedom, the administration of justice, assistance, compensation and development according to just principles"; and "develop civil servants and government officers working in the border provinces towards efficiency consistent with the characteristics of the society, economy, culture and way of life in the region".³⁴⁸ The new structure of the SBPAC is slightly different from its predecessor. A notable innovation in its new structure has been the addition of Justice Ministry officials to the mix of its civil servants, adding to Defence, Education and Interior Ministry officials.

4.7.2 The Civilian-Police-Military Task Force (CPM 43)

The CPM 43 was also established by Prime Minister Prem in 1981 to coordinate security operations by reducing military predominance and giving civilians and the police greater security roles.³⁴⁹ It was under strict orders to ensure that extra-judicial killings and disappearances ceased.³⁵⁰ Before the control of security was handed to the police during Thaksin's term, CPM 43 helped to maintain a delicate balance between the security and intelligence agencies operating in the south.³⁵¹ In 2002, CPM 43 was

³⁴⁶ International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand," *Asia Report*, 11.

³⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch, "No One is Safe," 28 August 2007, <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/10779/section/4> (accessed 24 February 2010).

³⁴⁸ Askew, "Thailand's," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 198.

³⁴⁹ Funston, *Southern Thailand*, 16.

³⁵⁰ International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand," *Asia Report*, 11.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

also dissolved together with SBPAC and then it was revived during Surayud's government.

4.7.3 The Southern Border Provinces Peace-building Command (SBPPC)

During Thaksin's term, the SBPPC was established in March 2004 by prime ministerial order under the ISOC.³⁵² The SBPPC aimed to direct and coordinate military, police and intelligence operations in the south, as well as to oversee social, economic and education policies of civilian agencies. It was an organisation intended to establish permanent peace and security through understanding the way of life and social conditions of people in the southern border provinces and promoting peaceful co-existence in Thai society and fostering an understanding of their problems and real needs leading eventually to sustainable development. The SBPPC strategy was to build peace by using psychological operations together with social and economic development, more than by political and military operations.³⁵³

The structure of the SBPPC has been revamped several times after its establishment. Today, the main strategy of the SBPPC is to promote the King's advice of 'Understanding, Reaching out, and Development' in order to resolve the conflict in the south.³⁵⁴

4.7.4 The National Reconciliation Commission (NRC)

In 2005, the NRC was appointed by Prime Minister Thaksin to help ease problems in the deep south. The order for the formation of the Commission was issued on 28 March 2005, with former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun as chairman and a prominent social critic, Prawase Wasi, as vice-chairman. It comprised sixteen representatives from the civic sector in the affected areas, eleven representatives from the civic sector outside the affected areas, seven from the political sector, and nine from the

³⁵² Funston, *Southern Thailand*, 25.

³⁵³ South Peace, Website, http://www.southpeace.go.th/eng/sp_civil.htm (accessed 7 February 2010).

³⁵⁴ The Government Public Relations Department, "Strategies of Southern Border Provinces Peace-building Command," 14 August 2012, http://region4.prd.go.th/ewt_news.php?nid=20817 (accessed 23 March 2014).

public sector. The Secretary of the Cabinet served as member and secretary, with well-known academics Gothom Arya and Surichai Wankaew as co-members and secretaries.³⁵⁵

The NRC was responsible for suggesting policies, measures, mechanisms, and methods to create reconciliation and bring peace to Thai society, especially in the three southern border provinces. It investigated the southern unrest and conducted research studies on southern problems. The NRC was entrusted with developing processes to prevent and ease conflicts and violence and make these processes known widely among the general public. It also educated the public on the adverse effects of violence and hatred and the necessity of using peaceful means to stop the violence. At the same time, the NRC promoted social justice with respect for social and cultural diversity.

Anand finally submitted the NRC's recommendations on 5 June 2006. The highlights among them were as follows:

- Introducing Islamic law;
- Making ethnic Pattani-Malay (Yawi) a working language in the region;
- Establishing an unarmed peacekeeping force; and
- Establishing a Peaceful Strategic Administrative Centre for Southern Border Provinces.

The Thaksin administration assigned a government committee to study the report, but nothing tangible came of it. The NRC was terminated in March 2006 after the parliament had been dissolved. Since then, they have not appointed a new committee.

4.7.5 The Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC)

The ISOC is a unit of the military devoted to national security issues. It was originally set up to fight the communist insurgency between the 1960s and 1980s during which it was implicated in numerous brutalities against activists and civilians. After Thaksin was deposed in a military coup, the junta transformed the ISOC into a 'government within a government,' giving

³⁵⁵ The Government Public Relations Department, "Short-Term Measures to Ease Violence in the Deep South," 1 August 2005, http://thailand.prd.go.th/view_inside.php?id=883 (accessed 7 February 2010).

it wide-reaching authority over the National Counter Corruption Committee, the Department of Special Investigation, and the Anti-Money Laundering Office. In June 2007, the junta approved a draft national security bill which would give the ISOC significant change in powers to handle any new round of violence in the country. After being revamped, the junta gave the ISOC more and new powers as well as allowed the ISOC chief to implement security measures, such as searches, without seeking approval from the prime minister. The ISOC is under the authority of the Office of the Prime Minister.³⁵⁶

4.8 Laws Issued during the Conflict

Three new laws were put in place in the southern border provinces granting the military extraordinary powers: Martial Law, the Emergency Decree and the Internal Security Act (ISA). This complexity of legislation created a climate of impunity and heightened the risk of human rights abuse which was often counter-productive. It was criticised that these three laws aimed to make the state officials more convenient in arrest, searching and detention. These processes can be done faster with these laws. However, the processes of investigation, the number of officials, equipment and technology remain the same and have never been adjusted to be compatible with new laws.³⁵⁷ This is not fair to the locals who could be arrested as a suspect easier and faster, but are still stuck in the old process of investigation which takes a long time to prove their innocence. It was believed that the three special laws deepened mistrust of the security forces and increased public discontent.

4.8.1 Martial Law B.E. 2475

The military imposed Martial Law in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat and in some districts in Songkhla after the raid on the army depot in January 2004. The law allowed the military to carry out search and arrest without

³⁵⁶ Internal Security Operations Command, Website, www.isoc.thaigov.net (accessed 26 January 2010).

³⁵⁷ Prakong Tekachut, "The Three Southern Border Provinces with Justice," *Justice Journal* 6 no. 2 (December 2011-January 2012): 133. [in Thai].

court warrants and detain suspects for seven days without charge. The military was also allowed to terminate any gathering and to control any communication in this area.

The problems caused by using this law are as follows:³⁵⁸

- The power of the military was higher than other state authorities creating tension among them;
- Detention of a suspect could be done without any judicial process;
- Repeated detentions annoyed the local people;
- Relatives of detainees could not contact detainees; and
- Detainees were not allowed to see lawyers or have any legal consultants.

4.8.2 Emergency Decree B.E. 2548

Thaksin's government replaced Martial Law with the Executive Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations (or Emergency Decree for short) in the three provinces on 19 July 2005. The decree transferred supervisory responsibility for the overall operation of the law from the army to the government and gave authority to the police and interior ministry officials to carry out security operations alongside the military. For the decree to take effect, the government had to designate an area as being under 'a state of emergency' and the designation was subject to renewal every three months. The decree offered some legal protection for an accused as it required that military, police and interior ministry officers had to jointly sign a request for a court warrant.

The decree still authorised harsh measures, however, as it allowed security officials to hold suspects without charge for up to 30 days with court approval - an increase from seven days under martial law. It was described as 'a license to kill,'³⁵⁹ because Sections 16 and 17 granted law enforcement officers immunity from civil, criminal and disciplinary penalties

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 132.

³⁵⁹ The phrase "a license to kill" was used by Anand Panyarachun, a former prime minister who headed the NRC.

and suspended the jurisdiction of administrative courts to prosecute officials.³⁶⁰

Following the coup, martial law was again imposed, this time throughout the country. It was gradually lifted everywhere, apart from the deep south, where martial law and the emergency decree were in force concurrently. Together, they granted more power to the security forces than either measure alone would do. In consequence, security officials were using a 'seven + 30 formula': they arrested suspects and held them for seven days under martial law, then extended the detention for another 30 days under the emergency decree.³⁶¹

The examples of the problems caused by this law are as follows:³⁶²

- Suspects could be detained for an extended period under the Martial Law and the Emergency Decree;
- Warrants of arrest were issued too easily;
- The process was too complicated caused delays and overlapped with the Martial Law creating confusion; and
- Some suspects disappeared after being released.

4.8.3 Internal Security Act (ISA) B.E. 2551

The ISA also created further public discontent. Under this law, the ISOC was in charge of maintaining "internal security," which was defined as "any threat of disorder, destruction, loss of life, limb or property of the people or the state".³⁶³ The act made the ISOC the focal point of internal security policymaking granting it powers to monitor, investigate and evaluate potential internal security threats. The law allowed the ISOC to "prevent, suppress, eradicate, overcome or mitigate occurrences that affect internal security".³⁶⁴ Moreover, Section 21 allowed the ISOC Director, with court consent, to drop legal charges against any suspect in security-related cases if the person confessed his or her wrongdoings and agreed to undergo a six month 're-education' training programme under military supervision. This

³⁶⁰ International Crisis Group, "Thailand: Political Turmoil," *Asia Report*, 13.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁶² Prakong, "The Three Southern Border Provinces," 132.

³⁶³ International Crisis Group, "Southern Thailand: Moving Towards Political Solutions?," *Asia Report* no.181 (8 December 2009):12.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

programme was called 'Peace Development Programme' and included academic, historical, religious, vocational and recreational activities. It aimed to change the mindset of the people who used to join militant groups so that they were able to go back to a normal life.³⁶⁵

The military expected this amnesty strategy would entice insurgents into surrendering, as it did with members of the Communist Party of Thailand in the 1980s. However, there was no suggestion that the southern insurgents were in the same position, so the tactic seemed unlikely to work. Rather, large-scale detentions were likely to fuel additional resentment.³⁶⁶

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter gave an overview of the insurgency in southern Thailand and how various governments have handled the conflict in this region. Under diverse circumstances, each government had different focuses and directions in trying to resolve the violence in the south and these various strategies affected the trend of the violent situation differently. Overall, the government policies focused mainly on security issues, especially increasing troop strength, implementing laws and reorganising the government agencies. Despite efforts to reach out to southern Muslims, the government made no serious attempt to address the key substantive issues – economic, political, education, social and cultural,– and bring about justice for past abuses. Political turmoil in Bangkok has polarised the country and distracted attention from the conflict. As long as the state is unable to resolve other urgent problems, for example political polarisation, unstable government and economic crisis, it is unlikely that the southern conflict will receive serious attention from the central government. Therefore, most governments have tended to hand over power and responsibility in resolving the conflict to the military.

It was, however, proved that the state's tools alone, including national policy, laws and administrative restructuring cannot resolve the conflict.

³⁶⁵ Isra News Agency, "Section 21: Re-education Training Programme," 14 September 2012, <http://isranews.org/south-news/scoop/38-2009-11-15-11-15-01/16365--q-21q-.html> (accessed 20 March 2014) [in Thai].

³⁶⁶ International Crisis Group, "Thailand: Political Turmoil," *Asia Report*, 13.

Even worse, some of those policies have only further provoked tension and resentment in the local community.

The next chapter will examine five cases of ethno-religious conflict in South and Southeast Asian countries including India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia and Myanmar, and the roles of the civil society sector in these conflicts.

CHAPTER V

ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

5.1 Introduction

After World War II, by international comparison to countries in other parts of the world (e.g. Africa) which also have internal ethnic conflicts, Asia has been a region that has seen a high number of violent conflicts.³⁶⁷ Many governments in South and Southeast Asia have struggled to stabilise their countries after achieving independence. One of the main problems has been ethno-religious conflict which in many countries was caused by the effects of colonial rule. These regions have clearly been destabilised by ethno-religious conflict which has resulted in thousands of people dying and becoming internally displaced.³⁶⁸

There are many actors involved in the conflict and peace process. The state and the insurgents are the key players, and peace is always defined as some form of a balance of power that is obtained between them.³⁶⁹ Although the state has retained its main role in making decisions in most domestic matters, the importance of the civil society sector in peacebuilding has recently been highlighted. The concept of civil society's role in creating peace became popular among countries with ongoing ethnic conflicts when the civil society organisations were encouraged to participate in the peacebuilding process of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission which was formed in 2006.³⁷⁰

This chapter will describe the ethno-religious conflicts in South and Southeast Asian countries including the Assam conflict in India, the Eelam

³⁶⁷ Aurel Croissant and Christoph Trinn, "Culture, Identity and Conflict in Asia and Southeast Asia," *ASIEN* 110 (January 2009): 17.

³⁶⁸ Rizal Sukma, "Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia: Causes and the Quest for Solution," in *Ethnic Conflicts in Southeast Asia*, ed. Kusuma Snitwongse and W. Scott Thompson (Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2005), 1.

³⁶⁹ Samir Kumar Das, *Conflict and Peace in India's Northeast: The Role of Civil Society* (Washington: East-West Center, 2007), vii.

³⁷⁰ Peacebuilding Initiative, Website, *Introduction to Peacebuilding*, <http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org/index9eb1.html?pagelD=1681> (accessed 24 May 2013).

war in Sri Lanka, the Mindanao conflict in the Philippines, the Aceh conflict in Indonesia and the hill tribe conflicts in Myanmar. These cases will create a better understanding of the background, nature and causes of the ethno-religious conflicts in these regions. Moreover, this chapter will show how civil society is involved in some peacebuilding activities which would reduce the tension in the conflict areas.

5.2 An Overview of Ethno-religious Conflicts in South and Southeast Asia

South and Southeast Asia have been home to indigenous militant groups for decades. Before World War II, most South and Southeast Asian countries were dominated by the Western colonial powers. After the war ended, most countries became independent when their foreign rulers departed either through an independence struggle or voluntarily. In other cases, territories were governed by unrepresentative governments that were both undemocratic and brutal. In many cases, colonial rule and nation-building issues affected directly the identities and values of the minorities of the country and exacerbated feelings of resistance toward central governments, with a huge impact on regional security and stability as a whole.³⁷¹

The persistence of ethnic insurgencies in South and Southeast Asia has challenged the governments in many countries. Today, most ethnic insurgencies in these regions are deeply entrenched, thereby increasing the insurgents' capacity to engage the states in protracted, low-intensity wars of attrition, and greatly enlarging the threat posed to these states' territorial integrity and continued sovereign existence.³⁷²

Ethnic insurgents in South and Southeast Asia have sought ways to enhance the durability, visibility and audibility of their movements through

³⁷¹ Thanawat Pimoljinda, "Ethno-religious Movements Remain Barrier to Creating Asean Community," *Jakarta Globe*, 2 April 2010, <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/opinion/ethno-religious-movements-remain-barrier-to-creating-asean-community/367178> (accessed 5 April 2010).

³⁷² Rajat Ganguly, "Introduction: the Challenge of Ethnic Insurgency and Secession in South and Southeast Asia," in *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South and Southeast Asia*, ed. Rajat Ganguly (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2003), 13.

several different channels. For example, militant groups in Sri Lanka and the Philippines have carried out international diplomatic activities with an aim to gain external sympathisers and supporters who could provide political, moral, and material support.³⁷³ Almost all the major ethnic insurgent groups in these regions have maintained their existence by resorting to terrorist attacks. Usually lacking the resources needed for conventional military warfare, insurgent groups often resort to terrorism because it is cheaper and more effective in creating wider circumstances of fear and insecurity. Terrorism is usually more difficult for the state to detect and counter and it also attracts broad domestic and international publicity.³⁷⁴

Moreover, since ethnic conflict cases try to prevent outside states from imposing solutions on them, or intervening in their internal matters, they may engage in direct violence against other states than the one in which they reside. The international targets of ethno-terrorism are, however, not exclusively foreign government officers, diplomats, or politicians. Terrorist attacks against foreign nationals located in one's own state also help to internationalise an ethnic conflict and bring publicity for the group. Furthermore, terrorists may hijack international passenger flights, extort ransoms, and resort to kidnapping and assassination of foreign businessmen, aid workers, and tourists in order to publicise their movement and the reasons for their terrorist activities.³⁷⁵

In South Asia, the conflicts among different religions and ethnicities in India have a complex history. One of the more prominent conflicts is the one between India and Pakistan which have fought over the states of Jammu and Kashmir since 1947. The Hindu Maharajah of Kashmir decided to accede to India in the wake of the invasion by Pakistani forces. After becoming part of India, the majority of Muslims in Kashmir have continued to fight for autonomy from India whose population is largely Hindu. The Kashmir dispute became a main ethno-religious conflict in this region and seems to be a prolonged international conflict.³⁷⁶ There have been a

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 14.

³⁷⁶ Baanjomyut, *Religious War*, http://www.baanjomyut.com/library/war_of_religions/02.html (accessed 25 August 2013).

number of non-international armed conflicts and internal disturbances as well as the conflicts in the 'Seven Sisters' states of India and the civil war in Sri Lanka.³⁷⁷ The Northeast of India comprises of seven states which are characterised by extraordinary ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity. Most states in the region are currently affected by some form of insurgent violence and ethno-religious conflict.³⁷⁸ In Sri Lanka, the Eelam war between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamils reached its peak in the 1990s. The main Tamil insurgent organisation, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), demanded a separate state for the Tamils.³⁷⁹

Most countries in Southeast Asia have faced difficulties after gaining independence. In the Philippines, the decades old conflict in Muslim Mindanao, which had held out some hope for resolution with the signing of the 1996 peace agreement between the Philippines government and the largest Muslim rebel group, the Moro National Liberation Front, flared up once again in the late 1990s mainly as a result of the government's failure to keep their promise on economic assistance and development for Mindanao.³⁸⁰ In the case of Indonesia, one of the most widespread issues of contemporary ethnic politics is related to the attempt by the state to deal politically and economically with the grievances of Muslims and the communities on the other islands who perceive themselves as second-class citizens who have been left out by the state's distribution of wealth.³⁸¹ In the case of Myanmar, one of the dominant issues of contemporary politics is clearly that of the ethnic rebellions against the central state, and the domination of that state by ethnic Burmese.³⁸²

Overall, internal security issues remain a challenge for South and Southeast Asian countries. These regions remain threatened by ethno-religious separatist insurgencies that have been fighting for their autonomy, although there is a huge effort to develop peaceful coexistence, and constructive economic and political collaboration.

³⁷⁷ Ganguly, "Introduction," 10.

³⁷⁸ Das, *Conflict and Peace*, 75.

³⁷⁹ Ganguly, "Introduction," 10.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁸¹ David Brown, *The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 1994), 31.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 30.

5.3 The Nature of Ethno-religious Conflicts in South and Southeast Asian Countries

Throughout history, ethnic diversity is to be found almost everywhere in the world, but only some countries have been facing the difficulties caused by ethnic conflict and violence. Ted Robert Gurr, a leading expert on ethnic conflict, concluded in *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South and Southeast Asia* that there are four factors determining whether or not a minority will mobilise against the state dominance.³⁸³

The first one is the degree of economic, social and political disparities between groups. Normally, severely deprived groups have a greater chance of becoming politically active. Deprivation alone, however, is not enough for ethnic conflict to erupt. A group must have other factors to strengthen its capacity.³⁸⁴

The second factor is the salience of group identity. Motivations for forming ethnic groups may be material, as in mobilisation for the defence of interests or resources. Psychological factors, such as dehumanisation or social discrimination, could stimulate cohesiveness within a group and eventually increase polarisation between groups. Symbols are important for group makers in this process of mobilisation.³⁸⁵

Third, organisational skills and regional concentration are also crucial to the development of political activity. Strong leadership is important to the rise and growth of ethnic movements.³⁸⁶

Finally, ethnic mobilisation must get a response from the state against which it is reacting. Interactions are also important factors that have to be considered. Conflicts between dominant groups and minorities usually involve issues of national identity, the expansion and centralisation of nationalist political authority which creates a competitive atmosphere for power to control a country's resources, and for the recognition of ethnicity as a basis for resource competition and political access.³⁸⁷

³⁸³ Ganguly, "Introduction," 32

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

Although there has been no uniform pattern in the emergence of ethnic violence in these regions, there are some common causes of conflict. These include the following:

- ***Ethnic Tensions Caused by Colonialism***

In history, diversities could be found in most countries in South and Southeast Asia, however, these diverse ethnic communities had lived together without any serious conflict for centuries. Today, the issue of ethnic conflict has become an unsolved problem for many countries in these regions. A main factor that has fostered ethnic conflict in recent years is these regions' colonial history. Colonial rule played a significant role in increasing the ethnic diversity in their territories. Both colonial and post-colonial politics have been a main influence on today's clashes between ethnic communities and governments.³⁸⁸ During the colonial period, Western powers intervened in every aspect of their colonies' internal matters such as the administrative structure, economics, social structure and territory or ethnic zone division. Even the only uncolonised country in Southeast Asia, Thailand, was affected by the powerful Britain.

- ***Unsuccessful Nation-building***

After decolonisation, most states were weak and lacked internal stability. There was no successful process of nation-building for the post-colonial countries. The governments were not able to deal with existing conflicts and often continued with heavy-handed measures to suppress ethnic minorities. Moreover, corruption undermined the government's credibility. States faced difficulties in gaining the trust of local people.³⁸⁹ In several post-colonial countries, nation-building has been considered as one of the most important tasks since they gained independence. In general, all countries aim to achieve unity and harmony among ethnic groups. This effort, however, is not an easy task because one of the most important characteristics of a country is its ethnic diversity. In some countries, the

³⁸⁸ Haji Zakaria Ahmad and Suzaina Kadir, "Ethnic Conflict, Prevention and Management: The Malaysian Case," in *Ethnic Conflicts in Southeast Asia*, ed. Kusuma Snitwongse and W. Scott Thompson (Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2005), 42.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

government's efforts to unite the nation failed due to ethnic and religious conflicts.³⁹⁰

- ***Migrations Create Demographic Diversity***

The geography of South and Southeast Asia includes peninsulas, islands and a mainland on which more than ten countries share borders. It was believed that states which share more borders, have increased likelihood of ethnic conflict occurring.³⁹¹ An increase in the number of refugees coming into a country also increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict occurring.³⁹² It is common that people would migrate from poor and insecure countries to where labour is needed and land is easy to find. One of the consequences of the migration is a change in demography in terms of religion, language, and ethnicity. The colonial period encouraged migration mostly for the development of industry and commerce. For instance, the situation in Assam was caused by colonial-era immigration which produced a stubborn pattern of conflicts between immigrant communities and those with indigenous roots.³⁹³

- ***Differences in Identities***

Identity refers to more than just the strict adherence to religious practices, but also appeals to a common language, culture, heritage, and the shared memories of history. Conflicts involving groups that share a transcendental view and which have the same religion and language often involve more violence than other conflicts.³⁹⁴ Religion, in particular, has been shown to be an issue in many worldwide conflicts. Some studies have agreed that countries with religious diversity are more likely to experience ethno-religious conflict than are those that are highly homogeneous.³⁹⁵ There are at least four major religions in these regions including Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism. Thus, religion is an important factor which has an influence on ethnic conflicts in these regions.

³⁹⁰ Saad and Jacob. "Managing Ethnic Conflict," *Asian Social Science*, 69.

³⁹¹ Mai Nguyen, "Causes of Ethnic Conflict: examining the Role of Religious Diversity and Contagion Effects," http://www.creighton.edu/fileadmin/user/CCAS/docs/Mai_Nguyen.pdf (accessed 22 August 2013).

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Rajat Ganguly, *Autonomy and Ethnic Conflict in South and South-East Asia* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 32.

³⁹⁴ Croissant and Trinn, "Culture," *ASIEN*, 22.

³⁹⁵ Nguyen, "Causes of Ethnic Conflict."

- ***Marginal Citizens***

Minor groups which are different from the majority of the country tend to think they are treated by the state as marginal people. Economic inequality, social discrimination, the lack of opportunities for political participation, and repression have made the minorities of a country feel that they have been left behind and are not part of the state. In some countries, minorities have even been threatened and suppressed brutally. These factors have triggered ethnic violence and caused marginalised people to fight for their rights and for a better quality of life. The separatist groups normally request for independence or some form of autonomy. These types of rebellion and violent movements might be supported or sponsored by foreign sources that have the same ethnicity or religion or assisted by international organisations that see the government as having abused the minority's human rights.

5.4 Case Studies of Ethno-religious Conflict in South and Southeast Asia

South and Southeast Asian countries provide significant case studies of ethno-religious conflicts. Most countries in these regions have encountered long-run ethnic and religious conflicts. There may be more than one conflict in each country and also various actors involved in the conflict. The level of the conflict in these countries includes international and domestic issues which can be found among two or more communities as well as between insurgent groups and the state. Some conflicts have moved forward in a peaceful direction while in many countries a solution is still hard to find. The most well-known cases of conflict in South and Southeast Asia will be discussed in this section.

The effect of ethno-religious conflicts in these five countries in South and Southeast Asia are profound. All cases concern the conflicts between insurgent groups or minority groups and the government. The first two cases that will be considered are from South Asia: the Assam conflict in India and the Eelam War in Sri Lanka. The rest are conflicts that have happened in

Southeast Asia: the conflict in Mindanao, the Philippines; the Aceh case in Indonesia; and the hill tribe conflict in Myanmar.

5.4.1 India: The Assam Conflict

India is an important place for the study of ethnic conflict. Its billion people, its many languages and cultures, its crosscutting identities of religion, ethnicity and caste - all these contribute to a unique potential for learning about ethno-religious conflict. India has nearly 4,693 separate communities and eight major religious faiths of the world.³⁹⁶ Hinduism is the largest religion in India (80.5% of the population); followed by Islam (13.4%), Christianity (2.3%), Sikhism (1.9%), Buddhism (0.8%), and Jainism (0.4%). India has the world's largest Hindu population, and the third-largest Muslim population.³⁹⁷

Furthermore, it is the caste system - a system of hierarchical and social organisation-that has formed the basic foundation of India's pluralistic social structure.³⁹⁸ Besides various religions and a unique social structure, India has various tribal groups and dialects among linguistic groups and up to 645 district tribes are recognised in the constitution of India. Some religious groups have developed themselves into ethnically self-conscious communities that make their claims for a nation or autonomy.³⁹⁹

India's social structure is a unique mixture of different religions, cultures and ethnic groups. Historically, India was a place for immigrants and invaders from Europe and Asia.⁴⁰⁰ Additionally, British colonial rule, especially its 'divide and rule' policy, was responsible for Hindu-Muslim conflict and the breakdown of communal harmony in India.⁴⁰¹ Since then, religion, ethnicity and language have been the issues that keep challenging the government of pluralistic India.

³⁹⁶ Sarbeswar Sahoo, "Ethno-religious Identity and Sectarian Civil Society: A Case from India," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 8, no. 3 (2008): 453.

³⁹⁷ Webindia123, Website, <http://www.webindia123.com/religion/indiafacts.htm> (accessed 22 December 2014).

³⁹⁸ P.R. Rajeswar, *Ethnic Conflicts in South Asia: Cases of India and Sri Lanka*, <http://www.idsa-india.org/an-sep-9.html> (accessed 11 December 2012).

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Sahoo, "Ethno-religious Identity," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 454.

The Assam Conflict

Assam is one of the seven states known as the 'Seven Sisters' located in Northeast India. Assam shares international borders with Bhutan to the north, Myanmar to the east and Bangladesh in the south.

The Assam conflict has been continuing for decades and this ethno-religious conflict was caused by the influx of migrants.⁴⁰² One of the consequences of this migration has been a significant change in Assam's religious demography.⁴⁰³ The population in Assam was assessed with the Hindu population at about 42 per cent and the Muslim population at 77 per cent from 1971 to 1991.⁴⁰⁴ In Assam, the Muslim growth rate was much higher than the national average and was disproportionately larger in the districts bordering Bangladesh due to the immigration of Muslims across the borders.⁴⁰⁵ Some tensions were created among native Assamese people and Muslim migrants as they created pressures on land and caused unemployment amongst the Assamese people.⁴⁰⁶

Today, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) is the biggest separatist group operating in Assam. ULFA originated from the 'Assam Movement' initiated on 7 April 1979.⁴⁰⁷ Thousands have died in three decades of violence since ULFA was formed in 1979, demanding independence from India which it accused of plundering the region's mineral and agricultural resources.⁴⁰⁸ According to Assam people, Assam was never a part of India at any time in history, but it has been occupied by India. The purpose of the movement is to overthrow Indian colonial occupation from Assam.⁴⁰⁹ The people of Assam are confronting various problems including national identity, a backward economy, an influx of migrants and massive exploitation of its natural resources. India has encouraged the

⁴⁰² Das, *Conflict and Peace*, 8.

⁴⁰³ Ganguly, *Autonomy*, 32.

⁴⁰⁴ Das, *Conflict and Peace*, 8.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁷ Ganguly, *Autonomy*, 30.

⁴⁰⁸ Guwahati, "ULFA Softens Demand on Assam Independence," *Reuters*, 3 January 2011, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/01/03/idINIndia-53891120110103> (accessed 5 November 2013).

⁴⁰⁹ United Liberation Front of Assam, Homepage, <http://web.archive.org/web/20091027113256/http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Congress/7434/ulfa.htm> (accessed 10 August 2013).

influx of Muslims from neighbouring countries because this is a population base that has ethnic affinity with Indians. It was seen as an advantage to their long-term security. The people of Assam have launched democratic and unarmed peaceful movements many times against the injustice of India which, however, has always ruthlessly suppressed and killed hundreds of innocent protestors. There are endless lists of gross human rights violations during this period by Indian occupation forces. Eventually, the unarmed peaceful movement transformed to an armed national liberation struggle. A military wing of ULFA, the Sanjukta Mukti Fouj (SMF) was formed on 16 March, 1996.⁴¹⁰ The main intention of this military operation is to suppress the legitimate aspiration of the people of Assam, and their basic and fundamental human rights such as national self-determination.⁴¹¹

ULFA earlier agreed to abjure violence and to find a solution to the conflict through peaceful negotiations with the conflicting parties. The first step to find peace in Assam was a tripartite agreement for the Suspension of Operations (SoO) against ULFA signed between the Indian Government, Assam government and ULFA on 3 September 2011.⁴¹² The main concerns and demands of the ULFA in the negotiation were classified into three areas: protection of political and cultural identity of the indigenous people of Assam; land rights; and illegal immigration.⁴¹³

The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding

Civil society groups play diverse roles in making peace in India's Northeast, for example, civic representatives, peace groups, bridge-builders, and popular initiatives.⁴¹⁴ Civil society groups have been seen as representing the ethnic community and thereby get involved in creating conflict resolution in the region.⁴¹⁵ The second category of civil society groups are those expressly set up with the objective of making the

⁴¹⁰ South Asia Terrorism Portal, *United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)*, http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/assam/terrorist_outfits/ulfa.htm (accessed 5 November 2013).

⁴¹¹ United Liberation Front of Assam, Homepage.

⁴¹² The Hindu, "Tripartite Agreement Signed with ULFA," 4 December 2011, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2421033.ece> (accessed 10 August 2013).

⁴¹³ Best Current Affairs, "Tripartite Talks Between Govt of India, Assam Govt & ULF Held," 27 June 2013, <http://bestcurrentaffairs.com/w/tripartite-talks-between-govt-of-india-assam-govt-ulfa-held/> (accessed 5 November 2013).

⁴¹⁴ Das, *Conflict and Peace*, 42.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

necessary preparations for peace dialogues between conflicting parties, working out ceasefire details, and thereby facilitating a process that directly supports the signing of peace agreements.⁴¹⁶ As a bridge-builder, civil society plays an active role in creating links at the local level thereby making the coexistence of different communities possible.⁴¹⁷ The final role of civil society in creating peace is also located in some loosely organised popular initiatives that mark its emergence as a force autonomous from both the state and the insurgents. These unorganised initiatives, however, have yet to find any significant reflection in the institutionally established frameworks of peace making and conflict resolution.⁴¹⁸

Unfortunately, the roles of civil society in the peacebuilding process remain limited largely to a secretarial role. Civil society in Assam has largely remained in the background, and its roles have been restricted to doing the groundwork necessary for the conflicting parties to stop hostilities, and to find a negotiated settlement to their problems. In still fewer cases, civil society groups have been involved in direct talks with the government.⁴¹⁹ The involvement of civil society groups in the peace process, however, may help to infuse the process with the values of human rights, democracy and justice.⁴²⁰ The Calcutta Research Group (CRG) is an example of a civil society initiative that attempts to bring these values to be a main focus of the peace process. The CRG organises a series of dialogues among the representatives from different communities to bring together conflicting parties so they can feel relaxed and confident with the organisers who are not involved as conflicting parties. One more main task of the CRG is to bring together experts and academics that can analyse the peace agreements of the past, and activists who would attempt to share their experiences of some of their conditions for success and failure in order to determine the peace process for this region.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 46.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 47.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 49.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 53.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 54.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 52.

In the dialogue between the government and ULFA, one of the specified roles of Assam's civil society is to be part of the resolution process. Government sources have said that civil society groups will have a very vital role to play in consolidating the many communities that make up the greater Assamese community. Lots of the demands concern socio-economic-cultural issues where civil society must play a very important role.⁴²² Poverty and unemployment are serious problems caused by massive political corruption as a result of which natural resources are wastefully exploited with little benefit for the locals. Social problems including inequalities and lack of dignity for the local people is due to unchecked immigration that threatens the existence of the identity of local people.⁴²³

5.4.2 Sri Lanka: The Eelam War

Sri Lanka has a population of about 20 million, which is broadly divided into the majority - 74 per cent of Sinhalese, who are mainly Buddhist; the Tamils, who are predominantly Hindu (18 per cent); and the Tamil-speaking Muslims (7 per cent).⁴²⁴ The first Europeans who came to Sri Lanka were the Portuguese in 1505. Next, the island was controlled by the Dutch for more than a hundred years. Britain was the last nation which took over the country in 1796 before it gained independence in 1948.⁴²⁵

The Sinhalese came originally from India in the third century B.C.,⁴²⁶ and are mostly concentrated in the southern, western and central parts of Sri Lanka. Most of the Tamil population is located in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka and is split into two distinct groups: the Jaffna Tamils, who were one of the first tribes that arrived on the island over 1,500 years ago and the Indian Tamils, who were brought to Sri Lanka by the

⁴²² Silchar Chronicle, Blog, "Assam Civil Society Prepare for Lasting Resolution," <http://www.silcharchronicle.com/2012/11/assam-civil-society-prepare-for-lasting-resolution7411.php> (accessed 12 January 2013).

⁴²³ The Hindu, "Civil Society Group Hands Over Charter of Demands to ULFA," 8 May 2011, <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/civil-society-group-hands-over-charter-of-demands-to-ulfa/article2000680.ece> (accessed 5 November 2013).

⁴²⁴ Alan Bullion, "Civil Society and the Peace Process in Sri Lanka," *Civil War* 7, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 117.

⁴²⁵ BBC News Asia. "Sri Lanka Profile," 5 November 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12004081> (accessed 8 January 2014).

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

British as tea plantation workers during the 19th century.⁴²⁷ Ethnic discrimination resulted in the Tamils' resistance and fighting for a separate state. Initially, thirty-five militant groups were created, including the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) that gradually emerged as the most powerful group in the conflict.⁴²⁸

The Eelam War

The Eelam War is the name of the armed conflict between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, also known as the Tamil Tigers insurgent group. An estimated 74,000 soldiers and civilians were killed in Sri Lanka's bloody conflict since fighting erupted between the LTTE and the state.⁴²⁹ The roots of this struggle date back to Tamil resentment at Sinhalese preferential policies that were introduced by the government during the 1950s.⁴³⁰ The national policies related to language, citizenship, and university admission and development aimed at discarding the minorities who were gradually marginalised. Protests against the state of Sri Lanka were staged mainly by Tamils from the north and developed into an LTTE-led militant struggle for Tamil self-determination.⁴³¹

Beginning in July 1983, there was an intermittent insurgency against the government by the LTTE, a separatist militant organisation which fought to create an MNLF independent Tamil state in the north and the east of the country. Although tensions between the government and Tamil militant groups had been simmering since the 1970s, the war did not break out until an attack by the LTTE on a Sri Lankan Army patrol in Jaffna, in the north of the country, on 23 July 1983. The attack and the subsequent riots in the south are generally considered as the start of the conflict.⁴³² After almost two decades of fighting, the first ceasefire agreement was signed between LTTE and the government, under Norwegian auspices in February 2002.⁴³³

⁴²⁷ Peter Chalk, "The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Insurgency in Sri Lanka," in *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South and Southeast Asia* ed. Rajat Ganguly (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2003), 129.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 130

⁴²⁹ Bullion, "Civil Society," *Civil War*, 117.

⁴³⁰ Chalk, "The Liberation," 130.

⁴³¹ Camilla Orjuela, "Civil Society in Civil War: The Case of Sri Lanka," *Civil War* 7, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 122.

⁴³² World without Genocide, *Sri Lanka*, <http://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/sri-lanka> (accessed 22 December 2014).

⁴³³ Bullion, "Civil Society," *Civil War*, 118.

The peace agreement, however, could not end the conflict, with the violence between the state and the LTTE continuing. In 2006, violent attacks began to escalate again, when a suicide bomber attacked the main military compound in Colombo in April. The fighting between the LTTE and the government in the north-east saw the worst of the clashes since the 2002 ceasefire. In early 2008, the government pulled out of the 2002 ceasefire agreement which launched a massive offensive. Finally, the Sri Lankan military defeated the Tamil Tigers, bringing to an end the 26-year brutal civil war in May 2009.⁴³⁴

The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding

Civil society in Sri Lanka has largely been shaped by British colonial rule and the establishment of the modern, democratic state in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴³⁵ It was said that social movements grew in Sri Lanka as a reaction to the grave social and economic changes brought about by colonial rule. Most of the movements, however, resulted not from purely local reactions, but were largely inspired or instigated by Western movements.⁴³⁶

The concept of Non-Governmental Organisations became part of Sri Lanka's civil society in the 1970s. After the government turned from socialist to open market economic policies in 1977, foreign NGOs entered the country in larger numbers. This trend was reinforced after the outbreak of the full-scale civil war between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE in 1983.⁴³⁷ The rise of foreign funded NGOs, engaging in social work, paralleled the decline and weakening of the welfare state. The relationship between the state and civil society actors was sometimes tense.⁴³⁸ Civil society groups concerned with peace, human rights and democratic reform were formed in Sri Lanka in the 1970s in response to ethnic riots and government repression.⁴³⁹ Many of the peace civil society groups aimed to raise awareness about the causes of the war in order to minimise ethnic

⁴³⁴ BBC News Asia. "Sri Lanka Profile."

⁴³⁵ Orjuela, "Civil Society," *Civil War*, 123.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, 128.

polarisation and conflict.⁴⁴⁰ A long-term goal is to build the grassroots support needed to legitimate peace negotiations and political solutions involving power-sharing and increased autonomy for the Tamil northern and eastern parts of the country.⁴⁴¹

For many years, the civil society sector struggled to build support from people for peace negotiations through peace education, exchanges, study visits and media campaigns. However, it can be assumed that people who had positive experiences of awareness raising projects were more positive to negotiations and third party involvement than they otherwise would have been.⁴⁴² The weakness of civil society in Sri Lanka is that it has been divided ethnically and geographically between Sinhalese and Tamils and between the north-east and the rest of the country. The divisions were reinforced by lack of contact and frightful experiences during the war, language barriers and lack of information.⁴⁴³ Additionally, many of the peace NGOs are highly dependent on foreign funding sources.

Ultimately, the conflict was eventually ended by state military action, however, a number of civil society groups including human rights, academics, students, religious and journalists groups attempted to build peace in the conflict area. Although civil society organisations did not make up a significant movement for peace in Sri Lanka, and the post-war environment for civil society action has been highly limited, it cannot be denied that the contribution of civil society and people's support were important in conflict resolution and also that took place after the war. The post-war period has seen the emergence of a number of new civil society organisations and networks. Youth have played an important role in civil society's activities which have helped to mobilise large support from other countries and international organisations.⁴⁴⁴

In conclusion, although other factors such as government policy were clearly more important, an indirect role by the civil society sector is

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Ibid.,132.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.,135.

⁴⁴⁴ Oliver Walton, *Reconciliation in Post-war Sri Lanka*, <http://www.transconflict.com/2013/01/reconciliation-in-post-war-sri-lanka-311/> (accessed 27 May 2014).

necessary. The peace work carried out by civil society organisations helped reduce tensions between conflicting parties and opened up a public space in the conflict area, for example, supporting non-violent popular mobilisation to pressure the government to negotiate with the LTTE in 2001.⁴⁴⁵

5.4.3 The Philippines: The Conflict in Mindanao

The Philippines comprises 7,107 islands categorised into three main geographical divisions including Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The population is approximately 94 million. A multi-ethnic and multi-cultural composition is found throughout the islands.⁴⁴⁶

The Philippines was a colony of Spain for over three hundred years since the Spanish expedition in 1542.⁴⁴⁷ Later on, Spain lost the war against the United States and it became a protectorate of America in 1897 and was finally granted independence on 4 July 1946.⁴⁴⁸ Since independence, the Philippines has suffered from severe internal conflicts between its two religious communities – Muslims and Catholics. Muslims, known as ‘Moros’, comprise only 6 per cent of the total population but are concentrated in the Mindanao region located in the southern part of the Philippines.⁴⁴⁹ The Mindanao region was once an independent kingdom and has been influenced by Islam since the 8th century. In 1565, the Spanish arrived and started to attack the Muslims in Mindanao. Spanish rule created a deep alienation between the Muslims and the Catholics, and each community developed negative images about the other.⁴⁵⁰ Later on, the Philippines was occupied by the United States which adopted some policies of assimilation that created a deep sense of frustration in the minds of the Muslims in Mindanao.⁴⁵¹ After independence, the Philippines’ government continued

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 131.

⁴⁴⁶ Philippine History, Website, <http://www.philippine-history.org/philippine-statistics.htm> (accessed 11 December 2014).

⁴⁴⁷ Philippine History, Website, <http://www.philippine-history.org/timeline.htm> (accessed 11 December 2014).

⁴⁴⁸ Alfredo L. Filler, “The Abu Sayyaf Group: A Growing Menace to Civil Society,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14, no. 4 (2002): 132.

⁴⁴⁹ Syed Serajul Islam, “Ethno-communal Conflict in the Philippines: the Case of Mindanao-Sulu Region,” in *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South and Southeast Asia* ed. Rajat Ganguly (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2003), 195.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 197.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 198.

the policy of repression of the Muslims by encouraging the influx of Christians to Mindanao. By the 1960s, the Muslims had become a minority in Mindanao.⁴⁵² The conflict in Mindanao is the longest existing insurgency of any Asian country.⁴⁵³

The Conflict in Mindanao

Mindanao has a population of approximately 20 million with approximately 25 per cent being Muslims. However, the majority of the people in Basilan, a province in Western Mindanao, are Muslims while Christians comprise around 35 per cent of the population. The incidence of poverty and illiteracy in Mindanao is higher than the national average. Furthermore, land disputes are a prolonged problem. There are four main Muslim secessionist and separatist movements operating in the Philippines including the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). Security problems in Mindanao have focused on the Muslim secessionist and separatist movements led by the MNLF since the early 1970s, followed by the MILF since the late 1980s, as well as the more radical ASG in the past decade.⁴⁵⁴ Later on, the BIFF broke away from the MILF in 2008.

The Moro insurgency in the Philippines is related to political tensions and the violence began in 1969 between the Muslim rebel groups and the government of the Philippines. The first political movement led by Professor Nur Misuari was formed after the Armed Forces of the Philippines killed 68 Filipino Muslim military trainees who were believed to be part of an upcoming rebellion. The incident was known as the '*Jabidah Massacre*'.⁴⁵⁵

In 1973, the MNLF made the first move for the independence of 13 provinces from the Philippines. It entered into the 'Tripoli Agreement' with the government in 1976 and its peace agreement with the government under the auspices of the Organisation of Islamic States was made in

⁴⁵² Ibid., 201.

⁴⁵³ Filler, "The Abu Sayyaf Group," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 136.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 138.

⁴⁵⁵ GMA News, "Fighting and Talking a Mindanao Conflict Timeline," 27 October 2011, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/236761/news/specialreports/fighting-and-talking-a-mindanao-conflict-timeline> (accessed 8 November 2013).

1996.⁴⁵⁶ The Tripoli Declaration agreed to “the establishment of autonomy in the southern Philippines within the realm of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines”.⁴⁵⁷ In the areas of autonomy, Muslims are able to set up their own court which implements the Islamic Shari’ah laws. Besides matters of justice, they have the right to set up their own educational institutions, administrative mechanisms and financial systems.⁴⁵⁸

After the MNLF entered into the Tripoli Agreement with the central government, a new group called the MILF was formed in 1987 by Hashim Salamat who was originally a member of the MNLF. The government has tried to seek peace with the MILF through dialogue and negotiation to develop depressed Muslim communities.⁴⁵⁹ The government, however, emphasises that it will not allow Philippine sovereignty and territorial integrity to be compromised. In 2008, the government announced a peace deal that would have given the MILF some autonomous areas but it failed after the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional.^{460 461}

Later on, Ameril Umbra Kato, a leader of the largest armed unit of the MILF, established the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) because he was not included in the peace process between the Philippines’ government and the MILF. Moreover, he felt that the MILF may have lost sight of its original intent: “to liberate the Moro people from the local colonisers which are the Filipino people, and the Philippines’

⁴⁵⁶ Filler, “The Abu Sayyaf Group,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 140.

⁴⁵⁷ SEAsite, Tripoli Agreement, [http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Modules/Modules/Muslim Mindanao/tripoli_ agreement.htm](http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Modules/Modules/Muslim%20Mindanao/tripoli_agreement.htm) (accessed 1 December 2012).

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Filler, “The Abu Sayyaf Group,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 141.

⁴⁶⁰ ABS-CBN News, “Timeline: Key Dates of the Moro Rebellion,” 12 September 2013, <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/regions/09/12/13/timeline-key-dates-moro-rebellion> (accessed 8 November 2013).

⁴⁶¹ On 27 March 2014, a comprehensive peace agreement on Bangsamoro was signed between the government of the Philippines and the MILF, closing almost two decades of negotiations that had started in 1997. The agreement calls for Muslim autonomy in parts of the southern Philippines in exchange for a deactivation of insurgent forces by the MILF. Eventually, this agreement will lead to the creation of the new Muslim autonomous region called ‘Bangsamoro’ that the government aims to set up by 2016. Source: Inquirer.net, *What is the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro?*, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/589245/what-is-the-comprehensive-agreement-on-the-bangsamoro> (accessed 22 December 2014).

government.”⁴⁶² After the ceasefire failed in 2008, many more separatists from MILF went to his side. His supporters are now estimated at around five thousand, which at the very least constitutes, almost half the entire MILF fighting force.⁴⁶³

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), is the smallest and most radical of the Islamic separatist groups operating in the Philippines. It was founded in the mid-1980s with the objective of the establishment of a separate Bangsamoro homeland.⁴⁶⁴ Their main insurgent activities are bombings, assassinations and kidnappings, and they are unusually ruthless to Christians who try to disrupt their operations.⁴⁶⁵ In fact, the ASG has all the characteristics of a modern international terrorist organisation, constantly changing in ways that make it very dangerous and difficult to counter.⁴⁶⁶ The government finds it hard to deal with the ASG because mislabelling it as an ordinary criminal group has caused misconceptions among those having to deal with it. The government has to accept that it is a contemporary terrorist organisation.⁴⁶⁷ Pursuing a military solution without any political, social, or economic components in the strategy to counter the insurgency makes terrorist groups such as the ASG more aggressive.⁴⁶⁸

The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding

The conflict situation in Mindanao is quite complex. To understand the effect of civil society’s efforts to end the long-running separatist war, context is required. It must be remembered that violent conflict in the southern Philippines is not only as a result of the Muslim-Christian communal problems or Islamic separatist insurgencies. There is banditry, focusing on kidnapping, a communist insurgency, and endemic tribal conflict. All these variables affect efforts to resolve this separatist insurgency.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶² Aljazeera, Blogs, “Introducing B.I.F.F,” 16 February 2011, <http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/asia/introducing-biff> (accessed 8 November 2013).

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Filler, “The Abu Sayyaf Group,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 140.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 139.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 140.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 141.

⁴⁶⁹ Rood, *Forging Sustainable Peace*, 4.

Civil society groups in Mindanao have showed their interest in peacebuilding efforts since the ensuing armed war in Mindanao in the 1970s. It was considered that civil society groups in Mindanao could contribute significantly in terms of managing the conflict and ultimately achieving lasting peace in Mindanao. Encouraging the locals to establish 'spaces for peace', where combatants are requested not to be in a particular community, was one of the successful activities supported by the civil society.

Moreover, the civil society groups help the government to move toward peace by promoting interreligious dialogue and involvement of civil society in the official peace process.⁴⁷⁰ They also help to reduce the level of conflict by pushing for a restoration of the ceasefire. Furthermore, the civil society sector can also promote the discussion of options for peace - including draft peace agreements devised by both sides - allowing exploration of ideas that cannot be officially taken up by either side.⁴⁷¹ In addition, civil society is officially represented on the Local Monitoring Teams formed by five members from the government, the MILF, two non-governmental members and a religious leader.⁴⁷² The objectives of these groups are to observe, monitor and investigate the implementation of the agreement on peace.⁴⁷³ Interestingly, civil society can also assist elements of the government to undertake conflict management. The Local Monitoring Teams was set up to assist police in order to provide a buffer between the government and MILF sites in the 2001 cessation of hostilities. Moreover, civil society groups with a monitoring role have been praised by both the government and the MILF for helping provide impartial analysis of different accusations.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 28.

⁴⁷³ International Monitoring Team, Website, <http://imtmindanao.org/about-imt/> (accessed 30 August 2013).

⁴⁷⁴ Rood, *Forging Sustainable Peace*, 35.

5.4.4 Indonesia: Aceh

Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous country and it has the biggest Muslim population in the world. There are around 300 distinct native ethnic groups in Indonesia with more than 300 different languages and dialects.⁴⁷⁵ As a result of that, Indonesia has faced many ongoing conflicts between people of different religions, tribes and cultures.

The beginning of the mid-1990s, saw a sudden rise in violent ethnic conflict in Indonesia. After the downfall of Suharto's regime, economic crisis and the beginning of democratisation, ethnic riots and violent conflicts escalated in several parts of the country.⁴⁷⁶ From 1995 to 2002, there were a large number of violent conflicts involving various ethnic groups in different parts of the country: clashes between Muslims and Christians in the mid-1990s across Java; some of which were anti-Chinese in Jakarta; Dayak-Madurese conflicts in West Kalimantan (1997) and Central Kalimantan (2001); the eruption of a new Muslim-Christian conflict in Maluku (1999) and in Sulawesi (1999); and the intensification of conflict and resurgence of violence in Aceh, East Timor, and Papua (1999). By the end of 2002, the violence had largely decreased in these areas, with the notable exception of Aceh.⁴⁷⁷

The conflicts in Indonesia can be divided into two levels including intra-society conflict, and a conflict between the state and a particular group within the nation.⁴⁷⁸ Kalimantan, Maluku and Sulawesi are cases of a conflict within the society itself or intra-society conflict which is a conflict between at least two different cultural or religious communities under a single political authority.⁴⁷⁹ Aceh and Papua are conflicts between the state and a particular group within the nation. Conflicts in Papua, like in Aceh, also took the form of a secessionist conflict. In this province, which officially became part of Indonesia in 1969, the main resistance organisation, the

⁴⁷⁵ Living in Indonesia, Website, <http://www.expats.or.id/info/overview.html> (accessed 22 December 2014).

⁴⁷⁶ Jacques Bertrand, "Ethnic conflicts in Indonesia: National Models, Critical Junctures, and the Timing of Violence," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 8, no. 3 (September-December 2008): 425.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 430.

⁴⁷⁸ Sukma, "Ethnic Conflict," 3.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Free Papua Organisation,⁴⁸⁰ clearly aimed for the creation of an independent state separate from Indonesia. For decades, the Indonesian military has used excessive force to suppress the rebellion, resulting in widespread abuses of human rights, including arbitrary killing, rape and torture.⁴⁸¹

The Aceh Conflict

Aceh – the northernmost province on the island of Sumatra – is presented both as a war over resources and as an ethno-religious conflict. Aceh is the stage for one of the oldest domestic conflicts both in Indonesia and in Southeast Asia as a whole.⁴⁸² Aceh is a historically famous region for its battle against the Dutch and then for its resistance against the central government in Jakarta since 1953. Aceh has experienced long-term conflict in its history since it became the last region to be conquered by the Dutch between 1847 and 1914. In fact, the conflict in the province began to take form as a secessionist conflict only in the mid-1970s with the establishment of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM stands for *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* in Indonesian). The conflict ended in 2006 and the demand shifted from independence to the acceptance of ‘Special Autonomy Plus’.⁴⁸³

Many factors led to the successful peaceful solution. The turning point was the change of presidency in 2004 from Megawati to Yudhoyono. At that time, the Megawati presidency had weakened the GAM but Yudhoyono changed the strategy from a military solution to a political one. On the GAM side, the leaders became more flexible since the Indonesian state agreed to a peaceful solution.⁴⁸⁴ Finally, the 2004 tsunami and earthquake disasters paralysed GAM supporters, and this ceased the violence. GAM’s decision to renew peace negotiations, however, was made before the tsunami disaster which was just an accelerating factor.⁴⁸⁵ This position of special autonomy offered by the government was pushed to ‘self-government’ by GAM with the Helsinki MoU and although GAM did not

⁴⁸⁰ Free Papua Organisation: Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM)

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁸² Croissant and Trinn, “Culture,” *ASIEN*, 27.

⁴⁸³ Iwan Gardono Sujatmiko, “Conflict Transformation and Social Reconciliation: The Case of Aceh, Indonesia,” *Asian Social Science* 8, no. 2 (February 2012): 104.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 105.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 106.

succeed, it still achieved 'Special Autonomy Plus'. This new administrative model gave the Acehnese more power in politics, such as the permission for the existence of local political parties, and in economic matters, such as increased oil and gas revenue.⁴⁸⁶

The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding

In Indonesia, the formation of civil society was dependent upon the growth of democracy.⁴⁸⁷ After the fall of Suharto in 1998, the concept of civil society became very popular and gained prominence in Indonesian political discourse - especially among researchers and social/political activists.⁴⁸⁸ The process of peacebuilding needs to look at how to link each level of society as well as how to link the activities done inside and outside the conflict areas. As such, the involvement of civil society is needed as they can act as elements of change in a protracted conflict like Aceh.⁴⁸⁹

For best results, the peacebuilding process should be initiated from within and should involve all parties who are in the conflict and are feeling the impacts of the conflict. The members of civil society in Aceh are most likely victims as well, making it more important that they achieve their targeted objectives. They are the most important actors for peacebuilding which are concerned with building the foundation for peace, and they present themselves as both an alternative voice and a catalyst for change in the transformation of society.⁴⁹⁰

In the context of Aceh, civil society groups are led and initiated by the students, NGOs, religious leaders, intellectuals, and journalists who have tried to promote the values of peace, non-violence and humanity. Their activities, however, have been obstructed by the ongoing conflict between the armed parties, the government and the GAM. The peacebuilding activities carried out by civil society in Aceh include the raising of awareness and advocacy; lobbying and pressuring the Indonesian government and

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 107.

⁴⁸⁷ Chantana Banpasirichote, "Civil Society Discourse and the Future of Radical Environmental Movements in Thailand," in *Civil Society in Southeast Asia*, ed. Lee Hock Guan (Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2004), 222.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 215

⁴⁸⁹ Kamarulzaman Askandar, "The Aceh Conflict and the Roles of the Civil Society," 6 http://www.researchgate.net/publication/260385083_The_Aceh_Conflict_and_the_Roles_of_the_Civil_Society (accessed 7 January 2013).

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 8.

GAM to stop the violence; capacity building and education especially in promoting peace including peace education and peace studies; research and data gathering, especially about human rights abuses; and legal and non-legal advocacy for the victims of the conflict.⁴⁹¹

5.4.5 Myanmar: The Hill Tribe Conflicts

Myanmar is the most ethnically diverse state in mainland Southeast Asia. Myanmar's diverse ethnic population is a result of the country's strategic location. It shares borders with China in the northeast, India in the northwest, Bangladesh in the west, and Laos and Thailand in the east. As a result, different ethnicities have migrated to settle down in the extremely fertile land around the Irrawaddy River.⁴⁹²

The conflict in Myanmar is slightly different from the above-mentioned cases in which religion is a strong element of the cause of the conflicts. For the case of Myanmar, ethnic and indigenous identities play a more important role than religion in creating the conflict.

Myanmar has been torn by the world's longest-running civil war, which is rooted in ethnic conflict.⁴⁹³ Since achieving independence after the Second World War, Myanmar has isolated itself from the outside world. The Burmese are the majority which forms an estimated 68 per cent of the population, but there are still more than a hundred ethnic groups in the country. The major non-Burmese ethnic groups are the Arakanese, Chin, Kachin, Shan, Karenni, Karen, and Mon, all of which have their own states in which they are the dominant ethnic group. All these states have ethnic insurgent activities of varying intensities against the Myanmar military.⁴⁹⁴ The largest of the ethnic minorities are the Shans (9%) and the Karens (7%). The Burmese dominate the major cities along the river while the hills bordering the neighbouring countries are populated by ethnic minorities.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁹² Medha Chaturvedi, "Myanmar's Ethnic Divide: The Parallel Struggle," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, <http://www.ipcs.org/special-report/southeast-asia/myanmars-ethnic-divide-the-parallel-struggle-131.html> (accessed 20 August 2013).

⁴⁹³ David C. Williams, "Ethnicity, Elections, and Reform in Burma," *Law & Ethnicities* 12, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2011): 101.

⁴⁹⁴ Conflict Map, *Myanmar- Civil War*, http://www.conflictmap.org/conflict/myanmar_rebels (accessed 13 August 2013).

These ethnic groups have long resisted Burmese domination.⁴⁹⁵ Most Burmese are Buddhist, whereas the Shan and the Karen are predominantly Christian. Buddhism entered Myanmar from India from the 7th century while Christianity was introduced during British rule. Thus, there is a contrast between the minority groups and the Burmese, who are largely Buddhist.⁴⁹⁶

The Hill Tribe Conflicts

The failure to manage Myanmar's immense diversity has resulted in ethnic conflicts, and some of them started even before independence. The main demand of the ethnic minorities is greater autonomy and acceptance of their cultural and religious identity in the process of their integration into Myanmar's mainstream.⁴⁹⁷ In response to the civil war caused by ethnic conflict all over the country, the civilian government asked the army to run the country for a period in the late 1950s. The military returned to take power again in 1962 and since then, the army has insisted on ruling Myanmar as they claimed that only the military can keep the country together against the minority forces that would tear it apart. In other words, military rule in Myanmar is the product of ethnic violence.⁴⁹⁸

Myanmar's ethnic conflicts are rooted in colonial state-building and rule. During the colonial period, the British impact on Myanmar was profound as it was governed as a minor part of the British Indian Empire.⁴⁹⁹ The models of administration were imposed by the British who had little understanding or respect for local social structures. A major consequence of British rule was to strengthen the division between the Burmese and ethnic minorities.⁵⁰⁰ Therefore, the violent civil wars erupted shortly after independence and ethnic minority groups struggled for territorial and cultural autonomy.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁵ Burma Link, *Overview of Ethnic Groups*, <http://www.burmalink.org/background/burma/ethnic-groups/overview/> (accessed 22 December 2014).

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁷ Chaturvedi, "Myanmar's Ethnic Divide."

⁴⁹⁸ Williams, "Ethnicity, Elections," *Law & Ethnicity*, 101.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵⁰⁰ Tin Maung Muang Than, "Dreams and Nightmares: State Building and Ethnic Conflict in Myanmar (Burma)," in *Ethnic Conflicts in Southeast Asia*, ed. Kusuma Snitwongse and W. Scott Thompson (Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2005), 65.

⁵⁰¹ Jasmin Lorch, "Stopgap or Change Agent? The Role of Burma's Civil Society after the Crackdown," *Internationales Asienforum* 39, no. 1-2 (2008): 38.

In 1947, Aung San became a hero of the Burmese independence movement who tried to negotiate independence from the British in 1948 and compromise with all minority groups. There were some attempts to meet with leaders of the various ethnic minorities to discuss their status after the independence of Myanmar.⁵⁰² Tragically, Aung San and six members of his cabinet were assassinated in 1947. Since then the country has been in turmoil. The ethnic minorities had no trust of the central government. The hill tribes wanted to govern themselves in their own ways because their identities differ from that of the Burmese, especially with respect to language, religion, and culture.⁵⁰³

When Myanmar became independent in 1948, many ethnic minorities feared that the majority Burmese would oppress them. Some tribes wanted independence, and others would agree to merge only if the constitution gave them special protection.⁵⁰⁴ Some ethnic minorities took up arms because they believed that the constitution did not provide them with enough self-determination, and the military seized control in response.⁵⁰⁵

The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding

State weakness was one factor which has led to the emergence of civil society spaces in Myanmar. Spaces for civil society actors do exist within at least two areas of state weakness: firstly, in sectors where the welfare state fails to perform its function and, secondly, in some of the partly autonomous ethnic ceasefire areas.⁵⁰⁶ The state, however, affects how civil society is able to develop itself. Thus, whether Myanmar's civil society will be confined to serving a facilitating function or whether it can play a vital part of political change as well eventually also depends on the state.⁵⁰⁷

Furthermore, it was believed that the ceasefire agreements between the state and most of the armed ethnic resistance groups in the 1990s have led to the emergence and enlargement of spaces for civil society.⁵⁰⁸ Since

⁵⁰² Matthew J. Walton, "Ethnicity, Conflict, and History in Burma: The Myths of Panlong," *Asian Survey* 48, no. 6 (November/December 2008): 889.

⁵⁰³ Williams, "Ethnicity, Elections," *Law & Ethnicity*, 102.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ Lorch, "Stopgap or Change Agent?," *Internationales Asienforum*, 23.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

then, they have been carrying out important roles as monitors of the ongoing conflicts and tentative ceasefires.⁵⁰⁹ Some peace-aimed civil society groups have improved the relations between ethnic minorities and the state in a positive way. As the talks proceed, the key roles for local peacebuilders will be in the areas of monitoring, advocacy and reconciliation processes.⁵¹⁰

It is important that a sustainable peacebuilding process should provide space for the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, communities or international aided groups.⁵¹¹ There is, however, a warning that an influx of foreign aid could distort local priorities, overwhelming the limited local capacities and marginalising local organisations.⁵¹²

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter described the backgrounds of ethno-religious conflicts in South and Southeast Asian countries where most conflicts have been entrenched for decades. Differences in identities and ways of life as well as discrimination are believed to be the root causes of the ethno-religious conflict in these countries.

Although some conflicts share common characteristics and patterns, it is also important to recognise that each conflict has its own distinct history and unique causes, thus demanding different solutions.⁵¹³ This is why it is difficult to find a peacebuilding model which could be a universal method to use for resolving all conflicts. There is no guarantee that the method which had been successful in one country could be used in the other cases. There are some variable factors that can contribute to successful peacebuilding including the state leaders, the government's policy, militant leaders, regional security and international circumstances. In multi-ethnic countries, government policies to manage conflicts are essential. State tools can be used to manage conflicts such as the constitution, laws, public policies, and

⁵⁰⁹ Ismail Wolff, "Hope for Lasting Peace in Burma," *Insight on Conflict*. <http://www.insightonconflict.org/2012/03/hope-peace-burma/> (accessed 13 August 2013).

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Sukma, "Ethnic Conflict," 2.

security authorities (i.e. the police and military).⁵¹⁴ Public policy is an effective tool to manage a conflict but the government must know the limits of their intervention to enable people to manage conflict as well.⁵¹⁵

It is clear that the state's strategy alone cannot resolve a conflict. The civil society sector plays a significant role in creating a better atmosphere for peacebuilding which includes providing popular support for peace, and promoting negotiation and reconciliation between polarised groups.⁵¹⁶ The involvements of civil society and the grassroots are very important to maintain peace.

The next chapter will discuss in more detail the roles of civil society in creating peace, the importance of civil society being involved in the peacebuilding process, the concept of peacebuilding and the framework of civil society's roles in building peace in an ethno-religious conflict.

⁵¹⁴ Suhana Saad and Ray Ikechukwu Jacob. "Managing Ethnic Conflict for Nation Building: A Comparative Study between Malaysia and Nigeria," *Asian Social Science* 8, no. 7 (June 2010): 75.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁵¹⁶ Orjuela, "Civil Society," *Civil War*, 120.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN PEACEBUILDING

6.1 Introduction

The non-state sector has become an obvious influential actor in contemporary conflict. The roles of civil society in the process of peacebuilding are now widely acknowledged in conflict-affected countries.⁵¹⁷ Today, the main question is no longer whether civil society has a role to play in peacebuilding, but how it can realise its potential.⁵¹⁸ Besides a key role in fostering democratic governance in peaceful societies, civil society also plays significant roles in the peace process in a conflict area.⁵¹⁹

In order to understand the relationship between civil society and peacebuilding, this chapter will begin with the concept of peacebuilding, followed by peacebuilding actors and approaches, the importance of the civil society sector in the peace process with a final analysis of the general roles of civil society in creating peace.

6.2 Understanding the Concept of Peacebuilding

First of all, the concept of peace should be explained. Galtung has differentiated between negative and positive peace, whereby negative peace describes peace in a narrow scope as the absence of war or direct physical violence while positive peace also includes an increase in social justice and the creation of a culture of peace among people within and across societies.⁵²⁰ Thus, peace in a positive way is not only a matter of control and reduction of the use of arms or violence, but is also referred to as development and social healing.⁵²¹ So, this means that peace theory is intimately connected not only with conflict theory, but also development

⁵¹⁷ World Bank, *Civil Society*, 1.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁹ Marchetti and Tocci, "Conflict Society," *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 201.

⁵²⁰ Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 183.

⁵²¹ Michelle I. Gawerc, "Peace-Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives," *Peace & Change* 31, no. 4 (October 2006): 438.

theory.⁵²² Nonetheless, most scholars agree that peace is a complex, long-term and multi-layered process.⁵²³

Later on, the term 'peacebuilding' emerged from the concept of positive peace because peacebuilding aims for not only a limitation of physical violence but sustainable peace.

6.2.1 The Origins of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding can be defined in many different ways. Scholars, policymakers, and practitioners have all developed different conceptions of peacebuilding.⁵²⁴

The term peacebuilding was first created nearly 40 years ago through the work of Galtung. In 1975, 'peacebuilding' emerged in his work called the *Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding*.⁵²⁵ His understanding of peacebuilding is based on his conceptual distinction between negative peace and positive peace.⁵²⁶ The creation of peacebuilding structures was to promote sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of violent conflict and supporting the locals' capacities for peace management and conflict resolution.⁵²⁷

John Paul Lederach, another key scholar in the field of peace studies, has called for expanding an understanding of peacebuilding. According to Lederach, peacebuilding "is more than post-accord reconstruction" and "is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships".⁵²⁸ Thus, the term involves a wide-range of activities that both precede and follow formal peace settlements.

Other peace scholars have been conducting research along similar lines since the 1980s. The peacebuilding concept has received interest

⁵²² Galtung, "Violence, Peace," *Journal of Peace Research*, 183.

⁵²³ Berghof Foundation, ed., *Berghof Glossary on Conflict Transformation: 20 Notions for Theory and Practice* (Berlin: Berghof Foundation Operations GmbH, 2012), 59.

⁵²⁴ Peacebuilding Initiative, "Introduction to Peacebuilding".

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 45.

⁵²⁷ Peacebuilding Support Office, "UN Peacebuilding: An Orientation," *United Nations* (September 2010): 5.

⁵²⁸ Peacebuilding Initiative, "Introduction to Peacebuilding".

throughout the world from well-known international organisations, local NGOs and community networks who are working to help victims, communities and societies from civil wars or international conflicts.⁵²⁹

Besides 'peacebuilding', two other terms that should be clarified are 'peacekeeping' and 'peacemaking'. Their different definitions make it easier to understand the concept of peacebuilding. Peacekeeping involves third-party intervention to keep apart warring groups in order to maintain the absence of direct violence or to reduce it. Peacemaking, on the other hand, refers to the negotiation process that takes place between decision-makers directed towards reaching an official settlement or resolution to specific conflicts. Finally, the third term, peacebuilding, refers to a wider scope which involves a variety of activities such as the re-establishment or development of normal, peaceful relations between people, organisations, and their societies through socioeconomic reconstruction. It focuses more on the people and the context of the conflict than on the issues or the interests being fought over.⁵³⁰

6.2.2 Definition

It is quite difficult to find a simple, clear-cut definition of peacebuilding. There are many possible definitions of peacebuilding and varying opinions about what it involves. Peacebuilding has a complicated meaning because of its wide-range of activities focusing on the social, psychological and economic environment at the grassroots level.⁵³¹ Peacebuilding differs from peacemaking, which is the use of negotiation or a peace agreement to end violence, and peacekeeping, which is the threat of the use of force to prevent actors from re-engaging in armed conflict.⁵³²

The initiator of the term *peacebuilding*, Galtung, said that peacebuilding achieves positive peace by creating structures and institutions based on justice, equity, and cooperation.⁵³³ Peacebuilding became a familiar concept within the United Nations in 1992 from the report

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Heidi Burgess and Guy M. Burgess, *Encyclopedia of Conflict Resolution* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 1997), 232.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² World Bank, *Civil*, 5.

⁵³³ Gawerc, "Peace-Building," *Peace & Change*, 439.

An Agenda for Peace by Boutros Boutros-Ghali which defined peacebuilding as action to solidify peace and to avoid relapse into conflict. The UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee has described peacebuilding thus: "Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritised, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives".⁵³⁴

This thesis defines peacebuilding as activities aimed at preventing and managing conflict, and sustaining peace after the violence has ended. Peacebuilding is concerned with issues that go beyond a narrow definition of conflict issues and covers the wider economic, political and social dimensions of countries before, during and after the end of violent conflict.⁵³⁵

6.2.3 Theoretical Approaches to Peacebuilding

Studying some relevant theories and schools of thought is needed for a profound understanding of the field of peacebuilding because the history of these schools is closely linked to the history and evolution of peacebuilding. There are five schools of thought that can be distinguished. These schools have different terminologies, conceptual frameworks, approaches, understandings, and actors. The different schools have had different influences on peacebuilding and its practice has adopted elements from different schools.⁵³⁶

The following are the five main schools of thought - conflict management, conflict resolution, complementary school, conflict transformation and alternative discourse.

⁵³⁴ Peacebuilding Support Office, "UN Peacebuilding," *United Nations*, 5.

⁵³⁵ Marchetti and Tocci, "Conflict Society," *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 213.

⁵³⁶ Paffenholz and Spurk, "Civil Society," 20.

1) The Conflict Management School

This is the oldest school of thought which is linked to the institutionalisation of peacebuilding in international law. This approach aims to end wars through diplomatic initiatives. The peacebuilding actors within the meaning of this school are external diplomats from bilateral or multilateral organisations. Its theoretical approach is referred to as an outcome-oriented approach which aims to identify and bring leaders of the conflicting parties to the negotiating table. Its main focus is on the short-term management of the armed conflict.⁵³⁷

The Conflict Management School has been criticised because mediators tend to focus only on the top-level leadership of the conflicting parties, and the approach overlooks deeper causes of conflicts. Thus, this approach cannot guarantee the long-term stability of the peace agreement. Conflict Management approaches, however, have recently moved beyond a concern with a ceasefire agreement and now also focus on the conditions for successful implementation of post-conflict peacebuilding. Therefore, it is now possible to distinguish between traditional and modern approaches to conflict management.⁵³⁸

2) The Conflict Resolution School

This school was established in the 1970s, adopting strategies from socio-psychological conflict resolution at the inter-personal level. This approach aims to solve the root causes of conflict and rebuild destroyed relationships between parties involved in the conflict. Under this approach, relations need to be rebuilt not only between the top representatives of the conflicting parties, but also within an overall society. As the approach evolved, additional actors, such as international or local NGOs, as well as individuals and communities entered the field and have had more roles in the peace process. Workshops are designed to rebuild relationships between the conflicting parties' representatives who can influence their leaders and do not represent a government or an international organisation. All actors work to solve the root causes of the conflict under a long-term resolution-oriented approach. The examples of activities used in this

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

approach are dialogue projects between groups or communities, and conflict resolution training to enhance the peacebuilding capacity of actors perceived as agents of change.⁵³⁹

The Conflict Resolution School has been criticised, especially by supporters of the Conflict Management School, because the process takes too long to stop armed conflict and because improving communications and building relationships between parties to the conflict does not necessarily result in a ceasefire agreement.⁵⁴⁰

3) The Complementary School

This school focuses on combining the strengths of both the conflict management and conflict resolution schools. Three different approaches have been proposed in this school. The first approach is Fisher and Keashly's Contingency Model for third party intervention in armed conflicts which aims to identify the appropriate third party method and the proper timing of interventions. Based on Glasl's Conflict Escalation Model, the approach is to de-escalate the conflict from phase to phase. For resolution-oriented approaches, it is appropriate to use power mediation when the conflict escalates. After a peace accord has been agreed by the conflicting parties, it is time to adopt resolution-oriented approaches. Critics of this approach have pointed out that in practice different types of interventions can take place at the same time.⁵⁴¹

Bercovitch and Rubin developed the second approach from the contingency model by shifting the perspective from approaches to actors. In this approach, it is not important which mediators are the most effective, but who is more effective at different stages of the conflict. Hence, the result is that the more the conflict escalates the more powerful the third party becomes. A weakness of this approach is that it does not fully address the issue of coordination or the possibility of simultaneous application of all approaches.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

The third approach of this school is the Multi-Track Diplomacy Approach proposed by Diamond and McDonald which, while recognising that different approaches and actors are needed to reach peace, seeks to make a clearer distinction between the different approaches and actors by adopting a 'Track Concept'. Track I involves formal diplomatic peacebuilding initiated by governments through formal negotiations which are in line with the Conflict Management School. Track II represents the original conflict resolution school by improving communication and creating a better understanding of each party through unofficial and non-governmental channels.⁵⁴³

Overall, the Complementary School has not been criticised widely nor has it resulted in major debates among researchers. This is due to the evolution of the Conflict Transformation School that absorbed the results of the Complementary School and was taken over by mainstream research and, most of all, by practitioners.⁵⁴⁴

4) The Conflict Transformation School

This approach focuses on the transformation of deep-rooted armed conflicts into peaceful ones based on a different understanding of peacebuilding. Lederach developed the first comprehensive transformation-oriented approach. His approach is to resolve the underlying causes of conflict and to build sustainable peace by supporting both short-term conflict management and long-term relationship building. According to the Conflict Resolution School, he sees the need to rebuild destroyed relationships, focusing on reconciliation within society and the strengthening of society's peacebuilding potential. Lederach divided society into three levels: top-rank, middle-range, and grassroots, which can be approached with different peacebuilding strategies. A key element of this approach is to focus on peace constituencies by identifying mid-level actors and empowering them to create peace and support reconciliation. Empowerment of the middle level is assumed to influence peacebuilding in the whole community including the grassroots. Third party intervention should concentrate on supporting internal actors and coordinating external peace efforts.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

Moreover, sensitivity to the local culture and a long-term time frame are considered necessary for peacebuilding.⁵⁴⁵

5) The Alternative Discourse School

There is an emerging literature analysing peacebuilding through the perspectives of discourse analysis and encouraging an alternative approach to peacebuilding. The most important contribution of this school is its focus on ordinary people, oppressed voices, the analysis of power structures, and an assessment based on realities instead of normative assumptions.⁵⁴⁶

6.2.4 Dimensions of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is based on an assumption that violent conflicts do not automatically end with the signing of a peace agreement or the deployment of military forces. Peacebuilding is not a rapid response tool, but a long-term process of ongoing work in the following three dimensions (see figure 6.1):⁵⁴⁷

1. *Altering structural contradictions* is widely considered as necessary for sustainable peace. The important elements are state-building and democratisation measures; the reform of structures that reproduce the conflict such as the education system; economic and sustainable development; social justice and human rights; empowerment of civil society; and constructive journalism.

2. *Improving relations between the conflict parties* is a vital part of peacebuilding to reduce the effects of war-related parties and disrupted communication between the conflicting parties. They deal with the non-material effects of violent conflict. The examples of their healing activities are programmes of reconciliation, trust-building and dealing with the past which aim to transform damaged relationships and to achieve justice as an ultimate goal.

3. *Changing individual attitudes and behaviour* is the third dimension of peacebuilding. It means strengthening individual peace capacities,

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 56.

⁵⁴⁷ Berghof Foundation, *Berghof Glossary*, 62.

breaking stereotypes, empowering formerly disadvantaged groups, and healing trauma and the psychological wounds of war. Training people in non-violent action and conflict resolution is one frequently used measure for strengthening individual peace capacities.

Many peacebuilding measures seek to have a greater impact by combining strategies which encompass all three dimensions. An example of these strategies is the bringing of former conflicting parties together to work on improving their economic situation and thus changing individual attitudes.

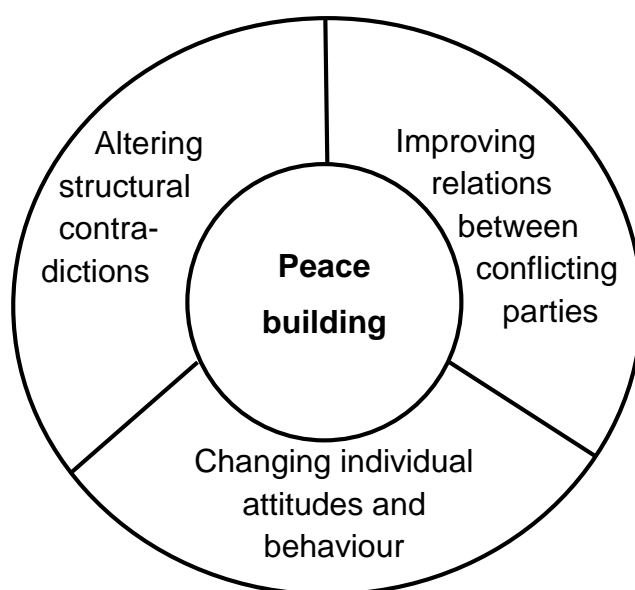


Figure 6.1 - Three Dimensions of Peace

Source: Berghof Foundation, ed., *Berghof Glossary on Conflict Transformation: 20 Notions for Theory and Practice* (Berlin: Berghof Foundation Operations GmbH, 2012), 63.

6.2.5 Phases of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding was seen as the third phase of the conflict resolution process, following the enforced cessation of violence (peacekeeping) and the negotiation of a settlement agreement (peacemaking).⁵⁴⁸ In fact, peacebuilding is recognised as dynamic having something to contribute in

⁵⁴⁸ Burgess, *Encyclopedia*, 232.

every phase of a conflict and always moving in response to the situation and the stage of the peacemaking efforts.⁵⁴⁹ Although most peacebuilding happens once conflict has ended, some peacebuilding tasks can start even during conflict.⁵⁵⁰

There are three phases of peacebuilding.⁵⁵¹ First, preconflict peacebuilding aims at preventing the start of violent conflict. The second phase is peacebuilding during armed conflict or conflict management. This phase aims to end armed conflict and to reach a peace agreement. Even though the concept of peacebuilding includes interventions at the stages before and during the conflict, most peacebuilding activities concentrate on the post-conflict stage. Many peacebuilding scholars, however, advocate an increased focus on pre-conflict peacebuilding in the future.

The last phase, and the most important, is the post-conflict phase which is the stage after the end of large scale violence. The post-conflict phase can be divided into two sub-phases, the immediate aftermath of armed conflict (1-5 years) and the period after (5-10 years). Many researchers found that there is a high risk of reverting to large scale violence within the first five years after the end of war.⁵⁵²

Furthermore, post-conflict peacebuilding has been divided into three dimensions: stabilising the post-conflict zone, restoring state institutions, and dealing with social and economic issues. The first dimension aims to reinforce state stability after the armed conflict and discourage former combatants from returning to war through activities such as disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration programmes, security sector reform, and arms control for light and heavy weapons systems. Second dimension activities focus on building state capacity to provide basic public goods and increase state legitimacy. Finally, programmes in the third dimension are to build a post-conflict society's ability to manage conflicts peacefully and to promote socioeconomic infrastructure development.⁵⁵³

⁵⁴⁹ Gawerc, "Peace-Building," *Peace & Change*, 439.

⁵⁵⁰ Peacebuilding Support Office, "UN Peacebuilding," *United Nations*, 6.

⁵⁵¹ World Bank, *Civil*, 5.

⁵⁵² Paffenholz and Spurk, "Civil Society," 19.

⁵⁵³ Michael Barnett, et al., "Peacebuilding: What Is in a Name?," *Global Governance* 13, no. 1 (2007): 49.

The main focus of post-conflict research is the durability of peace agreements including how peace agreements can be successfully implemented in the immediate aftermath of wars and sustained thereafter.⁵⁵⁴ Armed conflicts and wars, however, do not follow this path, but rather evolve in recurring cycles of peace and violence.⁵⁵⁵

6.3 Peacebuilding in Action

Having described the concept and theory of peacebuilding above, the following will discuss the practice of peacebuilding and the actors who have important roles in the process of peacebuilding. There are some attempts to classify actors in peacebuilding although the people involved in creating peace are various and complex. For example, Lederach has explained the key actors in peacebuilding by using the pyramid of leadership.

6.3.1 Actors in Peacebuilding

Most of the literature on peacebuilding distinguishes between 'local,' 'national,' and 'international' stakeholders. This classification of actors in peacebuilding can be quite problematic and contentious in some circumstances. For example, a national actor coming from the central government or another social group may well be considered as an outsider when entering a specific community; this is why some distinguish between a 'national' and a 'local' level, but the criteria for making this distinction are unclear or overlapping.

The concepts of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' create a better understanding and are more flexible. Some academics have defined insiders as "those vulnerable to conflict, because they are from the area and living there, and who in some way must have experienced the conflict and lived with its consequences personally. Outsiders are those who choose to become involved in the conflict and who have personally little to lose".⁵⁵⁶ It is also important to understand how the relationship between insiders and

⁵⁵⁴ Paffenholz and Spurk, "Civil Society," 19.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁵⁶ Berghof Foundation, *Berghof Glossary*, 62.

outsiders is defined in a particular context. Even when the distinction between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ seems to be obvious, it has to be closely considered. In many cases, outsiders when working with a civil society claim to be working with the locals, but are actually collaborating with other outsiders.⁵⁵⁷

Although external agents can facilitate and support peacebuilding, the best practice must be driven by internal actors or local people. Moreover, outsiders, such as international organisations, are seen to be limited in what they can do. Their peacebuilding work is criticised for being too bureaucratic, having short-term commitment, and being financially dependent on the government for donations and therefore being accountable to them but not to the people on the ground.⁵⁵⁸ A successful peacebuilding process cannot be imposed from the outside.⁵⁵⁹

6.3.2 Levels of Leadership

Lederach found it helpful to think of leadership in the population affected by a conflict as being in terms of a pyramid (see figure 6.2 on page 174).⁵⁶⁰ The pyramid can be used as a way of describing the numbers within a population in simplified terms. The pinnacle, or top level leadership, represents the fewest people. The base of the pyramid represents the largest number of people; the grassroots. The pyramid also shows the types of leaders, the sectors from which they come at each level and the conflict transformation activities that the leaders at each level may undertake.⁵⁶¹

Level 1: Top Level Leadership

The top level leadership comprises of the key political and military leaders in the conflict. These people are the highest representative leaders of the government and opposition movements. A great deal of attention is paid to their movements, statements, and positions. These highly visible leaders are generally locked into positions taken with regard to the perspectives and issues in conflict. They are under considerable pressure

⁵⁵⁷ Peacebuilding Initiative, “Introduction to Peacebuilding”.

⁵⁵⁸ Berghof Foundation, *Berghof Glossary*, 62.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁰ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 37.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

to maintain a position of strength against their adversaries and in their own constituencies.⁵⁶²

Level 2: Middle-range Leadership

Middle-range leaders are persons who function in leadership positions within the setting of a conflict, but whose positions are not necessarily connected to or controlled by the government or major opposition groups.⁵⁶³

Middle-range leadership can be described in several different ways. One approach is to focus on persons who are highly respected as individuals and/or occupy formal positions of leadership in sectors such as education, business, agriculture, or health. A second approach is to consider the primary networks of groups and institutions that may exist within a conflict area, such as religious groups, academic institutions, or humanitarian organisations. A third approach is to concentrate on the identity groups in conflict, and to locate middle-range leaders among people who are well known as belonging to a minority ethnic group, or who are from a particular geographic region within the conflict and are respected by the people of that region, but are also known outside the region. The final approach is to focus on people from within the conflict setting but whose prestige extends much farther.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Ibid., 41.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

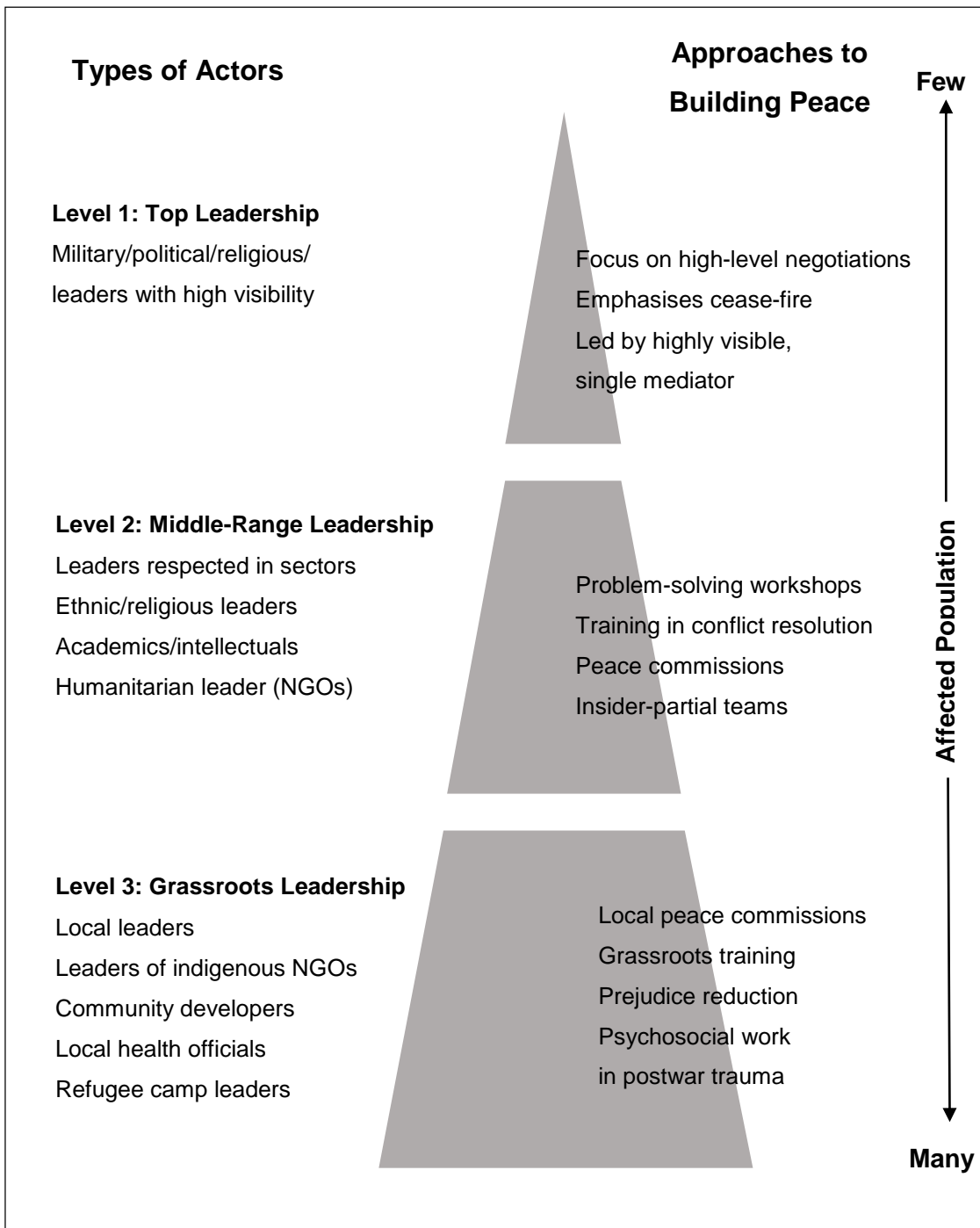


Figure 6.2 - Actors and Approaches to Peacebuilding.

Source: John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 39.

The key actors within this level have significant features: they have contact with top level leaders, but are not influenced by the elite level, and their position is not based on political or military power. Similarly, they have experience of people living at the grassroots level but they are not struggling

with the survival demands that the violence affected victims face. They have good connections with both the top and the grassroots levels.⁵⁶⁵

Level 3: Grassroots Leadership

The grassroots represent the masses, the base of the society. In some cases, people at this level are involved in an effort to survive and keep their lives safe. The leadership at the grassroots level also operates on a day-to-day basis. Leaders in this level include people who are involved in local communities, members of indigenous non-governmental organisations carrying out relief projects for local people, health officials, and refugee camp leaders. These people understand intimately the fear and suffering of the local people; they also have an expert knowledge of local politics and know on a face to face basis the local leaders of the government and its adversaries.⁵⁶⁶

6.3.3 Approaches to Peacebuilding

As each level of leadership has different features, their individual ways in dealing with peacebuilding should be described. Almost all approaches to peacebuilding involve increased contact and cooperation between people.⁵⁶⁷

Level 1: Top Level Approaches

The top level of leadership uses the 'top-down' approach to peacebuilding. This approach has the following characteristics. First, the people who emerge as peacemakers, often seen as intermediaries or mediators, are from elite groups in the community. Second, the goal is to achieve a negotiated settlement between the high-level leaders in the conflict. Third, the peacebuilding approach at this level is often focused on achieving a ceasefire agreement as a first step that will lead to a broader political and substantive negotiation. At the end, the agreement will create the mechanisms for a political transition from war to peace.⁵⁶⁸ According to this model, the ultimate goal is to achieve a peace agreement with the

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 43.

⁵⁶⁷ Burgess, *Encyclopedia*, 232.

⁵⁶⁸ Lederach, *Building Peace*, 44.

leaders of the parties in the conflict.⁵⁶⁹ Thus, it first involves efforts aimed at achieving a ceasefire agreement at the leader level. Next, a process of national transition is initiated involving the political leadership in creating a framework that will lead to a democratic solution. Peace in the early stages depends on achieving a ceasefire agreement and in the later stages on broadening and including more sectors of the society. This assumes a step by step, issue-oriented, and short-term achievement process engaged in by top level leaders.⁵⁷⁰

Level 2: Middle-range Approaches

The middle-range offers what is called a 'middle-out' approach to peacebuilding. It is based on the idea that the middle-range contains a set of leaders with a certain location in the conflict who might provide the key to create an infrastructure for achieving and sustaining peace.⁵⁷¹ The following are examples of middle-out approach activities.

Problem-solving Workshops. These workshops, referred to as 'interactive problem-solving' or 'third-party consultation,' provide a venue for persons who unofficially represent the conflict parties to interact in a process of 'collaborative analysis' of the problems that separate them.⁵⁷² The problem-solving approach has a number of important features as a tool of middle-range peacebuilding. First, middle-level participants are typically invited because of their knowledge of the conflict and their close connection to key decision makers, but top level actors are not invited to be involved in any middle-range activities. Second, the workshop is designed to be informal which creates an environment for adversaries to interact in friendly and relaxing settings. The established environment enables direct interaction with adversaries and encourages the development of relationships, as well as flexibility in looking at the parties' shared problems and possible solutions. The workshop also provides a politically safe space for testing ideas. Finally, the third-party component in the workshop provides multiple functions which are the convening of the parties,

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 46.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

facilitating the meetings, and providing expertise on the analysis of conflict and processes of conflict resolution.⁵⁷³

Conflict Resolution Training. Training, in the conflict resolution field, generally has two aims: raising awareness and imparting skills for dealing with conflict. In this context, training programmes are developed to educate and provide participants with an understanding of how conflict operates, the general patterns and dynamics it follows, and useful concepts for dealing with the conflict. In terms of developing skills, training has the more concrete goal of teaching people specific techniques and approaches for dealing with conflict, often in the form of analytical, communication, negotiation, and mediation skills.⁵⁷⁴

Peace Commissions. The third activity of middle-range peacebuilding involves the formation of peace commissions within the conflict setting. The form and application of the commissions are varied depending on the conflict's situation and context.⁵⁷⁵

The above approaches suggest that the middle-range should hold the potential for helping to establish a relationship based on infrastructure for sustaining the peacebuilding process. A middle-out approach builds on the idea that middle-range leaders can be cultivated to play a useful role in resolving the conflicts. Activities in middle-range peacebuilding have varied forms, from efforts directed at changing perceptions and growing new ideas among actors to the policymaking process, to training in conflict resolution skills, to the establishment of teams, networks, and institutions that can mainly play a conciliation role within the setting.⁵⁷⁶

Level 3: Grassroots Approaches

The grassroots level faces different challenges to those that the top and middle-range levels are confronting. First, at this level, there are large numbers of people. It is difficult for strategies to be communicated to the masses. At best, strategies can be implemented to reach the leadership working at local and community levels. Second, many of the grassroots

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 48.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 49.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 51.

people are in a survival mode which is meeting the basic human needs of food, shelter, and safety. An effort to gain peace and conflict resolution can easily be seen as an impossible attempt. Some strategies at the grassroots level are outlined below.⁵⁷⁷

Bottom-up Approach. This approach involves a process of first achieving discussions and agreements to end the fighting at local peace conferences by bringing together contiguous and interdependent individuals guided by the seniors of each sub-group.⁵⁷⁸

Programmatic Peace Efforts. This approach is the effort to provide an opportunity for grassroots leaders and others to work on issues of peace and conflict resolution at the community level. These kinds of programmes frequently work through existing networks such as religious groups or health associations. These grassroots level programmes are also characterised by their attempts to deal with the important issues that the war has produced, especially among the youth.⁵⁷⁹

6.3.4 Peacebuilding and the Dynamics of Conflict

To understand the dynamic of conflict, Adam Curle has proposed the 'Progress of Conflict Model'. This is to explain the movement toward peace through the roles that emerge in a typical progression of conflict through four major stages (see figure 6.3 on page 179).⁵⁸⁰

In Quadrant 1, conflict is hidden because people are unaware of the injustice and imbalances of power that affect their lives. At this point, education in the form of moral values is needed. The role of educator in this latent conflict stage is aimed at erasing ignorance and raising awareness as to the nature of the unequal relationships and the need for addressing and restoring equity from the view of those experiencing the injustices.⁵⁸¹

Quadrant 2 represents the pursuit of change which involves some form of confrontation. In this stage, confrontation brings the conflict to the surface and it is no longer hidden. Change will require a rebalancing of

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 53.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 55.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

power in the relationship by which all those involved recognise one another in new ways.⁵⁸²

In Quadrant 3 confrontation moves toward negotiations if those involved increase the level of awareness of their interdependence through mutual recognition. Negotiation means that the various groups involved recognise they can neither simply impose their goal nor eliminate the other side, but, rather, must work with one another to achieve their goals. Shared recognition is a form of power balancing and a prerequisite of negotiation. The roles of conciliation and more formal mediation are aimed principally at helping to establish and support the movement from violent confrontation toward negotiation.⁵⁸³

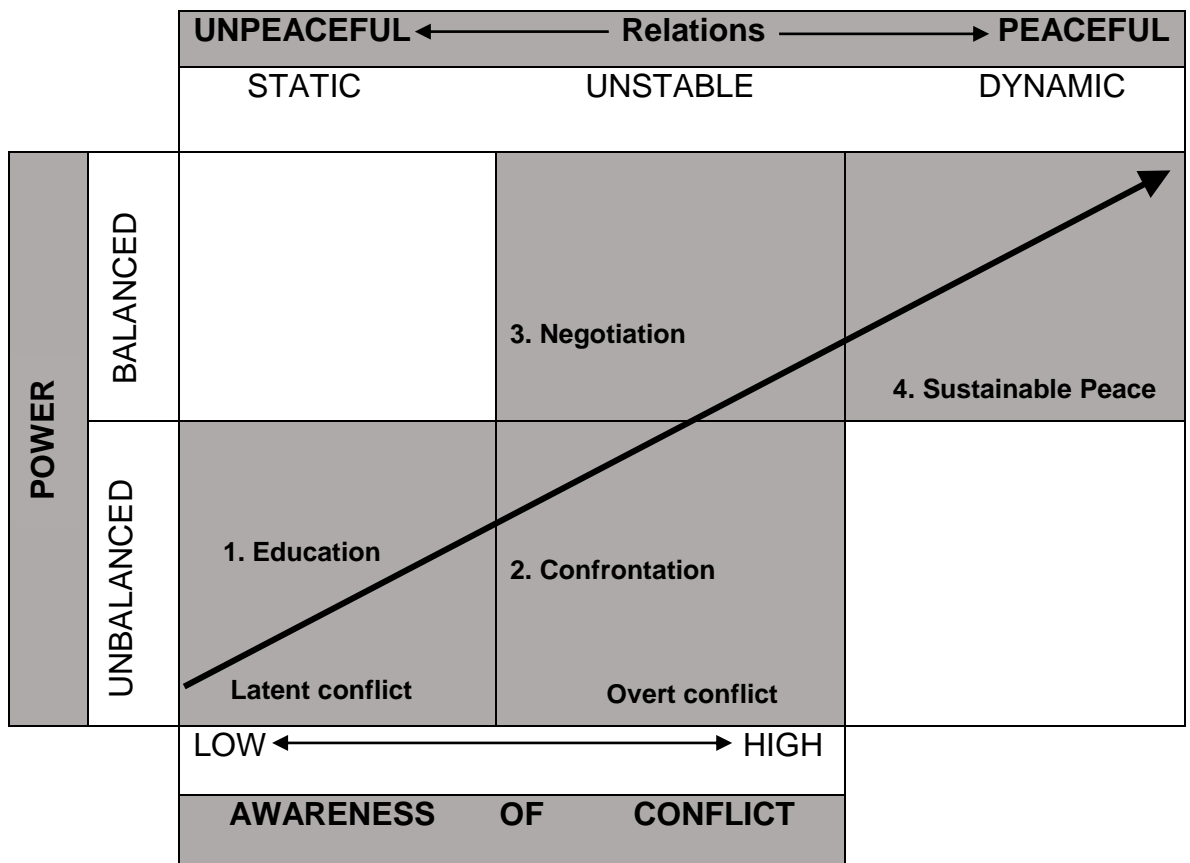


Figure 6.3 - The Progress of Conflict

Source: see Adam Curle cited in John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 65.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 65.

Finally, Quadrant 4 shows that successful negotiations and mediation will lead to restructuring the relationship that deals with the fundamental substantive and procedural concerns of those involved. This refers to increased justice or more peaceful relations.⁵⁸⁴

However, at any point in the progression, conflict can skip any step, or cycle between several of the quadrants for an extensive period of time. For example, confrontation does not always lead to negotiation.⁵⁸⁵

6.4 The Importance of Civil Society in Creating Peace

It has been said that in contemporary wars, both state and non-state actors have played important roles in resolving the conflict. Where states had failed, or took part in conflicting violence, civil society actors were seen as a necessary party for conflict resolution. Moreover, the aim of international diplomacy is no longer only to settle disputes, but also to prevent future conflict through transforming and democratising societies. This is impossible without involving those that have been marginalised in the conflict. This results in increasing recognition for civil society in building peace in the conflict. Indeed, it is suggested that civil society should participate in formal peace processes. Consequently, some peace strategies have been developed to enhance the participation of civil society in solving conflicts.⁵⁸⁶

At the beginning of peacebuilding theories, non-governmental actors, including civil society, play a limited role in the *Conflict Management School*. Civil society rarely has a place at official negotiations based on the assumption that the lower the number of actors involved in negotiations, the easier it is to reach agreement. Although civil society actors are sometimes assigned a significant role as official mediators, their actions and behaviour remain limited and not different from official governmental mediators.⁵⁸⁷ Later on, civil society networks became the key actors in the *Conflict*

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., 66.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ Mathijs Van Leeuwen, *Partners in Peace* (The Netherlands: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2009), 37.

⁵⁸⁷ Paffenholz and Spurk. "Civil Society," 23.

Resolution School and *Conflict Transformation School*. The focus is on the roots of conflict and relationships among conflict parties and society, and both schools understand that these issues should be handled by non-state actors. The main difference is that the *Conflict Resolution School* tends to focus on external actors while the *Conflict Transformation School* does so on internal actors.⁵⁸⁸ Other approaches try to link the public to the official negotiation process through broad information campaigns, or public opinion polls, which allows civil society to play a key role in the communication process. It is, however, very challenging for civil society to organise channels for communications from the conflict parties to the population and to have a flow of communication from the population to the negotiations.⁵⁸⁹

In practical terms, civil society groups have been seen as alternatives to the state in providing conflict solutions. Furthermore, they are also important contributors to good governance and democracy.⁵⁹⁰ The civil society sector significantly influences the nature and implementation of peace agreements and plays an obvious role in the post-settlement phase.⁵⁹¹ In fact, civil society can play roles at every stage in the development of conflict and its resolution, for example, bringing situations of injustice to the surface to prevent violence, creating conditions conducive to peace talks, and setting a policy agenda to heal war-affected psyches.⁵⁹² However, the methods and roles of civil society groups generally only focus on non-military measures and activities to heal the society torn by violence.⁵⁹³

6.5 The Roles of Civil Society in Peacebuilding

There have been some attempts to classify the roles or functions of civil society involved in the peacebuilding process. It is recognised that civil society roles are complex and varied, and there are many grey areas and

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Leeuwen, *Partners in Peace*, 49.

⁵⁹¹ World Bank, *Civil*, 8.

⁵⁹² Catherine Barnes, "Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Mapping Functions in Working for Peace," *The International Spectator* 44, no. 1 (March 2009): 131.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 133.

overlaps. The core roles of civil society offer a suitable framework to better understand the potential contribution of civil society to peacebuilding.⁵⁹⁴ The following are some researchers who have attempted to reach conclusions on the general roles of civil society in conflict resolution.

Paffenholz, an expert in conflict and peacebuilding, applied the proposed analytical framework to assess the different functions of civil society in peacebuilding. These functions can be helpful to analyse civil society's functions more systematically.⁵⁹⁵ Paffenholz classified seven functions of civil society in peacebuilding: (1) Protection; (2) Monitoring and accountability; (3) Advocacy and public communication; (4) Socialisation and culture of peace; (5) Conflict sensitive social cohesion; (6) Intermediation and facilitation; and (7) Service delivery.

Das outlined four types of organisations and initiatives that help to explain the role of civil society in making peace or producing conflict in India's Northeast which are (1) Civic representatives; (2) Peace groups; (3) Bridge-builders; and (4) Popular initiatives.⁵⁹⁶

Barnes mapped out the main functions of civil society in peacebuilding in an article called *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Mapping Functions in Working for Peace*. These roles are mapped out into eight main functions of civil society in peacebuilding: (1) Waging conflict constructively;⁵⁹⁷ (2) Shifting conflict attitudes; (3) Defining the peace agenda; (4) Mobilising constituencies for peace; (5) Reducing violence and promoting stability; (6) Peacemaking/conflict resolution; (7) Community-level peacemaking; and (8) Changing root causes and building cultures of peace.⁵⁹⁸

Based on an analysis of a collection of works on civil society's roles and functions in peacebuilding, and the researcher's own experience, eight general roles of civil society were found. The aim of categorising the roles of civil society is to determine the roles of civil society involved in creating

⁵⁹⁴ World Bank, *Civil*, 13.

⁵⁹⁵ Paffenholz and Spurk, "Civil Society," 27.

⁵⁹⁶ Das, *Conflict and Peace*, 42.

⁵⁹⁷ This term means crucial roles of civil society in changing conflict by bringing the conflict to the surface and escalating it non-violently to generate the necessary changes. Source: Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 135.

⁵⁹⁸ Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 134.

sustainable peace and to enhance the effectiveness and impact of civil society's in peacebuilding. These roles can be useful to analyse civil society contributions to build peace in the ethno-religious conflict in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand. The following presents the eight roles of civil society in peacebuilding.

6.5.1 Security Protector

Protecting the country and keeping civilians secure in their lives and properties are the most important duties of a state. The tasks of the civil society are to remind the state of this warrant or to initiate their own security mechanism in the community.⁵⁹⁹ It is very difficult for people to support and engage in creating peace when their basic security is threatened. This is one of the reasons why those who want to ruin a peace process escalate violence against civilians. While state security forces can play an important role in protection, they are often a part of the problem or fail to fulfill their responsibilities. The military sometimes deploys too few soldiers, is too late or is inadequate in providing sufficient protection for the civilian population.⁶⁰⁰ In some cases, providing too much military force also has a negative effect on the daily life of the locals because it creates fear and an insecure atmosphere in the community. The main activities for civil society within this security protector role are international accompaniment, watchdog activities, the creation of 'zones of peace,' humanitarian aid, and civil society initiatives for human security such as supporting local capacities and leadership to enable local response strategies to conflict.⁶⁰¹

State security forces or international peacekeepers, however, are not the only actors to respond to violence effectively. In many cases, violence-affected communities have been able to take action to protect themselves and to relieve the effects of armed conflict. Civil society at the community level – especially when they cooperate with central authorities and international organisations – can monitor developments and take proactive steps to reduce violence. In a number of places torn by violence, one of the

⁵⁹⁹ Paffenholz and Spurk, "Civil Society," 7.

⁶⁰⁰ Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 137.

⁶⁰¹ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 67.

most effective ways to solve this problem is for communities to become proactively involved in trying to prevent the violence.⁶⁰²

When a state weakened by armed conflict is often unable to protect its citizens, civil society is usually initiated during a conflict and its aftermath to protect citizens' lives, rights and property against threats by conflict actors or the state. For example, communities in the Philippines have negotiated zones of peace called 'spaces for peace' where no arms are allowed.⁶⁰³ Another aspect of protection is support for security-related issues such as demining, arms control and disarmament, demobilisation, and the reintegration of ex-combatants.⁶⁰⁴

6.5.2 Representative

Civil society is seen to represent the forces in favour of peace in a society and it can play a significant as the public's representative in the peacebuilding process. They are closer to the grassroots than government authorities.⁶⁰⁵ Civil society acts as a representative of the public to express what local people want and need. Besides contributing to good governance and a democratic state, strengthening the civil society as a representative of the grassroots will lead to successful peacebuilding.⁶⁰⁶

In general, the public can participate in the peace process directly or through representatives. The civil society sector is one of the most effective and convenient channels. Civil society also has an opportunity to voice views and to propose recommendations where all interested individuals engage in a process of developing and implementing agreements to end the conflict.⁶⁰⁷ Some peace processes have structures that enable the wider public to engage directly in the formal negotiations. This process is usually aimed at reaching comprehensive agreements on new administrative structures and other key issues of the conflict. Thus, civil society actors can

⁶⁰² Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 137.

⁶⁰³ Rood, *Forging Sustainable Peace*, 36.

⁶⁰⁴ World Bank, *Civil*, 13.

⁶⁰⁵ Leeuwen, *Partners in Peace*, 38.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁷ Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 140.

be very useful because they are typically motivated more by the locals' need to promote sustainable change than by the quest for governing power.⁶⁰⁸

6.5.3 Bridge-builder

Civil society is known as a bridge between civilian and other conflicting parties including the state and it is also seen as a catalyst of community building and integration. Public participation in civil society organisations helps to bridge societal cleavages, create civil virtues, and foster social cohesion, also satisfying the needs of individuals to develop bonds and attachments.⁶⁰⁹

Civil society is attributed special roles in healing societies torn apart by conflict. It can build inter-communal links between conflicting parties to promote dialogue and reconcile people within groups and on different levels of society.⁶¹⁰ Furthermore, civil society has a role as an intermediate between state, citizens and interest groups, and can ensure a balance between central authority and social networks.⁶¹¹

The main activities within this function are facilitating both formal and informal initiatives between state, armed groups, communities and external agencies.⁶¹² Many grassroots peacebuilders in societies promote people-to-people dialogue across the conflict divides to shift entrenched conflict dynamics. This is often facilitated by establishing direct communication between people with some common attributes, for example, a similar occupation, identity characteristic, or common experience of the conflict.⁶¹³

In the bridge-builder role, enhancing social cohesion is an important function for civil society as conflict usually destroys trust among conflicting communities. Restoring bridging as a social capital can help to restrain violence among communities and revitalise group interactions, interdependency and solidarity. Participation and engagement in voluntary associations has the potential to build and strengthen social capital, but rather than building bonding ties within groups, the aim should be to

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Paffenholz and Spurk, "Civil Society," 7.

⁶¹⁰ Leeuwen, *Partners in Peace*, 38.

⁶¹¹ Paffenholz and Spurk, "Civil Society," 7.

⁶¹² World Bank, *Civil*, 13.

⁶¹³ Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 136.

strengthen relationships across adversary groups. Main activities to enhance social cohesion focus on joint activities between groups such as joint associations, joint cultural events, or sports games. This can also include joint service delivery activities designed specifically to strengthen social cohesion through mixed or joint development committees.⁶¹⁴

6.5.4 Relief Worker

In a conflict, while the role of the civil society is often diminished, their actors can be engaged in some functions including being involved in relief work. It is important for war-affected communities to have emergency assistance promptly. Conflict victims normally need some help immediately such as shelter, food, money and other things needed in daily life.⁶¹⁵ Besides material necessity, it is also very important to heal psyches and transform the mindsets of those who have been affected by the conflict. These changes can be supported by reliable civil society actors, who rely essentially on creativity to generate experiences that allow people to connect across divides and to inspire changes in perceptions.⁶¹⁶

Relief work, or service delivery, is seen rather as a task of the state. There is no doubt that as the state weakens during conflict, service provision by civil society groups is extremely important for violence-affected people. The objectives of this role might be seen as being for primarily economic or humanitarian objectives, and being of only indirect and limited relevance to peacebuilding. It is, however, an important role for civil society to assist the local people when a state is unable to respond to their needs immediately. Direct service provision to communities is an important function for most civil society groups, particularly in weak states and during conflict.

Furthermore, the civil society can play a role between aid agencies and conflict parties to deliver services directly to communities. In some conflict areas, the local civil society acts as a facilitator where government or foreign aid groups cannot operate or need facilitation to better understand the local context.⁶¹⁷ The civil society sector can not only be more efficient

⁶¹⁴ World Bank, *Civil*,13.

⁶¹⁵ Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 141.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ World Bank, *Civil*,13.

than the state, but they may also be more effective in reaching marginal groups which may be at the roots of the conflict. This is because local civil society members speak the same language and have a similar cultural background.⁶¹⁸

6.5.5 Monitoring Observer

Civil society groups can monitor the conflict situation, make recommendations to decision makers, provide information to advocacy groups, and provide inputs for early warning of a conflict situation.⁶¹⁹ The monitoring-aimed civil society groups can be uniquely influential in creating sufficient stability and space to support official political negotiations and to address the local dimensions of wider conflict contexts. Civil society monitors usually provide credible, independent information and analysis that is accepted by the conflicting parties and outsiders.⁶²⁰ The main activities related to the monitoring function are the creation of conflict-relevant data collection, early warning systems and reporting on human rights abuses.⁶²¹ Some groups have created and developed the database system which could be used by a variety of actors such as military authorities, government institutions, international agencies, researchers and the public. This data system is very useful as they typically draw upon detailed local knowledge of the specific dynamics and developments that can trigger conflict escalation.⁶²²

In addition to monitoring formally agreed ceasefires, civil society monitors can become involved in activities that help to generate public confidence, such as monitoring developments in state authorities or relations between communities.⁶²³ Members of civil society are often the best source to identify the reasons for a conflict and the motivations, and to suggest specific actions that could lead to a more peaceful direction. These insights can support the development of highly targeted strategies that do not require extensive resources or coercive measures, especially when

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 138.

⁶²¹ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 68.

⁶²² Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 138.

⁶²³ Ibid.

addressed at an early point in a conflict cycle. While the civil society sector can be the source of vital inputs for shaping international responses to conflict, it is also important to encourage the locals to respond to the risk of violence.⁶²⁴

6.5.6 Academic

In a peaceful situation, civil society plays a vital role in growing democracy at the community level. People learn how to deal with their basic democratic rights including the capacities of being citizens, participating in public life, developing trust, confidence, tolerance and acceptance. This also supports the decentralisation of power, and the creation of solidarity among citizens, which act as defense mechanisms against possible attacks on their freedom.⁶²⁵

In circumstances of turmoil, the main activities for civil society in an academic role are to brainstorm with experts in peace, to address sources of structural violence, to promote human security, and to do research to find a potential solution for the conflict. From a long-term perspective, the civil society can encourage new generations to become aware of peace studies, dynamics in ethnic diversity and citizenship awareness, and to promote tolerance and a culture of peace. Often target groups of this civil society are focused on youth, who may have greater capacities for change than older generations. Summer camps, integrated schools and cultural exchange programmes can all promote what has become known as ‘next generation work’.⁶²⁶

People of all ages, however, can be empowered to address conflicts from the grassroots upwards. One of the means of doing this is through indoctrination and supporting constructive responses to conflict by peace and conflict resolution education. Moreover, the development of a civic idea can be a key to prevent conflict in the community. Finally, a widespread, inclusive and vibrant engagement within civic life can be the beginning for

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Paffenholz and Spurk, “Civil Society,” 7.

⁶²⁶ Barnes, “Civil Society,” *The International Spectator*, 142.

the institutions needed to resolve conflict peacefully and to generate more responsive and better governance needed to make peace sustainable.⁶²⁷

6.5.7 Public Communicator

Independent media plays an important role in peacebuilding by reaching a broad range of the population, facilitating public communication, expanding the audience for advocacy campaigns, and raising awareness of non-violent solutions. The most important, but difficult task, is disseminating unbiased news and non-partisan information, such as the facts on mass killings, human rights violations and reconciliation efforts, and is the media's contribution to peacebuilding.⁶²⁸ Often the media has been used as a tool by conflicting parties to discredit the opposition or propagate their side.

Civil society offers a space for public communication which is its core function in democratic countries. It stresses the importance of a free public sphere, separated from the state and economy, where people have space for debate, participation and democratic decision-building. Civil society and its networks have a major role to play in establishing this democratic public space and acting as a watchdog. Members of civil society groups, organisations, and social movements are able to collect concerns and problems and transfer them from the private sphere to the political agenda.⁶²⁹

Advocacy within a democratic context is often referred to as communication as it entails civil society promoting relevant social and political themes on the public agenda.⁶³⁰ Advocacy is one of the core functions in peacebuilding and primarily a role for civil society which can reconcile the interests of social groups, especially marginalised groups, and create communication channels to raise public awareness and facilitate the inclusion of issues in the public agenda.⁶³¹

The main activities within this role are: disseminating to outsiders the facts of the conflict situation; agenda-setting by local civil society actors,

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ World Bank, *Civil*, 13.

⁶²⁹ Paffenholz and Spurk, "Civil Society," 8.

⁶³⁰ Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 69.

⁶³¹ World Bank, *Civil*, 13.

such as bringing themes to the national agenda in conflicting countries; lobbying for civil society involvement in peace negotiations; and creating public pressure.⁶³²

6.5.8 Peace-builder

This role focuses on civil society's direct involvement in the peacemaking process and in reaching a ceasefire agreement. Negotiations to end armed conflict are often viewed as the duty of the state and the top leaders of militant groups. This process means that the potential contributions of civil society were overlooked. Since the 1990s, many civil society peace initiatives, however, have revealed their potential for supporting the prospects of a sustainable agreement.⁶³³

Before the conflict erupts, sometimes the prevailing power structures in a society are deeply oppressive. While there may not be full-scale warfare, some groups are impaired by profound violence, often combined with threatened direct violence. Civil society actors can play important roles in changing these situations by bringing the conflict to the surface nonviolently to generate the necessary changes. Using both international human rights machinery and the domestic judiciary, they are sometimes able to use existing institutional and legal systems to judge or to solve injustices.⁶³⁴

Civil society actors can also help to develop the agenda for peace by identifying problems that have been overlooked and policy gaps. Furthermore, they can help to shape peace policy by analysing issues and recommending solutions. In short, they can identify the key agenda of issues that need to be addressed in responding to a conflict situation and dealing more widely with peace and security issues. Civil society groups can engage in policy making to address conflicts; mobilise advocacy campaigns to generate political will among decision-makers; and implement strategies to achieve the desired results. In short, civil society tries to raise public

⁶³² Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding*, 69.

⁶³³ Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 139.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

awareness about the conflict with efforts to motivate political decision-makers to take action to resolve the problems.⁶³⁵

In addition to encouraging an atmosphere conducive to peace negotiations, civil society actors sometimes have a direct peacemaking role. They can help provide channels of communication among parties in conflict. Using their unofficial status, which makes engagement possible without being involved in formal conveying legitimacy, they can provide confidential unofficial channels to convey messages between opponents.⁶³⁶ Furthermore, civil society can also initiate and participate in unofficial dialogues, involving influential academic, religious, and NGO leaders and other actors who can interact more freely than high-ranking officials.⁶³⁷ These informal tracks provide opportunities for both official and non-official actors who are close to government leaders and armed opposition groups to brainstorm for sustainable peace.⁶³⁸ The unofficial dialogues have at least three different tracks. First, Track I ½ includes unofficial actors who intervene between official government representatives to promote a peaceful resolution of conflict. Secondly, the unofficial intervention with unofficial actors, or Track II dialogue, is an informal interaction between members of adversarial groups or nations to find out ways that might help resolve the conflict. Finally, Track III is an unofficial intervention at the grassroots which are from various sectors of their society to find ways to promote peace in the settlement of violent conflict. This Track III aims at building broken relationships among people in the conflict affected community.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁵ Ibid., 136.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 139.

⁶³⁷ United States Institute of Peace, *Tracks of Diplomacy*, <http://glossary.usip.org/resource/tracks-diplomacy> (accessed 19 June 2013).

⁶³⁸ Barnes, "Civil Society," *The International Spectator*, 139.

⁶³⁹ Dian Chigas, "Track II (Citizen) Diplomacy," August 2003, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/track2-diplomacy> (accessed 11 July 2013).

6.6 Conclusion

In finding conflict resolution, peacebuilding is the most difficult process because it involves and engages a variety of people working at different levels and roles focusing on various aspects of the conflict.⁶⁴⁰ Peacebuilding has been presented as a process made up of a multiplicity of interdependent roles, functions, and activities. Thus, the goal of peacebuilding is to create a sustainable peace toward restructured relationships.⁶⁴¹ It requires widespread attitudinal and behavioural change, usually linked with social and economic changes made at the interpersonal, organisational, community, and societal levels. This cannot be done quickly or easily.⁶⁴²

Most peacebuilding schools assume that the influence of civil society on conflict management is indirect and generally limited to a supporting or facilitating role.⁶⁴³ However, in almost every case, it has been proved that sustainable peace cannot rely on a state or a single actor to transform conflict in divided societies.⁶⁴⁴ This chapter has also analysed the importance of civil society and its role in creating peace. It cannot be denied that civil society plays a significant role in the peacebuilding process. It is no wonder, therefore, that numerous international NGOs and UN agencies have integrated support to local civil societies in their peacebuilding policies. They have seen the civil society sector as being the most appropriate entry point and an effective tool to work well for peace.⁶⁴⁵ Civil society can make unique contributions to peacebuilding during all phases of conflict, with or without external support.⁶⁴⁶

The next chapter will discuss civil society in Thailand providing an understanding of the civil society sector in a Thai cultural background.

⁶⁴⁰ Lederach, *Building Peace*, 67.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁶⁴² Burgess, *Encyclopedia*, 233.

⁶⁴³ World Bank, *Civil*, 13.

⁶⁴⁴ Lederach, *Building Peace*, 67.

⁶⁴⁵ Leeuwen, *Partners in Peace*, 38.

⁶⁴⁶ World Bank, *Civil*, 22.

CHAPTER VII

CIVIL SOCIETY IN THAILAND

7.1 Introduction

Public participation is a fundamental right for citizens in every democratic country as well as a basic concept in the formation of a civil society and other sectors. Civil society in Thailand, however, has not been well-developed because of social circumstances, economic foundations and especially the history of its politics which is different from western countries where original patterns of democracy have existed for many years.⁶⁴⁷ Civil society groups in Thailand vary from one another in terms of background, ideals, objectives, size, assets, and these give rise to different problems and complex issues at various levels. Civil society groups have various roles in Thai society. These include offering public services, supplementing government agencies in providing social support for the poor and other disadvantaged groups, monitoring public organisations and their activities, and advocating for justice, human rights, environmental protection and anti-corruption measures.⁶⁴⁸

The increasing usage of the term ‘civil society’ among prominent Thai scholars in Thailand reveals that the country is entering into a new stage of grassroots community awareness concerning citizenship rights and democracy. Its emergence, however, is still in its infancy.⁶⁴⁹

This chapter will examine the overall background of the civil society sector in Thailand which is distinct from that in other countries. The chapter begins by discussing how the term ‘civil society’ emerged in Thai society; then explains the history of the civil society sector in Thailand; and finally

⁶⁴⁷ Evaluation Department of Development of Democracy, *The Evaluation of the Strengths of Civil Society toward the Development of Democracy: Case Study of Yala Province*, Project of Promoting Awareness and Responsibility of Civilians in Politics, 2012, 3. [in Thai].

⁶⁴⁸ Cameron Lowry, “Civil Society Engagement in Asia: Six Country Profiles,” Paper of Asia Pacific Governance and Democracy Initiative (AGDI), East-West Center, Honolulu, July 14-16, 2008, 76.

⁶⁴⁹ Jamaree Chiangtong, *Evolution of Civil Society in Thailand* (Bangkok: Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation, 2000), iv.

analyses several aspects of Thai civil society such as its position, its formalisation, its different categories, the difficulties challenging it and the factors that promote it.

7.2 The Emergence of Civil Society in Thailand

In Thailand, different terms have been used to define civil society such as 'civil movement', 'people's participation', and 'new social movement'. Civil society, however, seems to be the most suitable term for Thailand. One reason for this is that the term 'civil society' has been used more widely and tends to replace the other words because the term 'civil society' refers to people wanting to share their opinions, while other terms, like 'people's participation', means that the state allows people to participate as a part of the state's work. The term 'civil society' is used widely in the private sector and also in the government sector which shows a positive trend in the growth of civil society. Because of this, the Thai government has encouraged the establishment of civil society organisations.⁶⁵⁰

For Thailand, a civil society sector has gradually emerged since the time of King Rama V. The first civil society organisation was the Thai Red Cross Society which was established in 1893. In the early period, civil society organisations were formed with the main purpose being social assistance. Civil society groups grew with the purpose of meeting the country's development needs with many being formed by 1967. Finally, the purpose of promoting democratic participation emerged after a major political event in 1973.⁶⁵¹

Civil society groups have generally increased in number and become more widely spread in society over subsequent decades; a phenomenon which means that the country is moving in a positive direction towards sustainable development. Thailand has also seen an increase in the strength of its middle class; not only in terms of its absolute or relative size, but also in the general level of education and awareness that citizens now

⁶⁵⁰ Jamaree, *Evolution of Civil Society*, 1.

⁶⁵¹ The Secretariat of the Senate, *The Activities of Non-government Organisation*, http://www.senate.go.th/senate/report_detail.php?report_id=49 (accessed 20 January 2014).

have of their rights. Although Thais in general have traditionally been content to mind their own affairs, members of the middle class have increasingly become active participants in public issues.⁶⁵²

The earliest voluntary organisations in Thailand were the Buddhist and Christian groups which served the poor in the early 20th century.⁶⁵³ Traditionally, most civil society groups are formed to provide relief to the needy in times of disaster and hardship. There are also a large number of non-profit organisations which have been established under royal patronage to receive funds from people's donations through the royal family such as the Sai Jai Thai Foundation, the Thai Rice Foundation and the Zoological Park Organisation.⁶⁵⁴ Furthermore, local NGOs are found in all areas of Thailand, particularly in the rural areas, due to increased rates of poverty. Despite this, many civil society groups have a short life span, fading away as quickly as they form.

7.3 The History of Civil Society in Thailand

The evolution of the civil society sector in Thailand is tied to history and culture. The background to Thailand's civil society can be traced back to the era of absolute monarchy including Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and the pre-democratic period in the Rattanakosin period. To understand the background of civil society in Thailand, the country's history needs to be explained.

Thai history is commonly divided into four eras from Sukhothai to the present era, Rattanakosin. Here, the focus will be more on the Rattanakosin Era where key events became turning points for the growth of civil society. However, a brief description of the situation before the Rattanakosin Era will be provided in order to explain those circumstances before the formation of a civil society sector which have affected its evolution. For the purposes of this thesis, the Rattanakosin Era will be divided into four periods. Each period has important incidents aligned to the growth of civil society.

⁶⁵² Hudson, "Problematizing European Theories," 92.

⁶⁵³ Katia Balassiano, "Support for a Civil Society in Thailand," East-West Center Working Paper no. 36 (International Graduate Student Conference Series, 2008), 8.

⁶⁵⁴ Lowry, "Civil Society," 76.

7.3.1 The Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Thonburi Eras

In the past, Thai society did not encourage a civil society for political reasons. One of the most famous kings during the *Sukhothai Era* was King Ramkhamhaeng. His national policy was 'Father Governs Children'. King Ramkhamhaeng created a concept of 'paternal rule' in which the King governs his people as a father would govern his children. If civilians were in trouble, they could ring the bell in front of his palace to call for the King's help. As a result of that, civilians absolutely relied on the ruler.

During the *Ayutthaya Era*, a king's status was that of absolute monarch with a semi-religious status. According to Hindu religion, the king is a descent of God in human who was born to be a defender of the people. Besides the Hindu tradition, Buddhism believed that the king is the righteous ruler, aiming at the well-being of the people. Therefore, civilians were considered under the ruler as servants or followers. Slaves remained under the control of rich or noble families. They had no freedom or concept of civilian awareness. The kings of Ayutthaya, especially King Trailokanat, created institutions in support of rule including bureaucracy and a system of 'Sakdina'⁶⁵⁵ as well as the creation of 'Rachasap',⁶⁵⁶ the language which was reserved exclusively for addressing the king or talking about royalty. The king's power was absolute and sovereign: he was the 'Lord of the Land and Lord of Life'. The king was also the chief administrator, chief legislator and chief judge. Therefore, the king was the centre of all laws, orders, verdicts and punishments.

After Ayutthaya was burnt and destroyed by Burmese troops in 1767, King Taksin decided to move the capital from Ayutthaya to Thonburi. This *Thonburi Era* lasted fifteen years with constant civil wars throughout the period. There was no opportunity for the people to create any sense of civilian awareness; their only thought was to try to survive the war and restore the country to order.

⁶⁵⁵ 'Sakdina' refers to power over lands but usually translated as feudalism.

⁶⁵⁶ 'Rachasap' is the official language used only for the king and the royal family.

7.3.2 The Rattanakosin Era

The Rattanakosin Era (from 1782 to the present) began with Bangkok as the capital. Four important incidents concerning the civil society sector in Thailand are described below.

1) The Change to Democracy in 1932

After the Thonburi Era, Thailand remained an absolute monarchy from King Rama I until King Rama VII. Democracy first emerged in Thailand when the military imposed constitutional limits upon King Rama VII who relinquished control to the people in 1932. The military came to power in the bloodless Siamese revolution of 24 June 1932 which transformed the government of Thailand from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. Initially, the government was run by elites and the military in a one-party state.⁶⁵⁷ In practice, because it was not a fully democratic system, and an absolute state economic system existed, most economic activities depended on the state's decision-making with civilians having no power or rights to participate in any political or economic resolutions. However, following changes to the ruling system from an absolute monarchy to a democracy, the idea of a civil society sector formed among the upper class many of whom had been educated overseas.

2) The Revolution of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976

Although Thailand has been a democratic system since the reign of King Rama VII in 1932, the state has retained absolute power mostly with the control of military governments. This political period is known as 'semi-democracy'. The main regimes have been mostly led by military dictators such as General Phibulsongkram, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat and Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, who kept rotating their turns as the top power brokers in the country.

The first non-government development organisation was formally registered with the government in 1967. It was called the Thai Rural Reconstruction Foundation (TRRF) which was founded by the Director of the Bank of Thailand and the President of Thammasat University. The King

⁶⁵⁷ Balassiano, "Support," 1.

subsequently accepted the TRRF under his royal patronage and the influence of the non-government sector in rural development expanded.⁶⁵⁸

Although the military has ruled Thailand for the majority of years since 1932, dissatisfaction with the military and police grew among people from the rural regions and the educated middle class.⁶⁵⁹ Demonstrations by students started in 1968 and the numbers of protesters increased in the early 1970s although the government had banned political gatherings. In June 1973, nine university students were expelled for publishing an article in a student newspaper that criticised the government's corruption and its leaders' inappropriate manners.⁶⁶⁰ Shortly after that, thousands of students held a protest at the Democracy Monument in the capital. As the crowds were breaking up the next day - 14 October - many students found themselves unable to leave because the police attempted to control the flow of the crowd by blocking the exit roads and using teargas and gunfire. More than a hundred students were killed and many of them disappeared.⁶⁶¹ However, the protest in October 1973 ended the military dictatorship and promulgated a new constitution.⁶⁶²

Following the student demonstration of 14 October 1973, the Thai people generally became more politically active and many NGOs were formed by committed people from a variety of professions. Moreover, educational opportunities and exposure to mass media sources increased during the Vietnam War period. Many university students learned more about ideas related to Thailand's economic and political systems which resulted in a revival of student activism. The Vietnam War period was also the time when the Thai middle class grew and gradually developed its own identity and consciousness. After the 14 October 1973 incident, political freedom in Thailand flourished for three years. The most active movements were those of students, the worker's union and farmers. The incident is

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁶⁰ One of those scandals occurred when a military helicopter crashed in 1973. Many bison carcasses were found at the scene and it was believed that these were hunted and killed from the National Reserved Forest by a group of high-rank military and police.

⁶⁶¹ Balassiano, "Support," 2.

⁶⁶² Kittisak Prokati, *Thailand: The "October Movement" and the Transformation to Democracy*, http://www.ghi-dc.org/files/publications/bu_supp/supp006/bus6_099.pdf (accessed 22 December 2014).

usually referred to as a victory for students but, three years later, the students were condemned as troublemakers and accused of being communists.⁶⁶³

From 1973 the army and right-wing parties⁶⁶⁴ began a propaganda war against student liberalism. By late 1976, moderate middle class opinion had turned away from the activism of the students with their base at Thammasat University. Tension between workers and factory owners became serious as the civil rights movement became more active. However, the main cause of the demonstration on 6 October 1976 was the return to Thailand of former military dictator Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn who had left the country after the bloody incident on 14 October 1973. Over a hundred students from various universities who protested at Thammasat University in Bangkok were brutally killed by the government on the 6 October 1976. On the same day, the military took over in order to control the crisis.⁶⁶⁵

Overall, the end of 1970s and early 1980s, marked a low period for the development of civil society groups and civil activities. Several hundred members of the active core of the movement fled to the communists in the jungle. However, a few years later, they were granted amnesty and many have become respected politicians or university professors.⁶⁶⁶ The country was under several appointed prime ministers and military governments from the coups in 1976 and 1977. Finally in the late 1980s, the military government stepped down, allowing for elections.⁶⁶⁷ Since then, many NGOs emerged and became more active due to an increase in social problems associated with development and the government's failure to tackle the problems.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁴ In politics, the right-wing parties have been defined as the support or acceptance of social hierarchy.

⁶⁶⁵ Sudarat Musikawong, "Thai Democracy and the October (1973-1976) Events," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 7, no. 4 (2004): 713.

⁶⁶⁶ Prokati, *Thailand: The "October Movement"*.

⁶⁶⁷ Musikawong, "Thai Democracy," 713.

⁶⁶⁸ Lowry, "Civil Society," 76.

3) 'The Black May Event' 1992

After the political crisis in October 1976, Thai politics had been peaceful under the government of Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda for nine years from 1979 to 1988. He remained personally popular, but the revival of democratic politics led to a demand for a more challenging leader.

The 1988 general election brought former General Chatichai Choonhavan to power. From 1988 to 1991, his government focused on expanding Thailand's economic policies and during his term the country's economic boom, saw the annual growth rate reach as high as 13 per cent. However, his government came to be known for its high levels of corruption.⁶⁶⁹

On 23 February 1991, a coup was staged by the junta led by Generals Sunthorn Kongsompong and Suchinda Kraprayoon. Chatichai's government was charged with being a corrupt regime. The junta called itself the National Peace Keeping Council or NPKC for short. Anand Panyarachun, who was popular because of his anti-corruption and straightforward measures, was selected by the junta to be prime minister. Although the NPKC promised to return power to the people after a new constitution had been approved, the new constitution only seemed to encourage the NPKC to gain more power. This was the reason for the resistance by the people, especially the middle classes. After the general election on 22 March 1992, the winning coalition failed to form a government because their leader was on the drug blacklist of the United States. Therefore, they appointed one of the coup leaders, Suchinda Kraprayoon, to become Prime Minister.

Suchinda's becoming prime minister brought hundreds of thousands of people out on the streets in the largest demonstrations in Bangkok, led by the former governor of Bangkok, Major-General Chamlong Srimuang. The strong protests exploded from 17 to 21 May 1992. Most protesters were middle-class, business owners and working age people which was a different cohort from past protests in Thai political history where most

⁶⁶⁹ The New York Times, Archives, "Chatichai Choonhavan, 76, Ex-Prime Minister of Thailand," <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/07/world/chatichai-choonhavan-76-ex-prime-minister-of-thailand.html> (accessed 13 January 2014).

protesters were university students. This mob became known as the 'middle class mob', 'cell phone mob', or 'car mob' because during that time, cell phones and cars were affordable for the middle classes, but not for the ordinary grassroots people.⁶⁷⁰ Suchinda tried to suppress the demonstrations by military force, which led to a massacre and riots in the heart of the capital in which hundreds died. It was one of the biggest protests for democracy in Thai history and the incident was called 'the Black May Event'. Amidst the fear of civil war, King Bhumibol (King Rama IX) intervened to improve the situation and end the conflict peacefully. He summoned Suchinda and Chamlong to a televised audience and urged them to reach a compromise. This meeting resulted in Suchinda's resignation.⁶⁷¹ After the incident, Anand Panyarachun was again appointed to serve as prime minister. This was the beginning of the drafting of the first people's constitution.⁶⁷²

Civil society has become a catchword among Thai intellectuals in the last few decades especially after the events of May 1992. The May incident proved that the urban middle class, previously thought of as politically inert, was quite capable of political public action. This incident seemed to have brought people involved in the non-government sector into much closer collaboration.⁶⁷³ Overall, the civil society movement became stronger during the 1990s when the need for political and social reforms was recognised. People became more self aware, responsible, and participated in political reforms. Civil society organisations have played an active role in political movements since that time.⁶⁷⁴

4) Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 1997

Demands for a new constitution and people's participation in the drafting process were made between 1992-1997. It became clear that the 1997 Constitution was the most advanced in terms of political reforms in

⁶⁷⁰ The Thailand Research Fund, *Legal Measures to Strengthen Civil Society in Thailand*, 2000, 3-35. [in Thai].

⁶⁷¹ Nicholas Farrelly, *17 May 1992 and 17 May 2010*, <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2010/05/17/17-may-1992-and-17-may-2010/> (accessed 22 December 2014).

⁶⁷² The Thailand Research Fund, *Legal Measures*, 3-36.

⁶⁷³ Lowry, "Civil Society," 77.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

civil society history as it was drafted with public participation and is always referred to as the 'People's Constitution'. Monitoring the impact of the economic crisis in 1997 and disseminating information on corruption cases have become important roles for civil society over the last decade. The activities of the civil society sector include anti-globalisation, anti-international financial institutional activities (including those of the World Bank, IMF, and the Asian Development Bank) as well as poverty eradication projects.⁶⁷⁵

Therefore, the most influential period for civil society in Thailand was when groups had a role in drafting the 1997 constitution. As a result of that, the importance and role of the middle class and grassroots people in Thai society has been highlighted to participate in political activities. This constitution contained new clauses which have never existed in previous ones such as human rights, social and economic rights, and community rights in matters such as environmental management. Additionally, some independent government agencies were established to increase checks and balances.⁶⁷⁶

7.4 Where is Civil Society in Thai Society?

As some concepts of the position of civil society in general have been described in Chapter 2, this section analyses where the civil society sector is placed in the Thai society. Thailand has a different concept of civil society from Western models where each sector of society seems to play an individual role. In Thailand's context, more actors are involved in building a civil society sector which includes political, economic and citizen sectors.⁶⁷⁷

According to the make-up of Thai society, the *Political Sector* seems to share the biggest portion, in terms of roles and power, involving state, laws, parliament, government agencies, courts and political parties. The second part is the *Economic Sector*. Profit-based organisations, private companies, and investors are all considered integral to the economic sector.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁷⁶ Gary Suwannarat, *Financing Development in Southeast Asia: Opportunities for Collaboration and Sustainability*, (Bangkok: The Synergos Institute, 2004), 2. [in Thai].

⁶⁷⁷ Kritsada. "Concept," *Krirk University Journal*, 21.

Although Thailand has a liberal market system, the state remains involved in many important issues which affect the overall economic system. The *Citizen Sector* is the third sector which includes all people in the country.

The newly formed and most important sector for a democratic country like Thailand, but the one which shares the least power in Thai society is *Civil Society*. The civil society forms in the citizen sector according to the Western concepts because it does not have any involvement by state or business interests. However, in Thailand's case, civil society groups are formed in any individual sector. Moreover, there are some areas of civil society which overlap between the political, economic and citizen sectors. These overlaps are associations, communities, networks or groups which are formed by grassroots communities but supported by the government and/or sponsored by the business sector. This is why the civil society sector in Thailand is different from Western's models. The civil society sector in Thailand is still in its beginning stages, so it is the smallest portion in Thai society.

7.5 The Formalising of Civil Society in Thailand

In Thailand, there are more than 18,000 civil society organisations in different categories based on the International Classification of Nonprofit Organisations (ICNPO). These include both full-time workers and volunteers working for civil society organisations.⁶⁷⁸ Various forms of civil society organisations are found such as working groups, centres, councils and foundations.

These organisations are involved in charitable or public interest concerns and do not operate for a profit. Only some of them have officially registered with the government because to be registered as a civil society organisation, they need to reach certain criteria such as board member numbers, capital requirement and committee obligations. The registration process may take up to a year although normally it takes a few months to complete.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁸ Lowry, "Civil Society," 76.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

The establishment and oversight of NGOs in Thailand is governed by the Civil and Commercial Code of 1992.⁶⁸⁰ Different government departments register civil society organisations based on the proposed organisation's form, aims and declared activity areas. Relevant government agencies responsible for registration and oversight are the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the Ministry of Culture, the Prime Minister's Office and the National Police Office.⁶⁸¹

Two types of registration which most civil society organisations in Thailand comply with relate to foundation and association and their help in analysing the status and the difficulties of civil society groups involved in peacebuilding which occurs in Chapter 9.

- **Foundation**

According to Thai law, a charitable organisation may be registered as a foundation. The Thai Commercial and Civil Code defines a foundation as one whose assets are arranged solely for the purpose of charity, religion, arts, science, literature, education, or any public interest that is duly registered under the regulations of law. Furthermore, no trustee, director or any member may directly benefit from the profits earned by the foundation incidental to its operation.⁶⁸² While non-Thais can act as officers of a foundation, it is advisable to have at least one Thai national on the board to help with every day practical matters. A minimum of three board members is required in total to register a foundation.⁶⁸³ The newly formed foundations are required to have a minimum bank account statement of THB 200,000 (NZD 8,000) in endowment.⁶⁸⁴

- **Association**

An association is a group of persons sharing similar interests. This type of civil society is appropriate for activities such as sports clubs, hobby clubs and religious organisations.⁶⁸⁵ An association is a form of legal entity

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., 80.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 83.

⁶⁸² Siam Legal, *Setting up a Foundation*, <http://www.siam-legal.com/Business-in-Thailand/thailand-foundation.php> (accessed 24 January 2014).

⁶⁸³ Chaninat & Leeds, *Foundation Registration*, <http://www.thailand-lawyer.com/Foundation.html> (accessed 23 January 2014).

⁶⁸⁴ Lowry, "Civil Society," 83.

⁶⁸⁵ Chaninat & Leeds, *Foundation*.

that is registered with a government agency according to its main purpose. A registered association requires an official name, objectives, address, rules, and member fees. An association is different from a foundation as an association may be created for continuously and collectively conducting any lawful activity other than sharing earned income. Associations are also permitted to engage in activities useful to the public, however, by description associations are organisations of members who act together to achieve specified objectives. Associations can earn income, but must comply with the Revenue law and other laws of Thailand. Moreover, associations must file annual reports with the relevant government authorities. This includes an income and expense audit report certified by an accountant and a copy of the minutes of the annual meeting.⁶⁸⁶

7.6 The Categorisation of Civil Society in Thailand

The classification of civil society groups in Thailand is still unclear. Some scholars have divided civil society groups according to their definitions, group purposes, target groups, general characteristics and status. These commonalities aside, there are also many differences between civil society organisations.

According to Wayne Hudson, in *Civil Society in Asia*, civil society organisations can be divided into four broad categories.⁶⁸⁷ The first type is *Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)* formed by, and comprised of, persons who know one another or are linked by kinship ties. These provide a medium for mutual assistance and exchange to benefit members of the community and where members participate and there is no hiring of staff or professional managers. The second is *Traditional Philanthropic Organisations* based on various benevolent goals such as welfare or the promotion of ethnic groups, health or gender issues. Generally, these involve elite-based or prominent persons who have community respect. Their major focus is giving assistance to the poor or the needy or to specific underprivileged groups. They are tacitly approved by the government. The

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ Hudson, "Problematising European Theories," 93.

third category is *Religion-Based Civil Society Organisations* based around Buddhist temples and Muslim mosques. Some Buddhist temples engage in charitable or social development activities, however, such efforts are usually entirely voluntary. Finally, *Urban-Based Civil Society Organisations* are professional associations who monitor matters concerning their professions in order to manage their external environment including raising levels of professionalism, standards, ethics and social expectations.⁶⁸⁸

According to Busabong Chaichareonwattana in *Civil Society and Southern Local Community Development*, civil society groups are further classified by their general characteristics into five categories.⁶⁸⁹ The first type is *State-Based Civil Society* where the government gives opportunities for people to get involved but the main decision is still in the state's hands.⁶⁹⁰ This type of civil society is found in developing countries and is different from the Western civil society concepts. The state remains powerful, but decentralises people's participation while the state retains the decision making capacity. A *Capital-Based Civil Society* is the second category set up to reduce the state's role in economic and social sections. Here civil society groups focus on competition and market mechanisms with most members being middle class managers or entrepreneurs who want the market to be free from state control or intervention.⁶⁹¹ Thirdly, there is the *Freedom/Volunteer Civil Society* which focuses on 'citizenship' and 'democratic awareness'. This group centres around the middle class who have democratic and citizenship awareness.⁶⁹² Fourthly, *Community-Based Civil Society* is full of various civil society groups who cooperate with each other. They are not against the state, but see the state as necessary to maintain law and order.⁶⁹³ The state still plays the main role in promoting cooperation among people.⁶⁹⁴ Finally, there is a new concept of civil society called the *New Social Movement* which is a movement by people who try to

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Busabong Chaichareonwattana and others, *Civil Society and Southern Local Community Development* (Songkhla: Prince of Songkla University, 1993), 42.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁹¹ Kritsada. "Concept," *Krirk University Journal*, 26.

⁶⁹² Busabong, *Civil Society*, 42.

⁶⁹³ Kritsada. "Concept," *Krirk University Journal*, 26.

⁶⁹⁴ Busabong, *Civil Society*, 42.

change structures, rules and societal perceptions.⁶⁹⁵ Civil disobedience by these people does not mean they want to take over or control state power rather they are more interested in using public spaces to make changes in their communities.⁶⁹⁶

Banphot Virasai and Sukhum Nuansakul, both renowned academics, categorise these civil society sector groups into three areas.⁶⁹⁷ The *Motherland Group* does not have a role in requesting benefits or assistance from the state but encourages bonding between people who are from the same provinces, schools and institutions. Next is the *Voluntary Group* who gathers to provide support or organise political activities. This civil society group formed after the 'Black May Incident'. Most activities are concerned with democratic campaigns. Finally, the *Professional Group* is formed by members who have the same career or business interests.

According to Thirayuth Boonmee, a famous democracy activist, five types of civil society exist: voluntary organisations which cooperate with each other in social development, economic and professional activities; independent mass media groups; academic groups such as research institutions and universities; groups for cultural activities; and private foundation organisations.⁶⁹⁸

The above-mentioned categorisations aim to give an overview of how the normally quite broad and diverse civil society groups in Thailand are divided. This thesis argues that there is no formal categorisation of civil society in Thailand and that the boundaries are blurred. However, the above-mentioned categorisations help to classify the civil society groups used for this research. There are three main components used in this thesis for categorising them: same career/professional groups (e.g. academic, media and government agencies), same targeted groups (e.g. youth and women) and same main purposes (e.g. public health, religion and culture). For the purposes of this research, civil society groups have been classified into eleven categories which are natural resources issues, human rights,

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ Kritsada. "Concept," *Krirk University Journal*, 27.

⁶⁹⁷ Alongkorn Vorragee, "Revising the Concept of Civil Society and Community," *Local Magazine* 39, no. 4 (April 1999): 62. [in Thai].

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 61.

media, academic, religion and culture, economic, public health, women, youth, multi-purpose and government agencies.

7.7 The Challenges to the Development of Civil Society in Thailand

This section will outline some of the difficulties that civil society groups have encountered. Some factors are external circumstances which are hard for civil society groups to manage. The following are the factors which affect the formation, administration and growth of the civil society sector in Thailand.

7.7.1 Financial Challenges

Funding is one important issue that most civil society groups face. There are generally various major sources of revenue among different categories. Major financial sources would be donations from communities, private companies, foreign organisations and the government. Despite this, some civil society groups have struggled to find funds. For religious groups such as Buddhist temples, most revenue comes from donations on the basis of merit and alms giving. For Buddhist culture, activities related to religion tend to get more attention from people as they believe in karma and reincarnation. They believe that if they do good things, like making donations to temples, they would enjoy a happy and wealthy life, or a better next life. It is common to hear criticisms that most temples are far too rich while some civil society groups which target social development tend to get less attention and fewer donations from people.

Some civil society organisations have been receiving funds from foreign donors such as the EU, Oxfam and the UN which are not sustainable sources.⁶⁹⁹ This is why the impact of funding on civil society can be high. Effective communication between fund sources and civil society groups is also necessary as civil society groups have to rely on foreign financial resources which have a different working culture and lack knowledge about situations and root causes of the problems.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁹ Lowry, "Civil Society," 79.

⁷⁰⁰ Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Civil Society and Peace Process*, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2009), 19. [in Thai].

7.7.2 Political Factors

The concept of civil society commonly develops along with democracy in a country. According to history, Thai politics have been preserved by a 'tripartite cooperation' of the monarchy, military and civil administration. The military has been a key factor in achieving equilibrium whenever power tends to be imbalanced.⁷⁰¹ While the number of civil society groups continues to grow, this growth has not always coincided with gains in democratic forms of government.⁷⁰² Thus, it should be noted that civil society in Thailand did not develop in a uniform pattern, but varied across time, space, and sector. In particular, the state had an important role in determining the strength and shape of civil society. Moreover, the growing strength of civil society in Thailand has not unequivocally had democratic implications.⁷⁰³ Rather, political circumstances are one factor which distracts from the growth of a civil society network in Thai society.

7.7.3 The Capacity of Civil Society

As Thai civil society groups are still in their formative stages, they have a limited capacity to make any major changes to their communities. Most civil society groups that exist are cooperative associations organised by the government to which Thai rural people belong as a condition of access to government markets and subsidies.⁷⁰⁴ Problems with cooperation among civil society groups is another issue which could affect the working capacity of the groups. There are difficulties when civil society groups which have the same long-term goal, but different short-term targets, cooperate with one another because one group's progress might go against that of another. For example, both the human rights groups and the peace talk groups have the same ultimate goal which is a peaceful community. However, the human rights groups normally use a hard-line approach such as condemning and suing cases in court while the peace talk group tends to be more compromising by using negotiation and avoiding using violent methods. The human rights groups want to proceed with an absolute law of

⁷⁰¹ Balassiano, "Support," 5.

⁷⁰² Ibid.

⁷⁰³ Lowry, "Civil Society," 90.

⁷⁰⁴ Balassiano, "Support," 84.

punishment for the militants while the peace talk groups want to give chances to people mistakenly involved in militant groups to return to their community.⁷⁰⁵

7.7.4 Culture and Perception

The old political beliefs implanted in Thai culture were that citizens were followers. Civilians were ruled by the king who was seen as the head of the family in the Sukhothai Era and the Lord of Life in the Ayutthaya Era. As a result of these beliefs, Thai citizens have become good followers but not good initiators which constrains citizenship awareness in Thai society.

The 'Thai way' was referred to by Katia Balassiano in *Support for a Civil Society in Thailand*.⁷⁰⁶ It offers a series of behavioural characteristics which affects the growth of a civil society in Thailand. Firstly, Thai culture avoids confrontation so as to preserve surface harmony. Secondly, Thais avoid openly questioning public officials, especially between civilians and government agencies. They tend to keep quiet if there is any trouble and wait until government agencies solve problems. Thirdly, fate is quickly blamed when damages or injuries are incurred while luck is believed to be a reason for being wealthy and successful. Thus, people do not believe in their potential and capability to make things better or to prevent problems from happening. Fourthly, top-down authority is still relied upon, even as decentralisation is expected. This hierarchy is not supportive of the idea of citizenship awareness.⁷⁰⁷

7.7.5 Human Resources Issues

Although there is some stability and continuity at the leadership level in some civil society groups, the issue of human resources remains a problem. Group initiators become the leaders of various groups, with most groups encountering problems retaining capable younger staff members. Younger members often move on to other jobs, preferring larger incomes and more stable jobs with more clearly defined career paths, so the civil society sector finds itself constantly needing to train new staff members.

⁷⁰⁵ Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Civil Society*, 17.

⁷⁰⁶ Balassiano, "Support," 6.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

The view that non-profit organisations should be staffed with volunteers, with paid staff kept to a minimum, also contributes to the less than ideal state of pay and career advancement in the sector.⁷⁰⁸ That is why it is difficult to persuade young people to join civil society groups and make differences in their communities.

7.8 The Factors Promoting Civil Society in Thailand

The political circumstances and social structures in the country have affected the development of the civil society sector. An environment that supports public participation and citizenship awareness could lead to an increase in civil society networks. In Thailand, the significant political incidents of the past have produced generations of active citizens who subsequently became important catalysts for Thai civil society while some are prominent critics of Thai society.⁷⁰⁹ The following are several key factors that could shape the dynamics of civil society in Thailand.

7.8.1 The 1997 People's Constitution

Although today the 1997 Constitution was succeeded by 2007 and the 2014 (temporary) Constitutions, it was considered a positive step toward democracy and the strengthening of the civil society sector. The Constitution filled a gap in the public arena by shaping public participation. The Constitution was considered a positive step toward democracy and the strengthening of the civil society sector. The Constitution contained some following are important provisions which could support the development of the civil society sector.⁷¹⁰

Election Reform. Voting was made compulsory in order to ensure a high turnout and to make vote buying so expensive it would be untenable. The independent Election Commission was established to ensure transparent elections, and a central site to count votes was intended to discourage vote buying.⁷¹¹

⁷⁰⁸ Lowry, "Civil Society," 85.

⁷⁰⁹ Banpasirichote, "Civil Society Discourse," 243.

⁷¹⁰ Balassiano, "Support," 2.

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

Human Rights. In addition to the freedom of speech, open assembly and association, property rights, freedom of religion, the right to due process of law, the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, and equality of rights between men and women, the Constitution also specified a number of new human rights as well. These included rights for children, the elderly, and the handicapped; the right to information; and the right to public health and education.⁷¹²

Devolution of Government. Locally elected governments including Subdistrict Administrative Organisations and Provincial Administrative Organisations were given new authority.⁷¹³

Public Hearings. This measure aimed at promoting democratic participation with the constitution supporting having a public hearing before any decisions could be made on certain government projects.⁷¹⁴

Freedom of the Mass Media. Thailand's broadcasting industry has seen big changes since the 1997 Constitution.⁷¹⁵ A free and open media has had an impact on the state and the growth of civil society networks. State ownership of broadcasting frequencies ended and was replaced by a frequency reallocation scheme aimed at serving public interests. The two independent regulatory bodies - the National Broadcasting Commission and the National Telecommunication Commission - were established to allocate frequencies for television, radio and mobile phones. The most significant impact under this new regime is that the broadcast media can now act as a channel for citizens to impart information and express their opinions, instead of being under the control of the state or big business. Broadcasting frequencies, are considered a 'national resource' under the new constitution, and have been re-allocated to three groups including public use, private business group and local communities.

Independent Government Agencies. The multiple checks and balances provided by the 1997 Constitution aimed at making government transparent in order to build trust.⁷¹⁶ The four new independent government

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ Busabong, *Civil Society*, 46.

⁷¹⁵ Prangtip Daorueng, "Thailand," *Media Asia* 34, no. 3/4 (2007): 222.

⁷¹⁶ Banpasirichote, "Civil Society," 243.

agencies, including the Election Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman, the National Anti-Corruption Commission and the State Audit Commission, were established to play a vital role in checking and monitoring how government managed its policies⁷¹⁷ These organisations are very important in solving the corruption problems which have plagued Thai society for a long time.⁷¹⁸ They provide more channels for civil society to get involved in the political sphere by monitoring the government.

All of the above advantages show that the 1997 Constitution had an important role in boosting civil society movements as it contained significant principles associated with maintaining the mutual interests of the Thai people and encouraging the participation of people in political matters which had never occurred before in Thai political history.

7.8.2 The National Economic and Social Development Plans

The government's recognition of the role of civil society organisations in development activities was first seen in the Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1987-1991). It was clearly stated in the section on the promotion of local organisations that the civil society sector should actively participate and the groups should work together in rural development.⁷¹⁹ This plan encouraged people's participation in community development by acknowledging the problems in the community and the community resolving the problems together. The government acted as a stimulator to get cooperation from the state, people and private sector to collaborate with one another. In the past, action plans to encourage the private sector's involvement had not developed until the Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan was devised with the private sector playing an important role in promoting development activities.⁷²⁰

The Seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (1992-1996) included economic and business organisations as well as philanthropic and social development organisations in its plan. The Seventh

⁷¹⁷ Balassiano, "Support," 3.

⁷¹⁸ Gary, *Financing*, 2.

⁷¹⁹ Amara Pongsapich, "Democracy and Human Security in Thailand," Conference Paper, Institute of Security and International Studies 25th Anniversary Conference, 2006, 4.

⁷²⁰ Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan, section 10, chapter 7.

Plan also recognised a need for the development of human resources, quality of life improvements, and the conservation of environmental and natural resources.⁷²¹

In the Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001), the Thai government put even more emphasis on human resources. The Eighth Plan introduced a new approach called 'people-centred development' which also focused on the role of the civil society sector in social development. In terms of the changing role of civil society, the government shifted its policy from one of control to one of policy support.⁷²² It means the state provides more opportunities for people to initiate and manage some matters in their community which would help the civil society sector to grow and strengthen.

After the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the philosophy of a sufficiency economy was the main guideline in the Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006) with its practical application becoming evident during the Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-2011). One of the principles of the philosophy of a sufficiency economy was based on having strong communities that encouraged cooperation in solving problems which is a fundamental for creating civil society.

The main concept of the Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) derived from the last three years' guiding principles based on the philosophy of a sufficiency economy. People-centred development and participation were integral to the national development processes.

7.8.3 Tax Exemption

Tax exemptions by the Ministry of Finance are a factor that shows the government's commitment to the formation of civil society organisations. To qualify for a tax exemption, an organisation must be registered with the appropriate government agencies for at least three years, have its books endorsed by a certified accountant, and submit an application. Further, in

⁷²¹ Lowry, "Civil Society," 81.

⁷²² Ibid.

order to obtain exemption from taxes, for example, VAT, land tax and custom duties, a NGO must show that it spent no more than 25 per cent of its budget on overheads for two years prior to the application for an exemption. Today, approximately 300 civil society organisations have full tax benefits.⁷²³ Donations given to civil society organisations by corporations have tax-exempt status and are tax deductible up to two per cent of their profits before tax. In addition, individuals are allowed to deduct up to 10 per cent of their taxable income for contributions made to tax-exempt foundations and associations. These deductions require approval from the Ministry of Finance.⁷²⁴

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter has described the overall background of Thailand's civil society sector from its formation to the present day. The chapter helps to understand the characteristics of the civil society sector through its political history. In sum, it has identified the factors which have encouraged the growth of civil society networks and examined the factors which have influenced the development of a civil society sector.

Currently, the role of civil society organisations in Thailand is still quite tentative and at the formative stage. They mainly engage in activities associated with the distribution of information and resources or are bridges between people and government. This is a positive development. It extends participation and promotes pluralism in ways that affect state-citizen relations and also encourages government to be more responsive to citizens' concerns. The concept of civil society in the country's National Economic and Social Development Plans has encouraged local powers to cooperate with government and other social sectors in preventing and resolving social problems.⁷²⁵

The general knowledge about civil society in Thailand will help to explain and analyse the categories, roles and efficacy of civil society in the

⁷²³ Ibid.

⁷²⁴ Ibid., 82.

⁷²⁵ Balassiano, "Support," 8.

southernmost region, as some weaknesses or strengths have their root causes in the history, formalisation and laws of civil society in Thailand. These basic factors will affect the potential and capability to develop the civil society sector in the conflict region. That is why we should understand these factors before further analysis is carried out.

The next chapter will examine the findings from fieldtrip inquiries concerning the role and efficacy of civil society groups as they attempt to build peace in the ethno-religious conflict in the southernmost provinces. It will also explain the problems faced by civil society groups involved in the southern conflict and make recommendations to improve their functioning.

CHAPTER VIII

CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS INVOLVED IN BUILDING PEACE IN THE DEEP SOUTH

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter gave an overview of the civil society sector in Thailand and its role in Thai culture. This chapter will focus on civil society groups involved in building peace in the deep south.

The information in this chapter was mainly obtained from the fieldwork in Thailand consisting of in-depth interviews. The interviews took place mainly in the southern provinces of Songkhla, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat.⁷²⁶ The interview guide was used for the thirty interviews. The fieldwork was well supported by representatives of all the selected civil society groups.

8.2 Respondents

The fieldwork was first planned for approximately twenty civil society groups. The first selected group list was based on data found on the internet. When the fieldwork was proceeding in Thailand, more groups were introduced. With the snowball sampling technique, the fieldwork ended up with interviews of thirty civil society groups of which one group was a pilot test.

The total of 29 sample civil society groups represented eleven categories: natural resources issues (one group), human rights (three groups), media (two groups), academic (six groups), religion and culture (three groups), economic (two group), public health (one group), women (two groups), youth (three groups), multi-purpose (four groups), and government agencies (two groups).

⁷²⁶ One civil society group which was not interviewed in the south was the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Nakhon Patom province.

The interviews included at least 30 respondents who play important roles in the civil society sector involved in trying to build peace in the southern conflict. Only a few groups had more than one participant in each interview. Most participants were leaders or key persons from each civil society group. There was, however, a group whose leader suggested interviewing their field-staff to get more detailed information.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, types of civil society actors can be diverse. In Thailand, the civil society sector has various organisational forms and names. This research comprised of seven foundations, four groups, three networks, three associations, three institutes under a university, two groups/projects under a university, two working groups under the government, two centres, one council, one organisation and one chamber.

8.3 Interview Questions

The questions used in the in-depth interviews were classified into four main sections: 1) the characteristics of civil society groups involved in peacebuilding in the south; 2) the roles of civil society groups; 3) the efficacy of civil society groups; and 4) problems and recommendations.

The interviews used open-ended questions that enabled the respondents to express their opinions.

8.4 Overview of the Civil Society Sector in Southern Thailand

The civil society sector was formed in the south more than ten years ago. The history of ethno-religious conflict began in this area when it was ruled by Siam. Since the central government of Siam attempted to change the administrative structure and rules in this area, it became unavoidable that Muslim elites, together with religious leaders, would fight for the rights of local people's identity against the central government. This kind of movement in the south against the state has been seen since 1975.⁷²⁷

⁷²⁷ Political Science and Public Administration Southern Region Network, National Research Council of Thailand and United Nations Development Programme, *Civil Politics with Social Movements, Politics and Policies in the South*, Political Science and Public Administration Regional Conference 2008 (Southern Region), 2009, (v).

The second period of the civil society movement occurred when other problems were created such as the destruction of natural resources. Moreover, the key players in civil society networks became more varied and no longer included only the local elite or religious leaders as was the case in the past. The new generation involved in the civil society sector was comprised of graduates from the general state education system. The early civil society groups in this period were formed to fight for their rights over lands or local natural resources. One of the prominent leaders who protested against government projects which affected local people and the ecological system is a local Buddhist lecturer at the Prince of Songkla University. From fighting for various causes like local fisheries to Islamic identity, today's civil society sector includes gatherings of people who have knowledge gained from various types of institutions together with religious studies, while some groups consist of local politicians. They are all powerful groups of people who can form an effective civil society sector.⁷²⁸

Two scholars have made some comments concerning the civil society sector in the south. The first scholar, Chalit Tavornnukitkul, found that the beginning of civil society formation in the southernmost provinces was based on an attempt to conserve their identity and to be representatives of local people to the state. Two kinds of civil society groups were found in the south at the early stage. The first group was formed to maintain their identity and religious customs and to keep the balance of power between the locals and the state. The second type of civil society groups mostly gathered to fight for the community's interests over issues such as natural resources.⁷²⁹ The second scholar, Mark Tamthai, assessed the general work done by civil society in the deep south and found that there are two types. The first type is planned work which has been well organised. The second one is work which happens unexpectedly and needs to be done immediately. He argues that both types of work are important for the solution to the violence in the south.⁷³⁰

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Deep South Watch, "Civil Society and Peace Process (Vol. 4): Dynamics, Roles and Potential of CSOs in the Deep South," <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3470>. (accessed 12 September 2012) [in Thai].

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

According to the fieldwork, ten out of twenty-nine groups have settled in the south before 2004, but only two of them have shifted their scope to deal with the conflict after an eruption of violence. Eleven groups were suddenly established after 2004 and the rest were initiated during the period 2009 to 2012.

The first formal organised civil society groups formed in the southernmost provinces were the groups that worked for the local natural resources reservations. The Pattani Bay reserve group and the Saiburi River reserve group that have been active in the south for 20 years are the prime examples of this. Besides reserve groups, there are some groups run by the community such as the Mosque committee and village career groups. Provincial Chambers of Commerce are also one of the civil society groups formed in this area before the upsurge of violence as they were set up in every province throughout the country.⁷³¹

The overall purpose of the civil society sector in this region before 2004 was concerned with social infrastructure such as activities based on identities and religions, local natural resources management, and community occupational groups; their aim was not to resolve the ethnic conflict. The turning point in the civil society's role in the south was the upsurge in insurgent disturbances in 2004. Many existing civil society groups shifted their focus to help people affected by the violent situation.⁷³²

After the violence erupted in 2004, civil society groups have boomed with the main task being to help the victims of the violence. Many groups spontaneously formed after the upsurge in violence. Some of them had a short life while some have remained. A number of civil society groups have been developed into formal organisations in terms of legal registration. The target groups for most civil society groups are both Muslim and Buddhist people who have been affected by the violence.

As the violent situation has been ongoing in the region, many civil society groups have been recently established. The second round of growth in the civil society sector occurred from 2009 to 2012. It is noticeable that this occurred again only after the violence returned in the area. It could

⁷³¹ Respondent 20.

⁷³² Deep South Watch, "Civil Society (Vol. 4)."

mean that the existing civil society groups are not able to respond to the needs of the people.

8.5 The Characteristics of Civil Society Groups Involved in the Attempted Peace Building in the South

Civil society groups in the south have the following characteristics that will be described as follows.

- ***Names***

When asked why they called themselves ‘civil society’, most of them said their performances and intentions were more important than what they are called. The definition of civil society for people who work in this field is “everybody who works for the community and for the local people”. One respondent answered,

We do not expect any benefits but we work with a volunteering spirit. Civil society’s work is based on the community; community is the purpose and goal.⁷³³

For people who are working in the civil society sector, it seems it is not important to them what they are called. Some of them have never called themselves ‘civil society’. One respondent said,

We have never called ourselves civil society. I do not like this word because it sounds limited, discriminating and it is only used by the high ranking levels. We are always classified into a civil society sector by the others although we have never said that.⁷³⁴

Civil society groups usually have their names based on their target groups and purposes. It is easy to assume what these groups are working on from their names.

- ***Key Persons / Initiatives***

Interestingly, there are not many key persons involved in the civil society sector. It does not take too long to become familiar with the people

⁷³³ Respondent 17, Interview. Pattani Provincial Health Security Coordinating Center. 4 July 2012.

⁷³⁴ Respondent 1.

who play key roles in the groups. It is to be noted that one person could be involved in one or more civil society groups or projects.

There is no doubt that most civil society groups in the deep south were formed by Muslims as they are the majority in this region. There are, however, some groups initiated by the Buddhists and some attempts to mix all cultures including Muslims, Buddhists and Chinese into one organisation. Although the religions of civil society groups are different, they were established to help all victims, no matter what religious group they belong to. When asked what their group's main purpose is, the answers were various, but the top three ones were: to do relief work, to build peace in the region, and to create a network. One respondent stated,

We want to see this region get back to peace again by gathering representatives of three religious groups: Muslims, Buddhists and Chinese. The conflict made people misunderstand each other. Our group selected the representatives who are well-known and respected by their community to be our group's members. We plan and work together as one team to show that we can live together based on understanding among all differences.⁷³⁵

The groups' founders are also diverse. Many groups that work for resolving the problem in the south are based at the universities. One university could have at least three or four groups working on the southern conflict. For example, the Prince of Songkla University has at least four groups such as the CSCC, the Institute for Peace Studies, the DSCC and the Southern Border Natural Resources Network. Besides academic networks, professionals such as lawyers have also formed groups to help poor local people who have to deal with the legal issues, particularly the victims, arising from special laws in the southern region.

- ***Organisational Form***

Only 15 per cent of civil society organisations in the south have been registered with the government.⁷³⁶ Today, many groups have been upgraded from casual networks into registered foundations or associations. As a result of this, some groups have gradually changed their names

⁷³⁵ Respondent 18, Interview. Thai-Muslim, Buddhist, Chinese Association. 4 July 2012.

⁷³⁶ Respondent 13.

slightly. The reasons for registration with the government concern sponsorship, stability and continuity. The registered groups are seen as being more trustworthy to apply for sponsorship or funding.

Some civil society groups are registered as foundations or associations. Both types are non-government organisations which have slightly different purposes. A foundation is a legal non-profit organisation that will typically either donate funds and support other organisations, or provide the source of funding for its own charitable purposes. An association is a group of individuals who entered into an agreement as volunteers to form a body to accomplish a purpose.⁷³⁷

- **Group Members**

Most civil society groups do not have membership requirements. They are open to all who are interested in their projects and activities. Since civil society groups lack a formal process for keeping membership records and then it is difficult to estimate the numbers of group members accurately. It is more like a casual network in the community. It can, however, be said that the networks and members of the civil society sector have enlarged. Only members in groups which are under the government or security authority have hardly increased because they are not volunteers but government officials.

- **Location**

The location of the civil society groups determine how stable the groups are and how easily they can be connected to the community.⁷³⁸ A suitable location for a civil society group is one that the community can conveniently access. Many groups, especially in youth fields, host some activities in their compound. Besides the Sukaew Foundation which has a perfect compound for hosting their activities such as the leadership youth camp,⁷³⁹ most groups' offices are located in the town area which the community can access easily.

⁷³⁷ The Thai Encyclopedia for Youth, Vol. 12. Source: Department of Cultural Promotion, Website, www.culture.go.th (accessed 12 November 2012).

⁷³⁸ Evaluation Department of Development of Democracy. *The Evaluation*, 12.

⁷³⁹ Respondent 24.

8.6 The Categories of Civil Society Organisations

Civil society groups in southern Thailand have various characteristics. There have been attempts to classify civil society groups, but there is no acceptable pattern for it. It would be easier to classify civil society organisations if each group has only one purpose. Many of them have more than one main target or activity which means each group's functions overlap among the categories.

This research has classified the civil society groups that are involved in building peace into eleven categories which are based on the types of work. These civil society groups can also be divided into two groups. The first group includes civil society groups which are extensively involved in building peace (i.e. human rights, media, academic, religion and culture, women, youth, multi-purpose and government agencies) and the second group refers to civil society groups which are less involved in peacebuilding activities (i.e. natural resources issues, economic and public health).

8.6.1 Human Rights

Human rights civil society groups mean those groups which identify the transgression of human rights and discrimination, promote the judicial process for conflict management and encourage common laws to be used in the south instead of special laws.

Most human rights groups were formed before the violent upsurge in 2004. They began forming groups in Bangkok and worked for those who were marginalised and human rights issues in other parts of Thailand. After the return of violence, they played more roles in the deep south's conflict. They focused on people, particularly Muslim victims, who needed assistance in legal issues and who were being treated unjustly by the state.⁷⁴⁰

Human rights is the issue believed to be the root cause of the conflict. Many local people, especially Muslims, have been affected by the three special laws in the southernmost provinces. Under these laws, some Muslims have been detained and accused of being involved in militant

⁷⁴⁰ Respondent 9, Interview. Justice for Peace Foundation. 27 June 2012.

groups. It is unavoidable that human rights civil society groups are seen as being opposed to the state.⁷⁴¹ A respondent said that in a conflict area laws alone could not solve the problem, but that a political solution is needed. This is because some conflicts cannot be ended in court.⁷⁴²

One respondent from three groups in the human rights category mentioned funding sources:

It is quite hard to find a financial source which understands our jobs. Our work focuses on human rights which is based by law with the assistances of justice as a tool. This task has been seen by international organisations as the duty of the state.⁷⁴³

8.6.2 Media

Media civil society groups mean those groups which create a public space for the locals and outsiders to communicate about the conflict. They are also part of a group that creates a better understanding about the facts of the situation and the conflict. Creating various channels for the locals to show their opinions is what they aim for as well.

There are approximately thirty civil society groups in this category operating in the south.⁷⁴⁴ Two broad types can be found for media civil society groups; one is the news agency which is based on reporting news and articles on websites and the other is the broadcast programmes on radio stations.

One of the most popular news sources is the DSW that publishes news, journals, academic articles and relevant statistics concerning the situation in the south. It is the only group in this fieldwork funded by a Japanese organisation; in this case the Sasakawa Foundation. They avoid receiving money or support from the United States because this is a sensitive area and they want to remain unbiased. Support from the United States might affect the image of the organisation because they see the

⁷⁴¹ Respondent 15.

⁷⁴² Respondent 9.

⁷⁴³ Respondent 15.

⁷⁴⁴ Deep South Watch, "Civil Society and Peace Process (Vol. 3): The Database of CSOs in the Deep South," <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3203> (accessed 28 May 2012) [in Thai].

United States as not having a good relationship with the Muslim world since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The DSW has three strategies: to work with media; cooperate with academics; and encourage civil society groups to build peace in the conflict. The DSW focuses on the issues of decentralisation, justice procedure and peace talks. They work as a network with other civil society groups which they call 'Track Two'.⁷⁴⁵ 'Track Three' means villagers with whom they hardly cooperate directly, but they use civil society groups in Track Two as a link between them. They aim to create political space without fighting with weapons or using violence.⁷⁴⁶

Another prominent media civil society group is the Bungaraya Group formed by students at the Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. As people tend to hear only a negative side of the deep south, the group opened a space for locals to publicise good stories about their community.⁷⁴⁷

8.6.3 Academic

Academic civil society groups in the south play significant roles in creating a body of knowledge, developing paradigms, and producing some research and journals in conflict resolution. This is to encourage peaceful measures to be used in the conflict area. Both local and outside universities have established some institutions which focus on Peace Studies. The PSU, Pattani Campus, created the two well-known organisations which are the CSCD led by a famous academic, Dr. Srisompob Jitpiomsri, and the DSCC initiated by a group of PSU lecturers. The PSU, Hat Yai Campus, established the Institute for Peace Studies. The Mahidol University's Institute for Human Rights and Peace Studies (formerly the Centre for Human Rights and Social Development) is the only outsider which plays a significant and continuous role in the south.

Lecturers have to contribute time for researching about model solutions. Many groups from political backgrounds support political solutions such as autonomous areas and decentralisation. They have

⁷⁴⁵ This use of Track II differs from that employed in International Relations.

⁷⁴⁶ Respondent 8, Interview. Deep South Watch (DSW). 22 June 2012.

⁷⁴⁷ Respondent 4.

produced a variety of databases concerning the southern conflict. The weak point of researching is that not much work has been published because there is a lack of process in transferring research to published work. This makes it difficult to publicise and make the most of these useful researches.⁷⁴⁸ The unique point and strengths of academic civil society groups are their structural flexibility and credibility. They are seen as impartial groups whose arguments are based on theory and knowledge, not feeling. Being a trustworthy organisation makes it easy for it to access funding. Besides getting funded from the government annually, they are also able to request for funding from other sources for their research projects.⁷⁴⁹

The Volunteer Graduate Group commented that they wanted to see the power of university students to solve the conflict in their community. They should not just be in the classroom while their homes are on fire.⁷⁵⁰

8.6.4 Religion and Culture

This category includes those civil society groups that aim to conserve their identity. Their work is to teach people to be good by following their religious teaching. It is common to find people in the same culture and religion forming groups such as the Buddhist Association or the Imam Club which can be found in almost every district.

Religious civil society groups were formed in the Muslim community a long time ago. A mosque is the centre of the Muslims' way of life; the same as the temple is for the Buddhists. Muslim males of all ages normally go to pray at the mosque every Friday. It is a good opportunity to update news in the community. Furthermore, the offices of the Provincial Islamic Committee were established in every province throughout the country. Religious leaders have an important role in the community to shape people's good behaviour. Their main funding sources are from villagers' donations with some support from the government and local administration. They are also

⁷⁴⁸ Respondent 3, Interview. Center for the Study of Conflict and Cultural Diversity in Southern Thailand (CSCC). 20 June 2012.

⁷⁴⁹ Respondent 16, Interview. Deep South Coordination Center (DSCC). 2 July 2012.

⁷⁵⁰ Respondent 28, Interview. Graduate Volunteer Group - Prince of Songkla University. 16 July 2012.

supported from the business sector in the community for hosting religious festivals.⁷⁵¹

Their work, however, does not involve resolving the violent situation directly, but their teaching concerns good Muslim behaviour and anti-drug campaigns. This is a partial solution for social problems which is one of the southern conflict's root causes.

An Imam in Pattani commented that language is a barrier for local people to communicate with government officials. He also said that the trend in drugs usage, especially habit-forming ones, is rising in their community after the violence erupted.⁷⁵²

A new association was recently established in 2012 called the 'Thai-Muslim, Buddhist and Chinese Association'. It is the first civil society group which combined the three different identities of the members together. Their strategy is to bring the elites of the three cultures, who have the same hope which is to see the people along the borders of the southern provinces live peacefully together in their homeland again. Creating a better understanding under varied religious contexts is their vital task for being able to live in a diverse society.

A participant from the Islamic Cultural Foundation of Southern States defined culture in the Muslim way which means concepts and ideas including politics and education. They are now focusing on a political solution, decentralisation and good governance. They are trying to generate support for the idea of 'Pattani Metropolitan'- an autonomous administrative structure by using radio as a publicised channel. Furthermore, they have been creating a political network for the Young South Border Muslim Academics.⁷⁵³

8.6.5 Women

The women's civil society groups were established by groups of women to cooperate and campaign on any issue. Unfortunately, the role of females in Muslim society remains limited. There is no doubt that the

⁷⁵¹ Respondent 27.

⁷⁵² Ibid.

⁷⁵³ Respondent 25.

numbers of women in civil society groups are very few. Before the upsurge of violence in 2004, women civil society groups were gathered for manufacturing local products. Today, women civil society groups focus on healing the victims from the conflicts. Most of their activities are all organised by a group of women.

The Civic Women's Network for Peace in the Deep South is a network that gathers the heads of each woman's group. They are good at communicating as they have three media channels including radio, journals and a website.⁷⁵⁴ They have their own radio programme which is called 'Voice of the Deep South Women'. Female victims share their experiences on the programmes which are on air in the 14 stations of the southernmost provinces. After the first successful broadcasting of a series of 70 programmes, they developed their programmes into Bahasa Melayu.⁷⁵⁵

The Deeppeace was formed by a group of students who wanted to help their community. They do not depend on any funding sources. Their main income is from donation boxes located in public places to provide their group's finance.⁷⁵⁶

8.6.6 Youth

The civil society groups which gather groups of youths to work on any problem are considered in this category and also groups which work with youths. Children and young people are seen as the cause of, and the solution to, the conflict. People in the youth civil society groups think that it is easier to shape a good spirit in youths than adults. That is why youths are the key players in conflict solutions. They agree that if youths grow up in good circumstances they would not join the militant groups or become involved with drugs or violence. Most youth civil society groups were established by groups of university students, especially from the Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. The founders were mostly former

⁷⁵⁴ Civic Women's Network for Peace in the Deep South, Website, <http://www.civicwomen.com> (accessed 3 October 2012).

⁷⁵⁵ Respondent 14.

⁷⁵⁶ Respondent 21, Interview. Deep South Woman Association for Peace (Deeppeace). 5 July 2012.

student leaders who played significant roles in universities when they were students.

The Southern Youth Network aims to fill the gap that exists in financial assistance for the orphans of the conflicts and normal orphans. They are concerned about orphans who are not eligible to receive assistance or compensation from the government. This group initiates funds for these orphans by selling calendars and postcards and running a small business in their community.⁷⁵⁷

The Lookrieang Group has been working for the community for at least ten years and recently registered their status from a working group to an association in 2012. The activities before and after the resurgence of violence were shifted from promoting HIV knowledge to healing the victims from the conflict. This is because the problem was no longer far removed, but had started to affect their routine life.⁷⁵⁸

8.6.7 Multi-purpose

It is difficult to classify some civil society groups that have various activities and target groups because some purposes overlap among the categories. Visiting the victims, giving money and consultations for mental problems are the examples of tasks for civil society groups in this category.

When the DSRR visits the community, they normally send a team of psychologists which cooperates with the military for the safety of the members of the foundation. The staff from the foundation said that the feelings of the people in the southern provinces are very important which is not influenced by financial assistance.⁷⁵⁹

The Asian Resource Foundation has various purposes such as development, healing, human rights and peaceful solution. It is said that their job is to develop people not to create activities. Their aim is to create a body of knowledge for local people.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁷ Respondent 12.

⁷⁵⁸ Respondent 22, Interview. Lookrieang Group. 5 July 2012.

⁷⁵⁹ Respondent 7, Interview. Deep South Relief and Reconciliation Foundation (DSRR). 22 June 2012.

⁷⁶⁰ Respondent 11.

The Sukaew Foundation was established by Dr. Rung Kaewdang, a former local politician who had a broad vision to solve the conflict. The all-Buddhist-staff foundation started with a goat farm project aiming to improve the local economy in the south. As most Muslim households have goats, they invited professionals to teach them how to increase productivity in goat farming that will increase their income. Today, this project has been developed to become the Goat Bank which has networks all over the three southernmost provinces. Their next project was the Youth Leader Camp. The purpose of this project is to forge a closer relationship between Buddhist and Muslim youths. As they are separated unintentionally by the schooling system, that creates a big gap between the two cultures. The project aims for learning by doing. The foundation trained teenagers to manage cultural performances in the community. The project was successful in terms of creating leadership for the youths and strengthening friendships between the two religions.⁷⁶¹

Creating a network of civil society groups is the mission of the Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand. Today, the network includes 22 civil society groups who agree that working as a combined group will facilitate changes more easily than working as individual groups. They have four strategies to reduce violence in the south by 2020: to support democracy by decentralisation; to maintain justice and human rights in the region; to raise the standard of living of the local people; and to encourage their normal way of life, identity, religion and culture.⁷⁶²

8.6.8 Government Agencies

This category includes groups that are state-run and their responsibilities are to promote the working of the civil society sector and to support and coordinate with other civil society groups.

The state has been supporting the civil society sector as Thailand is a democratic country. There are two notable government agencies which play key roles in the south: these are the SBPAC and the CSCWG. SBPAC is an agency under the Ministry of Interior while the CSCWG is under the

⁷⁶¹ Respondent 24.

⁷⁶² Respondent 23, Interview, Southern Provinces Civil Society Council. 5 July 2012.

ISOC; an agency of the state security authority. CSCWG works as a link to create a better understanding among civil society groups, the community and the state.

The aims of SBPAC are to support and coordinate all sectors to work together for the peace of the southern border provinces. The four main tasks for the SBPAC are developing education, supporting religious institutions, stimulating the local economy, and encouraging a strong Thai identity for Thai people overseas. The Consultancy and Development of the Southern Border Provinces is a civil society group which was established under the SBPAC in April 2011. The committees were selected from five southern provinces including the three southernmost provinces, Songkhla and Satun. They are from eight different fields: the local administrative organisation; the head of the sub-district and of villagers; the Provincial Islamic Committee, the imam; the abbot; a social developer; a lecturer; women; and the Chamber of Commerce.⁷⁶³

CSCWG is a small, flexible unit which provides information for their leaders to use for decision making and implementing policy. They have been working with the civil society groups to create better relationships between the state and the locals. They hope to see civil society groups focus more on the locals' needs and not the groups' needs.⁷⁶⁴

When asked about cooperation with other civil society groups, a group which represents government agencies said, "We do not want to use the term 'cooperation' but a keyword is 'participation' based on people's needs. Normally the state uses people as a tool but today we work as a tool for the people".⁷⁶⁵

8.6.9 Natural Resources Issues

One of the problems in the south is environmental degradation and the struggle for possession of natural resources among the locals, the government and outside investors. Development which leads to

⁷⁶³ Respondent 26, Interview, Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC). 6 July 2012.

⁷⁶⁴ Respondent 13.

⁷⁶⁵ Respondent 26.

environmental changes affects not only the way of life of the local people, but it also creates a conflict of ideas.

The civil society groups considered in this category are the groups that try to promote environmental conservation and protection. They try to learn and understand the changes in their local natural environment which will lead to a sustainable solution. These groups encourage the community to be involved in resolving their own environmental problems.

It could be said that the oldest civil society groups in the region are the groups which have fought for their natural resources in the community. They work with the community as a partnership by helping villagers to form a group which works towards conserving their natural resources. Fisheries seem to be a source of major conflict among the community, wealthy investors and government policy makers, resulting in some key group leaders being threatened and killed. The government's policies such as the Saiburi River Dam and the Sea Food Bank could affect the local wildlife. Without discussing with the locals, the government thought these policies would develop these poor areas. Unfortunately, these policies have destroyed the local environment and also created conflict among the local people.⁷⁶⁶

Civil society groups in the natural resources category have been fighting for their rights by peaceful methods for more than 20 years. The civil society groups have had a significant role in negotiating as the government has sometimes reconsidered their policies after receiving the group's requests or opinions. This could be an example of using non-violent tool for peaceful conflict resolution for today's violence. This soft measure, however, takes time to reduce the effects of the various consequences caused by the conflict.⁷⁶⁷

After the upsurge in violence in 2004, some people who worked in these groups adjusted their aims to resolve the insurgent problem and to build peace in the region. They reduced their work on natural resources to half or less with the rest of the time put aside to solve the violent conflict.

⁷⁶⁶ Respondent 20.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid.

They feel it is the responsibility of everybody as it is happening in their homeland.⁷⁶⁸

8.6.10 Economic

One of the groups most affected by the turbulent situation has been business entrepreneurs. There are civil society groups that support economic coordination and negotiation among business people, the locals and central government.

Provincial Chamber of Commerce offices have been established in every province for more than ten years now. There are only a few civil society groups which play a significant role in representing the business sector. Activities hosted by them mostly concern economic promotions such as the Rice Farming Model Project which educates farmers how to adapt sufficiency economy as well as integrated farming to increase their productivity. It helps the growth of the economy and it could reduce poverty in the area. As they are local business people, they avoid getting involved in the resolution of conflicts or giving any opinions which are against the insurgents because they are afraid that they would become the target of militant groups.

The President of the Pattani Chamber of Commerce commented that education is the first priority that must be improved in the south as it means that a good career and better economy in the area would eventually lead to the end of the violent situation.⁷⁶⁹

8.6.11 Public Health

Public health civil society groups mean those groups which work for promoting public health accessibility, maintaining good health in households and providing relief work during natural disasters. Furthermore, other activities are to make people understand the concept of 'National Health

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁹ Respondent 10, Interview. The Pattani Chamber of Commerce. 27 June 2012.

Assembly,⁷⁷⁰ public policy in health issues and to help other relevant organisations set their public health strategic plans.⁷⁷¹

They believe that government policy in health issues should come from the grassroots. If the policy is related to the local people's needs, it will be more successful. Public health civil society groups have always been well supported by the community and others because public health is considered as a harmless issue which provides benefits to everybody.⁷⁷²

This category of civil society groups is involved in the task of peacebuilding because the groups help to heal victims who were affected physically and mentally by the conflict. Also, the public health groups can fulfil the basic needs of local people who want to improve their quality of life so as to reach the same standard as the rest of the country.

8.7 The Functional Characteristics of Civil Society

To assess how efficient the civil society sector is in dealing with the southern conflict, we need to understand the main elements of their internal functioning which are organisational structure, human resources, evaluation and funding.

- ***Organisational Structure***

The organisational structure of civil society groups dealing with the southern conflict solution seems very flexible and suitable for application in uncertain circumstances. Although the bureaucracy in a developing country such as Thailand is enormous and complicated, the government-run authorities, for example the CSCC⁷⁷³ and the Mahidol Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies,⁷⁷⁴ are able to make decisions and work independently. According to the academic civil society participants, although they belong to universities which are under the government, they

⁷⁷⁰ The goal of the National Health Assembly is to use an evidence based participatory public policy process to create a public policy to improve the health of Thai people. Source: National Health Commission Office of Thailand, Website, <http://www.nationalhealth.or.th>.

⁷⁷¹ Respondent 17.

⁷⁷² Ibid.

⁷⁷³ Respondent 3.

⁷⁷⁴ Respondent 29, Interview. Institute for Human Rights and Peace Studies. 24 July 2012.

are very flexible and independent which is unique for academic-styled organisations.⁷⁷⁵ Simple-structured civil society groups can be easily found in the region. Some civil society groups do not have a hierarchic administrative structure because they were initiated by members who are of the same status, for example, the Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand⁷⁷⁶ and the Chamber of Commerce.⁷⁷⁷ As they were formed for networking reasons, their relationship within the groups is not vertical but more horizontal. The overall organisational structure of civil society groups is a strong advantage for working in the region which is full of unpredictable situations.

- ***Human Resources***

People who work in the civil society sector can be grouped into two types, full-time staff and volunteers. Some civil society groups have offices which hire full-time staff to do the administrative work. Those who work for civil society in the southern provinces are mostly volunteers who already have full-time jobs. This makes some staff struggle with the time they have available to dedicate to the groups. The academic groups, for example, have full-time lecturers who cannot spare much time in the south as they have to teach.⁷⁷⁸ Many civil society groups have mixed volunteer and full-time staff. The main base needs staff who do the administrative work while fieldwork needs local volunteers who are familiar with the people and the area. On the other hand, the groups in the government agencies category have full-time officials who are assigned directly to focus on the civil society sector. This could be an advantage for the community if they do not need to be rotated when their term ends. A rotation makes it hard for the locals to get familiar with and to trust the government officers.

- ***Evaluation***

Evaluation is considered to be one of the most important steps of the working process. Although most civil society groups are open to outside organisations to assess their work, evaluation and getting some feedback

⁷⁷⁵ Respondent 5.

⁷⁷⁶ Respondent 23.

⁷⁷⁷ Respondent 10.

⁷⁷⁸ Respondent 29.

do not seem to be necessary for civil society groups. They only need to report back to the funding sources. Other than that, they do internal evaluations of themselves although there is no clear method to evaluate their performances. Furthermore, their incomes and expenses systems do not reach the accounting standards which make it hard to trace any irregularities.⁷⁷⁹ Those who have registered as an association must show their performance and financial reports to the Ministry of Culture as this is required in terms of the regulations of registration.⁷⁸⁰ The groups which are government-run agencies must report their performances to their headquarters as part of their annual routine.

- **Funding**

Funding is a surprisingly interesting topic for civil society groups in the turbulent provinces. Much money has been thrown at the deep south. There is no doubt this is why many groups have been formed promptly despite turbulent circumstances. Many groups have never encountered any difficulty in finding project-based funding sources although this means that such financial support will not last forever. Only a small number of a sample of civil society groups said that it is hard to get funding sometimes. Most civil society groups get funds from more than one source.

The financial sources of civil society groups' income are various such as the state, international organisations, the community, donations, their own members, and private business groups. The major financial support for civil society groups in the south are from overseas such as the European Union (EU), the World Bank and embassies (e.g. Australia) though these are normally available only for a short term. The EU is the biggest source of funding to help to solve the insurgency problem in this region. Civil society groups tend to choose international funding sources first because they are more flexible.

The state also plays a role in distributing some money to both government agencies and non-government groups. The independent state

⁷⁷⁹ Evaluation Department of Development of Democracy. *The Evaluation*, 12.

⁷⁸⁰ Respondent 15.

agencies, particularly the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth),⁷⁸¹ have funded many projects in the problem area.

Some civil society associations get money from membership fees, donations and a little bit of support from the government. It has also been found that the bigger civil society groups share their funds with newly formed groups.

The sustainable way of running a civil society is by being independent from any funding sources which are normally short term and uncertain. One way of doing that is to have their own small business to gain income for administrative work, with a little support from the state or project sponsors. A civil society group has to be free from the influence of funding sources. A respondent spoke about how they organised their fund:

We have been initiating a fund for orphans since 2006. We produced 50,000 postcards and sold it for THB 10 (NZD 0.40) each. There was good response. This money was used to establish 2 funds; one was for orphans in the three southernmost provinces and the other was local funds for 87 areas out of a total of 140 areas. Other than this, we run some small businesses such as youth shops, clothes shops, and head scarf shops.⁷⁸²

Overall, civil society groups working on the conflict problem in the deep south have a healthy financial status. The government-run civil society groups normally receive a government allocated budget annually. Those groups that do not receive a routine budget from any sources will apply for some support by submitting a project proposal. Lastly, the groups receive support only from their members and donations from people in the community who believe in the groups' mission.

Having funds from international organisations does not necessarily affect the strength of civil society groups. There are some groups which

⁷⁸¹ Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth) is an independent state agency set up according to the Health Promotion Act 2001 and funded by a 2% surcharge tax on tobacco & alcohol excise taxes. ThaiHealth has a Governing Board chaired by the Prime Minister with half of its members from independent social organizations. It promotes well-being in 4 dimensions: Physical, Mental, Spiritual and Social. It funds over 1,000 projects a year; spends around \$US 100 million on health promoting activities a year; and works with a wide range of multi-sectoral partners. Source: IUHPE Conferences, Website, <http://www.iuhpeconference.net>.

⁷⁸² Respondent 12.

have remained active in the area for at least 30 years although they have not relied on any outside sources for income.⁷⁸³

8.8 Cooperation between Civil Society and Other Sectors of Thai Society

Civil society in the south, like everywhere else in Thailand, naturally works as a network. Some groups work together with other civil society groups who have the same goal. Some of them cooperate with other groups which are able to help them in areas where they lack expertise and this could provide people with more complete services. Government authorities are also part of the network for some civil society groups.

- ***Civil Society and the Locals***

Most civil society groups get good participation from local people because they normally initiate projects or activities by discussing these first with the community. They ask what the locals actually want and make people understand their activities. They usually connect with the community by using their local network or leaders in the area.

- ***Among Civil Society Groups***

According to the fieldwork, a third of the participants said they did not have any problem working with other civil society groups and they cooperated well with one another. It is very important for civil society to cooperate with each other because it is the best way to spend a budget effectively. By working together civil society groups can combine budgets to be more efficient and to avoid spending on overlapping tasks. Integration will make civil society work more effectively as some groups have money while some groups have staff or knowledge.⁷⁸⁴

One respondent mentioned that one strength of the civil society network in Pattani is that they will gather spontaneously when there is a crisis, but during normal situations they go back to work in their own way.⁷⁸⁵

- ***Civil Society and the State***

⁷⁸³ Evaluation Department of Development of Democracy. *The Evaluation*, 16.

⁷⁸⁴ Respondent 17.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

It cannot be denied that there is an adversarial relationship between the state and civil society.⁷⁸⁶ Three types of relationships between the civil society and the state can be found in the south. The first type is civil society groups which have no relationship with the state and their work is not related to the state. Civil society groups seen by the state as opposition are of the second type. Their activities seem to create problems for the state. The last one is civil society groups which cooperate well with the state. They are supported or sponsored by some government agencies.

It is often suggested that civil society is a non-state sphere of collective life and depends entirely on citizen initiatives. It should not be something that the state can build or should try to. In the case of southern Thailand, the state can play a positive role.⁷⁸⁷ Almost half of the people in the research sample seem satisfied working with government authorities. When civil society groups cooperate with the government, it seems they work more slowly because of the strict rules and regulations.

When asked why some civil society groups have been seen as an opposition by the state, one respondent noted,

It is the nature of fighting. Today, most social problems are caused by the conflict of people and government. Thus, they are in conflict in terms of structure. People who join civil society groups see the government as not being genuine or having a bias from the beginning. Our group, however, does not have anything against the state because we are based on logic and data, not feeling.⁷⁸⁸

- ***Civil Society and the Private Sector***

Cooperation between the private sector and the civil society sector is very rare. In the private sector, businesses aim for profit and they do not have important roles in resolving the conflict. The only way that the private sector is involved in resolving the problem is by giving donations or sponsoring some activities.⁷⁸⁹ Business people hardly participate in any

⁷⁸⁶ Ashutosh Varshney, "Civil Society, Islam, and Ethnocommunal Conflict," in *Democracies in Danger*, ed. Alfred Stepan. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 39.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁷⁸⁸ Respondent 23.

⁷⁸⁹ Respondents 12, 21, 27 and 28.

activities concerning the conflict discussion because they are concerned about their safety. They are sometimes seen as an opposition to the civil society as their purposes are very different. Business entrepreneurs work for their own benefit which is opposite to the civil society's goal. Even worse, some civil society groups have no clue as to what the private sector is.⁷⁹⁰ One advantage of working with the private sector is that they are more flexible in terms of regulations than working with government authorities.

- ***Civil Society and the International Organisations***

Many civil society groups have been working with international organisations in many ways. Other than being a main funding source, for some civil society groups in this region exchanging knowledge and experiences among Thai groups and international groups is also an important part. International organisations, particularly the embassies, receive information from civil society groups which work to collect data about the conflict. Civil society is the one which plays a role in communication and creating an understanding about the situation in the south to outsiders like embassies and international organisations.⁷⁹¹ One respondent, who works in a well-known media civil society group, said that:

With international organisations, we do not cooperate but we give them data. Embassies are the main groups which ask us for data. International organisations prefer using data from us because we have many kinds of data which are able to be balanced with the government side e.g. the rate of death and casualties. Even military and police ask data from us sometimes which we are glad to share because we are in the middle.⁷⁹²

8.9 The Difficulties Faced by Civil Society Groups in Dealing with the Conflict in the South

The obstacles for civil society groups are caused by various factors. A few civil society groups, however, claimed that they did not have any serious working problems. Some problems are caused by internal factors while circumstances and external factors also affect their work.

⁷⁹⁰ Respondent 4.

⁷⁹¹ Respondent 15.

⁷⁹² Respondent 8.

- **Human Resources**

The difficulties concerning human resources are significant in terms of the qualifications of people who work in this sector and the need for more specialists and skills. They lacked a new generation of staff to volunteer to work in the civil society sector.⁷⁹³ A spirit of volunteering is a basic necessity which is not easy to find in working people. Unfortunately, volunteering is not very attractive to potential members because working for an ideal cannot feed them. Some respondents commented about their difficulties with human resources.

Our problem is we need staff who have not only law degrees but administrative knowledge as well. Both skills are needed to complete our group's work.⁷⁹⁴

Another respondent added,

We need staff with more patient because people who work in the civil society sector must face resistance from the government sector, security agency, other civil society groups, villagers, community leaders, and religious leaders. Some staff have quitted because they could not stand it.⁷⁹⁵

The need for special skills by people who work in this sector has also been mentioned by a respondent:

I think people who work for the civil society sector should contain six specialists in the areas of strategy, academia, management, integration, communication and thought.⁷⁹⁶

A respondent in the government agencies category also gave a comment on their human resources problem:

We have a problem of continuity of officers because they are not local people but from headquarters. They might have to leave the area if there are any inquires

⁷⁹³ Respondent 25.

⁷⁹⁴ Respondent 19, Interview. Muslim Attorney Center Foundation, Pattani. 4 July 2012.

⁷⁹⁵ Respondent 11.

⁷⁹⁶ Respondent 17.

such as the headquarter calls them back, there is an urgent family matter or to further their study.⁷⁹⁷

- **Language**

Language is also a barrier for working in this sensitive area where the differences of culture and language have become the causes of the conflict. If people spoke the same language, they could communicate and understand each other better than in the past.⁷⁹⁸

- **Time**

Another obstacle for civil society is time. Time management is a problem for groups which have volunteer staff who normally have their own full-time work. It is hard when they need to hold a group meeting or to attend a seminar which is hosted during working hours. One respondent described their struggle with lack of time:

It is a tough job for our group's secretary to hold a meeting or seminar. We have never got all twenty members having a meeting together. We have to pick the date that most members are available. Funding is easier to find than time.⁷⁹⁹

- **Cooperation**

Although most civil society groups claimed that they did not have any difficulties in cooperating with other civil society groups or the state, some interesting points were raised by the respondents.

The disadvantage of working with other civil society groups is that of high competition. Every group wants to get to the funding sources. That is why they do not share any useful data with each other which is not good for the whole community. Most financial sources have to leave one day and how will civil society groups survive after that?⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁷ Respondent 13.

⁷⁹⁸ Respondent 29.

⁷⁹⁹ Respondent 14.

⁸⁰⁰ Respondent 9.

Another respondent added,

Discrimination among civil society groups is very high especially academic groups. The civil society sector is supposed to work for equality but they are themselves very discriminatory.⁸⁰¹

More than half of the respondents said their relations with government agencies were good; on the other hand, some groups were seen as being opposed to the government.⁸⁰² The government seems not to trust the civil society sector⁸⁰³ and remains wedded to its traditional style which is not to cooperate with any other social sectors.⁸⁰⁴ Cooperation with the state is a problem for some civil society groups when their purposes seem to be against the state. Ultimately it depends on the policy of each government and leader. One respondent commented that,

We have found that need to keep a distance when working with the government. It is okay to work for non-security issues with hospitals or the Agricultural Office but working with police or military, we need to keep a distance.⁸⁰⁵

The main obstacle faced by those attempting to work with the state is that the government authorities have doubts about civil society groups and even see some of them as being in opposition, particularly, human rights civil society groups. This is because human rights civil society groups help people who claim that they have been tortured or treated unjustly by the state's officials.

Civil society groups in the area, and outside groups, look at the conflict differently and it is difficult for them to cooperate with one another.⁸⁰⁶ Local civil society groups have different perspectives from outsiders. Civil society groups in the area have more understanding of the dynamics of the problems.

⁸⁰¹ Respondent 22.

⁸⁰² Respondent 15.

⁸⁰³ Respondent 8.

⁸⁰⁴ Respondent 19.

⁸⁰⁵ Respondent 28.

⁸⁰⁶ Evaluation Department of Development of Democracy. *The Evaluation*, 7.

- **Financial Issues**

Only a few difficulties were found by civil society groups which were competition for funding sources and a conflict of ideas. Some participants gave a strong comment concerning financial issues which has led to dishonesty and non-transparent work. Such financial issues have changed people who work in the civil society sector which should be working for the benefit of the community. The civil society group's members today aim to receive compensation if they participate in seminars or activities. They even slander other groups which could be their competitors for funding.⁸⁰⁷

The influence from funding sponsorship is an interesting issue for civil society groups in this area. This makes it difficult for them to work independently because funding sources may interfere with their work and determine their work processes which may not be compatible with the local needs.⁸⁰⁸ This is also because many sponsors are from overseas and have no profound knowledge about the conflict. For example, international human rights civil society organisations would focus on condemning the government or militant groups on incidences of human rights violations, while the local people want the civil society groups to resolve the conflict and improve their well-being, and not create a more negative atmosphere in the region.

When asked what their difficulties about financial process were, one respondent said:

It is because we have not registered as an official public organisation legally so we have a difficulty in receiving donations. We need to get support via registered corporation like the Subdistrict Administrative Organisation or relevant government agencies.⁸⁰⁹

A civil society group outside the region said, "We were seen as their competitor for funding. They criticised that our work was not good".⁸¹⁰ Two respondents commented about the problem caused by sponsorship:

⁸⁰⁷ Respondent 22.

⁸⁰⁸ Evaluation Department of Development of Democracy. *The Evaluation*, 7. and Respondent 8.

⁸⁰⁹ Respondent 12.

⁸¹⁰ Respondent 29.

An influx of funding has changed the way people think about volunteers. The first question asked in a civil society seminar would be how much money they will get. People's behaviour has changed from being keen to learn to wanting to spend time in a fancy hotel or going shopping in the city.⁸¹¹

Another participant added,

Discrimination among civil society groups, caused by an influx in funding, is very obvious. Many new groups have been formed because money motivated them more than the volunteering spirit. Before 2004, we enjoyed working in a friendly atmosphere but now it has become an atmosphere of high competition. I do not trust the new groups. They are not genuine so we try not to work with other groups. We have our pride and work in our own way.⁸¹²

- ***Other Problems***

People do not openly trust civil society groups because they have experienced some fake ones. They also do not trust the government sector, especially the military, because they see the root cause of the conflict as being the government.⁸¹³

Safety issues were the concern of some civil society groups which needed to get into the community. They normally need to cooperate with some local staff who can make the community understand the purpose of the group before their fieldtrip.⁸¹⁴

Although the King suggested the key approach in which the southern conflict could be resolved: 'Understanding, Reaching out and Development',⁸¹⁵ the government has never followed up on it or tried to understand the differences in the identities of the local people in the south and the rest of the country. Some problems cannot be solved by money. An

⁸¹¹ Respondent 9.

⁸¹² Respondent 22.

⁸¹³ Respondent 7.

⁸¹⁴ Respondent 24.

⁸¹⁵ The word 'Understanding' means to seek to understand history, the cause of violence, and the success and failure in tackling the problems. 'Reaching out' involves efforts to win the hearts of local residents and learn their feelings and thoughts. The word 'Development' means the proper way of developing in order to cope with the problems with greater efficiency. Source: The Government Public Relations Department, "Adopting the Royal Words 'Understanding, Reaching Out, and Development' to Deal with Southern Unrest," 12 May 2008, http://thailand.prd.go.th/view_news.php?id=3415&a=2 (accessed 3 June 2014).

increase in the budget to the south has created the problem of corruption among government servants.⁸¹⁶

Finally, the continuity of government is another difficulty when civil society groups need to deal with the state agencies. They cannot rely on government policy and leaders as they change quite often and thus it is hard to deal with the government agencies for long-term activities. Moreover, the financial regulations and processes involved when they have to deal with the state agencies, take time and can be complicated.⁸¹⁷

8.10 How to Make Civil Society Work More Efficiently

There are some recommendations proposed by people who work in the civil society network. It would be very advantageous for the community if these recommendations were considered and brought into practice. The following are some comments raised by respondents as to how to make civil society work more effectively.

- ***More Cooperation***

The biggest change that people want to see is cooperation among civil society groups towards the same goal which has been planned together. Many groups are working for the same targets and on the same issues, but they have never had a chance to discuss the problems together. It would be more effective if those who aim for the same ultimate outcome could share their knowledge and information. Working with people from different religions and cultures should create a better understanding and strengthen the relationship in the community.⁸¹⁸ Thus, they should expand and create more variety in the civil society network, particularly an international one, which would be advantageous in terms of sharing experiences and exchanging staff.⁸¹⁹ Furthermore, they should support each group to have more dialogues and talks over peace issues. This would create a friendly atmosphere for both formal and informal talks where people are not afraid to express their ideas. They should also support working

⁸¹⁶ Respondent 21.

⁸¹⁷ Respondent 24.

⁸¹⁸ Respondent 22.

⁸¹⁹ Respondent 3.

together with the state for people from different religions. The Pattani Forum is an example which initiated peace talks between Melayu Muslims and Thai Buddhists.⁸²⁰

- ***Clear Plan***

Another point that has been made is how having a clear plan and strategy would make civil society work more effectively. It should not work to respond only to funding sources, but it needs to work for local people's needs.⁸²¹ To make the civil society sector work more efficiently, being open to new knowledge and adapting from successful lessons learnt would be helpful.⁸²² The conflict cannot be resolved by feeling-based decision making. Knowledge and experience are necessary in the decision-making process.⁸²³

- ***Sustainable Financial Support***

An unsustainable funding source is one of the problems the civil society is facing and trying to get financial support from the government is one way of getting long-term funding. Most civil society groups today rely on external or international sources which only provide funding for a limited time such as two years. At the end of this, civil society groups have to search for a new sponsor to keep their activities going. One respondent said "Civil society needs to link with the government which has the budget and the civil society, the good ideas".⁸²⁴ In fact, the most sustainable way is to be independent of all financial sources and to rely on the civil society itself as much as they can.

- ***Run by the Locals***

Ideally, civil society groups should be initiated and formed by locals who are aware of their citizenship and being a part of society. Most people, however, are not sure about their roles in the peacebuilding process so we should try to make people understand their position and how to be involved in the peacebuilding process.⁸²⁵ One respondent commented that the type

⁸²⁰ Respondent 29.

⁸²¹ Respondent 11.

⁸²² Respondent 6, Interview. Knowledge for Deep South (K4DS). 22 June 2012.

⁸²³ Respondent 23.

⁸²⁴ Respondent 9.

⁸²⁵ Respondent 4.

of leadership in the civil society groups is also important. Groups' leaders should be able to motivate people to volunteer to work together as most of them already have their full-time job.⁸²⁶

- ***Understanding, Reaching out and Development***

The Thai King's guideline of 'Understanding, Reaching out and Development' is a complete cycle for resolving the south's conflict. However, for this to work, all sectors need to understand the real causes of the problem which are identity and injustice.⁸²⁷ The development of education and the economy and more employment opportunities are necessary to increase local people's standard of life. There should be a specific school for government servants who are assigned to work in this region.⁸²⁸ The slogan itself is very good, but it needs to be brought into practice.⁸²⁹

- ***More Opportunities***

On the other hand, the government should be more open and let the people as well as civil society groups play their roles in an appropriate context because both the government and civil society have the same goal which is peace in this region.⁸³⁰

8.11 Conclusion

The fieldwork in Thailand revealed many interesting points which help to clarify the situation of the civil society sector in southern Thailand. Some points have been clearly made including that civil society groups involved in building peace in the ethno-religious conflict in the deep south have a variety categories, activities, financial sources and initiatives. The significant role of the civil society in the south is being the link, or middle space, between local people and the state. Even though they do not have difficulties in finding short-term financial support, the civil society groups

⁸²⁶ Respondent 10.

⁸²⁷ Respondent 28.

⁸²⁸ Respondent 18.

⁸²⁹ Respondent 28.

⁸³⁰ Respondent 20.

have encountered problems in the human resources area and in terms of coordination with other civil society groups, the state and the private sector.

Efforts to reduce the conflict in the southernmost region by the civil society sector are important. Overall, civil society groups in this region are satisfied with their performance. According to the fieldwork samples, they evaluated themselves with at least a pass of 50 per cent for their groups' performance. Quite a few of them gave themselves a hundred per cent for their hard work. Although they seem satisfied with their performances, some problems still need to be resolved.

The next chapter will present the analysis of the role of civil society in building peace in the ethno-religious conflict in southern Thailand. It will also analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the civil society sector as well as provide some recommendations.

CHAPTER IX

ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN BUILDING PEACE IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

9.1 Introduction

It is believed that the civil society sector is one of the key elements for a country's successful development and for finding solutions to a country's crisis caused by political, economic and social factors. Therefore, to handle the southern conflict, the state should also emphasise civil politics and citizen awareness which are necessary to strengthen the civil society sector in Thai communities.⁸³¹

This chapter will begin with analysis of the stages of the conflict and the types of actors. It will then seek to answer the four main research questions: what are the roles of civil society groups in the south; how efficient is the civil society; what are the problems of civil society groups; and what should be done to improve civil society's performance. Lastly, this chapter will discuss the future of civil society involved in the southern conflict resolution.

The analysis is based on the data from in-depth interviews, documentary evidence and the researcher's experience. The interviews indicated the responsibilities, activities, difficulties, and recommendations of civil society groups involved in attempting to build peace in the deep south. The data from documentary research reflects how outsiders think about the role of civil society groups in this region. The efficacy of civil society groups dealing with the southern conflict was based on analysis of the internal and external factors which affected the work of civil society groups.

⁸³¹ Bongkoch Sudasna Na Ayudhaya, *Civil Society-The Key for a Successful Development*. Conference Paper of Rangsit University 2006, 3 April 2007, 95. [in Thai].

9.2 The Stages of Conflict and the Types of Actors

Ethno-religious conflict in the southernmost provinces of Thailand has a long historical background. Many factors and variables influence the tension between the conflicting parties. According to Curle's matrix, the progression of a conflict can be divided into four major stages. (see figure 6.3 in Chapter 6, page 179). This matrix is useful for plotting where a conflict is located and thus it helps to indicate which conflict resolution functions and activities may be appropriate.⁸³² In the case of southern Thailand, ethnic tension has been latent in this sensitive area for centuries. Education and social activities were tools which would help to prevent the conflict before it erupted. Unfortunately, the Thai government during that time ignored this unbalanced power situation and kept repeating the national policies that emphasised inequality in the society. When injustice and unbalanced power had accumulated to a certain level, along with some incidents as triggers, violence finally erupted and thus the conflict was no longer hidden. Awareness of the conflict became high and confrontation among conflicting parties was unavoidable.⁸³³

The confrontation involved a series of violent and non-violent mechanisms or a combination of both.⁸³⁴ After some factors were stimulated, violence erupted in the southernmost provinces in 2004. The strategy of resolving the conflict had been changed to suit the stage of conflict. In Quadrant 3, negotiation is one of the peacebuilding tools to keep power in balance during the unstable situation. The present situation in the deep south is between Quadrant 2 and 3 which are the stages of violent confrontation that have happened and where the state is now attempting to resolve the conflict. If the reconciliation between conflicting parties is successful, then peace in the community will be achieved. This process takes a long time and patience will be required together with greater efforts; however, the outcome is worth the time and effort. In the future, it is hoped

⁸³² Lederach, *Building Peace*, 64.

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*

that the violence in this area will end and finally sustainable peace will be achieved.⁸³⁵

According to the leadership pyramid developed by Lederach (see figure 6.2 in Chapter 6, page 174), different approaches in building peace and types of actors can affect the conflict differently.⁸³⁶ To create a sustainable peace, the grassroots leadership should lead the role in peacebuilding. Unfortunately, in Thailand, only top level leaders in the leadership pyramid have definite power and the leading role in making decisions concerning resolving the conflict. Normally, the top leadership focuses on stopping physical violence and achieving an official ceasefire agreement. These attempts can only achieve a negative peace; not a lasting positive peace.

Today, most leaders of civil society groups acting in the deep south are considered to be middle-range leadership. Many civil society actors play leading roles and they receive high respect in the communities such as religious leaders, ethnic leaders, notable scholars and renowned NGO leaders. These actors are well educated and have a vital role in growing public awareness and creating sustainable peace in their communities.

9.3 The Roles of Civil Society in Attempting to Build Peace in the Deep South

More than 300 civil society groups attempting to build peace can be found in this region.⁸³⁷ Each group normally plays more than one role and their activities are varied depending on the target groups and their group's purposes.

In Chapter 6, the roles of civil society groups involved in peacebuilding were classified into eight categories including that of being security protector, representative, bridge-builder, relief worker, monitoring observer, academic, public communicator and peace-builder. The roles of

⁸³⁵ Ibid.

⁸³⁶ Peacebuilding Initiative, "Introduction to Peacebuilding".

⁸³⁷ Respondent 13 and Deep South Watch, Website (accessed 4 January 2012).

civil society groups involved in attempting to build peace in the south can be classified and analysed based on the above categories.

9.3.1 Security Protector

The role of civil society groups as a security protector is hardly found in these provinces. Civil society groups dealing with the southern conflict are not strong enough to create a safe zone to protect themselves. State security agencies remain key actors in protecting civilians from harm. According to '*Ryan's Peacebuilding Model*', (see figure 2.4 in Chapter 2, page 49) military and police forces are in charge as peacekeepers who have to deal directly with conflicting parties.⁸³⁸ However, some volunteer groups were initiated by the state for security reasons. There was an attempt to form groups of volunteers for security protection in their village called 'civil defence volunteers'. As these groups were initiated by the state, they have to be under the control of the Royal Thai Army. The government approved the Interior Ministry to recruit a number of civil defence volunteers to help maintain peace and security in the southernmost region. These volunteers have been accepted well by the locals because they are selected from local communities. The total number of volunteers available is still not sufficient, although the government has tried to boost their numbers by increasing their daily wage.⁸³⁹ Moreover, the safety of civil defence volunteers is an issue to be concerned about since they have been targeted by insurgent groups. Although the state's officials, including civil defence volunteers, are the general targets of insurgent groups, 2013 was the first year that the number of dead state officials was very high compared with civilian deaths.⁸⁴⁰

9.3.2 Representative

The Malay ethnic groups in the southernmost provinces have a unique identity which is different from the majority of the country in terms of religion, culture and language. Moreover, these provinces are located in the

⁸³⁸ Ryan, *Ethic Conflict*, 52.

⁸³⁹ Thai Visa Forum, "Thailand's Deep South Lacks Civil Defence Volunteers," 23 March 2012, <http://www.thaivisa.com/forum/topic/542801-thailands-deep-south-lacks-civil-defence-volunteers/> (accessed 16 September 2013).

⁸⁴⁰ Isra News Agency, "Government Officers are the Main Target of the Militant Groups," 14 September 2013, <http://www.isranews.org/south-news/stat-history/item/23791-1.html> (accessed 29 December 2013) [in Thai].

deep south which is very far from the central government. This has created a physical and emotional distance between people in the southernmost region and the capital, Bangkok. Because of this distance, it made the locals in the south distrust government authorities and state officials. To pass on their matters to the central government, representatives who understand the local language and culture are needed.

One obstacle that the government faces is local people refusing to give them any information about insurgent groups. Lack of accurate data and news from insiders makes it difficult for the state security authorities to encounter the insurgent groups and handle the conflict. The role of civil society as a representative of the ethnic groups is necessary as local people hope that civil society groups can be their representatives who will report the facts and forward their needs to the government.

Civil society groups involved in the southern conflict have been classified into various categories which represent the specific needs of each group such as women, youth, academic and religious groups. Having data from these representatives is also very useful when the government authorities want to get some opinion or information from the grassroots. This role of civil society is also to support a bottom-up approach for information processing which is considered as one of the most important factors to build peace in the conflict in the south because it is this sort of approach which enables the government to get information about the grassroots' needs.

9.3.3 Bridge-builder

As the gap between the government and local people in the southernmost provinces is very large, civil society groups can act as a bridge which will bring them closer to each other. Based on my fieldwork and other relevant articles, it was seen that the most significant role of civil society in attempting to create peace is that of bridge-builder.

To solve this conflict, it is important to first understand each other because some of the root causes are differences in religion, culture, identity and ways of life. Trying to create a better understanding is the first step in showing sincerity to solve the problem. Compromises between the state and

local people may happen if they have more opportunities to talk and reveal what both sides want.

As the insurgent and militant groups in these provinces operate in secrecy, the state has found it difficult to identify who is involved in violent operations or is a member of an insurgent group. People are scared to speak out because they are afraid of becoming a target of the state or militant groups. If they agree with the insurgents' ideas, their names would appear on the military's blacklist. On the other hand, if they help the state to spy on insurgent groups, they could be harmed by the militants. The significant role of civil society groups today is to create a link for people to communicate and negotiate among each other and with the state authorities. This is a safe environment where local people can openly express their feelings, share their opinions and voice their expectations from the state. The civil society sector becomes a channel for people to gather and work for their community. State security authorities also agree on the importance of the role of civil society networks, especially as a mediator that has created a better understanding and strengthened trust among the conflicting parties.⁸⁴¹

Another task of the bridge-builder is to create a common space for all relevant parties to exchange their experiences and share knowledge that might be useful for finding a solution. In September 2012, the 'Patani Peace Process (PPP)' was officially formed as a model that aims to foster cooperation among civil society groups, scholars, the media and research institutions as well as state agencies.⁸⁴² The PPP has created the 'Insider Peacebuilders Platform' whose participants are an informal group of respected Thais of various backgrounds and political affiliations who share a desire to bring peace back to this region.⁸⁴³

⁸⁴¹ Parinya Chaidilok, "Civil Society and the Problems of the Southern Border Provinces," *Yuthagot Journal* 118 no. 3 (April-June 2010): 26. [in Thai].

⁸⁴² Arida Samoh, "Patani Peace Process," *Deep South Journalism School*, 25 August 2012. <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/dsj/3484> (accessed 12 October 2013) [in Thai].

⁸⁴³ Sol Iglesias, "The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding: Southeast Asia in Focus," Paper for Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) Meeting at Brussels, 7 March 2013, 7.

9.3.4 Relief Worker

The relief work role of the civil society sector seems very important in a country whose government often fails to respond to its people's needs promptly. Relief work in the south can be divided into two types. The first is the short-term relief work which means money, food, or shelter which can help the conflict-affected victims immediately. The second type is long-term relief work which aims to improve the quality of the victims' normal routine in the long-run such as providing accommodation, career opportunities and moral support.

In the ongoing violence, a number of civilians have been killed and injured; women have been widowed and children have become orphaned. To provide help to the victims as soon as possible, many civil society groups have attempted to do this job by visiting injured people and distributing money to those victims and their families. Although it is important for providing urgent assistance to the victims, giving money away is not a sustainable solution. Thus, some civil society groups started projects which helped the locals in the long-term such as giving them careers or accommodation. The DSRR initiated a project for building houses for disabled victims of the violence through cooperation with the military together with local administrative organisations.⁸⁴⁴ Besides getting houses for victims, the project created an atmosphere of cooperation among civil society members, state officials and villagers.

Also, there are some economic and multi-purpose civil society groups involved in the long-term relief work. Although economic focused civil society groups do not have a significant role in creating peace, they help in terms of providing knowledge, skills and funding for careers. They have created some projects which aim to improve the economic situation in the conflict region. The 'Rice Farming Model Project' of the Provincial of Commerce is one example that aims to increase the potential of agricultural productivity. The project 'Industrial Estate for Halal Food Centre' was initiated by the government in the Panarae district, Pattani province to motivate investors and to create jobs in this area. The Pattani Chamber of

⁸⁴⁴ Respondent 7.

Commerce was one of the organisations assigned to operate the project. Although the project was disrupted by resistance and disturbance from insurgent groups, it has been continuing.⁸⁴⁵ The Civil Organisation for Peace and Sustainable Economy of Narathiwat has a mission to publicise knowledge in using non-chemical fertilisers and agriculture based on the philosophy of a sufficiency economy.⁸⁴⁶ Multi-purpose civil society groups such as the Sukaew Foundation also help local farmers increase the value of goat farming. Since the upsurge of insurgency, the economy in this region has become flat. Many of these projects are based on the King's philosophy of a sufficiency economy and aim to increase income for the poor local people and to raise the quality of life of people in the deep south.

Relief work seems very popular among the civil society groups in this region because it is not a complicated task and is able to get funded easily. Therefore, relief work was seen as an opportunity for fake civil society groups to gain benefits for themselves. However, there are many civil society groups which genuinely want to help people affected by the violent conflict as the state has failed to do this duty. Thus, a civil society group with the role of relief worker needs more continuity and sincerity to prove their genuine mission. It was realised that money is not the only thing victims want, but also encouragement. Most groups are concerned only with distributing money, but mind healing as well as being supportive are also important for victims who have lost their loved ones.

9.3.5 Monitoring Observer

Many civil society groups in the media and academic categories play a major role as monitoring observers. Their main task is to collect data which are relevant to the conflict. There have been some attempts to keep statistics and data on deaths and casualties from the unrest. The renowned and trustworthy civil society groups recording such statistics are the DSW and DSCC. Their data have been used widely by researchers, media and especially international organisations. Based on the researcher's

⁸⁴⁵ Respondent 10.

⁸⁴⁶ Respondent 2, Interview. Civil Organisation for Peace and Sustainable Economic of Narathiwat. 20 June 2012.

experience working with an international agency, this is because the data from non-government organisations is believed to be impartial and non-biased. The data from the civil society groups based on academics' knowledge is considered as especially reliable as people in academic networks are highly respected by Thai society.

Moreover, these civil society groups have monitored the most important issues concerning the conflict. The latest news about the conflict, such as violent incidents, government policies or special laws used in these regions, are normally posted and shared on their websites. This online database is very useful for people who live in the conflict area and outsiders who are interested in this conflict. Some civil society groups have developed the design of data presentation such as graphs and tables classified in various ways to make it more interesting and easier for users. The influx of assistance from various organisations into these provinces has created the problem of overlapping or missing data. The DSCC tried to solve these problems by creating a checklist programme for victims' assistance. This checklist helps to identify if the victims have been assisted by these organisations or not. This ensures that all victims have been helped.⁸⁴⁷

The relevant data monitored by these civil society groups is very useful for the government as it was used as an input for the policy making process. This is because these civil society groups work very close to the grassroots with their main purpose being to help victims of the conflict. For example, the network of civil society supported by the Asia Foundation hosted 39 dialogues (from January 2010 to December 2011) covering the area of three southernmost provinces and more than 1,455 people participated to find out the real situation in these southernmost provinces. They came up with four important problems in this area including: 1) security and safety in daily life; 2) quality and local needs in education; 3) confidence of local people in the justice process; and 4) the spread of drugs in the community. They also brainstormed for solutions at the end of the

⁸⁴⁷ Respondent 16.

dialogue.⁸⁴⁸ This data is useful for the government because it shows the actual problems in this region and how the locals want it to be resolved.

9.3.6 Academic

In the southern conflict, scholars and lecturers in universities in this region play a leading role in conveying knowledge about peace studies. It is very significant for researchers and lecturers in universities to play a main part in doing some research on conflict resolution. A number of universities in the south and other parts of the country opened schools or faculties for Peace Studies to help promote non-violent solutions. They, however, have been short-staffed and are looking for some lecturers who have graduated from and specialised in this specific field. Today, the universities are trying to send their lecturers for further degrees in Peace Studies overseas.

A number of researches concerning the southern conflict have been produced by students and scholars from many universities and institutions on various topics. They offered some alternative political solutions for the southern crisis. In the past, an autonomous solution was banned from being discussed publicly because it went against the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2550, Section 1: "Thailand is one and indivisible Kingdom".⁸⁴⁹ As a result of the growth in the civil society sector, this solution is now widely acceptable to be discussed publicly. Some new political alternatives were suggested by civil society networks to the relevant state authorities and were discussed widely in public. In 2008, a group of Prince of Songkla University researchers funded by an academic civil society group, the Mahidol University's Research Center for Peacebuilding,⁸⁵⁰ proposed the creation of a new Ministry to oversee the administration of the southernmost region. The idea of autonomy and special forms of administration, however, has not been totally agreed to by the government and state security authorities. Also, the idea that special laws in the area should be terminated has not been agreed to by the security forces, as

⁸⁴⁸ Civil Network for Peace in Southern Border, *Voices from Villages* (Bangkok: The Asia Foundation, 2012), 17. [original in Thai].

⁸⁴⁹ Duncan McCargo, *Mapping National Anxieties: Thailand's Southern Conflict* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2012), 134.

⁸⁵⁰ Today, the name was changed to 'Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies'.

discussed in Chapter 4. These academic civil society networks have held a series of seminars and workshops to brainstorm with scholars who are experts in Peace Studies, not only in Thailand, but also from leading overseas institutions. The 'Roadmap for Peace'⁸⁵¹ was a first-step concrete outcome from brainstorming by local civil society networks led by an academic group. This roadmap aims to help the peace process move towards the right end which is sustainable peace without using violent means and within a suggested specified timeframe.⁸⁵²

Moreover, this academic role includes work that targets youth. Many civil society groups see the younger generation as a key actor to keep lasting peace in the future, although this process will take a long time for the outcome to be seen. The idea of bringing youths from both Muslim and Buddhist communities to do activities together, such as camping, is very good because one of the root causes of the conflict is distrust and misunderstanding between cultures. The general schooling system has separated the children from the two religions, so they do not have much chance to make friends and to learn about different cultures. When friendships have bonded, conflict is hardly likely to happen because they will live together with an understanding of social diversity. These civil society groups have hosted some projects which will help the growth in the volunteering spirit in the next generations.

Civil society's role in the academic sector also covers other professional areas such as law and human rights. A group of lawyers who work in civil society groups (e.g. MAC) have been working on promoting the

⁸⁵¹ The 'Roadmap for Peace' was one of the series of Conflict Analysis Workshops, led by Asst. Prof. Dr. Srisompob Jitpiomsri, Director of CSCD and DSW, and Dr. Norbert Ropers, Director of Berghof Foundation for Peace Support gGmbH. The Conflict Analysis Workshop intends to bring together 25-30 local people (Muslims and Buddhists), religious leaders, government officials, and representatives from civil society and peace institutes to analyze conflicts in the three southern border provinces based on the following steps:

1. To build knowledge on conflict analysis and peace dialogues based on global conflict situations;
2. To integrate global conflict analysis methodologies into the situations of the three southern border provinces; and
3. To create a common document to be used as a guideline for conflict resolution partners. Source: UNDP Thailand Country Office, *Southern Thailand Empowerment and Participation (STEP)*, Annual Report 2012, 27.

⁸⁵² Deep South Watch, "Roadmap for Peace and Role of the Third Sector," <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/4314> (accessed 14 September 2013). [in Thai].

judicial process and have resisted using special laws in the southernmost provinces. They also help and give consultation to the locals, especially Muslims, who do not have legal knowledge or were threatened by the state.

9.3.7 Public Communicator

As it is generally believed that in conflicts who has control of the media will win the war, it means that the role of public communicator is particularly important. Today, channels for communication are various and convenient. Civil society groups in the media category are very efficient in distributing news about the southern conflict. There are many choices for civil society groups to communicate with the public such as websites, radio programmes, social networks (e.g. Facebook) and hardcopy documents (e.g. magazines and newsletters). Although the government has considered the southern conflict as an internal matter, the violence in this area has been monitored by other countries and international organisations.

The civil society sector plays an important role in presenting accurate and non-biased news to the world. These civil society groups, such as DSW, have been widely trusted because they have been working in this area for a long time and their members are from various professional fields such as academia and the media. Being watched by outsiders makes the government careful in implementing any hardline measures or an unjust policy which might affect human rights and create discrimination. Many civil society groups try to find out a resolution for the southern conflict from various stakeholders, but the next step of publicising is also necessary. This role of civil society will help in communicating and raising agendas to the public by using various types of media. Civil society groups in this category also play a role in raising some agendas such as using political ideas to resolve the conflict.

Civil society groups in the media category should work strongly to create a better understanding about the real situation in the deep south for people in other parts of the country and international networks. Media civil society groups might have been used by the conflicting parties to report biased news or show only one side of the situation which would be advantageous for them. To gain more support from the local people,

insurgent groups could use the media to inflame tensions between the locals and state officials. There were some violent cases reported by media civil society groups which made people believe that some crimes were committed by state officials. In some cases, it was reported that the suspects who killed Muslim villagers were wearing military uniforms although it had not been proved whether this was true or not. As being a public communicator is an important role for the civil society sector, these groups should make an effort to publicise non-biased news of the conflict and not be influenced by any parties.

Besides news of the violence, these civil society groups should be able to reflect other positive issues such as the beautiful natural environment and unique local culture which the researcher found only a few of them were doing. One of them is the Sukaew Foundation which has tried to promote local culture by organising some activities for youths. Creating a better understanding about the real situation in the deep south is necessary in order to attract outsiders to travel to, and to invest in, these provinces again. This would help promote tourism and the local economy in the south as poverty is one of the causes of the conflict.

Furthermore, civil society groups in the women's category also have roles in communicating the stories and experiences of women in the conflict area such as the Civic Women's Network for Peace in the Deep South that has their own radio programme. These experiences shared on the programme will help outsiders understand the facts and how people in the conflict area feel. They also have their programme in Bahasa Melayu which is very advantageous because many local people in the southernmost area cannot understand central Thai fluently.

9.3.8 Peace-builder

The peace-builder role refers to civil society's direct involvement in the peace process. In some countries, civil society groups play a main role in initiating peace agreements; unfortunately, in the southernmost provinces of Thailand, the direct role of the civil society sector in creating peace in

their community is hardly found. Even the official peace dialogues⁸⁵³ between the representatives of the Thai government and BRN insurgent group have just been highlighted in the news almost a decade after the upsurge of the violence.

In the past, the idea to expand the scope of the participants in the peace talks was explored by a group of Thai academics. In 2011, the peace dialogues between the representatives of the Thai government and the leaders of a militant group - PULO - in Geneva permitted local civil society leaders to take part in the discussion. Muslim and Buddhist leaders from the three southernmost provinces were invited to attend several rounds of meetings. This concept was to expand a partnership in the peacebuilding process; however, this idea did not go any further after the government dissolved the parliament. The new government shifted the authority that was in charge of negotiations with insurgent groups and changed the group of people who used to deal with the peace dialogues.⁸⁵⁴ In the researcher's view, this made it difficult for other parties involved in the process of peacebuilding because working with this conflict needs a degree of trust. It is not a good idea when central authorities keep changing the officials in charge of the peace process as good relations need time to develop. After that, the peace dialogues faded from the Thai news until the official announcement of a peace dialogue between the Thai authorities and one of the main insurgent organisations early in 2013.

Although the peace dialogue held in the capital of Malaysia in February 2013 is not the first attempt to negotiate for peace, it is considered as the first ever official talks. Unfortunately, the idea of including the civil society sector in a formal peace negotiation process has never materialised in the history of the Thai state's dealing with insurgent groups.⁸⁵⁵ The civil society sector has always been denied access to any formal negotiations or peace dialogues which have normally been reserved for the state's actors

⁸⁵³ The term 'peace dialogue' was used more than 'peace negotiation' because peace dialogue sounds less threatening than negotiation and it was hoped that the military would go along with the idea of a less structured approach and concept. Source: Don Pathan, "Conflict Management and Resolution in Asia: The Role of Civil Societies in Thailand's Deep South," Occasional Paper no. 18 (Asia Foundation, 2012), 6.

⁸⁵⁴ Pathan, "Conflict Management," 7.

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

only. During a series of these formal dialogues, the civil society sector can only observe and criticise this matter on their networks.

It is, however, a good sign that the peace process has been opened to the public as in the past the government was not keen on negotiations and always had these peace talks secretly. If civil society networks in Thailand become stronger, which needs more experiences and time, they could be able to negotiate some matters concerning conflict resolution with the government in the future.

9.4 The Efficacy of Civil Society

Nationally, Thailand has one of the largest civil society communities in Southeast Asia. Bangkok is a regional centre for several inter-governmental agencies like the UN, and also hosts hundreds of regional NGOs. However, there seems to be limited mobilisation among local civil society leaders to be involved in resolving the conflict in the deep south.⁸⁵⁶ The following sections will examine those factors affecting the civil society sector and attempt to answer the question of how efficient civil society groups are at attempting to build peace in the conflict in the southern provinces.

To measure efficacy sounds complicated as it is an abstract concept, not a concrete fact. Nevertheless, there are some tools from organisational and strategic management theory that can be used to find the answer. As already described in Chapter 3, the main concept of SWOT Analysis is to study both internal and external factors that affect organisations. The SWOT Analysis was applied in the assessment of the efficacy of civil society groups dealing with building peace in the ethno-religious conflict. This SWOT Analysis helps to identify the present status of the civil society sector and the ways to enhance the civil society sector's potential which could be part of the solution to the conflict.

⁸⁵⁶ Iglesias, "The Role," 7.

9.4.1 Internal Factors

To assess the internal factors, the 7S Model of McKinsey was applied. The seven 'S's in this model refer to seven factors that start with the letter 'S': Strategy, Structure, Systems, Shared values, Style, Staff and Skills.⁸⁵⁷

Strengths:

1) Membership (Strategy)

Most civil society groups do not have membership requirements. The civil society groups are usually open to all members who are interested in the same issues and want to volunteer for the community. There is no discrimination among religions or ethnicities to join their groups' activities. This makes it easy to expand the networks of the civil society sector. It was agreed that the southern conflict is the whole country's problem as the conflict is very dynamic. Thus, it is advantageous for civil society groups if they can be supported by a large number of people, especially the grassroots.

2) Location (Strategy)

One attribute that civil society groups need to have is a venue which they can use as an office, as a base for contact, and for hosting activities. Fortunately, locations are one of the advantages for the civil society groups in the south. According to the experience from the fieldtrip, many groups have their office location based in the town area which is easy for people to visit. However, most offices are rented so they could face some budgeting problems and uncertainty in the long-term. An example of a civil society group which has a large compound in a natural environment is the Sukaew Foundation. Their venue is very suitable for hosting activities such as youth camping and seminars.

3) Organisational Structure (Structure)

As the civil society sector was formed by a small group of people, their organisational structure is normally simple and functional. There is no hierarchy or a long chain of command. They normally have to deal only with their financial sources and the locals. Thus, this structure is very suitable for

⁸⁵⁷ Toolshero, *7S Framework (McKinsey)* (accessed 9 October 2013).

an unstable environment because it is faster and easier to make decisions and to manage their work. These factors make most civil society groups very independent and flexible. However, they are able to discuss some matters if they need to with experienced seniors who are their group's consultants.

4) Comprehensive Database (System)

Good planning should be based on accurate data and reliable information. One of the significant works of civil society groups is collecting data on the conflict including the tolls of violent incidents (i.e. deaths and casualties). The databases were designed for people who are interested and want to apply the data in their work. It will be very useful if civil society groups can use the information from these databases to plan for their activities that could help in resolving the conflict. For example, the trend of deaths and casualties would be able to identify which groups of victims are the most affected by the conflict. This data would help civil society groups to plan for their future target groups or relevant projects.

5) Financial Status (System)

Most civil society groups found that it is not difficult to find the short-term, or project-based funding for their activities. This is interesting because it seems like none of the civil society groups are facing any financial problems. Most civil society groups attempting to build peace in this conflict are in a healthy financial status. They have been financially well supported from various sources including the government, private sector, embassies, inter-governmental agencies and international organisations.

Over the period 2004 to 2014, some international donor programmes have increasingly focused on southern Thailand. The five largest foreign funding sources addressing the southern area are UNICEF, USAID, UNDP, the World Bank, and the EU. Many of these agencies aim to promote policy change and institutional transformation, for example, addressing long-term policy in the education system in the southern provinces (e.g. improving the quality of teachers in local Muslim schools) or promoting debate over

options for establishing some political authority (e.g. special autonomous authority).⁸⁵⁸

6) Common Space (Shared values)

The civil society sector has created a common space which is safe and independent for people from various networks to share and exchange their ideas as well as experiences without political and legal interference. In the past, people did not want to share their opinions about the southern conflict because they were scared of being targeted by militant groups or government authorities or not sure if their thoughts could be against the laws which might put them in trouble. Therefore, people kept their mouths shut and this made it even harder for the government to resolve the conflict because they did not know what the locals wanted. Initially, some ideas were first raised in civil society networks, but today those issues are widely discussed at the national level such as the idea of a special autonomous area.

7) Diversity (Shared values)

There are a variety of civil society groups dealing with building peace in the southern conflict. This makes it very advantageous because the wide scope of the civil society sector can cover all types of work needed for resolving the conflict such as human rights, academic and media. Moreover, civil society groups aim to help a variety of target groups without discrimination such as youth and women. All victims, no matter what their religions, are their target groups which make people feel equal.

8) Leadership (Style)

Most leaders of civil society groups have unique personality traits and are respected in the community. Leaders of civil society group active in the south have broad characteristics including education up to a bachelor's degree, active in this area for long time, academic expertise, and are renowned in the local community or even in Thai society. They have shown initiative and played a significant leading role in volunteering for communities since they were university students. This is the strength of civil

⁸⁵⁸ Adam Burke, Pauline Tweedie, and Ora-orn Poocharoen, *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance*, (Asia Foundation, 2013), 43.

society groups because many of their leaders are originally locals who have had the volunteering spirit for quite some time.

9) Integration of Tasks (Skill)

It is common to find civil society groups that combine more than one speciality to make their group work more efficiently, for example, a civil society group that combines academic and media skills together so that they can publicise their research work more conveniently. At the same time this will make data from that group have reliable supportive sources as they are based on research work.⁸⁵⁹ Another example is when a civil society group combine their professional skills, like maths and statistics, with their relief task to help their group work more efficiently.⁸⁶⁰ The database about conflict-affected victims created by using statistical skills is very useful because it helps relevant organisations to reach all the victims faster. It also could help with the future planning for relief work as the data is more accurate and easier to access.

Weaknesses:

1) Various Goals (Strategy)

A number of civil society groups come from many places with different purposes. People who are from outside the conflict area might have different perspectives on resolving this conflict from the local civil society groups who understand local culture and root causes better. In particular, the civil society groups which are mainly supported by international sources face more difficulties. The government is normally reluctant for them to receive aid from foreign organisations because they aim primarily to influence government policies or how the state operates in the conflict area, for example, supporting civil society advocacy bodies and promoting changes in education language policy.⁸⁶¹

Some civil society groups have different goals, but the target group is the same. These factors could make one group's performances go against another group's progress.⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁹ Respondents 6 and 8.

⁸⁶⁰ Respondent 16.

⁸⁶¹ Burke, Tweedie, and Poocharoen, *The Contested Corners*, 47.

⁸⁶² Evaluation Department of Development of Democracy, *The Evaluation*, 7.

2) Informal Structure (Structure)

An informal organisational structure of a civil society group would be an advantage in terms of flexibility, but it could be an obstacle if it is not functional. Many civil society groups grow from time to time in this region, but only a few have registered with the government. Without registration, civil society groups hardly get supported by the government through, for example, tax exemption. This is why today many civil society groups have tried to register their groups with the government. As being registered is not compulsory for civil society groups, only approximately 15 per cent of them have been officially registered. One of the reasons that the number of registered groups is still low is that the groups' organisational structure has not yet reached the government's requirement as far as formal forms of administration such as reporting of incomes and expenses (which must be shown to the government authority) are concerned.

3) Time Management (System)

Members of civil society networks find it difficult to allocate and dedicate time for volunteering works in this area as some members are students and most staff already have full-time work such as lecturers in universities who have teaching responsibilities as their main duty. Moreover, it is also difficult to arrange for all group members to have a routine meeting together at the same time. Furthermore, seminars and conferences concerning conflict resolutions are normally held during working hours which makes it hard for members who have full-time jobs to participate in those events.

4) Evaluation (System)

Evaluation processes lack participation and cooperation among aid providers (i.e. international or government agencies), practitioners (i.e. civil society groups) and target groups (i.e. local people). Many civil society groups in the deep south do not realise the importance of evaluation or assessment of their performance, and ignore feedback from the local people. Therefore, the actual outcomes of their projects, which are very important, were ignored by the civil society. The civil society groups tend to focus more on how to write a report for funding sponsors to keep a steady

flow of financial support and to propose a new project for a new amount of money.

5) Dishonesty (Shared values)

It is unavoidable that the issue of corruption will be raised when money and benefit are involved. There are people questioning how civil society groups manage their funds and if the money has been distributed to the victims equally or not. An influx of funding from overseas has attracted many people to work for relieving the conflict in these provinces which makes it difficult to prove those who are genuine or fake. Furthermore, distortion of information in order to get funded by foreign donors was found in some civil society groups, especially in the human rights category. They normally publicise the cases of human rights violations by government officials or present only one negative side of the situation in order to request financial aid from international sources.⁸⁶³ Unfortunately, money has gradually changed the mindset of people who work in the civil society sector. They have changed from working based on a volunteering spirit to being money-centred.

6) Buddhist Minority (Shared values)

It was noticeable that the government has focused more on trying to reach out to Malays Muslims in this area through some policies such as offering special university entrance requirements for the local students and increasing local recruitment into some government agencies. Furthermore, most local civil society groups were formed by Muslims rather than Buddhists. Today, it is evident that civil society networks in the region mostly involve the Muslim community. To keep the balance in a diverse society, the government should also pay attention to the minority in these provinces and Buddhist civil society groups should be encouraged to play more roles in the peacebuilding process as well.

7) Human Resources (Staff)

One of the most important weaknesses is that people working in the civil society sector lack the required skills (i.e. leadership, communication,

⁸⁶³ Narater2001, "The Purposes of Civil Society in the Deep South," 30 September 2013, http://narater2010.blogspot.co.nz/2013/09/blog-post_30.html (accessed 25 January 2014).

and management), higher education degrees or qualifications. Not many Thai scholars and university lecturers have graduated majoring in Peace Studies. Therefore, famous scholars from overseas were invited to work with Thai academics concerning the conflict in the south. Civil society networks need more people from the new generation to volunteer in resolving the problems in their community. It is not easy to find young, smart people who want to commit themselves to volunteering work because working in civil society networks has less motivation, no career paths and low incomes. Thus, members of the networks need to be genuine and to have a spirit of volunteering; not be money-centred.

9.4.2 External Factors

PEST Analysis describes a framework of environmental factors used in strategic management. The analysis includes Political, Economic, Social and Technological factors which are used for analysing external environmental factors.⁸⁶⁴

Opportunities:

1) Supported by Government (Political)

The activities of the civil society sector usually aim to expand democracy, support decentralisation, and improve the justice system in this problematic region. As these aims are considered good criteria for a democratic country to have, many projects initiated by the civil society sector have been supported and financially sponsored by the government. Normally, the government allocates some amounts from its annual budget for supporting civil society activities and building peace in the conflict in the south. This proportion would be determined by the strategies in the National Plan depending on the government and the circumstances at that time. For example, in the fiscal year 2006, the government allocated 1.4 per cent of the total expenditure for the strategy of promoting democracy and the civil society sector. Later, in the fiscal year 2009, the government started to have a specific plan for conflict resolution in the deep south under the strategy of

⁸⁶⁴ Neil Kokemuller, "Relationships between PEST and SWOT," <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/relationships-between-pest-swot-10083.html> (accessed 9 October 2013).

restoring the confidence of the country with 6.6 per cent of the total expenditure approved for this strategy.⁸⁶⁵

2) Relationship with International Organisations (Social and Economic)

It was found that a number of civil society groups have a good relationship with many international organisations including embassies and foreign civil society groups. They have been cooperating in exchanging experiences and skills such as attending training courses, doing some fieldwork and inviting guest speakers. Exchanging knowledge and sharing experiences between local civil society groups and international groups are useful for them because this knowledge might be able to be adapted for conflict solution in the southernmost provinces. One example is cooperation between two Thai civil society groups - DSRR together with Volunteer Graduate Group and Indonesia - in exchanging knowledge about community development between Aceh and Takbai district of Narathiwat and Tapa district of Songkhla in a project called 'Sister Villages'. The concept of this project is to create a network of towns helping each other when it is needed. The project includes matters of relief activities after the Tsunami of 2004 and insurgent violence, agriculture and community health development.⁸⁶⁶ The above-mentioned types of cooperation are considered social opportunities for civil society which can strengthen their network at an international level.

In terms of financial support, the ethno-religious conflict in the deep south has attracted interest from many international civil society groups and inter-governmental organisations. Although the Thai government has tried to keep the conflict as a domestic issue, a huge amount of funding has been allocated to civil society groups dealing with this conflict.

3) Public Participation (Social)

It is generally believed that the grassroots are the most important factor for conflicting parties that want to win the war. It was apparent that

⁸⁶⁵ Bureau of the Budget, Website, http://www.bb.go.th/bbweb/?page_id=6039 (accessed 3 January 2014).

⁸⁶⁶ Deep South Relief and Reconciliation Foundation, Website, <http://www.dsrrfoundation.org/download/SummaryReportDSRR2010.pdf> (accessed 3 January 2014).

the relationship between local people and the civil society sector is closer than with the government. They have more opportunities to interact and work together. As the locals are in a situation in which they cannot trust any parties, people seem to give civil society groups their hope to bring peace back to this region. Therefore, civil society groups have received good responses and feedback from local people because they have come to appreciate the genuine desire of civil society groups to create projects and activities which will be advantageous and bring peace back to the community.

4) Cooperation among Civil Society Networks (Social)

Since the upsurge of violence, hundreds of civil society groups can be found in this area. Although some groups see each other as competitors for finding financial sources, during a crisis most of them will gather and work together very well. There was a successful attempt to foster cooperation among civil society groups with the establishment of the 'Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand' which comprised more than twenty civil society groups working together. Furthermore, there is cooperation among civil society networks to find a conflict solution by hosting dialogues which invite the conflict victims and relevant parties for brainstorming. This dialogue aims to reflect the actual needs of local people and to achieve a common agreement.⁸⁶⁷

5) Online Media (Technology)

The internet has become one of the necessities of daily life and today social networks have a huge influence on Thai society. Most civil society groups have their websites to promote their background, mission, activities, group structure, sponsors, how to contribute to the groups, and contact details. Some civil society groups have used the social network channel widely to publicise their groups which is quite effective, especially to youth target groups. Today, a social network, like Facebook, is very popular for almost all ages in Thai society. Many civil society groups use Facebook to promote their events, share photos of their activities, and keep in touch with their network's members. This channel will be advantageous to share

⁸⁶⁷ Civil Network for Peace in Southern Border. *Voices from Villages*, 14.

knowledge and expand the networks in the future. Moreover, online media is a tool that costs less, works faster, and affects the larger public.

Threats:

1) Safety Issue (Political)

As being a member of an insurgent group involves extreme secrecy, it is very difficult to identify those who are involved in the insurgency. Militant members might be one of the villagers in the community. This makes it difficult for local people to trust each other. The villagers have to live in fear and an insecure atmosphere. Furthermore, people who work for civil society networks could be the target for militant groups while at the same time they can be seen by the government authority as suspects involved in insurgent incidents. Volunteers, like village-based mediators, for good reasons, prefer to remain discreet rather than present themselves openly as members of civil society willing to mediate.⁸⁶⁸ This safety issue obstructs the locals from participating in civil society networks as they fear for their life and property from being targeted by both the government and insurgent groups.

2) Continuity of Government Policies (Political)

It is common that a developing country like Thailand has an unstable political situation. Governments hardly complete their four-year term and a rotation of cabinet members could happen at any time. Each government has a different focus in its policy and has its own measures to deal with the insurgent problem. The government policies have an impact on civil society work as many of them have been supported by state authorities. Civil society groups are also affected by heads of government authorities as each leader has their own style of working, especially the government agencies that were assigned directly to resolve the conflict in the southernmost area such as SBPAC. Changing the leaders and policies makes it difficult for civil society groups to continue their work smoothly.

3) Relationship with the State (Political)

According to the history and culture of Thailand, it cannot be denied that some government authorities still see the civil society sector as a tool or servant of the state that works for funding from government. Furthermore,

⁸⁶⁸ Iglesias, "The Role," 8.

people in the deep south have a bad attitude to government officials: for example, the government always uses violence against the local Muslims; state officials are narrow-minded; and the state sees itself as a ruling class. Therefore, an adversarial relationship between the state and some civil society groups remains a problem.

Some government authorities have doubts about the purposes of civil society groups and even see some of them as an opposition, especially civil society groups that work for human rights and advocacy. This is because the government sees some civil society groups' work as being to help insurgent groups. For example, the 'Private Islamic Religious School Association' tried to negotiate for helping a religious teacher of an Islamic school who was tortured by the police and charged for violating national security. In return, the government put the association on its insurgent supporter blacklist.⁸⁶⁹ Furthermore, some civil society groups which have experience working with government authorities have found it difficult because of strict regulations and formal rules that cause work to progress slowly.

4) Private Sector (Economic)

Cooperation between civil society and the private sector in building peace in this conflict is very rare. The private sector means entrepreneurs and the business sector that actually has the potential to support the activities of civil society groups. The reasons why it offers less support are that they give first priority to the profit of their business and some businessmen are afraid for their safety as their business could become the insurgents' target. Examples of the business sector becoming an insurgent target are car bomb attacks at a Pattani hotel and arson attacks at car showrooms in this area.

5) Funding Sources (Economic)

Civil society groups should be independent for what they aim to do, but in reality most groups depend on external funding sources such as international organisations and government authorities. Moreover, a huge amount of funding aid has caused people in the civil society sector to

⁸⁶⁹ Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, *Civil Society and Peace Process* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2009), 27. [in Thai].

become divided because they were competing with each other for sponsorship. A number of civil society groups relied on non-sustainable funding sources. Although they thought it is not difficult to find sponsorship, the flow of funds may be a problem. Many of the civil society groups in this region are financially supported by international organisations. These kinds of funds are normally only for a short-term and not stable.

Moreover, money from the government is still not equally distributed to all civil society groups which need funds for their works. Some groups are facing difficulties in finding a long-term financial support. One of the reasons for this is that some groups are not good at writing a report which is considered as an important criteria in applying for funding.⁸⁷⁰

6) External Civil Society (Social)

It could be a real threat if people from outside the conflict wanted to get involved in conflict resolution just because they want to take advantage of the crisis to gain funding. For local civil society groups, the groups from outside the conflicting area could be seen as their competitors for funding sources. Furthermore, the outsiders hardly understand the culture and the real need of people who are in this area. They normally have their own style of working which might be different from the local culture. They often overlook the identity of the local people as they have experience working in other countries and they assume that the conflict circumstances would be the same in Thailand. These differences could create problems. Without full information, Thailand was seen by outsiders as having failed to handle the conflict situation.⁸⁷¹

9.4.3 Overall Status of the Civil Society Sector

SWOT Analysis has helped to identify the internal and external factors that could increase the capabilities that enable civil society groups to perform well and the factors that might obstruct the progress of civil society groups from achieving their goal.

Noticeably, some factors, such as state involvement, can have both advantages and disadvantages at the same time depending on the situation

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid., 28.

⁸⁷¹ Ibid.

and perspectives of each civil society group. For instance, some civil society groups view the government as an opportunity for sustainable funding sources while some groups have never relied on the state and have seen the state as a threat.

Although the civil society sector has many strong factors that are an advantage, there are a number of weaknesses that cause concern. According to the 7S Model, civil society groups in the south have created two strengths of 'Shared values' including a common space and diversity. They have the flexible 'Structure' and efficient 'System' including a comprehensive database and healthy financial status. The significant strength of civil society today is also the unique 'Style' of leadership. However, the most significant weak internal factors are human resources and lack of time and these are the most vital factors to keep the civil society networks going.

According to PEST Analysis of the external factors, civil society groups have good opportunities that support their activities in many ways. All four PEST elements provide significant opportunities for the civil society sector to grow. In terms of the 'Political' element, civil society groups have been encouraged well by the government with supportive policies and regulations. The 'Economic' factor offers very good opportunities for civil society groups in this region as they are financially well sponsored by international organisations. The locals and communities, as part of the 'Social' element, are keen to participate in their projects and to share experiences. The last element, 'Technology', also provides more communication channels to enhance groups' performances. Although there are more external factors that can be threats to a civil society dealing with the conflict, half of the threats are mainly caused by one external element which is the 'Political' factor.

In conclusion, the status of the civil society sector dealing with the ethno-religious conflict in the deep south has the possibility to grow as it has a number of strong internal factors at the same time as there are many opportunities. It is, however, facing some threats from outside which are difficult to control, especially political and safety matters. Overall, people who are volunteering to help to resolve the southern conflict have evaluated

and rated their performances positively given civil society groups have limited resources in terms of time and staff.

9.5 Recommendations to Make Civil Society Work More Efficiently

1) Human Resources

People who work in civil society networks need to have various knowledge and skills because the conflict is problematic and complicated. Leadership and communication are very important skills to bring about changes in this region so it is necessary to make sure that people in the civil society community have these skills. Multi-tasking staff are needed for civil society networks because this sort of work needs people who have a volunteering spirit and professional knowledge (e.g. law and human rights) together with various skills (e.g. communication and management).

Furthermore, it will be very advantageous if the civil society members can communicate in Bahasa Melayu so they can access local people easily. A volunteering spirit and citizen awareness should be grown in the next generation from a young age. Civil society groups should be able to motivate more members who have various skills and specialities as today's civil society covers many different professional areas. At the end, civil society should be able to convincingly agree how important it is for everybody to be part of the peacebuilding process.

2) Cooperation

The civil society sector is an intermediate sphere so it needs to cooperate with other sectors, including the state, the private sector and the grassroots, at all levels: international, national, regional and local. A number of civil society groups involved in this conflict have similar purposes or target groups. It would be very useful if those civil society groups can share their goals, experiences or even resources. This is to create unity for all groups who aim for peace. Moreover, the peace process should identify the relevant issues found in each project: for example, one project might include economic and education development plans and the peace process should

identify how each plan links to the other.⁸⁷² Cooperation will help to save the civil society sector's limited resources including manpower, money and time. However, not all civil society groups have the same ideas and direction. It is not a good idea to force every group to think and lead in the same direction because it could prevent different ideas and initiatives emerging which may lead to conflict resolution. Each group should be able to work in their own way and find which parts of their plans could be pursued in cooperation with other civil society groups.

3) Strategy

Civil society groups should have a clear vision and working plan because today's conflict situation is dynamic. There are many factors affecting the performances of civil society groups. While some factors are controllable, many are not. Civil society groups should clearly identify their missions, objectives and plans for achieving their goals. Otherwise, members could be lost in direction and not sure what they are aiming for. To have a strategic plan, civil society groups have to assess if their internal and environmental factors are an advantage or a disadvantage and then try to determine a plan in order to achieve their groups' goal.

Having a peace roadmap initiated by the civil society sector is a useful idea. The roadmap should include a timeline showing the time period of peace activities, and the structure of the peace process together with the roles of the conflicting parties as well as other stakeholders such as the civil society sector.⁸⁷³

4) Relationship with Government and Formality

The civil society sector should maintain good relations with government agencies and register their groups with the relevant state authorities. At the same time, the government should also provide more opportunities for other sectors of society to be involved in finding a conflict solution. Both civil society and the government should determine a clear policy and plan to cooperate with each other. Civil society groups should increase their formality in terms of financial matters and performance

⁸⁷² Mark Tamthai, Thai Heritage Treasury, Website, <http://heritage.mod.go.th/nation/situation/sit2.htm> (accessed 5 September 2013).

⁸⁷³ Deep South Watch, "Roadmap for Peace."

evaluation. Thus, they can organise their groups more systematically and professionally. Formality will raise the official standard and reliability for local civil society groups to be able to work at national or international levels. They should, however, retain the flexibility of the groups because it is suitable for making decisions in these uncertain circumstances.

5) Needs of the Locals

Civil society groups should work based on the needs of local people. An ideal development plan should rely on a bottom-up approach so the outcomes will be able to fulfil the locals' needs more than a plan that comes from the top down. There is a gap between the locals and the government so that the community leaders should play an important role to pass on the needs of villagers. This information will be used as an input for higher level leaders making the development plan. However, the central authorities have a problem trusting community leaders because they believe that some of them are involved in the violence. This is a reason why they do not try to involve community leaders in the drawing up of a plan.⁸⁷⁴

People might think that money is a priority need for the locals, but moral support is also important. Civil society groups should try to find out what the locals' actual needs are to ensure civil society is heading in the right direction. A network of civil society groups can try to initiate hosting some forums dealing with the peaceful solution of the conflict by gathering together some conflicting stakeholders. This can be one of the efficient activities conducted by civil society sector to find out the needs of the grassroots. One concern is to ensure that the forums provide equal opportunities for all people to participate because many times the same faces could be found attending these kinds of events claiming that they are representing what the whole community wants.

6) Trust and Understanding

Working together on a basis of non-bias and respect is important. Effective communication and negotiation require some degree of trust between the parties. Working in these provinces is different from other parts of the country because the area of conflict is very sensitive and trust must

⁸⁷⁴ Tamthai, Thai Heritage Treasury, Website.

come first, especially trust between civil society groups and the communities. Working with the grassroots takes time and patience. Prolonged and deep engagement without the pressure of deadlines for legislative proposals or the influence by financial sponsors might work more effectively.⁸⁷⁵ Mixed culture civil society groups should be encouraged by the locals because they help people from different backgrounds and cultures to understand each other.

Some civil society groups cannot access the grassroots because most people working in the civil society sector are educated and not originally from this local area so there is a social gap between them.⁸⁷⁶ Furthermore, some local villagers have also experienced some fake civil society groups which have taken advantage of the victims. Fake civil society groups used victims' stories again and again to ask for money from aid agencies even though those victims had been relieved and had returned to normal daily routine. These fake groups did not tell the whole truth and they tried to make up some stories to make it more sympathetic for funding sources. Some groups gave villagers hopes and promises that they would have a chance to go overseas or Bangkok, but those promises have never come true.⁸⁷⁷ As a result of this lack of trust, civil society groups should make their purposes clear and show the locals their sincerity. It is, however, a time-consuming process to build trust and prove to people their sincerity.

The relationship between the state and civil society sector is also important. Government should believe and trust the local civil society groups to propose a solution, allow them to make decisions and manage some matters. At the same time, local people should also change their negative perceptions about the state and learn to trust government officials.

7) Financial Sources

Civil society groups that received funds from external support need to be based on thorough analysis and clear objectives otherwise civil society groups might be used easily as a tool for the outsiders who want to take political advantage of the conflict. Today, a number of civil society groups

⁸⁷⁵ Iglesias, "The Role," 8.

⁸⁷⁶ Respondent 3.

⁸⁷⁷ Respondent 13.

have been financially supported by international organisations. Although these foreign funds seem to offer a huge amount of money and are easy to apply for, they could leave this conflict area one day when there is a new conflict. Therefore, some civil society groups tend to consider the government funding source as a new option because it is a more sustainable financial source.

To avoid being influenced by funding sources, civil society groups should not depend on one source and try to rely on their own financial sources as much as they could. Also, there are more funding options such as getting donations from the public, hosting fundraising events or running their own small business for their group's income. Thus, the civil society sector could remain independent from the state and not be influenced by any funding sources.

8) Civil Society Council

Civil society groups involved in the peacebuilding process should be strengthened to help transform them to be able to bond people who have different religions and cultures together with sustainable peace.⁸⁷⁸ The concept of the 'Civil Society Council' is not easily achieved as there are many differences in civil society groups' characteristics. Thus, it has been suggested that it should begin with a dialogue in a small group called the 'Single Identity'.⁸⁷⁹ This is to bring small groups to talk and find a joint direction and then to ask other groups who have different opinions to join the next round of talks.

To encourage civil society to play a direct role in peace negotiation processes, they have to cooperate among groups and to strengthen themselves so that their requests will be more powerful in negotiations. It is interesting that only the same people play key roles in most projects and seminars in this region. Therefore, it is also important to ensure that every group will have equal rights and roles when they participate in the council.

The council should consist of civil society groups of various backgrounds but only a few civil society groups in the economic category have joined the networks so far. Civil society networks should motivate the

⁸⁷⁸ Rood, *Forging Sustainable Peace*, ix.

⁸⁷⁹ Tamthai, Thai Heritage Treasury, Website.

private and business sectors to get more involved in civil society activities. The business sector has the potential to be playing a part in building peace in the conflict, but mostly they give their priority to their business and profit. The civil society community should show them what would be beneficial for their business if the situation in the south goes back to being peaceful. The council might include international civil society organisations as consultants because it is a good chance to exchange experiences and to widen vision for members of local civil society groups.⁸⁸⁰

Also, the networks of civil society should be strengthened vertically by increasing the capability of members and expanded horizontally by growing a number of networks at the same time, or in other words quality must come together with quantity.

9) Based on Knowledge

It has been said that Thailand is a rumour driven society. In the Muslim community, a tea place is where rumours can grow fast as it is a meeting place where Muslim men like to gather. However, civil society groups should work based on data, information and knowledge, not feeling or rumour. There are a number of civil society groups that are working on keeping data and statistics. A lot of research relevant to the southern conflict has been produced by academic civil society groups, but they have not been fully used. Researchers should try to publicise and propose their works to relevant organisations so these studies will be useful for the wider public. Therefore, the civil society networks should try to use the inputs from these civil society groups as much as they can. Outsiders should understand the situation in the southern region based on facts and data from reliable sources, not biased sources.

⁸⁸⁰ Respondent 5.

9.6 The Future of Civil Society Involved in the Southern Conflict Resolution

As it was underlined, negotiations alone between the conflicting parties are not enough to end the conflict permanently; other relevant actors have to be included in the peace process such as civil society groups, scholars, the mass media, community leaders and local people.⁸⁸¹ The state, as a peacekeeper, can only stop using weapons and reduce the violence by formal agreement; however, the prolonged conflict remains in the community. The violence could escalate anytime even though an official ceasefire was agreed because the root causes (i.e. poverty, feeling discriminated and lack of trust in the rule of law) have not yet been resolved. In the future, trends in the civil society sector attempting to build peace will be varied depending on internal and external factors. The following section will discuss what should be kept the same or changed and improved in the civil society sector.

9.6.1 Fixing and Building Tasks

It seems that the main tasks of civil society groups remain fixing and building the society. *Fixing tasks* mean relief work which includes healing both the physical and emotional needs of the victims who were affected by the violence. Distributing the donated money and visiting the victims are still important roles for civil society groups. *Building tasks* include activities that create a better understanding and reconciliation between those people in a diverse society. It is difficult to prove that the decline of violent incidents is caused by the efficacy of the civil society network because there are more factors and actors involved in the conflict. However, having the civil society sector involved in the peacebuilding process is the cheapest method to resolve the conflict in a sustainable way.

Funding sources remain an important variable for the success of the civil society sector in building peace in the ethno-religious conflict. As a huge amount of funds have been thrown into this region, money has gradually changed the way people think. People are more selfish and think of their

⁸⁸¹ Arida, "Patani Peace Process."

own benefit first when money is involved. Time will prove which civil society groups are genuine because funding sponsors from overseas could abandon this area anytime for another place where a new conflict has emerged.

9.6.2 Positive Trends

Some trends have been seen in the civil society sector that may change in a positive way. There is a high possibility that the number of registered civil society groups will increase because of the government's encouragement and the advantages for civil society groups. It is easier for the state to check and monitor those civil society groups that have registered. It also benefits civil society groups as it is more convenient for them to apply for funding. It could be argued that government would have control over the registered civil society groups. In fact, however, the government can only monitor their work by examining their income and expenses report while civil society groups remain independent in organising their matters. In the researcher's opinion, having groups registered would benefit both parties. The government could get rid of fake civil society groups and at the same time civil society groups could gain more benefits in funding sources and tax exemption. Moreover, aid agencies could easily check for the group's transparency and trust so as to give their contribution to those registered civil society groups.

Online media and social networks will play a great role in publicising civil society's activities on a wider scope. These online channels will be one of the most efficient tools for the civil society network to get more attention and cooperation from the public.

It is interesting to see the business sector gain benefits from the unrest in these provinces. A number of seminar series brainstorming for a solution to the ethnic conflict have been held widely in the south, mainly in the provinces of Pattani and Songkhla. Hotels in Pattani, which is not normally a tourist destination, are fully booked by seminar participants. Therefore, the hotel business has unexpectedly gained from the conflict. It would not be surprising if the hotel business grows faster in this region in the future. Although the growth in the hotel business does not directly affect

to the conflict solution, it could make the business sector in this area less stagnant. They also support peacebuilding work by offering special room rates for civil society's seminars and activities hosted at their hotels.

9.6.3 New Issues

Besides the insurgency problem in this area, drug abuse and addiction in Muslim youths has become a new problem in these provinces.⁸⁸² It was found that the southern violence is an important factor leading youths to drug problems because of the pressure from government officials and adults in the village who suspect them of being involved in militant groups.⁸⁸³ Religious teaching has been supported as a tool to reduce the volume of this problem.⁸⁸⁴

Today, the proportion of Muslim civil society groups is much greater than the Buddhist ones. The civil society community of the minority Buddhists in the southernmost area should not be overlooked because this ignorance might create a new problem in the future.⁸⁸⁵ People, no matter what religion they are, in the conflict area have been affected by the violence, but the Buddhists in the area complain that they are overlooked by the state. Buddhists in the southernmost provinces felt that the government's policies only focus on providing assistance and relief programmes to the Muslims who receive better chances in education, career and living. This is a sensitive issue that could create tension among Buddhists who are the minority in southernmost provinces.⁸⁸⁶ The civil society network could play a representative role in raising this issue with the government.

9.6.4 What People in Southern Thailand Expect from Civil Society in the Future

The image of the civil society sector that people would like to see in the future is a dynamic one. One of the most important things to prove the

⁸⁸² Respondent 10,13 and 27.

⁸⁸³ Civil Network for Peace in Southern Border. *Voices from Villages*, 62.

⁸⁸⁴ Respondent 27.

⁸⁸⁵ Respondent 29.

⁸⁸⁶ ASTV Manager Online, "The Rights of Thai Buddhists in the Three Southernmost Provinces," 20 May 2007, <http://www.manager.co.th/Local/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9500000057631> (accessed 1 January 2014).

civil society group's sincerity to the community is continued support. The future of the civil society sector will be brighter if we can establish the idea of citizen awareness and establish a volunteer spirit in the next generation. It would be very useful for building peace in this region if more civil society groups in the academic category transform their researches into practice. So, these researches will not only be kept in a library, but they could be used to help to resolve the conflict.⁸⁸⁷

It is an ideal to see civil society groups initiated by victims who gather to help and protect themselves. If the victims come out for their rights, it will be more powerful and provide inspiration to the others.⁸⁸⁸ Hopefully, the grassroots will be able to decide what they really want to happen in their homeland which will be the actual benefit for the grassroots, not for the elite groups or the leaders of community.

At the end, the civil society sector should be able to develop their status to be one of the stakeholders in the conflict and then lasting peace could be achieved by the cooperation of stakeholders.

9.7 Conclusion

It was generally agreed that the resolution of ethno-religious conflict in southern Thailand should be the responsibility of the whole country; not only the government. The state remains acting as the peacekeeper who tries to figure out how to stop the violence carried out by insurgent groups. However, to achieve positive sustained peace, the civil society sector must be involved in the peacebuilding process.

Most civil society groups normally have more than one role and cover various activities. Although the civil society sector in Thailand rarely takes part directly in the peace process, and is usually excluded from peace talks, they have the power to persuade through peace advocacy and to push the idea of a non-violent peaceful solution.⁸⁸⁹ According to the classified eight roles of the civil society sector in the peacebuilding process, the role of the

⁸⁸⁷ Respondents 1 and 17.

⁸⁸⁸ Respondent 14.

⁸⁸⁹ Iglesias, "The Role," 8.

bridge-builder is the most outstanding among groups which are involved in building peace in the southern conflict. Its main activities are to reduce the tense atmosphere, to improve attitudes and to strengthen relationships among conflicting stakeholders including the locals, the state, the outsiders, the insurgent groups and international organisations.

It can be seen that the relationship between people who are involved in the conflict is getting better. Civil society networks, government authorities and local people have cooperated more on conflict resolution matters. More alternatives for creating peace in this region have been raised and forbidden issues in the past, like autonomy, today can be widely discussed. This is because civil society groups create a good atmosphere for informal negotiations. Furthermore, people from different cultures today have more interaction because civil society's activities bring them closer.

Overall, due to security concerns in an environment of mistrust, the civil society sector has proved that it plays a useful but limited role in creating a positive environment. This is because their role as bridge-builder helps to regain trust among people and other sectors.⁸⁹⁰ However, it seems like the civil society sector can play only a supporting role in the peace process and the state, with military measures, is still considered as the most important player in resolving the turbulent situation.

The next chapter will be the final chapter and will include a summary of the following topics: the history, background, methodology, main findings and key recommendations.

⁸⁹⁰ Parinya, "Civil Society," 26.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Nature of the Conflict in Southern Thailand

10.1.1 Background to the Conflict

The 'Southern Fire' is known to the Thais as the ethno-religious conflict in the southernmost region of the country that has claimed almost 4,000 lives since an upsurge in violence in 2004. The near daily attacks including ambushes and bombings are ongoing and more than half of the deaths are those of innocent people. The minority Malay Muslims, geographically concentrated in the three southernmost provinces, are divided from other Thais not only by religion but also by broader cultural differences. Most Muslims in southern Thailand share the same characteristics as Muslims in Malaysia.

In the past, the southernmost provinces were known as the Malay Kingdom of Patani and considered a colony of Siam. Because of Pattani's prosperity from being a centre for trade and also as the centre of Islamic religion, it tried to separate itself from Siam. After the signing of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty in 1909, Pattani became only a province under Thai rule.

Tension between the Pattani region and the central government in Bangkok continued and was intensified after the state attempted to modernise the country. The extreme nationalist policies of General Phibulsongkhram caused a Patani People's Movement to be formed to resist these policies that were perceived as the state trying to destroy their Muslim identity. After the disappearance of the Movement's leader while under police custody in 1954, and because of the continuation of the assimilation policies, three major separatist groups were established: namely, the Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani (BNPP, 1959), Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN, 1963) and the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO, 1968). These groups were called separatist groups because their commitments initially were to establishing an independent Islamic state. However, it seems the objectives of the insurgent groups

today have changed to those of autonomy and justice rather than independence.

From the early 1980s to the end of the 1990s, violence in the southern region declined dramatically. It was mostly because the new government's approach, which emphasised public participation as well as social and economic development rather than a purely military strategy, was effective in reducing the violence.

The violence in the deep south escalated dramatically after Thaksin Shinawatra became Prime Minister. His hardline security approaches and administration policies were widely criticised. The degree of violence in 2004 rose and there was a sudden upsurge of violence in these provinces.

Since the return of violence in 2004, the forms in which it has occurred have changed depending on the tactics of the government and the insurgent groups. At the beginning, from 2004 to mid-2007, a rapidly escalating wave of insurgent attacks were fuelled by the brutal incidents of the Krue Se Mosque and Tak Bai massacres. The government handled the conflict by using aggressive counterinsurgency measures. The national policies concerning the violence in the deep south depended on the government's leaders and overall circumstances during that time. After the heavy-handed measures used by Thaksin's government, later governments have seemed to handle the conflict in a more compromising manner. However, some governments did not put in any efforts to improve the violent situation in these provinces because they had other more urgent issues to deal with, for example, the downturn in the economy, political crises and natural disasters.

The conflict has now moved to a new phase after formal peace dialogues were set up between the representatives of the Thai government and the BRN group in February 2013: the first ever official peace talks. This new phase of the conflict is being impacted by two new factors which are major tactical changes on both sides. The first is the influence of the official peace talks. The second is the growing government counterinsurgency measures, especially in intelligence operations. The violence is now becoming increasingly close-fought with a sharp rise in combatant casualties on both the state's and militant groups' sides.

10.1.2 Possible Causes of the Conflict in Southern Thailand

In order to resolve the conflict, the root causes must be identified first. As described in Chapter 4, the ethno-religious conflict in southern Thailand has multiple causes including historical concerns, economic marginalisation, political issues, social and cultural differences, educational opportunity inequities and judicial discrimination.

First, the distorted political history between Siam and the Kingdom of Patani created prejudice among Muslims in the south and was used to mobilise their sentiment against the state.

The second factor is economic inequality as these three provinces are among the least developed in the country. Disparities between the centre and the rural areas have resulted in economic underdevelopment in the deep south. The government has failed to respond to the local people's needs because most public policies are decided by the central government without participation from the local people. In addition, there are several reasons for constant poverty in the region such as the high birth rate and the lack of education.

Thirdly, the failure of the government in handling the insurgent problem includes dissolving the key state authorities in the region. Moreover, having short-term governments makes it difficult to produce tangible outcomes.

Fourthly, social and cultural differences can cause tensions. As Muslim identity in the south is different from the rest of the country, local people in the region feel very much connected with those in Malaysia because they share more similarities. Furthermore, the deep south also has a reputation as having a high crime rate and other forms of illegitimate business.

The fifth cause is an educational one. Ponohs, which provide both religious and academic teachings, were seen a threat to national security as they could be breeding grounds for potential radical Muslims. Moreover, because of a syllabus imbalance, only a few graduates from ponohs are able to further their studies in a higher institution.

Finally, the problem of injustice is one factor which stimulates the conflict in the south. Due to the state's lack of understanding and acceptance of cultural differences, local people do not trust government officials, have no faith in the justice system and do not rely on the national justice process.

There are many conflicting views about the causes of the conflict, but it has never been confirmed what the real reason behind the violence is. All the above factors contribute to local discontent and tension in ethnic relations. However, the researcher believes that the root cause of the conflict is the disparity between the Muslims in the south and the majority of the country. Muslims have always thought that they are ignored by the central government. They consider themselves to be regarded as second-class citizens in the country by everybody else.

10.2 Theoretical Review and Methodology

10.2.1 Purposes and Process

As a civilian living in southern Thailand, the researcher has realised that it is the whole country's responsibility to help find potential solutions to the conflict. As the civil society sector dealing with the southern conflict has grown quickly since the new round of violence, it will be useful if there is research into how the civil society sector can get involved in the peacebuilding process. This research has aimed to promote the civil society sector as a tool of a non-violent approach which could help building a sustained peace in these provinces; to study the role of the civil society sector in building peace in the southernmost provinces; and to strengthen civil society groups attempting to build peace in this region.

In Chapter 3, it was outlined how this research used the qualitative method by employing in-depth interviews and documentary research. The thesis used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through person-to-person interviews with the leaders or representatives of civil society groups in Thailand. The interview was a non-random sampling procedure using purposive sampling. Twenty-nine civil society groups were selected as research samples, mostly based in the southern provinces.

These groups were classified into eleven categories: natural resources issues, human rights, media, academic, religion and culture, economic, public health, women, youth, multi-purpose and government agencies.

The questions used in the interviews were classified into four main areas: the characteristics of civil society groups involved in attempting to build peace in ethno-religious conflict in Southern Thailand; the roles of civil society groups; the efficacy of civil society groups in building peace in the conflict; and difficulties and recommendations.

As noted in Chapter 3, this research adapted some techniques from grounded theory and mind mapping as approaches to analyse data from the interviews. The SWOT Analysis was used to evaluate the effectiveness of civil society groups. The main concept of SWOT Analysis is to study both the internal and external factors that affect civil society groups. The 7S Model was used as a framework to analyse internal factors while external factors were assessed by the PEST Analysis.

10.2.2 Lessons from Ethno-religious Conflicts and the Role of Civil Society in South and Southeast Asia

Many countries in South and Southeast Asia have faced an internal conflict since the colonial period. The problems caused by ethnicity and religion remain the important causes of ongoing conflicts, for example, the Assam conflict in India, the Mindanao conflict in the Philippines and the hill tribe conflicts in Myanmar as well as former conflicts such as the Eelam war in Sri Lanka and the Aceh conflict in Indonesia. While some countries share common characteristics and patterns of conflict, each case, however, has its own distinct history and unique causes. Although Thailand is the only country in this region that has never been colonised, nevertheless, colonialism still affected the country. The Treaty signed by Siam and the British created discontent among Muslims in the south who became a minority of the country instead of joining the Muslim-majority neighbouring country.

Chapter 5 also discussed the role of the civil society sector in these cases of conflict. Although it is difficult for civil society actors to get involved in an official peace process, they have played a significant role in creating

a better atmosphere for peacebuilding. The main role of civil society groups in these countries is secretarial or supporting tasks which include, for example, providing popular support for peace, promoting negotiation and reconciliation between conflicting parties, creating links at the local level between different ethnic communities and monitoring a ceasefire process. Therefore, involvement of the civil society sector is very important to create and maintain peace in this problematic region.

10.2.3 Why the Civil Society Sector is Important in Building Peace

According to the scholars described in Chapter 2, the civil society sector plays a significant role in building peace and peace has various aspects and meanings. Relevant actors in the conflict can be various, but each one plays a different part in the conflict resolution. It was accepted widely that civil society's involvement can create a lasting peace in the conflict area, for example, the Peace-building Model by Ryan and Third-party Strategies in conflict transformation by Reimann.

Chapter 4 discussed matters concerning government policies related to the southern conflict from 1938 to 2013. It was found that the government policies focused mainly on security issues, especially increasing troop strength, implementing laws and reorganising the government agencies. These policies could reduce the violence for some time, but the tensions remain and the root causes of the conflict have still not been resolved. This chapter has shown that the government's policy alone could not resolve the problem. Thus, civil society actors are needed to be involved in building peace in the region.

The concept of peace was described in Chapter 6 as having two different scopes and meanings. The state plays the most important role to achieve a negative peace which is to stop direct physical violence and to sign a ceasefire agreement. Nevertheless, to create a positive peace, which means achieving sustainable peace in society, it is the civil society sector that plays a vital role in creating a culture of peace and increasing social justice in the conflict area. Where states have failed in handling the conflict, the civil society sector was seen as a necessary party for reducing the violence and creating peace in the long-term. Moreover, the aim of

international diplomacy is no longer only to settle disputes, but also to prevent future conflict through transforming and improving attitudes in societies. Therefore, some peace strategies have been developed to enhance the participation of civil society in solving conflicts.

Based on the researcher's experience and an analysis of researches concerning civil society's roles in building peace in Chapter 6, eight roles of civil society were determined including that of being security protector, representative, bridge-builder, relief worker, monitoring observer, academic, public communicator and peace-builder. These roles can be used to analyse the contributions of civil society in building peace in the three southernmost provinces.

10.2.4 Civil Society's Involvement in Building Peace in the Southern Conflict

According to the fieldwork, those civil society groups involved in attempting to build peace in the conflict have different characteristics. The general overview of civil society groups was examined in Chapter 8.

The main purposes of civil society groups in this area were changed after an upsurge in violence. In the past, civil society groups in the south had similar aims to other groups in the rest of the country which was to improve the general social well-being and the local economy. Until 2004, many existing civil society groups shifted their roles and new civil society groups were formed with aims concerning the conflict.

There are not many key persons from civil society networks who play significant roles in this region. Many of them are from academic networks and one person could be involved in one or more civil society groups. Not surprisingly, most civil society groups in the deep south were formed by Muslims as they are the majority in this region. There are both full-time staff and volunteers working in the civil society groups. Those who work for civil society groups in the deep south are mostly volunteers who already have full-time jobs. The size of civil society networks have expanded. One of the reasons is that most civil society groups are normally open to all who are interested in their goals and activities and do not have membership requirements. Moreover, many civil society groups have their offices located

in the town area which makes it easy to connect to and communicate with the community.

Although the state has encouraged civil society groups to register with the government agencies, only 15 per cent have been registered as foundations or associations. Many civil society groups have tried to upgrade from casual networks into registered organisations. Unfortunately, many of them have some difficulties in reaching the government's requirements for registration. Civil society groups are poor in evaluation and getting feedback from the local population. It seems they are concerned more with process than the outcome. The good thing is that most civil society groups have simple and flexible structures which make them suitable for application in uncertain circumstances. Difficulties in finding financial support are not a concern for civil society groups and they normally receive funds from more than one source. Various funding sources are available for civil society groups, such as the state, international organisations, the community, donations, their own members, and private business groups. The major financial support for civil society groups in the south comes from international organisations.

Cooperation between civil society groups and other sectors is important for their group's success. Local people respond to activities hosted by civil society groups quite well because most projects were based on the locals' needs. Some civil society groups were good at cooperating with each other while some saw other groups as competitors for funding. The relations between civil society groups and state are various. While some civil society groups were supported by the government, some saw other groups as opposition. For the private sector, cooperation between the business sector and the civil society sector is very rare. The only activity that the business sector is involved in is giving donations or financial support. Relations with international organisations occur in many ways, for example, as funding sources, or for exchanging knowledge and sharing data.

10.3 Main Findings

10.3.1 Role of the Civil Society Sector

According to the fieldwork, and an analysis of it, the three most significant roles that civil society groups are playing in attempting to build peace in the conflict are those of bridge-builder, academic and relief worker.

Civil society groups often play more than one role and the basic role of the bridge-builder is the one which most groups in the south are playing. To fill the gap of the differences in religion, culture, identity and ways of life, civil society groups can act as a bridge which will bring government and local people in the deep south closer to one another. As people are afraid of becoming a target of the state or militant groups, the civil society groups which act as bridge-builders have created better understanding and strengthened trust among the conflicting parties. Today, one of the significant successful efforts of civil society groups is creating a safe common space for relevant parties to communicate and share their ideas independently. Civil society networks have become a channel for people to share their ideas and work together for their community.

Scholars in academic institutions in this region play a leading role in brainstorming for potential solutions from other scholars who are experts in Peace Studies in Thailand and also from those overseas. Moreover, this role aims to help promote non-violent solutions giving greater knowledge about Peace Studies and doing further research concerning conflict resolution. A number of researches have offered some alternative political solutions for the deep south conflict. As a result of the strong academic networks in the civil society sector, the autonomy solution (once banned by the government) is now widely acceptable to be discussed in public. The ideas which are supported by knowledge and academic data are stronger than the solution based on feelings or opinions from some parties. Furthermore, this academic role covers work that targets the young generation by helping to promote the growth of the volunteering spirit in children and youth who are seen as the key actors to keep a lasting peace in this region.

According to the interviews, it was found that there are a number of civil society groups carrying out the role of relief worker. To provide urgent assistance to the victims of violence, this task of civil society groups is necessary, especially when the state fails to fulfil its duty. Moreover, to get assistance from the government usually takes a longer time and has more procedure. The main tasks of relief workers are to visit people injured because of the violence and to distribute money to those victims and their families. The long-term projects, such as training these victims for careers or providing accommodation, have also been launched as giving money is not a sustainable solution. Furthermore, the civil society groups are aware of the need to heal the minds of the victims by providing moral support and psychological consultation. As relief work is not a complicated task and is able to get funded easily, this role seems very popular among the civil society groups that deal with the southern conflict. Relief work was, however, seen as an easy opportunity for some fake civil society groups to take the benefits and to use these for themselves.

10.3.2 Efficacy of the Civil Society Sector

As discussed in Chapter 9, the status of the civil society sector dealing with the conflict in the deep south has the potential to grow as it has a number of strong internal factors and many opportunities that can increase capabilities and help the groups to perform better. Civil society groups in the south have created two strengths of 'Shared values' including a common space and diversity. They have a flexible 'Structure' and effective 'System' including a comprehensive database and healthy financial status. The significant strength of civil society today is also its unique 'Style' of leadership.

In terms of the external opportunities, which concern the 'Political' element, civil society groups have been encouraged well by the government. The 'Economic' factor provides a good opportunity for funding, especially financial support by international agencies. The locals, as part of the 'Social' element, are keen to participate in their projects and to share experiences. Finally, the 'Technological' element also offers various channels to enhance their groups' communication.

Interestingly, the government factor became an important variable for the civil society sector because it can be considered as both advantageous and disadvantageous depending on the circumstances and perspectives of each civil society group. Some civil society groups view government as an opportunity for sustainable funding sources while other groups have never relied on the state or even see it as a threat.

Although the civil society sector has many strong factors that are advantageous, there are some weaknesses that cause concern.

10.3.3 Difficulties Faced by the Civil Society Sector

According to the discussion in Chapter 9, there are a number of weaknesses and threats that the civil society sector faces. There are four problems, including human resources, time management, influence from funding sources, and political and safety issues, which this researcher has identified as being important and which can have a serious impact on the civil society sector. This is because these factors are the elements that keep the civil society groups going. Without staff, time, money and a safe environment, any kind of work cannot be done. External factors, political and economic elements, were considered important as they are difficult to control and have considerable influence on the work of civil society.

The issues concerning human resources are the qualifications of the staff, the need for more specialists and the skills of the people who work in this sector. Also, language is a barrier in communication between the locals and civil society groups. As a huge amount of money has been distributed in this region, money has gradually turned people who work in the civil society sector from working based on a volunteering spirit to being money-centred. When money is involved, people became more selfish and think of their own benefit first.

Another obstacle for civil society is lack of time. Time management is a problem for many groups because staff normally have full-time work. It is a struggle for them to manage and dedicate time for volunteering work. Arranging time for group meetings and attending conferences which may be useful for their groups are also difficult.

Financial support is important for the success of the civil society sector in building peace in the ethno-religious conflict and this issue has resulted in various problems. Many of the civil society groups in this region are financially sponsored by international organisations. These kinds of funds are normally only for a short-term and are not sustainable. Although it is not difficult for civil society groups to find sponsorship, the flow of funds may be a problem. The civil society sector should be independent for what they aim to do, but in reality most groups depend on funding sources. A huge amount of funding money has caused conflict among people in the civil society networks because they were competing for sponsorship.

The political factor has a strong impact on civil society's activities. The unstable political situation in Thailand makes it difficult for civil society to run their projects continuously. This is because each incoming government has a different focus in its policy and a new leader has his/her own style to deal with the problem of insurgency. The issue of personal safety is another problem. This safety issue obstructs the locals from participating in civil society networks as they fear for their life and the safety of their property from being targeted by insurgent groups.

10.3.4 To Improve the Performance of the Civil Society Sector

According to the results of internal and external analyses of the civil society sector, there are some recommendations to improve civil society's activities, as discussed in Chapter 9. The three key recommendations that can help to enhance the performance of civil society groups that the researcher considers to be the most important are trust, understanding the needs of the locals, and strategy.

Working in the area of conflict is very sensitive and requires some degree of trust between the relevant parties, for example, government, state officials, civil society groups and local communities. Thus, time, patience and deep engagement are needed for civil society to work with local people in a conflict area. Civil society should play a role in making Muslims in the south change their negative perception about the state and learn to trust government agencies. At the same time, the government should try to offer

opportunities for the civil society groups to share their opinions, and to allow them to make decisions and to manage some matters.

Civil society groups should work based on a bottom-up approach depending on the needs of the local people. They should try to find out what the actual needs of people in the region are in order to fulfill the locals' needs better than following a plan that comes from the central government. Ideally, civil society groups should be initiated and formed by the locals who are aware of their citizenship and being a part of society. Moreover, civil society networks should try to make people understand their roles and how to be involved in civil society's activities.

Today, the conflict is dynamic and there are many factors affecting the performances of civil society groups. Therefore, civil society groups should clearly identify their visions, objectives and plans for achieving their goals. While some factors are controllable, many are not. To ensure the group is aiming in the right direction, having a strategic plan is a useful idea. It is a good opportunity for the groups to assess their internal and circumstantial factors which can be advantageous or disadvantageous. Then, a suitable working plan can be determined in order to help the groups to survive in dynamic circumstances and to achieve their goals.

10.3.5 Other Findings

According to the fieldwork, there are some points that are not related directly to the role of civil society in building peace in the conflict, but the researcher found them interesting and they could be useful for further study.

As drugs have been a problem in Thai society for a long time, there is no doubt that the southern provinces are facing the same problem. Besides the problem of insurgency in this area, many respondents mentioned that drug abuse and addiction among Muslim youths have become a new area of concern in this region. Religious teachings have been supported to be used as a tool to reduce the volume of this problem. However, the government should not overlook this problem which may be linked to the insurgent operations.

Interestingly, the hotel business and civil society groups supported each other during the conflict. The hotel business gained from the seminars

and conferences on possible the conflict solutions while civil society groups were offered special deals for their peacebuilding activities.

10.4 Recommendations for Further Study

The ethno-religious conflict in the southernmost provinces is a prolonged conflict which seems difficult to resolve. Therefore, this conflict has been of concern to many Thais. The violence is ongoing even though each government has attempted to end the insurgent operation in this area. There is, however, not much research about the civil society sector and its relation to the conflict in southern Thailand.⁸⁹¹ Researchers may be interested to choose to study one particular category of a civil society group concerning their activities and how they are involved in creating peace in this area.

Funding is a complicated variable for civil society groups in the south. Funding can be considered to be both an opportunity and a threat, as was noted in Chapter 9. One area for further study would be the influence of funding sources on the civil society sector in attempting to build peace in the conflict in these provinces.

Most people want to see greater cooperation among civil society groups in building peace in the conflict in these regions. This is because it was believed that the wider networks can create a better change. One respondent questioned if it is true that the whole is more than the sum of its parts?⁸⁹² It will need further research to answer this question.

Another area recommended for further study is about the layers of the civil society sector. Since the upsurge in violence, there are many groups that want to be involved in conflict resolution. Civil society groups have divided themselves in the community by social class, education or region. These factors have widened the gap between the civil society sector and the grassroots.

⁸⁹¹ Chaiwat Satha-Anand, ed., *Imagined Land? The State and Southern Violence in Thailand* (Tokyo: Sanrei Printing Co. Ltd., 2009), 45.

⁸⁹² Respondent 6.

Further studies focusing on the possibility of bringing political solutions into practice, and which model is the most suitable for Thailand are recommended. Civil society networks have been active in mobilising wide-ranging debates on some forms of the special administrative arrangement, or regional autonomy, which have included proposals for various models of new governance in the south; for example, the concept of 'The Monthon'⁸⁹³ by Prawase Wasi and the model of 'Southern Border Provinces Development Administration Bureau (SBPDAB)'⁸⁹⁴ by Srisompob Jitpiomsri.

10.5 Conclusion

First of all, it should be clear that religious and cultural insensitivity has contributed to the conflict, but the conflict is not between the Buddhist Thais and the Muslim-Malays in the deep south. In fact, the tension and resentment of people in the south was caused by the disparity of opportunities provided by central government. However, the local people only want to have a peaceful and better quality of life. The actual cause of violence is from some groups of radical Muslim-Malay elite leaders who are politically, ethnically and culturally conscious.

As far as a framework for conflict resolution is concerned, the Thai state has put a great effort in to increasing the number of military and police forces in the conflict area to stop the violence urgently which is a 'peacekeeping' strategy. However, the deployment of security forces cannot stop the violence in these provinces and may only obtain a negative peace. Another strategy used was 'peacemaking' which includes political activities. An official peace dialogue between the Thai state and an insurgent group held early in 2013 was a good start for the peacemaking strategy.⁸⁹⁵ The

⁸⁹³ Duncan McCargo, "Autonomy for Southern Thailand: Thinking the Unthinkable?," *Pacific Affairs* 83, no. 2 (June 2010): 270.

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 273.

⁸⁹⁵ The 2014 Coup led by the Royal Thai Army, on 22 May affected the peace dialogue undeniably. Under the new regime, a slightly different approach to the peace talks has been undertaken. Key persons in the peace talks have been replaced by a new delegation from ISOC. This will be better in the long-term because the peace talks will not be affected by the political uncertainty as the main actors involved in the peace talks are under the Royal Thai Army, not the government. Source: Isra News Agency, "The Future

civil society sector has helped contribute to peacemaking in observing and monitoring although its role was very limited. However, negative attitudes among local people remain in the community. These strategies could be used together with 'peacebuilding' which will help keep the balance of socio-economic structures. This strategy aims to prevent violence from happening again and to create a sustained positive peace. In Thailand's case, the violence is ongoing, although the civil society sector, a main actor in peacebuilding, has played its role in helping ameliorate the conditions which sustain the conflict since the upsurge in violence in 2004.

This research has proved that the civil society sector plays various useful roles in attempting to create peace in the south. However, its role currently remains limited as the civil society actors cannot have an influence on or lead to a change in the Thai government's tactics. Together with other actors, the civil society sector can be an important part of the solution to reduce the violence and even play a more useful role in building lasting positive peace in southernmost Thailand when the violence eventually stops.

of Peace Dialogues after the Coup," 25 May 2014, http://www.isranews.org/south-news/scoop/item/29753-isoc_29753.html (accessed 9 June 2014). [in Thai].

Appendix A

Map of South and Southeast Asian Region



Source: One World – Nations Online, http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map_of_southeast_asia.htm (accessed 4 April 2014).

Appendix B

Map of Thailand's Regions



Source: Thailand for Visitors, <http://thailandforvisitors.com/general/regions.html#north> (accessed 4 April 2014).

Appendix C

Map of Southern Border Provinces



Source: Report of the National Reconciliation Commission,
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/thailand0807/1.htm> (accessed 4 April 2014).

Appendix D

Interview Guide

The in-depth interview will begin with an introduction about the research and the researcher's background. Then, the interview will proceed covering the following topics:

I. Background information

1. When was your group established?
2. What are your group's main purposes?
3. Who are the founders?
4. Who are your target groups / does your group work for?
5. How many members were there when your group was first established and how many members are there today?
6. Who are eligible to be your group members?

II. Administration and funding source

1. What is your group structure like?
2. From which sources does your group receive funds?
3. Do you find it difficult to find financial support?
4. How do you evaluate your performance and who do you report to?
How often?
5. Do your staff work full-time or do they have other sources of income?

III. Activities

1. What are your main activities / projects?
2. How is your group able to solve the problem in the south?
3. Why would you say that your group is a part of the civil society sector?
4. How much participation from the community does your group get?
5. How does your group persuade the community to be involved in the activities hosted by your group?
6. Do you have any group networks?

7. Do you find your group work to be more efficient or more difficult when you have to cooperate with other civil society groups?
8. Do you find your group work to be more efficient or more difficult when you have to cooperate with government agencies?
9. Do you find your group work to be more efficient or more difficult when you have to cooperate with the private sector?
10. Does your group have any difficulties to achieve your goal? If yes, what are they? And how do you solve those problems?
11. How much do you score your group's performance out of a scale of ten?
12. Do you have any suggestions what should be done to improve your group's performance?

IV. Opinions

1. Do you agree that it has been said that heavy-handed measures cannot solve the problems in the south? Why?
2. What does a soft measure mean to you?
3. In general, how can civil society groups resolve the conflict?
4. Overall, what is the most important role that you think civil society groups are now playing?
5. Do you have any suggestions that can improve civil society groups' performance?
6. What do you think the community is hoping to get from civil society groups?

V. Closing comments / additional information

- Do you have anything else to share concerning the role of civil society in resolving the problem in the south?
- Do you think any changes should be made that may help the next interview to be more efficient?

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