Foreign Aid and Peripheral Conflict: A Case Study of the Far South of Thailand

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PhD Thesis

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Declaration

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Abstract

Many foreign aid agencies promote peacebuilding as a global policy objective. This thesis considers how they have operated in practice in subnational, 'peripheral' conflicts, using the Far South of Thailand as a case study. It asks how the characteristics and causes of the conflict affect aid agencies' approaches and considers the properties of aid agencies that help explain why they act as they do. Semi-structured interviews with aid agency staff, supported by other empirical data, are used to examine the practical process of foreign aid provision.

The thesis builds on the concept of horizontal inequality to help explain how typical patterns of violence in peripheral conflicts are associated with perceptions of political, economic, social and cultural status inequality along ethnic lines within nation states. Foreign aid agencies have a mixed record of addressing such inequalities.

An assessment of aid agencies operating in Thailand, combined with detailed consideration of illustrative interventions, reveals a variety of responses to conflict in the Far South and its causes. Agencies with larger, more conventional programmes tend not to respond to the issue. Other agencies try but do not succeed in implementing their plans, while some agencies implement small yet relevant initiatives. The reasons for this pattern are identified through the research process with reference to existing literature on foreign aid, horizontal inequalities and conflict. Factors include: different motivations behind foreign aid including mixed levels of interest in addressing inequalities within conventional development approaches; the varied ability of agencies to negotiate with a reluctant recipient government; and practical barriers stemming from how agencies operate.

The research highlights the challenges faced in using foreign aid to address peacebuilding. Some increased involvement might be possible if aid agencies place greater priority on addressing underlying inequalities as well as building local knowledge and relationships that enable them to respond to arising opportunities.

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BAPPENAS	National Development Planning Agency (Indonesia)
BRN	*Barisan Revolusi Nasional* or National Revolutionary Front
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CONIS	Conflict Information System (Heidelberg University)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DOM	Military Operations Area
DTEC	Department for Technical and Economic Cooperation
EC	European Commission
EGAT	Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand
EU	European Union
FES	Friedrich Ebert *Stiftung* (Foundation)
GAM	Free Aceh Movement
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMT-GT	Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand Growth Triangle
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KDP	Kecamatan Development Programme (Indonesia)
KICA	Korea (South) International Cooperation Agency
KPI	King Prajadhipok's Institute
LICUS	Low Income Countries Under Stress
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEDA	Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
PAS	Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party
PTT	Petroleum Authority of Thailand

PULO	Patani United Liberation Organization
RKK	*Runda Kumpulan Kecil* (Small Patrol Group)
SBPAC	Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TAF	The Asia Foundation
TAO	Tambon Administrative Organization
TCMD	Thailand Centre for Muslim and Democratic Development
TICA	Thailand International Cooperation Agency
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
Unicef	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPAF	United Nations Partnership Framework
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Note: Transcriptions from Thai script are based on the Royal Thai General System, except where alternative spellings are more commonly recognized.

Map of Thailand

Adapted from *www.guidetothailand.com* (2009)

Map of the Far South of Thailand

Adapted from ICG (2009)

Chapter One   Introduction

1.1   <u>Context</u>

This thesis investigates how foreign aid agencies address violent conflict in the Far South of Thailand and considers the reasons for the emerging pattern of engagement. This initial chapter provides a short introduction to the conflict before describing the context of the study and the research agenda.

Long running tensions in the Far South of Thailand escalated on 4 January 2004 when some 30 armed men stormed a military depot, stealing weapons and killing four soldiers. The event marked the start of a long period of increased violence. By August 2011, an estimated 4,846 people had died in over 9,000 separate bombings, shootings and other incidents involving insurgents and government security forces (Srisompob 2009a, 2011).

The Far South of Thailand comprises the conflict-affected provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, along with four neighbouring districts of Songkhla province. It roughly corresponds with the area known historically as Patani.[1] People in the Far South are predominantly Malay Muslim,[2] while the clear majority of Thailand is Thai Buddhist. At the time of writing, low-level, repeated violence continues in the Far South of Thailand. Bombings, assassinations, reprisals and harassment are a daily norm. Like many other internal conflicts, it receives little attention internationally and is generally marginal to national politics.

As this thesis explains, violent conflict in the Far South of Thailand stems from a range of historically enduring 'horizontal inequalities' (as distinct from vertical inequality associated with socioeconomic stratification or class).[3] The education sector is one illustration of this; during the aforementioned attack, as well as raiding a military depot, insurgents set light to 20 government schools. Attacks on schools had been commonplace for many years, and they continued with added ferocity. In July 2006, for example, a primary school teacher was shot dead by four gunmen in front of his students. According to the Ministry of Education, 92 teachers and other education personnel were killed between 2004 and 2007. In some parts of the Far South, teachers travel to work under armed guard and have been issued with guns for self-protection. Many schools are also guarded by armed defence volunteers (Unicef 2008, ICG 2009).

Violent assaults on government schools and teachers are manifestations of wider tensions between local inhabitants and the state in Thailand and elsewhere, especially in peripheral areas far from the capital. Education has been at the heart of the difficult relationship between many Malay Muslims in the Far South and the Thai Government since the area formally became part of Thailand (then Siam) in

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[1] Patani is the preferred spelling for the former sultanate, Pattani for the current province of Thailand.
[2] The term Malay Muslim denotes both ethnicity and religion. The term preferred by the Thai Government is Thai Muslim, a wider category that includes Muslims elsewhere in the country.
[3] Stewart (2008b:13) defines horizontal inequalities as *"... inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups"*. See Ch.2 for further information. Explanations of the terms 'culture', 'ethnicity' and 'identity' are given in Ch.2 (Part 2.3).

1909.[4] For much of the twentieth century, the expansion of government schooling spearheaded assimilation. It promoted central Thai language and culture, and extended the authority of the state. In the Far South, these efforts ran up against a strong local network of traditional religious schools (or *pondok*). Some *pondok* have been partially integrated into the state education system, but others remain as a strong focus of independent local identity (Madmarn 1999). Most remaining *pondok* as well as more modern Islamic private schools do not promote violent action against the state, although a small number of teachers have used them as bases for recruiting students into insurgent groups. In addition to insurgents' attacks on government staff and schools, government-linked groups have also attacked *pondok* on numerous occasions, with students and teachers killed (Askew 2009b:81, Liow 2009).

The Thai Government, in common with most other governments, promotes education in pursuit of national development. However, in this context pursuit of development cannot be separated from the uneasy relationship between the peripheral Far South and the central state. For Malay Muslims in the Far South of Thailand, this is highly significant. Statistically, Malay Muslim children in the Far South of Thailand have lower school attendance rates than both the national average and Thai Buddhist children in the same provinces.[5] Furthermore, a majority of Malay Muslim parents in the Far South prefer to send their children to privately run religious secondary schools rather than the state-run schools that dominate among Thai Buddhists and across the rest of the country (NSO 2003). For many Malay Muslims in the Far South, education is intimately related to a minority identity that is largely defined in opposition to mainstream national identity. As this thesis explains in later chapters, the history curriculum, language of instruction, and other state actions and policies that affect the lives of people in the Far South continue to be key tools of assimilation that are widely resisted (Uthai 1981, Liow 2009).

This thesis applies the concept of horizontal inequality in order to explain the complex relationships between ethnic identity, conflict and development in the Far South of Thailand. Stewart et al. identify distinct political, economic, social and cultural aspects of horizontal inequalities, with the likelihood of conflict increasing when inequalities exist across more than one of these aspects (Stewart 2008b). This thesis considers all of these interrelated elements of horizontal inequality. Economic and social inequalities that are commonly addressed through development initiatives are seen by many Malay Muslims in the Far South from a predominantly identity-based perspective, as is reflected in the approaches adopted by academic research on the Far South of Thailand (Surin 1985, Che Man 1990, Chaiwat 2005 & 2009, McCargo 2008, G Brown 2008, Liow 2009). Meanwhile, the political structure and processes of the Thai nation state are central aspects of the genesis and perpetuation of the conflict.

The typical insurgent in the Far South is a young or early middle-aged man from a rural area where local job opportunities are few and sympathy for efforts to resist the Thai state has historically been strong (McCargo 2008:Ch.4, ICG 2009). The issue most commonly mentioned as a cause of poverty and

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[4] Siam was officially renamed Thailand in 1939.
[5] In the Far South, secondary school attendance rates for Muslim children are roughly 20% lower than for Buddhist children (NSO 2006).

associated failed development projects is the ethnic difference between the Thai state and local Malay Muslim recipients. A local NGO worker in Pattani province stated: *"They [i.e. the government] do not yet understand the three southern provinces of Thailand."* [6] A civil servant in Narathiwat Town approached the issues from the government's side, yet felt similarly: *"If you do not understand them, you cannot solve the problem."* [7] The failure to understand is typically attributed by local Malay Muslims to ethnic differences: as a minority group, they feel that the state does not answer their needs.

Identity is a central theme of much Thai studies literature, from the perspective of national as well as minority populations (Anderson 1991, Reynolds 1991 Thongchai 1994, Connors 2007). Ethnically defined nationalism is typically regarded in such accounts as a core component of the maintenance of authority by powerful national institutions including the military, civil service and royal family. The form and function of national identity are related to Thailand's highly centralized political and administrative structures, with government plans and administrative management across all fields being chiefly devised at the national level and subsequently delivered through provincial or local bodies. An ethnic minority concentrated in a remote corner of the country is especially marginalized, as analysis of horizontal inequality that allows for multiple variables and explanations of historical context reveals.

1.2   Defining peripheral conflict and associated terms

The context of the conflict in the Far South of Thailand, within a nation state that has experienced rapid development, provides a basis for examining the associations between development, conflict and foreign aid. The conflict is seen in this thesis as a specific example of what is here termed 'peripheral conflict'. In the Far South of Thailand and elsewhere, peripheral conflicts are typically territorial,[8] long-lasting violent disputes that pit self-appointed representatives of a discrete identity group against the central state. As is explained in more detail in Chapter Two, sites of such local resistance against state control exist in many countries, often ones that have undergone rapid recent development. Conflict areas on the fringes of nation states in Southeast Asia include the Far South of Thailand, Mindanao in the Philippines, Aceh and Western Papua in Indonesia, various border areas of Burma, the central Vietnamese Highlands, and parts of northern Laos. Across East and South Asia, other active or recent conflicts in Xinjiang (western China), Northeast Sri Lanka, and Northeast India also share many similar traits.[9]

Peripherality is here used in two related senses. First, the location and the ethnic minority status of the population of peripheral conflict sites make them marginal within the nation state geographically and demographically. Second, both the minority population and the conflict itself are often peripheral politically. Many local leaders and the peripheral population at large typically have little influence over

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[6] *"Pachuban ni yang mai dai mi kan phattana. Yang mai dai khao chai peun ti sam changwat phak tai"*. Interview with NGO Outreach Worker 3.
[7] *"Ta mai khao chai, gaer khai pan ha mai dai."* Interview with Local Official.
[8] Territorial here refers to attempts to affect, influence and control people, phenomena and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area (after Sack 1986:19).
[9] Recognizing that conflicts are contextually specific (Sambanis 2004), some wider patterns can nonetheless be detected.

national level political structures and processes, being peripheral both to political settlements and to wider constructions of national identity.[10] The long-term failure to address the concerns and demands of peripheral minorities, along with the lack of influence of peripheral minorities, is one reason why many peripheral conflicts continue for many decades or return after periods of relative calm.

Enduring horizontal inequalities are central to peripheral conflicts, with ethnicity and identity particularly salient. The terms are defined below and addressed in greater detail in Chapter Two. The term 'ethnicity' is employed here in the constructivist sense, recognizing that ethnic groups are chiefly products of human social interaction and differentiation, or social constructs, yet are nonetheless significant long-term historical phenomena. Identity, a term broader than ethnicity, is defined here in a sociological sense to mean the way that individuals consider themselves as members of particular groups.[11] Ethnicity is therefore a form of group identity. The relationship between ethnicity and conflict has been intensively addressed.[12] Concepts of ethnicity and identity, both with strong cultural content, can be applied alongside political and economic factors rather than being seen primarily as instrumental tools of political actors.[13] Culture carries many different meanings; its use here implies an interest in meaningful or symbolic rather than only instrumental action, leading to a concern over how culture interacts with society and economy.[14] Ethnicity and group identities are recognized as flexible concepts that shift over time, often defined in cultural terms and related to common historical and territorial bonds. They can be understood as individual or collective perceptions of reality.[15] As subsequent chapters explain, perceptions of inequality along ethnic identity fault-lines are a key element of peripheral conflicts.[16]

Nationalism is defined here as the identification of a group of individuals with a political entity defined by themselves or others in national terms.[17] Nation states are typically constructed around notions of common identity and can be approached as imagined communities (Anderson 1984), even if based on deeply rooted common cultural norms. 'Late nationalism' that flourished in the twentieth century across much of Asia is characterized by an ethnic definition based around the ascribed characteristics of a core ethnic group rather than a pluralist or civic definition of the state (Smith 1991). In the Far South of Thailand, resentment of what is perceived as a largely alien ethnic nationalism and associated assimilation programmes is a fundamental aspect of horizontal inequality and of the conflict, as Chapter Five explains.

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[10] Political settlements are the outcome of long-term bargaining between powerful groups (Di John & Putzel 2009). See Ch.2 for detail.

[11] Gellner (1964), Anderson (1991, 1998), Smith (1991), Ozkirimli (2000:72), Henders (2004:6). The definition of identity applied here contrasts with a psychological definition of identity as self-hood or individuality.

[12] For example Connor (1994), Gurr (2000), Horowitz (2000), Fearon & Laitin (2003), Kalyvas (2008), Stewart (2008).

[13] Brass (1991), Cramer (2002), Collier & Hoeffler (2004).

[14] Alexander (1990). Also Turner (1993), Hall (1996).

[15] In addition to the above references, see Brukaber (2004).

[16] See Stewart et al. (2008:293), Brown & Langer (2010).

[17] See Smith (1991). Also Gellner (1964), Hobsbawm (1990).

In understanding peripheral conflicts, it is important to recognize that the way in which horizontal inequalities are perceived may be more significant than observable or measurable facts (Stewart et al. 2008:293). Perceptions of inequality, injustice and unfairness that are often important motivations for those instigating peripheral conflicts may be closely related to objective political and socioeconomic horizontal inequalities but they do not always coincide (Brown & Langer 2010:30). Where groups do not perceive unfairness or injustice, severe objective horizontal inequalities might not provoke conflict. The converse situation can also occur, with horizontal inequalities perceived to be severe when objectively they may be relatively small or non-existent.[18]

1.3   Development practice, foreign aid, and conflict

The politicized, identity-based and violent context of education in the Far South of Thailand contrasts sharply with the typical international developmental view of education as a universal right and a foundation of modern progress. International promotion of universal primary education, as enshrined in the second of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, stresses the importance of improving access to schools. Where it stresses quality of education, this is normally limited to technical issues rather than the more controversial cultural and political context of how and what children are taught (United Nations 2009). As this thesis demonstrates in later, empirical chapters, international aid agencies that fund education globally and have supported the expansion of education in Thailand tend to avoid addressing politically difficult issues that affect how education is provided and are themselves significant aspects of conflict in the Far South.

This thesis explains how national development processes in Thailand have brought socioeconomic improvements yet have also perpetuated and even exacerbated the tensions surrounding horizontal inequalities that are associated with conflict in the Far South. Similar patterns are also observed elsewhere, as Stewart et al. recognize (2008). They create challenges for international aid agencies that are typically oriented towards the socioeconomic objectives seen in the Millennium Development Goals and that may be poorly equipped to respond to the combinations of political and cultural as well as socioeconomic factors that contribute to peripheral conflicts. Development projects in many countries have contributed to ethnic tension and other precursors of violent conflict. Various reviews have found that critical aspects of conflict including many elements of horizontal inequalities have rarely been comprehensively addressed by international aid agencies (Hettne 1993a, Uvin 1998, Stewart 2008b).

Links between conflict and foreign aid as well as the explicit promotion of peacebuilding through aid projects have received concerted attention since the end of the Cold War, building on this mixed legacy.[19] By the late 1990s, conflict analysis was becoming established as a working tool and development agencies were establishing new specialist peacebuilding units alongside existing units addressing established fields like health, education, and infrastructure. Despite these changes, reviews

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[18] In other words the same facts can be interpreted in different ways (D Brown 2008).
[19] See for example the Carnegie Commission (1997).

report mixed progress in linking aid programmes with peacebuilding, with many failures alongside the successes (Paris 2010). Stewart et al. (2008:297) find that international aid policies and statistics are often still more blind to horizontal inequalities than are many national policies. This finding is examined in greater depth through subsequent chapters, which consider the reasons why many aid agencies may or may not be effectively blind both to horizontal inequalities and more specifically to peripheral conflicts. The dilemma at the heart of efforts to use development assistance to address peripheral conflicts can be seen in this bland statement from the executive summary of a United Nations country plan for Thailand:

> *Over the last decades, Thailand has made remarkable progress in advancing human development and now stands ready to share its experiences with other middle-income and developing countries. At the same time, Thailand continues to address internal disparities, both regionally and among social groups.* (United Nations & Government of Thailand 2006)

The first sentence follows conventional inter-governmental development etiquette, praising Thailand for eliminating mass poverty and emerging as a middle-income country. It shows UN support for the Thai Government, especially for its efforts to turn itself from recipient to donor. For donors, this is the easier, consensual part of aid programmes that make up the bulk of donor flows in Thailand and globally. The second sentence contains the critique of development, presenting the other face of the same process that has been, in aggregate socioeconomic terms, successful. It can be read in part as a coy reference to conflict in the Far South of the country, more direct language being unacceptable to the Government of Thailand.[20] Evidence presented in this thesis shows that for UN agencies wishing to act on this second sentence in line with their policy commitments to equity, peacebuilding or human security, they find the going much harder. Many barriers emerge, stemming both from the domestic conditions of conflict in the Far South of Thailand and from the intrinsic characteristics of aid agencies themselves. At the same time, some aid agencies have managed to find ways to address peripheral conflicts, in the Far South of Thailand and elsewhere. The mixed picture that emerges raises several questions worth considering in detail.

1.4   Research questions and analytical framework

This study was motivated by an interest in three related fields: the causes of, and likely solutions to, persistent violence that affects many geographically peripheral areas of rapidly growing nation states, especially in South and Southeast Asia; the links between international development assistance (or foreign aid), conflict and peacebuilding;[21] and, more specifically, the surge in violence in the Far South of Thailand since 2004.

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[20] This interpretation is informed by interviews with UNDP Official 1 and UNDP Official 2 (see annexed interview references).
[21] Peacebuilding is defined here as those multiple actions aimed at addressing the structural causes of conflict and reconciling relationships affected by conflict (Barnes 2006).

The increasing if still limited efforts of foreign aid agencies[22] to apply their global peacebuilding agendas to the conflict in the Far South offer a fertile and relatively fresh field for research. This thesis provides new case study material as well as contributing to a broader understanding of how development agencies operate in a particular kind of conflict environment. Through empirical research that investigates foreign aid agencies' policies and actions in the Far South of Thailand, this thesis aims to build better understanding of, and explanation for, the patterns of responses to peripheral conflict among international aid agencies. Despite recent efforts on the part of foreign aid agencies to incorporate peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity into their approaches, many agencies struggle to do so in the case of the Far South of Thailand. The reasons why that is the case, and the reasons why some aid agencies do manage to pursue peacebuilding objectives in peripheral conflicts, merit closer attention. The research aims to answer the following key research questions:

1) *Do foreign aid agencies pursue peacebuilding objectives in the Far South of Thailand and what related patterns of aid practice emerge across different agencies?*

2) *How do the characteristics and causes of conflict in the Far South of Thailand affect aid agencies' ability to support peacebuilding?*

3) *What properties of aid agencies help explain the pattern?*

This thesis first identifies the chief characteristics of peripheral conflict in the Far South of Thailand. The conflict is situated with particular reference to other peripheral conflicts in South and Southeast Asia and approached through a theoretical framework derived from notions of horizontal inequality. This allows an exploration of the interactions between identity, socio-economic and political conditions that perpetuate and exacerbate perceptions of marginalization among the population living in areas affected by peripheral conflict.

From that starting point, the thesis offers an analysis of whether and how aid agencies address peripheral conflict in the Far South of Thailand and an exploration of the reasons for emerging patterns of engagement. The thesis examines dominant trends within aid practice and the underlying nature of foreign aid that limit the scope of aid agencies to address peripheral conflict situations. In addition to the common inability of foreign aid to address horizontal inequalities,[23] it considers the specific contexts of peripheral conflicts including the prominence of acute identity-based tension already mentioned in this chapter that create additional barriers limiting – but not preventing – the use of foreign aid as part of efforts to promote peace.

Through an iterative research process described in Chapter Four and illustrated through the aid agency case studies presented in the empirical chapters, three groups of donors were discerned. The identification of these separate groups serves as a tool to draw attention to the reasons why donors act

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[22] 'Foreign aid agencies' (or the shorter form 'aid agencies') typically include UN bodies, NGOs, foundations and intermediary organizations as well as official (governmental) bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. The term 'donor' can refer to a government or country as well as a specific organization.

[23] According to Stewart et al. (2008:315-316), foreign aid rarely addresses such inequalities even in conflict-affected areas and in many cases actually reinforces existing inequalities in countries with ethnically diverse populations.

in different ways. The considerable variety between and within aid agencies emerges through the analysis. Evidence shows that the reasons why aid agencies address or do not address issues relating to peripheral conflict amount to more than blindness or ignorance and can be related to structural and practical limitations to how foreign aid agencies operate. The variety of foreign aid agency responses to conflict in the Far South of Thailand that emerged through primary research challenges any expectation of uniformity in donor actions, suggesting that aid agencies are not always less progressive than national governments when it comes to addressing peripheral conflicts.

While various authors describe how aid agencies act in situations similar to that found in the Far South of Thailand,[24] there is only a limited body of material which examines in any detail the reasons why aid agencies act as they do in such contexts. The available literature on the institutional practices and political motivations that condition development assistance more widely nonetheless allows this issue to be addressed. Key themes that help explain the reasons why aid agencies act as they do in peripheral conflict environments are presented in Chapter Three before being applied in the empirical chapters to the patterns of donor behaviour in the Far South of Thailand.

The main focus of research is therefore on the interactions that aid agencies are involved in when formulating interventions in a specific peripheral conflict environment. This process takes place chiefly at the national level, even when considering a subnational conflict.[25] The ways in which staff in aid agencies' country offices address or avoid peripheral conflicts, and their engagement with institutions of the recipient state, receive particular attention. The interface between aid agencies and the Thai state institutions with which they engage is of particular interest and complexity given that, in this and other cases of peripheral conflict, the state is itself a conflict actor and a critical part of the dynamic in the Far South of Thailand as well as a necessary partner in establishing and often in implementing foreign-funded initiatives.

Finally, the thesis considers what wider conclusions can be drawn from the emerging pattern of aid provision found in the case of the Far South of Thailand and the underlying reasons that explain it. Emphasis is placed on understanding the potential for and the limits to approaching peacebuilding through aid provision in peripheral conflicts.

1.5   **Summary of thesis structure**

After this introductory chapter, Chapter Two *(National Development and Peripheral Conflicts)* builds an understanding of peripheral conflict and development in South and Southeast Asia through a review of the relevant literature. It explores relationships between horizontal inequalities and development processes before considering the viability of development interventions as a means to support peacebuilidng in peripheral conflict environments.

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[24] In addition to Stewart et al. (2008) and other work on horizontal inequalities, see for example Esman (1985, 2003), Uvin (1998), Herring (2003).
[25] Literature on aid relationships, for example Eyben (2006) and Morten & Hansen (2008), emphasizes this point.

Chapter Three *(A Mixed Record: Foreign Aid and Peacebuilding in Peripheral Conflicts)* considers foreign aid trends and their relationship with peripheral conflicts, summarizes literature that addresses the main research questions and offers short comparative cases. The chapter addresses the mixed record of foreign aid and explains how and why foreign aid interventions can in some situations support efforts to promote peace in peripheral conflict environments. It reviews relevant literature on aid in order to explain aid agencies' actions, establishing a theoretical framework that is pursued in later chapters by focusing on the differing motivations of aid agencies, their interface with recipient state institutions, and their everyday practice. This framework enables analysis of the actual process of aid provision.

Chapter Four provides a methodological overview. It explains how the theoretical framework is operationalized through a qualitative approach in order to investigate and explain how aid agencies address conflict in the Far South of Thailand. It also explains how a typology of three groups of aid agency is applied in order to structure empirical material and support the explanation of observed trends.

Chapter Five *(The Far South of Thailand: Resistance, Identity, and Development)* provides a background to the case study area, explaining its characteristics and describing the basis of violence in a long history of resistance against state domination. It places the locale in the context of national development, long-term political processes, and recent political upheavals, as well as explaining the international context. It considers the characteristics of the conflict from a perspective of horizontal inequality, stressing the significance of perceptions that relate to cultural and political as well as socioeconomic variables. The chapter considers how violence and its roots in the Far South relate to nationalism, political contestation, antagonistic identity formation, and highly centralized national development.

Chapter Six *(An Overview of How Foreign Aid Affects Conflict in the Far South of Thailand)* identifies key historical and contemporary trends of international aid as they relate to the Far South of Thailand. Presenting an overview of empirical research, it divides donors into three groups. The chapter incorporates information from the aid agencies addressed in the subsequent case study chapters as well as material from other agencies. It should be read in conjunction with the more detailed case study description provided in the subsequent chapters. The chapter confirms that horizontal inequalities as well as peripheral conflicts are often neglected in foreign aid approaches to Thailand for a range of structural and practical reasons. It also shows that some agencies do take different approaches, in cases managing to turn peacebuilding policies into active interventions.

Chapter Seven *(Conflict Blindness: the Asian Development Bank and the Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand Growth Triangle)* is the first of three chapters based on case studies of how donors address conflict. It describes Asian Development Bank support for a development scheme that demonstrates little understanding or concern for longstanding local grievances based around perceived horizontal inequalities. The ADB's involvement did not increase the project's sensitivity to the problems of peripheral conflict in the Far South of Thailand during its formulation in the 1990s, nor in its subsequent revitalization.

Chapter Eight *(The Interface between Donors and Central Government Agencies as a Barrier to Addressing Conflict)* looks at two agencies that tried to address conflict in the Far South of Thailand but which, at the time of research, were blocked at the interface with the recipient government. The chapter demonstrates some of the practical reasons why foreign aid agencies often do not address peripheral conflict in practice, showing how their work is shaped by the interaction between donor interests and national interests.

Chapter Nine *(Islands of Donor-Funded Peacebuilding)* introduces two agencies that established programmes to address conflict-related problems in the Far South with the aim of supporting domestic efforts to promote sustainable and just peace.[26] The chapter considers what motivated them to take on a difficult challenge that risked threatening their critical relationship with the state, how they negotiated the interface with elements of the Thai Government, and what practical barriers limited their impact.

Finally, findings are consolidated in a concluding chapter that summarizes the factors leading to the variety of approaches to peripheral conflict observed in the case studies before reflecting on the implications both for aid agencies and for future research.

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[26] A 'just peace' in this context involves recognition of, and action to redress, at least some of the opponent's grievances. It contrasts with an imposed 'victor's peace' (Goodhand 2010:351).

Chapter Two　　　　　Peripheral Conflicts, Horizontal Inequalities and Development

This chapter describes the properties of peripheral conflicts, building a basis for the subsequent chapter that considers how foreign aid agencies engage with them. Although peripheral conflicts show considerable variety, they have discernible common properties. They are characterized by low-intensity violent confrontation between self-appointed representatives of a group that is a minority at the national level but a majority within the conflict area (typically a border region distant from the capital),[27] and security forces or others representing nation state structures. Significantly, in addition to their geographically peripheral position within the nation state, the minority living in the conflict area also tends to be peripheral politically and culturally.[28]

The concept of multi-dimensional horizontal inequalities used by Frances Stewart et al. (2008) and others to explore ethnic and other cleavages between groups and their relationship with conflict supports understanding of peripheral conflicts in South and Southeast Asia. The combination of different inequalities described by Stewart et al. is especially significant in peripheral conflicts given the prominence of ethnic identity and associated cultural factors. After outlining the overall trends and characteristics of peripheral conflicts, the chapter describes key processes of political marginalization and then relates them to long-term patterns of developmental change and nation state construction. In common with the approach of Stewart et al., emphasis is placed on the significance of people's perceptions of inequality. The chapter then explains how many development interventions contribute to tensions associated with peripheral conflicts, although some programmes do address related horizontal inequalities or otherwise promote peace.

2.1　　　The prevalence and common features of peripheral conflicts in South and Southeast Asia

Analysis of conflict and development has increasingly focused on conflicts within nation states. This emphasis is reflected in the Human Security Report which found that over 95% of identified conflicts in 2005 were civil wars.[29] Further analysis reveals particular types of civil conflict. Harbom et al. (2006, 2008) use Uppsala University data in listing 34 active and significant armed conflicts globally.[30] The majority of these are classified as ethnic and territorial, most often occurring in border areas, and usually within rather than between nation states. This research focuses in particular on such conflicts in Southeast Asia, extending the field of study where relevant to parts of South and East Asia. Within this wider region, the pattern is still stronger: nine out of the thirteen Asian conflicts listed in the Uppsala dataset involve ethnic minority groups near the border of a nation state whose frontiers are not

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[27] G Brown refers to the *"Double whammy"* of ethnic and spatial horizontal inequalities that define peripheral conflicts (2008:276).

[28] The term peripheral conflict is occasionally used elsewhere, for example Wee & Jayasuriya (2002).

[29] Human Security Center (2005). The general trend identified is consistent with other sources. See also Mack (2007).

[30] The Uppsala data (Uppsala 2009) covers conflicts registering 25 or more battle-related deaths in a year. This means that some peripheral conflicts are missed out or included intermittently. Reporting restrictions also limit data availability.

themselves disputed internationally: three in Northeast India, two in Burma, one in the Philippines, one in the Far South of Thailand, one in Sri Lanka, and one in Pakistan. Similar conflicts not listed in the Uppsala data but that have nonetheless recently posed serious problems include Aceh and Western Papua, Xinjiang, and the Central Vietnamese Highlands.

Other databases confirm the trend. Croissant and Trinn (2009:19-20) use data from CONIS to show that while the prevalence of most forms of conflict across Asia has been largely constant, what they term domestic 'cultural conflicts' have increased from under ten specific sites at any one time during the 1970s, up to around thirty from 2000 on.[31] The Minorities at Risk project (2008) that lists the global incidence of acts of repression including discrimination, rebellion and protest shows that for Southeast and East Asia, most recorded incidents involve minorities in peripheral areas, with the conflicts listed above dominating the list year after year.[32]

Comparative studies of similar conflicts in Southeast Asia include Brown (1988), Islam (1998), Chalk (2001) and Liow (2006). Most analyses stress the identity aspects of ethnic groups pitted against the nation state in a search for more local power or authority (Esman 1985, McCargo 2008). Similar peripheral conflicts occur outside Asia too: in Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, northern Ghana, Chechnya in Russia, Chiapas in southern Mexico, and elsewhere. These conflicts share many of the characteristics of the cases from Southeast Asia and neighbouring regions that are examined here.

Violence in peripheral conflicts is typified by irregular action classified as 'terrorism' by a central state, yet justified by rebels as legitimate resistance against state-based oppression.[33] It may involve conventional combat where rebels hold territory and possess significant weaponry, although more often involves sporadic resistance targeting symbols of the state such as the army, police stations, schools, or civil servants. Long-term, low-intensity violence is a common characteristic of peripheral conflicts, with neither side achieving outright victory. The goals of rebels vary and may be inconsistent. They ususaly involve changes to national governance arrangements including greater allocation of power to the peripheral zone, either in the form of separation or through a federal arrangement. From the perspective of the central state, such aims are often seen as a threat to the fabric of the entire nation. As is common in irregular conflict, many victims are civilians who do not actively support either side.[34]

Governments may portray peripheral rebel groups as criminals, or recidivist ruffians hiding in mountains or jungle. These myths can be easily countered. In Aceh, for example, government officials were surprised to discover during the 2005 peace process that many rebel combatants were not hiding in the

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[31] Heidelberg University's CONIS (Conflict Information System) uses information from publicly accessible news sources, assessing it qualitatively according to defined criteria.

[32] The Minorities at Risk data misses out some civil protest and is limited by the difficulty of defining a minority conflict.

[33] Halliday (2002:70-71) states: *"Assigning the descriptor of 'terrorist' or 'terrorism' to the actions of a group is a tactic used by states to deny 'legitimacy' and 'rights to protest and rebel'."*

[34] See references in previous paragraph.

hills, but moving in and out of towns and villages where they blended in with the local population (Barron & Burke 2008:38).

Rebels are often involved in illicit networks, however. Smuggling, theft, kidnapping and ransom demands are indeed commonplace in rural areas along poorly policed borders with high levels of corruption in the security forces. Many peripheral conflict zones have been unruly sites of multiple levels of conflict for as long as is recalled in commonly unreliable local histories. Yet the significance of disorderly borders can be overstated: these tendencies are also found in other remote areas of developing countries and they may contribute to, but not explain, the persistence of peripheral conflict (Kalyvas 2001).

Peripheral conflicts tend to be relatively low intensity and are usually not located within what have been termed 'failed states', even if internal unrest does on occasion occur outside as well as inside the specific peripheral area.[35] The persistence of peripheral conflicts in countries with high rates of economic growth, relatively low levels of poverty, and improving human development indicators shows how conflict itself is not 'development in reverse' (Collier et al. 2003), but an element of more complex long-term processes (Cramer 2006:51). There is considerable variety between the examples in Figure 2a (below) but all are classified in the UN Human Development Index as mid-level rather than poor states.

Figure 2a: Key data on significant Asian peripheral conflicts

Country	Site of Peripheral Conflict	Global Peace Index (ranking out of 144 countries)[36]	Human Development Index (ranking out of 182 countries)[37]	Longevity [38]
Indonesia	West Papua and Aceh	67	111	From mid-1970s, following earlier violence. Aceh ended 2005, West Papua ongoing.
Philippines	Mindanao	114	105	Overt violence from the late 1960s, with earlier roots.
Thailand	Far South (Pattani)	118	87	Recurrent in intermittent bouts since 1909.
Sri Lanka	Northeast	125	102	From early 1980s until 2009.
China	Xinjiang, Tibet	74	92	Low-level since early 20th century.
Burma	Various border areas	126	138	From late 1940s.
India	Various conflicts in Northeast	122	134	Repeated or continual violent unrest since 1950s.
Average ranking of above cases		**107**	**110**	

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[35] See Rotberg (2003) among many other sources on failed states.
[36] Institute for Economics and Peace (2009).
[37] UNDP (2008).
[38] On Aceh see Reid et al. (2006); West Papua, Chauvel & Bhakti (2004); Mindanao, McKenna (1998); the Far South of Thailand, McCargo (2008); Xinjiang, Gladney (2004) and Dwyer (2005); Sri Lanka, Spencer (1990) and DeVotta (2004); Burma, Smith & Allsebrook (1994); Northeast India, Baumik (2009).

Addressing horizontal inequalities, Stewart, Brown & Langer (2008:286-288) show that it is not possible to draw direct correlations between economic inequalities alone and the presence of violent conflict. Indeed, wealth is not spread especially unevenly in countries experiencing peripheral conflict. Indonesia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka for instance have considerably lower Gini coefficients than most of middle-income Latin America (World Bank 2011). Peripheral conflict areas are frequently no poorer than other, peaceful areas of the same nation. The conflict-affected Far South of Thailand is not the poorest part of the country according to most measurements.[39] Similarly, Aceh is not one of the poorest provinces of Indonesia. Indeed, it recorded the ninth highest Human Development Index score out of 25 Indonesian provinces in 1996.[40] By contrast, the five provinces that comprise the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, an area that has experienced peripheral conflict over several decades, are the poorest five provinces of the Philippines (HDN 2009).[41]

Specific triggers of peripheral violence can in many cases be identified, one example being natural resource discoveries in Aceh in the 1970s (Aspinall 2007).[42] As is explained in this and subsequent chapters, the scope for such events to act as triggers depends on specific and long-term contextual factors that are complex, multi-dimensional and comparative (Hettne 1990, 1993a, Ostby 2008:147, Chanintira 2009):

> *Approaches to explaining violence should avoid isolationist programmes that explain violence solely in terms of social inequality and deprivation or in terms of identity and cultural factors* (Sen 2008:5).

Summarizing a range of case studies of conflicts and statistical analysis of associated horizontal inequalities, Stewart et al. (2008) recognize that the presence of severe horizontal inequalities does not necessarily produce wide-scale violence, but it makes countries more vulnerable to the emergence of violent conflicts along ethnic lines (Langer 2004). There are many examples of minority groups in peripheral areas that are not involved in violent conflict against the state.[43] Many peripheral and relatively disadvantaged areas with a high ethnic minority presence like Satun in Southern Thailand (Parks 2009) or parts of Sabah in Malaysia (G Brown 2008:274) remain peaceful. A horizontal inequalities framework explains that political elements of inequality, and the politicization of ethnicity by political actors, are critical to determining whether differences spiral into conflict (Mancini 2008). Religious and language differences also stand out as particularly overt markers that exacerbate and perpetuate group fault lines in peripheral and other conflicts.

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[39] See Ch.5 for detail.

[40] Aceh's ranking had fallen to 18th out of 25 provinces by 2004, although even this decline can be seen more as an effect of protracted conflict than a direct cause given violent unrest that started in the late 1970s and intensified in the late 1990s (BPS 2011).

[41] Higher levels of poverty or a lack of economic opportunity may be an effect rather than a cause of protracted violence.

[42] See Ch.2.

[43] Fearon & Laitin (1996) find that in Africa there has only been one instance of ethnic violence for every 2000 cases that would have been predicted on the basis of cultural differences alone.

Where ethnic groups are regionally concentrated, the visibility of differences between them and the majority population is likely to be greater. Regionally concentrated ethnic groups also have specific historical experiences, which are often drawn upon in mobilizing separatist movements (Brown & Langer 2010:41). Colonial boundary demarcations, such as the inclusion of the Far South of Thailand in Siam rather than Malaya, or the inclusion of Shan state in Burma rather than Thailand, are key historical events that have longstanding repercussions. Stewart et al. (2008:296-297) find that horizontal inequalities frequently stem from colonial distinctions between different ethnic groups as with the differential treatment by the British of Tamils and Sinhalese in Ceylon. In Aceh, a history of resistance against perceived external oppression stretching back to the province's struggle against Dutch colonial occupation has been commonly repeated for different reasons by Acehnese and Indonesian leaders, providing a basis through which to ground perceived oppression from outsiders – first the colonial Dutch, then the dominant Javanese within the Indonesian state (Reid 2004:ch.15, Brown 2004:43-44).

Peripheral conflicts tend to last a long time (see Figure 2a). This persistence can in part be attributed to commonly found asymmetric security stalemates between conventional armies and rebels, along with conflict dynamics that generate their own momentum. Cycles of violence tend to establish a self-reinforcing dynamic compounded by human rights abuses, lack of justice, arbitrary killings and intentional measures to polarize groups (Alker, Gurr & Rupesinghe 2001). Rebel leaders become dependent on their own networks for status and safety. For governments and the military, popularizing a separatist threat can garner public support and help build legitimacy.[44] More directly, it can justify large military budgets and create significant business opportunities for military and civil officials posted to the conflict area (Thongchai 1994, Aspinall & Crouch 2003).

The longevity and common recurrence of peripheral conflicts are also reflections of the endurance of group affiliations, with a combination of territorial and cultural factors appearing to create deep-seated group identities that are intergenerationally transferred and supported by perceptions of inequality. Stressing political and economic factors, Stewart et al. (2008:297) comment that group differences have been reinforced and perpetuated by unequal access to different types of capital and political influence.

2.2   National politics and peripheral marginalization

Peripheral conflicts shift over time, with periods of relative calm followed by further violence. Cyclical patterns of conflict in Xinjiang (Gladney 2008:139-141), Sri Lanka (De Votta 2004), and elsewhere can be linked to a range of factors including changing state policies, varying from concessions to repression, with consequences for peripheral unrest. As this chapter explains, however, the long-term dynamic of peripheral conflicts is of persistent political marginalization of the peripheral minority within the nation

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[44] Legitimacy of political systems is described by Alagappa (1995:11) as *"The belief by the governed in the rulers' moral right to issue commands and the people's corresponding obligation to accept such commands"*. It provides a basis for rule by consent rather than coercion (OECD 2010).

state. With relatively small minority populations[45] and distant locations, there is rarely any pressing need or incentive for influential actors within nation states to consider minority interests. Central administrations of Southeast Asian states are not usually dependent on raising rural revenue, with export industries and the urban economy generating greater levels of taxable wealth (Miller 2011). In Thailand, the highly centralized state offers little political or administrative space to the Far South. Key actors contesting power at the national level commonly ignore peripheral violence rather than seek political settlement. Where they do address the issue, they typically offer either security-based responses or marginal concessions that only touch upon underlying horizontal inequalities.[46]

Peace agreements and 'secondary settlements'[47] that make some concessions but do not shift underlying political conditions in peripheral areas have a poor record of long-term success (Brown 1994, McKenna 2004, Reid et al. 2006). In Indonesia, policies promising elements of autonomy to specific peripheral regions were repeatedly established only to be subsequently undermined by lawmakers responding to powerful and overlapping centralized interests including the military, national politicians, the state bureaucracy, and businesses (Robinson 1998). In both the Far South of Thailand and Xinjiang, even small concessions like policies promoting translation of official documents into minority languages or preferential employment of local civil servants have been approved but only partially implemented (Dwyer 2005, Liow 2009).

Incorporating some elite figures into national politics may not satisfy a sufficiently broad number of people to end the tensions leading to peripheral conflict. Prominent figures from peripheral conflict areas have assumed senior political office during periods of ongoing violence: Hamid Awaluddin and Sofyan Djalil, both Acehnese, served as Ministers in Indonesia, while Wan Muhammad Nor Mattha, from Thailand's Far South, was Interior Minister to Thaksin Shinawatra. Access to power on the part of some figures from the peripheral minority may not in itself end violence, with other local leaders able to call on shared ethnic affiliation to mobilize further unrest.[48]

Stewart et al. (1998:298) also find that multiparty democracy will not facilitate addressing the problems behind such conflicts unless specific efforts are made to guarantee ethnic groups and subnational units access to power.[49] Democratic politics commonly respond to the majority and do not address minority interests, while the centralizing tendency of party politics under majoritarian systems can exacerbate the exclusion of minorities. Consociational democratic systems that accord specific groups access to power, or federal systems that recognize some degree of local autonomy, may in cases provide solutions to peripheral and ethnic tensions (Lijphart 2008), although in many peripheral conflicts there is little incentive for national level political actors to consider adopting such measures.

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[45] The Far South of Thailand contains about 2% of the Thai population, Aceh about 2% of Indonesians, and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao about 4% of Filipinos.

[46] On political settlements see North et al. (2007), Di John & Putzel (2009). See Ch.5 for detail on the Far South of Thailand.

[47] Secondary settlements are formal or informal agreements between locally prominent figures and national representatives on how to govern subnational areas (Parks & Cole 2010).

[48] See Ch.5 on divided local elites in Thailand.

[49] See also Horowitz (2000), D Brown (2008).

States that accommodate the needs of ethnic minorities are, according to Stewart, more able to ensure that ethnic mobilization does not become violent (2008:20). Stewart et al. (2008:290) draw evidence from Malaysia, a state that overtly recognizes horizontal ethnic differences and has aimed since the late 1960s to redress the imbalance between poorer Malays and others through preferential treatment as a fundamental part of the nation's political fabric and socioeconomic planning. Malaysia's unusual political system with its explicit recognition of different ethnic groups and decentralization to fairly large state units has its shortcomings, but it has helped avoid the conflicts that have troubled its neighbours (Lo Kok Wah 2002). However, the situation in Malaysia, with Malays making up a majority of the population, differs starkly from peripheral conflict situations in Southeast Asia where peripheral ethnic groups comprise a minority at the national level and often have little access to national policymaking structures.

On occasion, escalating violence and associated perceived threats to wider interests draw national and international attention to peripheral conflicts (in East Timor and Sri Lanka, for example). However, comparative and historical experience shows that many cessations of violence are temporary, with peace negotiations failing to stop permanently both the violent conflict and mitigate underlying horizontal inequalities. In Mindanao, Xinjiang, Western Papua and elsewhere, attempted negotiations have in the past failed to bring lasting peace. In Aceh, initial negotiations between the government and rebel representatives following the fall of Suharto in 1998 failed as central government institutions and political actors as well as the independence of the military undermined agreements, extending the pattern of political marginalization of remote provinces within Indonesia (Aspinall & Crouch 2003). This fits a wider global pattern, given that negotiated peace agreements revert to conflict at roughly three times the rate of conflicts ended through an outright victory by one side (Call & Cousens 2008).

A peace agreement that successfully brought peace to Aceh in 2005 was viable as a result of increased space to reach a negotiated settlement given fundamental changes in the structure of the Indonesian state including increased democracy, decentralization and civil authority over the military (Morfit 2007:113, Barron & Burke 2008). The agreement included considerable concessions to Acehnese aspirations, supporting the transition of the rebel group GAM into a successful democratic political party. Elsewhere, in Sri Lanka, conflict ended after 33 years in 2009 as the government defeated the rebel LTTE militarily (ICG 2010). In most peripheral conflicts, however, such a forthright military victory is considered unlikely given the unconventional military tactics that rebels adopt and long-term stalemate that typically ensues.

The Aceh case underlines the importance of the nature of the state to peripheral conflicts and associated horizontal inequalities (Stewart et al. 2008:295), suggesting that negotiations alone are unlikely to satisfy rebel demands over the longer term and sustainably reduce wider grievances unless accompanied by the kind of structural changes seen in Indonesia. Bringing a sustainable and just peace to peripheral conflicts is likely to involve changing the centre's relationship with the periphery in order to find such common ground (Brown 1988, Liow 2006). It remains to be seen whether the Indonesian

state's historical centripetal tendencies referred to above will threaten the Acehnese peace agreement and whether Tamil resentment at political and cultural marginalization in Sri Lanka will reassert itself in a violent form in future.

2.3   Cultural status inequalities: defining ethnicity and identity

Explanation of peripheral conflicts is supported by taking into account associations between political, economic, social, and cultural status inequalities. The following parts of this chapter describe how political marginalization of the periphery is part of modern developmental change and ongoing nation state construction in much of South and Southeast Asia. Emphasis is placed in particular on the construction and maintenance of national and peripheral identities.

Many of the links between war-making and state-making made by Charles Tilly (1985, 1992) in a European context can be applied to peripheral conflicts. From the perspective of ethnic groups and peripheral conflict in particular, it is essential to consider the socio-cultural unit of the nation as well as the legal and political unit of the state:

> *For decades, it was assumed that economic development, modernization and nationalism would do away with those messy cultural identities, which is why the extremely problematic elision of 'nation' and 'state' could be overlooked for so long* (Ferguson & Whitehead 1999:xix).

The perceived significance of identity and ethnicity has not diminished as modernity theories had predicted (Harvey 1989). The use and construction of ethnic identity in opposition to a central state can be considered as part of wider processes that become violent in some contexts (Henders 2004). Key elements include the heavy ethnic content of much 'late' nationalism that builds on and in cases constructs enduring symbols of identity (Smith 1991). These traits can be located within the framework of modernist development without reducing identity to a product of economic process alone (Gellner 1964, Hobsbawm 1990, Anderson 1991).

Peripheral conflicts therefore cannot be boiled down to a single root cause but involve a complex nexus of factors including ethnicity, state-led nationalism and development and counter protest.[50] Efforts to *"Isolate identity as an independent variable"* (Fearon & Laitin 2000), or to reduce complex issues of ethnicity to quantifiable indices of horizontal inequality or linguistic fragmentation, are likely to miss the bigger picture given that identity is itself a multifaceted and complex concept (Connor 1984, Ballentine & Sherman 2003, Kalyvas 2008:1044). Economic methodologies typically manage to capture individual motivations (Collier & Hoeffler 2004) but do not as effectively address aspects of group identity. Other approaches address political structures and ethnicity, focusing especially on how different democratic systems manage inequalities and tensions in ethnically plural societies (Gurr 2000, Horowitz 2000). Such political analysis needs to capture processes of identity construction and maintenance rather than

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[50] Definitions of ethnicity, identity and culture are given in Ch.1.

seeing ethnicity as a fixed precursor to national political systems.[51] Analysis of ethnicity or identity often involves a more qualitative approach that leans towards political anthropology or sociology and is grounded in local context.[52]

Ethnicity is regarded in this thesis as something with a heavy cultural content that is found in all societies. Construction of ethnicity is an ongoing process in which group boundaries shift over time (Anderson 1983). Ethnicities are regularly reinforced or adapted by group leaders, within state institutions or outside the state, as a mechanism for mobilizing support or maintaining authority (Cohen 1974). Being ubiquitous does not in any sense make conflict along ethnic lines unavoidable, however. There is certainly nothing inevitable about the 'clashes of civilizations' predicted by Samuel Huntingdon and others (Bowen 1996). The concept of ethnicity can be applied without adopting a 'primordial' approach in which the term takes on a meaning far closer to that of the word 'race', implying permanence grounded in physical difference or immutable cultural properties (Stewart 2008b:8). It is also important to move away from an expectation that ethnically defined struggles are somehow ancient or instinctive. Analysis of peripheral conflicts supports criticism of the idea that 'new' wars are more rooted in base instincts than 'old' wars (Kalyvas 2001).[53]

Recent work on horizontal inequalities has adopted a more subtle understanding of ethnicity and identity, emphasizing case study analysis and recognizing the significance of people's perception.[54] The importance of how relative differences are perceived emerges from many case studies conducted by Stewart et al. (2003, 2008:293-4, 2008b), tallying with constructivist notions of ethnicity that emphasize the importance of what people think ethnicities to be (Barth 1969, Anderson 1988).[55] Studies of social (as opposed to psychological) identity often concentrate on the construction of boundaries, with group identities formed largely in opposition to something else. Boundaries can be formed geographically as lines on a map, symbolically through cultural expression, or through a combination of the two (Barth 1969, Cohen 1985). An emphasis on boundaries in identity construction fits the geographical and ethnic context of peripheral conflicts, where minorities define themselves in opposition to a mainstream national unit that itself is often largely ethnically defined. Such boundaries are in practice both flexible and partially permeable, identity-based violence typically polarizing and hardening existing differences. Notions of horizontal inequality need to be applied cautiously in order to avoid essentializing a complex reality, recognizing both the flexibility of constructed categories and interactions with inequalities based around caste, class, gender and other distinctions.[56]

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[51] See Stewart (2008:7).

[52] See for example Ferguson & Whitehead (1999), Richards (2005), Murray Li (2007), McLean Hilker (2008).

[53] See Kaldor (1999) on the concept of new and old wars.

[54] For example Brown & Langer (2010).

[55] Stewart comments: *"… it is perceptions as much as reality that is relevant to outcomes, both with respect to what differences actually are, as well how much group members mind about the differences"* (1998:12).

[56] The instrumental use of violence to harden group distinctions, and long histories of multiculturalism and everyday negotiation of multiple identity in Southeast and South Asia, are addressed elsewhere in this chapter.

The meanings ascribed to cultural attributes such as language or a shared version of history are core aspects of how ethnic groups are defined, binding group members together and differentiating them from others (Langer & Brown 2008:42). While recognizing that those with a vested interest and sufficient power regularly use and manipulate interpretations of culture for specific ends,[57] this thesis conceptualizes culture as a combination of beliefs, attributes and actions affected by many aspects including geographical and historical circumstance. Stewart et al. (2008:292-293) find that cultural status inequalities, such as differential treatment with respect to religion and language use or other forms of group discrimination, tend to increase the salience of group identity and become key aspects of conflict. Cultural differences are not enough in themselves to cause conflict but comparative analysis of horizontal inequalities diagnoses shared cultural ties within identity groups, when combined with strong perception of group deprivation, as a powerful source of potentially violent mobilization (Stewart & Brown 2005).[58]

2.4   National unity and oppositional minority identity in peripheral conflicts

Primordial uses of ethnicity and race are still prominent in conceptualizations of both national and peripheral identity. A notion of belonging or of identification with a place is not normally based on equal rights within a multicultural, cosmopolitan society.[59] In much of the world, the term race is still used in an unreconstructed sense, for example in official Malaysian discourse that defines the natural racial and blood divisions of the population and devises policy accordingly (Kahn 2006). Ethnonationalist, peripheral identity that typifies peripheral conflict is typically defined by protagonists themselves in primordial terms, playing up the rights of a defined group of people to ancestral land (Di Tiro 1982, Che Man 1990).

State nationalism is commonly built on a similar basis: historians and archaeologists in Indonesia or Thailand regularly produce new material apparently discovering the migratory routes of their nation's pre-modern ancestors, justifying the present through constructing the past.[60] A broad body of literature traces the maintenance of national identities, from focusing on specific enduring and self-replicating cultural attributes like language and religion (Smith 1991), to emphasizing the role of the state and elites in promoting nations as cultural constructs (Gellner 1964), to addressing the emergence of national consciousness through modernity.[61] Many studies of politics and society in Southeast Asia give prominent emphasis to the construction and maintenance of national and other group identities.[62]

The role of state institutions in promoting what in peripheral areas are ethnically polarizing forms of national identity is especially significant when considering the links between horizontal inequalities and

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[57] See Brass (1991).

[58] Ostby has found that the onset of civil war regularly depends on the strength of group identity association (2008).

[59] See for example Massey on a sense of place in north London (1993:63).

[60] See Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983).

[61] Anderson (1991). D Brown (2008) provides an overview that is particularly relevant to peripheral conflicts in Southeast Asia.

[62] For example Alagappa (1995), Montesano & Jory (2008).

conflict. With many nation states in South and Southeast Asia being dominated by an ethnic majority group, efforts to assimilate or at least co-opt minorities into the ethnic majority mainstream receive widespread attention.[63] As is explained in this section, nation-building regularly alienates ethnic minority groups and hardens boundaries, especially where a geographically peripheral concentration gives rise to territorial definitions of counter-identity, hampering the assimilation processes that are a common part of nation state consolidation.

The state itself is seen here as a contested political arena, with elites and rising middle classes embracing nationalism as a means to exert authority, maintain order and extract resources. Rulers across Asia and elsewhere have intentionally promoted a unified national identity as a means to gain legitimacy among local elites and the wider population in order to maintain central control over otherwise disparate areas that fall within nation state boundaries. Promotion of national identity is often a response to a perceived threat, as seen through official encouragement of nationalism across much of Southeast Asia in the 1960s in response to provincial insurgency and fear of communism.[64]

Even where elements of pluralism are promoted rather than a monocultural national model, assimilation of minority groups into the nation state, especially those along border areas, is a key element of nation-building and developmental 'progress' (Connor 1994). The historical and ongoing development of nation states typically involves expansion from a central core to cover the entirety of the area within its borders. This involves penetration by government institutions from the capital city into rural areas that they may have had little in common with in the past, especially in remote border regions where affiliations are often split between competing state powers as well as local leaders (Bates 2001). Peripheral conflicts are located in such regions. Unrolling universal education, connecting all parts of the country through transport infrastructure and mass media, and creating tax-paying citizens are all widely seen in international development policy discourse as unquestionably positive acts that contribute to socioeconomic progress. In peripheral conflict areas, however, they may be interpreted as more controversial aspects of assimilation towards a universal national identity and increased central bureaucratic control over daily life.[65] Claims by central institutions to represent citizens from different ethnic backgrounds are countered by the mono-ethnic nature of many states enduring peripheral conflict. The application of 'Unity in Diversity' as a state motto in Indonesia has parallels in the official recognition of different religions in Thailand (rather than Buddhism alone) and in some aspects of bilingualism in Sri Lanka. However, the perceived experiences of peripheral minorities are of discrimination in favour of minority populations in each case, with peripheral populations effectively marginalized in constructions of national identity.[66]

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[63] For example Anderson (1998), Scott (2009).
[64] See for example Wyatt (2003:271).
[65] Ch.1 provides examples from the Far South of Thailand to illustrate this point, with further detail in Ch.5. Development includes both 'immanent' (i.e. unplanned) change and 'intentional' (i.e. planned) projects promoted by the state (Cowen & Shenton 1996:162).
[66] See Ch.5 on Thailand and other parts of this chapter for further explanation.

Violence between an ethnic minority and state representatives risks further hardening attitudes, leading to polarized positions that become entrenched over time. Peripheral groups in cases form an 'other' that, alongside other factors, supports the definition of national identity (Thongchai 1994, Scott 2009).[67] In countries that have failed to peaceably manage tensions and demands in the peripheral areas, fears that concessions such as increased regional autonomy will lead to the eventual collapse of the nation state itself often dominate public opinion and the concerns of senior policymakers. In Indonesia these concerns were framed around the rejection of concessions that would lead to what are perceived as colonial federal arrangements (see Crouch & Aspinall 2003). In Thailand they have taken the form of concern over splitting the ethnic Thai nation's historically protected territory.[68]

A focus on identity as an important aspect of peripheral conflict complements rather than replaces political economy approaches. Core-periphery analyses are of particular relevance, stretching back to notions of internal colonialism (Williams 1977:274). Case studies stress how expanding nation states incorporate not only overseas colonies but also internal colonies (Hechter 1975, Hind 1984, Brown 1994:160). Of particular relevance to contemporary Southeast Asia, market-oriented export promotion policies commonly create considerable wealth alongside equally significant regional disparities and relative inequalities. Centrally defined development policies promoting geographically concentrated growth poles and economic zones have regularly bypassed local populations, a process that is especially noticeable when such differences occur along ethnic lines (Wee & Jayasuriya 2002:478-481).

In many late developing nation states in Southeast Asia and elsewhere rapid growth has stimulated significant opportunist and network-based associations between business and politics (Unger 2003). Investment typically expands from a primate capital city through close and often nepotistic relationships between the commercial and government sectors. These power networks typically follow, and in places displace, a legacy of traditional patronage links and proxy associations between central monarchs and local vassal leaders (Wolters 1999, Boege et al. 2008). As with earlier political structures, actions carried out by state actors are likely to reflect the interests of specific groups or individuals at different levels (Clapham 1985, North 2009). Economic interests and ethnic affiliation interact, with members of competitively well-positioned and more influential ethnic groups (Chinese in Southeast Asia being a common example) more likely to succeed individually and intergenerationally than other, more marginalized ethnic groups (Harvey 1999, Wee & Jayasuriya 2002).

Some ethnic groups, or some elite figures within an ethnic group, may benefit from links with political and administrative institutions and associated secondary settlements. However, a majority of people in remote rural areas are often excluded from the direct support afforded by such patronage structures. Networks of patronage that channel resources to certain groups and as a result exclude others are central aspects of political leaders' efforts to maintain authority in the semi-democratic regimes that are

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[67] Peripheral areas undergoing conflict are rarely the sole factor against which national identity is defined. Their status is typically more marginal than that, as is explained elsewhere in this thesis.
[68] Thongchai (1994). See Ch.5 for detail.

commonly found across Southeast and South Asia.[69] For excluded groups, a negative impression of the 'rent-seekers' and 'speculators' who typically dominate emerging business and political structures in provincial Southeast Asia exacerbates perceptions of a culturally distant and increasingly invasive state (Yoshihara 1988, McVey 2000, Miller 2011).

Migration from central to peripheral areas, either through planned resettlement projects or simply chasing economic opportunity, adds further to a local perception of colonization (MacAndrews 1978, Horowitz 2000:247). Migrants are typically considerably wealthier than the sedentary local population in peripheral conflict areas including Aceh, the Far South of Thailand, Mindanao, and Xinjiang, benefitting from superior networks to access a disproportionately large share of both government employment and business opportunities. Better-connected (often ethnic majority) businesses are more likely to benefit from new opportunities, while cultural barriers such as language or religious practices may limit minority access to education and employment.[70] Insurgents and sympathizers in peripheral conflicts regularly criticize migration and unequal access to authority and business opportunities.[71]

The capacity of government and other local institutions to manage tensions emerges as an important factor in studies of horizontal inequalities (Stewart et al. 2008:296). In peripheral conflicts this can be related to the relationship between the central state and the peripheral minority population. Different patterns emerge reflecting specific contexts. In Thailand, local state institutions that were largely established to create a homogenous, controllable nation still effectively act as outreach services of a highly centralized state. In the Malay Muslim majority Far South of Thailand, elected local officials struggle to gain the confidence of both their constituents and higher levels of government decision-makers, leaving them with insufficient authority to address arising problems locally (Cornish 1997, McCargo 2008).[72] Mindanao presents a contrasting political environment in which disputes between powerful 'clan' leaders, often working in association with higher-level politicians but given considerable licence to act independently, are prominent (Champain & Lara 2009). This creates different conflict dynamics on the ground involving a more complex range of actors, although the key feature that distinguishes the conflict remains the marginalization of a peripheral population and its representatives (McKenna 2007). Almost all studies of peripheral conflicts in the region – from Tibet to Western Papua – place primary emphasis on this feature.

2.5   Identity in peripheral conflict areas

From the perspective of peripheral minorities, negative aspects of rural transformation vary from overt violence through to symbolic and material changes to rural life. Expansion of national political and administrative systems involves bureaucratic, political and economic penetration at the local level: party

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[69] On patronage networks and their ethnic associations, see Montesano (2000), Miller (2011).
[70] See G Brown (2008). Chs 5-6 provide further case material.
[71] Javanese migrants in Aceh were targeted by GAM insurgents (Schulze 2006:235). Similar patterns have been seen in Xinjiang, Western Papua, and elsewhere.
[72] See Ch.5 for detail.

political machines canvassing for local support through securing the assistance of local leaders, often engaging in direct vote-buying, supplant previous power structures (Doolittle 2006); increasingly highly capitalized agriculture places pressure on smaller farmers, many of whom sell out and become landless or indebted (Scott 1985). Experiences of mistreatment when encountering representatives of the government emerge as a norm for the rural majority in most developing countries (Long 2001, Corbridge et al. 2005). Modern technology increases the scope to control private as well as public space (Chaiwat 2006).

The perceived costs of developmental changes can be considerably greater for minorities distanced from the mainstream of society through language, religion or culture. Their group identity may be directly targeted by development that emanates from the centre. James Scott comments: *"… projects of administrative, economic, and cultural standardization are 'hard-wired' into the architecture of the modern state itself"* (2009:4).

The record of cultural damage effected by nation states among peripheral ethnic groups in the name of national development is striking, including Turkish denial of the existence of a Kurdish identity, and Chinese restrictions on the practice of Buddhism in Tibet (Langer & Brown 2008:42-43). Government efforts to integrate ethnic minority identity into an inclusive nationalism rather than assimilating it out of existence, as seen in China's recognition of 'official minorities' (Gladney 2008:139), may be seen more as attempts to assimilate and control than implying any serious aim to address horizontal inequalities. Everyday, universal development initiatives are also imbued with nationalist sentiment: written in foot-high letters on a school gate in the Far South of Thailand, is the phrase: *Education builds people, people build the nation.*[73] This is no different from similar messages adorning schools elsewhere in Thailand and in many other countries, but the phrase assumes a different meaning in an area where state authority is seen as an unwanted presence and children are being educated in what many parents see as a foreign language associated with a different religion (Liow 2009; also Uthai 1991, Jory 1999).[74]

Just as cultural constructions of the nation state can become more strongly expressed and felt over time, so too can territorially based alternative identities. Ethnic ties and sentiments are created and perpetuated by many factors: ecological associations, social units, and cultural and symbolic issues such as religion, language and the arts. In several peripheral conflicts in South and Southeast Asia, a historically and geographically rooted sense of identity acts as a filter that strengthens selective interpretations of events. In Aceh and in the Far South of Thailand, local perceptions of the past depict their territory as one whose past wealth, religious piety and power have been damaged by external oppression (Chaiwat 2005:58, D Brown 2008:59). The comparisons made by people in peripheral conflict areas are significant in explaining their perceptions of inequality. In the Far South of Thailand, comparisons are typically made with more developed Thai Buddhist majority parts of the country rather

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[73] *"Kansueksa sang khon, khon sang chat."*
[74] See Billig (1995) on daily subliminal nationalism.

than with other, poorer peripheral areas.[75] Sri Lankan Tamils frequently look towards the greater cultural and political recognition afforded to Tamils in South India and Uighurs in Xinjiang similarly look towards Central Asia.

Studies of horizontal inequalities explain how disaffected elite leaders looking to benefit from division or conflict instrumentally promote exclusive or polarized ethnic affiliation (Brass 1991, Stewart 2008:53). From a class perspective, much separatism and ethnonationalism would be called popular revolt if it took place among the majority instead (McVey 1984:21). There are indeed common features linking such revolts and peripheral conflicts, including popular resentment at inequality and abuse of power or privileges by elite groups. Some ethnonationalist rebel groups including the LTTE (Tamil Tigers) in Sri Lanka and GAM (Free Aceh Movement) in Aceh have employed left-wing rhetoric, criticizing social and economic injustice. This was especially common during the 1970s when communist-associated rebellion was more commonplace.

However, rebel leaders' appeals for popular support in peripheral conflicts are frequently based primarily around territorial rights and cultural or religious traditions (Anderson 1991, Horowitz 2000). Rebels from privileged and humble backgrounds regularly express shared ethnic motivations.[76] The Memorandum of Understanding signed by GAM rebels and the Government of Indonesia in August 2005 following closed discussions between a small group of representatives of both sides[77] included the following conditions:

> *Para 1.1.5 – Aceh has the right to use regional symbols including a flag, a crest and a hymn.*
> *Para 1.1.6 – Kanun Aceh (local laws) will be re-established for Aceh respecting the historical traditions and customs of the people of Aceh […].*
> *Para 1.1.7 – The institution of Wali Nanggroe (Guardian of the Nation) with all its ceremonial attributes and entitlements will be established.*

The key point here is that identity needs to be understood as a factor in its own right that interacts with other political, social and economic factors rather than simply be seen as an instrument. People participate in group actions or rituals that symbolically affirm and heighten people's awareness of a shared group identity for a variety of reasons (Cohen 1985:50). Group affiliations are often strongly – and emotionally – felt by all group members, including leaders. Group identity can be seen as a collective and existential need rather than merely the product of elite manipulation (Simpson 2011). Anthony Smith (1991) and others have explained that group identities normally have deep cultural and historical bases that cannot be dismissed as fictions. Rebel leaders and supporters in peripheral conflicts do not simply use identity as an instrument for their own satisfaction. Many often endure decades of

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[75] See Ch.5.
[76] Founding leaders of resistance movements in peripheral conflicts often hail from traditional aristocratic families. Examples include Haji Sulong Bin Haji Abdul Kadir from the Far South of Thailand and Tengku Hasan Muhammad di Tiro from Aceh (Sulaiman 2006:126, Liow 2009:81).
[77] See Merikallio (2006).

hardship in pursuit of their cause, while some leaders turn down potentially advantageous terms of peace.[78]

At the same time as recognizing the importance of identity construction, it is important to move beyond stereotypes peddled on both sides of a conflict. Peripheral areas may contain as many internal differences as similarities. Rebel efforts to present a unified minority identity in the face of a greater external threat are in cases undermined by the presence of other minority groups that are themselves discriminated against, for instance Gayonese in Aceh (Bowen 1991, Horowitz 2000:267). In Mindanao, a discrete peripheral Moro identity is a fairly recent phenomenon imposed largely from outside, coalescing a singular mass out of diverse and fluid local groups (McKenna 1998). Even within a rebel movement, different personal or family motivations for using violence emerge over decades of conflict (Kalyvas 2001:111-112).

Closer analysis helps challenge misconceptions of the periphery. Work on 'lifeworlds' can bring out the multiplicity of local perspectives, questioning centrally produced versions of history or the present (Chaiwat 2005). A related actor-oriented approach, focusing on the relationships between development workers and intended beneficiaries, can be applied usefully to conflict settings (Long 2001, Arce 2003). James Scott (1985) shows how the weak resist and challenge authority without resorting to mass violence through a range of subterfuges and tactics. Such approaches expose the multiple identities of many actors in peripheral conflict areas who negotiate different cultural spheres and spaces without necessarily finding it challenging or contradictory (Turner 1993, Hall 1996, Horstmann 2004). Peripheral conflicts may affect patterns of behaviour but they are not usually so intense that they thoroughly change people's daily existence through steps such as forced resettlement or total cessation of economic activity through chronic insecurity. Indeed, by concentrating on violence it is easy to forget that even in a conflict zone most people's lives continue to be affected by many factors that only relate indirectly to violence (Richards 2005:12-13). For example, randomized surveys conducted during ongoing low-level peripheral conflict in the Far South of Thailand have shown that people repeatedly rate drug abuse and unemployment as more important local issues than conflict itself (Unicef 2008, TAF 2010).

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[78] It is hard to argue that decades of armed struggle are a purely instrumental exercise. Many examples exist, from the LTTE in Sri Lanka to GAM in Aceh until 2005, of rebel leaders who turn down personally advantageous peace deals offered by governments.

2.6   Globalization and peripheral conflict

Peripheral conflicts are also shaped by the wider international and regional context, from the significant roles of neighbouring countries (such as India in Sri Lanka or Malaysia in the Far South of Thailand), to international flows of ideas (including global Islamic identity as a factor in various peripheral conflicts involving Muslim minorities),[79] to specific interventions (such as foreign funding of both rebel groups and governments). It is argued here that international influences interact with the centre and periphery in complex and sometimes contradictory ways.

The orientation of national economies around globally defined norms, including the need to attract capital flows, has altered relationships between peripheral areas and central state structures. Stewart (1998) criticizes imposed neoliberal economic approaches associated with 'globalization' in the late twentieth century and beyond that limit governments' capacity to enact policies to address horizontal inequalities. She mentions that largely positive government interventions up to the 1980s including Malaysia's New Economic Policy and Sri Lanka's investment in human development in the years preceding ethnic conflict would not subsequently have been possible.

The effects of cultural and economic aspects of globalization and associated changes can be overstated or overly simplified, however.[80] Overall, there is little evidence linking increasing cross-border flows of capital with a consistent shift in the nature or severity of peripheral conflicts. Peripheral conflicts in South and Southeast Asia existed both before and after economic liberalization during the 1980s and 1990s. Far from being inaccessible and underdeveloped backwaters, many peripheral conflict sites such as coastal Aceh or Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka have a rich legacy of connections with the outside world (Reid 2008). Both ethnic nationalism and ethnonationalist peripheral resistance have always been shaped by interactions between transnational drivers and domestic factors (Sidel 2003), including changing economic relationships and shifting identity affiliations at the global, national and local levels. In Sri Lanka, for example, rising ethnic tension in the 1970s and subsequent decades of violence have been related to the unexpected manner in which liberal economic reforms interacted with long-term Sinhalese domination of political space (Spencer 1990, Herring 2003, Richardson 2005).

Linda Weiss (1997) finds that proponents of globalization seriously underrate the variety and adaptability of state capacities, which build on historically framed national institutions. International structures continue to promote and guarantee the fixed borders of nation states despite their often arbitrary nature (North et al. 2007:34). Michael Mann (1997:472) concludes that changing relationships between local, national and international levels show no consistent pattern but are more likely overall to weaken local networks than national ones. At the same time, global movements can boost the

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[79] Appadurai (1990) includes flows of ideas as one of five '-scapes' that characterize cross-border flows of cultural material.
[80] See Appadurai (1990), Featherstone (2006).

strength of anti-state movements. For example, expanding diaspora populations directly support territorial opposition to national governments in many peripheral conflicts (Appadurai 1990).

2.7   Can development interventions help end peripheral conflicts?

We have seen so far that development is an aspect of the processes that lead to and sustain peripheral conflicts. This section describes how planned development interventions relate to peripheral areas, emphasizing the challenges created by the multi-dimensional aspects of peripheral conflicts. The part then considers whether they offer a way to promote resolution of ongoing violence.[81]

Development is often an inherently nationalist as well as a more narrowly defined socioeconomic project. The pre-eminent unit of modern political organization, the nation state is the key institution for developmental action as well as political organization. In most contexts, development is measured, and usually framed, in terms of national statistics and objectives.[82] The pursuit in Malaysia of modern developed status by the year 2020, Buddhist-infused notions of a sufficiency economy in Thailand, rural welfarist development in Sri Lanka, developmental elements of Suharto's notion of *pancasila* in Indonesia, and rapid industrialization under a communist-led free market system in Vietnam and China, all link closely with nationalism both in popular perception and in policymaking. The concepts are intentionally promoted as nation-building tools that cement the authority and legitimacy of powerful groups or individuals. The vernacular terms for development in different languages commonly reflect this, typically implying order and stability to be achieved through national progress.[83]

Many development schemes suit the interests of majority populations rather than peripheral or minority groups. On occasion this is an intentional government policy objective: national resettlement projects such as components of the Mahaweli project in Sri Lanka and transmigration (*transmigrasi*) in Indonesia favoured migrants over indigenous peripheral minorities and aimed in part to pacify peripheral areas (see Herring 2003). Elsewhere, failures to benefit from development projects may reflect the marginalization of peripheral minorities from patronage networks and government processes that has already been described. Industrialization programmes in peripheral areas that generate opportunities to investors from elsewhere in the country but are perceived to offer little to local populations, such as the Southern Seaboard project in Thailand or efforts to build an industrial base around natural gas exploitation in Aceh, have generated local resentment and become viewed as symptoms of external domination and imposition (King 2005, Aspinall 2007).[84]

Governments commonly cast peripheral conflict problems in terms of economic underdevelopment, thereby justifying a narrow developmental approach and deflecting the need for political change that

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[81] The next chapter concentrates specifically on internationally funded development and peacebuilding initiatives.

[82] In addition to mainstream approaches, see Bernstein (2006:50-52) on the prominence of the nation state unit in the roots of Marxist economic theory and post-war practice.

[83] The words for development in Thai (*kanphattana*), and in Malay / Indonesian (*pembangunan*) connote modernity, order and nationalism (Demaine 1986, Arghiros 2001:34-35, Hoey 2003:112).

[84] See also Ch.7.

more systematically recognizes minority needs and inter-ethnic friction.[85] Conservative approaches commonly predominate in a post-conflict scenario, aiming to rebuild what conflict destroyed rather than change the original conflict-prone status quo or promote deeper reconciliation (Keen 2000, Srikandarajah 2003, Denskus 2007). Development initiatives in peripheral areas may be less about finding equitable peace than seeking victory by non-military means. Development projects aimed at 'winning the hearts and minds' of restless populations continue a long tradition of pacification. Civil and military bodies often apply development aid to curry local favour, from winning over the support of village leaders in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao (Cuyugan 2004) to demonstrating the benevolence of the military by building roads and local facilities in the Far South of Thailand (Bonura 2003).[86] Such policies tend to perpetuate the centralized nation-building that has contributed to so many peripheral conflicts , with little shift in power relations or changes in policy, as has been observed in the Far South of Thailand, Xinjiang and elsewhere (Noiwong 2001, Dwyer 2005).

This chapter has already demonstrated the significance of people's perceptions and relative comparisons rather than absolutes in driving peripheral conflict. Considering the symbolic and discursive power of development interventions as well as their measurable socioeconomic impact helps understand how acts of supposed improvement are perceived on the ground (Crush 1993). A wealth of academic material addresses aspects of how development is practised and how interventions are perceived and whether they are accepted or resented.[87] Critical factors include the working language of the development agency, the background and attitudes of development workers, and how local leaders are engaged. Attention may concentrate on national schemes that might have suited other parts of the country yet do not work in the specific peripheral locale, resentment being felt not at ineffectiveness or corruption directly but at the imposition of a standard national model that denies difference.[88] Criticism of opaque contracting procedures and nepotistic networks may dominate local views of development projects, irrespective of their developmental impact.[89]

For non-governmental or foreign organizations hoping to promote peacebuilding, the need to gain the approval of national government regulators in order to operate is a significant practical barrier.[90] The context is compounded by the practical challenges of development interventions working in areas with considerable security risks, as many project studies demonstrate.[91] However, as is explained below, development initiatives can in certain cases still play a valuable role in promoting peace and reconciliation. Many kinds of intervention have in different locations supported sustainable and just peace, contributing to structural change processes as well as shorter term negotiations (Smith 2004).

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[85] See Wickrematunge (2009) and Manageronline (2009) for typical criticism of such approaches.
[86] On military aid projects in the Philippines, see ICG (2008).
[87] For example Pottier (1993), Long (2001), Mosse (2005).
[88] See for example Cornish (1997) on the Far South of Thailand.
[89] See Burke & Afnan (2008) or Multi-Stakeholder Review (2009) on attitudes in Aceh, as well as Ch.5.
[90] Associated challenges are addressed in Ch.3.
[91] See Cullather (2002:530), Keen (2009).

Many sources from the vast body of literature on conflict prevention and post-conflict intervention address development initiatives.[92] Development practitioners or politicians aiming to promote equality of outcomes have decades of experience of different approaches, the form of which typically depends on specific context. Issues of participation and accountability (Cornwall 2000, Eyben & Ladbury 2006) are particularly relevant where the state ignores local interests, as is work on many dimensions of social exclusion (Sen 2000, Burchardt et al. 2002), and human rights and justice (Grugel & Piper 2009).

Three fields of intervention are identified here. The first involves promoting changes in how central state institutions operate. Redefining development practice as a field both supporting structural change and promoting peace involves a shift towards a more transformative and politically aware approach (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2005:209-212). Stewart et al. (2008) place primary emphasis on the need for reforms to national political and administrative structures to counter horizontal inequalities. They summarize a range of reforms that have been undertaken in different contexts: adaptations to political mechanisms to foster political participation by otherwise marginalized minority groups; ombudsmen and monitoring bodies to challenge discriminatory practice; preferential 'affirmative action' to offer employment or education to minorities; restructuring fiscal policies that are otherwise blind to horizontal inequalities; land reform or other asset redistribution; reforms to language policies. Changes in how states define and promote national identity would be even more fundamental steps to address the roots of peripheral conflict.

A second field consists of decentralization, increased autonomy, and area-based initiatives falling short of full separation for peripheral regions.[93] Such steps form core aspects of most proposals for solving peripheral unrest. Autonomy carries symbolic as well as material and political significance. It has the scope to create more legitimate channels for local leaders to seek political power and benefit from business opportunities (Hechter et al. 2006). Decentralization fits particularly into developmental approaches, from popular participation to restructuring of government agencies, associated at least in theory with better management of local problems (G Brown 2008). Decentralized development budgets and initiatives can support local autonomy agreements. For example, laws on autonomy in Aceh allocated extra national funding amounting to US$250 million annually to newly empowered local authorities, an increase in excess of 35% (Barron & Clark 2006).

Decentralization has in cases been falsely presented as a technical panacea that masks other problems, while the reality of implementation rarely follows good governance orthodoxy (Klem & Douma 2008). As has been observed in the Far South of Thailand and in Mindanao (McCargo 2008, Balisacan et al. (2008), decentralization can fuel local power struggles, invite abuse of authority, and further ethnic discrimination (Batterbury & Fernando 2006, Tranchant 2007). Key factors influencing how decentralization affects a peripheral conflict context include the specific dynamics of group differences,

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[92] For example Paris (2004), Pugh & Cooper (2004), Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall (2005), Human Security Center (2005), Fisher & Zimina (2009).
[93] Separation is of course a further option, although one rarely acceptable to the governments of nation states experiencing peripheral conflicts.

the support of powerful local and national figures, the extent of local authorities' financial independence from central institutions, and local administrative capacity (Weller & Wolff 2005, Siegle & Mahoney 2006, Diprose & Ukiwo 2008).

Third, where a peace process is ongoing, development initiatives can support specific elements of it, furthering the scope for finding common ground between conflict actors. In the immediate context of negotiations, development funding can build areas of initial agreement. Issues range from financial assistance to back peace initiatives and associated policies[94], economic policy advice (Woodward 2002), actual reconciliation processes between opposing groups or victims of conflict (Rosoux 2009), and the 'reintegration' of armed groups (Berdal & Ucko 2009).

These three fields of action depend on existing political will to address the underlying problem, a rare commodity in peripheral conflicts. Groups aiming to address the causes of peripheral conflict frequently aim to build political commitment or promote small initiatives in the hope that they will catalyse further change. Non-governmental advocacy groups apply many of the lobbying and advocacy strategies commonly used in other contexts. Although often marginalized by more powerful political forces,[95] they can on occasion achieve some success. NGOs have worked to promote accountability and rein in abuses of justice by state actors in the Philippines and Indonesia. For example, in the Far South of Thailand, a semi-autonomous think-tank working alongside academics in public universities has promoted political space for discussion of potential autonomy.[96] In other cases, specific government agencies can carry out limited reforms even if mainstream political support is absent. Examples include programmes to improve education and health outreach to minorities, catering to specific linguistic or cultural needs or promoting pluralist values as part of national approaches (Bush & Saltarelli 2000, Liow 2009).

2.8 **Chapter conclusion**

This chapter has emphasized the importance of understanding the interaction between different aspects of horizontal inequality in peripheral conflicts. It has explained the prominence of cultural factors as well as the particular challenges faced by interventions aiming to promote peace.

Peripheral conflicts have specific historical roots and fluctuating dynamics that reflect shifting local contexts, although they also share common resemblances including discrete territorial demarcation and ethnic divide between a marginalized minority and the nation state. The long-lasting nature of peripheral conflicts is related to the marginalization of peripheral minorities from national political settlements and from broader nation-building processes that often contain strong ethnic elements and play an important role in legitimizing authority. Secondary settlements between national leaders and

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[94] The successes and shortcomings of post-conflict reconstruction and other ways of stimulating a post-conflict 'peace dividend' are well documented (Kilroy 2005). Critical issues in a peripheral context include how economic dividends are spread across different groups.
[95] See Walton (2009) on NGO marginalization in Sri Lanka.
[96] See Ch.9.

representatives of peripheral areas, meanwhile, typically offer only superficial agreements that fail to address underlying horizontal economic, social, political and cultural status inequalities.

In common with findings presented by Stewart et al. (2008), this chapter has explained that the nature of the state is of fundamental importance to the form and duration of peripheral conflict. In particular, long-term processes of nation state formation, associated constructions of ethnically exclusive national identity, and the incorporation of peripheral areas are challenged by peripheral counter-identities that can harden in response to attempted assimilation and the perceived marginalization of local authority figures. Perceptions of inequality among peripheral populations are especially important. Peripheral conflict areas are often not statistically any poorer economically than other remote parts of a country but local populations in peripheral areas may nonetheless feel disadvantaged in comparison with central areas and ethnic majority populations.

It follows that efforts to end peripheral conflict sustainably are likely to involve changing how the central state engages with the peripheral conflict area. Stewart et al. and others have shown that reforms to address the horizontal inequalities that underpin peripheral conflict are possible, through moderating national political processes or policies including offering forms of increased autonomy to peripheral areas. However, in many cases there is little incentive for governments to undertake these steps. In an environment where the national government is pursuing a security-based approach to contain or solve violence, and typically employs developmental initiatives as part of efforts to establish its authority or to defeat peripheral resistance, the scope for addressing violence and its causes through developmental initiatives is likely to be limited. The prominence of contested national and subnational identities (and associated cultural status inequalities) in peripheral conflicts further limits the space to promote peace through developmental interventions. In the absence of central state commitment to significant changes, opportunities to promote peace are likely to be limited to relatively low-profile reforms undertaken by specific government agencies and non-governmental initiatives that advocate for policy modifications.

Chapter Three   A Mixed Record: Foreign Aid and Peacebuilding in Peripheral Conflicts

Having explored the main properties of peripheral conflicts, this chapter focuses on the role of foreign aid. It sets the scene for subsequent empirical analysis of how aid agencies address peripheral conflict in the Far South of Thailand.

This chapter first asks whether external intervention, and foreign aid in particular, can play a useful role in preventing or resolving peripheral conflict. Referring to assessments of aid and horizontal inequalities and presenting supportive case study material, the chapter considers how international development agencies address peripheral conflicts. It suggests that, in practice, foreign aid agencies often struggle to address peripheral conflicts or underlying horizontal inequalities through their work despite concerted attention having been paid to linking peacebuilding policies with development approaches. However, some comparatively successful interventions have been undertaken, showing that the pattern of foreign aid involvement in peacebuilding varies rather than following a single trend.

The chapter then explains why this pattern emerges, exploring the reasons why international aid actors frequently appear blind to or ignorant of horizontal inequalities (Stewart et al. 2008:297). Drawing from literature addressing the practice of foreign aid provision in countries experiencing peripheral conflict (and in other settings where relevant), three specific themes are identified and discussed: the motivations that dominate policy formulation and priority setting; the interface between foreign aid agencies and domestic recipients; and the actual practice of implementing programmes and projects. These themes are explained in this chapter and applied in subsequent chapters in relation to empirical material. Overall, it is suggested that common properties both of peripheral conflicts and of aid agencies themselves limit the scope to turn stated peacebuilding objectives into practice, even where aid officials are fully aware of the conflict context and underlying inequalities.

3.1   Using development assistance to address conflict

Foreign aid has figured increasingly prominently as an element of peacebuilding alongside diplomatic and military interventions since the early 1990s. Most official and non-governmental development agencies have peacebuilding policies and many have specialist staff or dedicated departments. United Nations reports, international commissions and policy statements are joined by good practice guides, academic journals and a consultancy industry in what amounts to a thorough institutionalization of peacebuilding (Barnett et al. 2007).

Recent conceptual thinking over the links between conflict, development and foreign aid covers wide ground (Uvin 2000). At the level of development practice, initial emphasis was placed in the 1990s on the need to ensure that aid funds at least 'do no harm' given a record of unwittingly contributing to conflict (Anderson 1999). Subsequent policy-directed analysis has looked more closely at the struggles encountered in delivering aid in conflict environments (Addison & McGillivray 2004). Some advocates

have promoted 'conflict sensitive' approaches (Paffenholz 2005). From a broader perspective, reformists have promoted greater attention to peacebuilding as an inherent part of foreign policy, stressing a notion of human security (Kaldor et al. 2007).

The role of foreign aid in peacebuilding has been criticized from various angles. Aid agencies have been understandably condemned as major promoters of the liberal economic reforms that destabilized fragile peace processes in Central America and elsewhere (Paris 2002). They are also seen on occasion as providers of humanitarian and developmental palliatives that help justify military campaigns (Newman 2009). Further common traits of peacebuilding operations have included a failure to recognize the limits to what external intervention can achieve and a 'Wilsonian' expectation that elections and rapid democratization from above can override the internal rifts or structural tensions that led to civil war in the first place (Paris 2004, Chandler 2006). Such approaches are typically based on the norm of a peaceful state that assumes a Weberian monopoly of legitimate violence and acts as a benevolent guarantor of domestic peace (Boege et al. 2008), alongside blindness to the politicized and factionalized institutions that typify developing countries (Roberts 2009).

Valid as these criticisms are, Roland Paris (2010) and others find that recent patterns of external intervention in peacebuilding are not straightforward.[97] Complexity and inconsistency of government policymaking and implementation within and between many countries is common and foreign aid, like other fields of intergovernmental activity, reflects a range of values and policy objectives (Chandler 2010:25). Paris (2010:354) points to various positive trends within aid and peacebuilding practice that demonstrate the inadequacy of blanket critiques, including concerted efforts made by many agencies to promote universal human rights. Paris states that international peacebuilding actors are often aware of the need to respect national sovereignty rather than impose external interventions, typically aiming to establish peacebuilding interventions only on a strictly temporary basis.[98] Some recognized failures, such as a tendency to supplant rather than support domestic institutions, have in cases been addressed in subsequent initiatives.[99] Furthermore, Paris finds that it is simplistic to depict the role of the UN and other international bodies as a purely neo-colonial or self-interested imposition (ibid.:350). Cases of unjustified and highly problematical interventions exist alongside others that have been more successful in conflict contexts as diverse as Bosnia, Guatemala, Sierra Leone and East Timor. Other reviews show that foreign aid can promote peace in a range of ways, by supporting long-term incremental 'transformative' steps to promote inclusive political systems and tackle horizontal inequalities as well as through narrow technical inputs during ongoing peace processes (Esman 2003, Paris 2004, Chigas & Woodrow 2009).

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[97] In addition to Paris see Uvin (2000), Esman & Herring (2003), Goodhand, Klem & Sorbo (2011).

[98] Inevitable tension between the promotion of international values including human rights frameworks and respect for national sovereignty demonstrates the complexity of external intervention.

[99] Chandler (2006) refers to the international presence in Bosnia as one example of overly dominant engagement.

3.2   How foreign aid agencies address peripheral conflicts

Building particularly on assessments of aid and horizontal inequalities, this section explores the diversity of responses that can be found in different peripheral conflict contexts, finding that the scope of international agencies to engage in countries affected by peripheral conflicts is often limited, with 'recipient' governments regularly resisting perceived foreign interference through aid provision and other means. Following a discussion of donor involvement in conflict contexts in Sri Lanka and Aceh, reasons for the diverse pattern are considered.

Stewart et al. (2008:315-316) find through appraising many different case studies of horizontal inequalities and conflict that foreign aid often in practice reinforces existing inequalities in countries with ethnically diverse populations. They find that horizontal inequalities are often neglected in foreign aid policy, even in countries which are conflict-prone. A range of policies that follow the standard liberal prescriptions for economic growth and poverty reduction are criticized for being blind to inter-group differences, from IMF structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s (Stewart 1998, 2003) to Poverty Reduction Strategies of the 2000s (Stewart & Brown 2003, Eyben 2006).

In terms of actual implementation, Stewart et al. describe how overall aid distribution in Mozambique shows a strong geographical bias towards more privileged regions, with a similar picture emerging in Ghana. In Nepal, aid agencies paid little or no attention to significant inequalities between regions and ethnic groups until after the advent of serious violent conflict (Brown & Stewart 2006:17). The strongest example of such trends comes from Rwanda, where international agencies' failure to recognize rising inter-ethnic political hostility led to continued backing for a regime that ultimately pursued ethnic genocide (Uvin 1998).

Specific projects can be seen to have had a detrimental impact on horizontal inequalities and associated peripheral tensions in many countries, albeit on a less disastrous scale than in Rwanda. For example, Brown and Stewart (2006) consider World Bank support for the Indonesian Government's transmigration programmes that relocated people from heavily populated Java to outlying provinces.[100] The programmes led to or exacerbated inter-group conflict in many areas. Their official developmental justification, to help develop underprivileged areas and to ease population pressure elsewhere, masked the more political motive of promoting effective internal colonization of the nation's ethnically diverse peripheral regions partly by enabling the Indonesian military to establish zones of control on the ground.[101] In examining the World Bank's role, Brown and Stewart find little evidence to indicate whether World Bank officials involved in the design and support of transmigration projects were aware of this motive or had given any thought to their potential repercussions on ethnicity and the distribution of resources, or whether they simply assumed that the expected developmental gains of the project would outweigh the adverse impact of any local tensions raised (ibid.:8).

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[100] See Horowitz on minority fears of 'swamping' through migration (2000:263-265).
[101] See also MacAndrews (1978).

Foreign aid agencies do not uniformly fail to address conflicts associated with horizontal inequalities. On the contrary, Stewart et al. (2008:315-316) comment that international NGOs have had some success in addressing horizontal inequalities. They also find that official aid projects (i.e. from bilateral and multilateral agencies backed by government funding) are also able to undertake fairly straightforward yet valuable measures such as basic service provision in relatively deprived areas. Others discuss specific projects that have overtly addressed horizontal inequalities, such as a relatively successful USAID-funded rural development project in conflict-affected Sri Lanka (Uphoff 2003). A range of reviews provide examples of interventions that can usefully address horizontal inequalities or ethnic conflict, many of which tally with the possible interventions listed at the end of the previous chapter (Uvin 1998, Esman 2003, Paris 2010).

In order to illustrate more clearly how aid agencies address or avoid peripheral conflicts, two brief case studies follow that complement the more detailed material on the Far South of Thailand provided in later chapters. The first case study covers Aceh, the northernmost part of the island of Sumatra, Indonesia, with a population of around four million. From the emergence of conflict in Aceh in the 1970s until the fall of Suharto in 1998, foreign aid supported government development policies in many fields across Indonesia, backing the government alongside military assistance and economic investment. Controversial programmes funded by donors working closely with the government included economic development initiatives as well as transmigration that were perceived predominantly to benefit the central island of Java and migrants from Java, contributing to subsequent unrest.[102] During the 1990s, with the Cold War over, donors increasingly looked to reform rather than back the centralized and undemocratic regime. After Suharto resigned amid acute political and economic unrest, donors and NGOs funded peacebuilding initiatives in many peripheral areas of Indonesia. They also supported decentralization policies and moves to strengthen democracy nationwide.[103] But with conflict still ongoing in Aceh, most donors were denied access to the province. Despite Indonesian Government desire for international legitimacy, foreigners were rarely given permission by the military to enter Aceh. The few aid programmes that did operate either employed Indonesian staff working closely alongside government, or were limited to very marginal activities. Without a presence on the ground, and with a weighty list of other priorities across Indonesia, aid agencies were in a poor position to build any meaningful interventions (Aspinall & Crouch 2003, Barron & Burke 2008:15).

The Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004 brought hundreds of donors and NGOs to Aceh for humanitarian work, but even then it was fairly simple for the Indonesian Government to keep them away from peacebuilding-related issues. Security guidance and instructions for foreign aid agencies banned them from working inland, stating inaccurately that the tsunami-hit coastal areas were unaffected by conflict. Despite contravening many agencies' guidance on conflict, and the stance taken elsewhere in their Indonesia country programmes, most aid agencies were content to abide by the

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[102] See Chowdhury & Sugema (2005), Mallaby (2006), Aspinall (2007).
[103] See for example Huber (2004), Chauvel & Bhakti (2004), Mallarangeng & van Tuijl (2004), Barron & Burke (2008), UNDP CPRU (undated)

restrictions, in the process simplifying their difficult humanitarian work and maintaining a good relationship with the government. This situation only changed significantly well after a peace process gathered momentum in late 2005, when government invited donors to cross the coastal road and work elsewhere in Aceh. It also asked them to support specific aspects of post-conflict reconciliation (Burke 2008). From that point on, even though most donor-funded tsunami reconstruction programmes remained isolated from political events, various international aid agencies became increasingly involved in assisting the wider peace process. They supported domestically led developments with some success through village level funds, awareness campaigns, technical advice and other specific actions – many of which offered valued support to the ongoing peace process (Multi-Stakeholder Review 2009).

Sri Lanka provides the second short case study. The island nation state's early development successes were based on government employment creation and service provision, backed by high levels of donor funding. In the 1970s, the government liberalized elements of the economy, with donors providing project funding to soften the impact. Throughout this process, chauvinist government policies and ethnically skewed patronage systems led to increased resentment within the Tamil minority population, laying the ground for the rise of the LTTE and over 25 years of violence. The failure of aid agencies to ameliorate deteriorating conditions, effectively continuing to support discriminatory government aid through their programmes, have been well documented (Herring 2003, Richardson 2005). Even as late as 2001, after eighteen years of violence responsible for at least 65,000 deaths, the bulk of donors were still conducting "*Business as usual*", funding a standard range of aid programmes that avoided conflict-affected areas and related politically sensitive issues.[104] Over time, more donors and NGOs did begin to focus on peacebuilding, to the extent that Sri Lanka became a test-bed for many small projects working with civil groups. As a peace process began in 2003, donors swung behind the Sri Lankan Government, offering some US$4.5 billion in concessional loans conditional on continued negotiations with the LTTE (Burke & Mulakala 2011:161). This turned out to be a false dawn: the peace process collapsed following a change of government and limited LTTE commitment, with donor influence shown to be very limited. Some aid agencies reverted to mainstream programming and others abandoned their involvement entirely, leaving behind a small range of donor-funded initiatives (Goodhand & Klem 2005, Burke & Mulakala 2011).

These two brief case studies illustrate the variety of peripheral conflicts and associated foreign aid provision, although some common patterns do emerge. In both cases, major responses could not be implemented by foreign agencies, although some engagement was possible. This follows the general pattern whereby donor impositions rarely work as planned in conflict contexts and indeed many other environments (Killick 1998, Boyce 2002).[105] The capacity of foreign aid agencies and other international bodies to address peripheral conflict is commonly limited by the desire and sovereign right of a national

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[104] Quote from interview with ADB Official. Casualty figures are unreliable and the figure given here is a commonly used estimate.
[105] See discussion of the donor-government interface later in this chapter for further explanation.

government to keep them out.[106] Foreign aid flows form a small or even economically insignificant proportion of national income and a low percentage of government budgets in many countries experiencing peripheral conflicts. Donors have little direct influence at the national level as a result. Donors have been excluded from Xinjiang and Tibet, from the various conflicts in Northeast India, from addressing separatist concerns in Pakistani Baluchistan, and from overt tensions among minority groups in the highlands of Vietnam and Laos. For many years they were also kept out of Aceh and Western Papua in Indonesia, while their role in Sri Lanka and the Far South of Thailand has been heavily circumscribed by the respective national governments.[107]

Overall, if donor aims and policies towards peacebuilding are not aligned with dominant recipient government interests, they appear to be hard to implement. Where a peripheral conflict is ongoing and a government is not pursuing a negotiated solution, donors interested in promoting peace may have few options, perhaps providing small funds for NGOs or humanitarian activities as seen in Sri Lanka. At the same time, donors were also themselves only partially committed to addressing conflict in both Sri Lanka and Indonesia, reflecting patterns that Stewart and others have documented. Foreign aid to countries including Sri Lanka and Indonesia typically avoids conflict issues. In Aceh, many foreign aid donors showed little interest in Aceh's violent peripheral conflict even after space to engage gradually opened up following the peace process that commenced in August 2005. More widely, some of the major proponents of using foreign aid for peacebuilding put remarkably low levels of resources directly into it. From 1997 to 2005, the World Bank Post-Conflict Fund disbursed a total of just US$66.7 million. Meanwhile, the 2005 budget for the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives was US$48.6 million in 2005, which means that it received only 3.5% of a total USAID budget of US$9.1 billion. Barnett et al. (2007) comment that although the global peacebuilding agenda might look impressive, it remains minute in comparison with the full range of activities undertaken by these and other organizations, in conflict areas or elsewhere.

Yet donors were able in both Aceh and Sri Lanka to address peripheral conflicts in some ways and in some circumstances. This shows that aid agencies do occasionally manage to overcome both external barriers and their own internal restrictions, finding some ways to support peacebuilding in peripheral conflicts even if on a small scale. They have done so in other cases including Mindanao and the Far South of Thailand, through a variety of initiatives both before and after peace processes were established between governments and rebel groups. Examples exist of foreign aid support for peacebuilding in peripheral conflicts with reference to the three relevant fields of developmental interventions mentioned in the previous chapter: supporting changes in how the central state operates; strengthening local institutions in peripheral areas; and adopting specific measures to back peace processes.[108] It is therefore important to break down generic, global statements over development and

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[106] International consensus on when sovereignty can be breached concentrates overwhelmingly on the views of donor nation governments and rarely exists elsewhere. See Woodward (2007:145); also ICISS (2001:70).

[107] Barron & Burke (2008). Also interviews with Tom Beloe, Lilianne Fan, and French Aid Programme Officer.

[108] Various further examples are provided in subsequent parts of this chapter. Case studies from Thailand are found in Chs 6-9.

international peacebuilding, since specific contexts and the practices of aid agencies themselves appear to affect actions and outcomes significantly.

Responses to peripheral conflict appear to vary significantly across and even within different aid agencies. In post-tsunami Aceh, some international agencies found ways to address peacebuilding issues over time. However, other agencies, both NGOs and official bilateral or multilateral donors, kept clear of issues that they considered too political (Barron & Burke 2008). Several donors who were involved in supporting the peace process including UNDP and the World Bank struggled to link their main post-tsunami reconstruction work with their peacebuilding support. A US$600 million joint donor fund for post-tsunami reconstruction supported by UNDP and the World Bank stipulated support for the peace process as one of its objectives, but a detailed evaluation found that few of the projects it funded paid any attention to it (OPM 2009). A further example comes from Sri Lanka in early 2009, where just as Western donors were cancelling some aid projects in protest at civilian casualties, human rights abuses and media restrictions during the Sri Lankan government's military campaign, a US$1.9 billion IMF loan to the Sri Lankan Government was agreed (Charbonneau & Sirilal 2009).

The mixed picture of donor consideration of peripheral conflict is a consequence of a range of factors relating to the nature of peripheral conflict and of donors themselves. The subsequent parts of this chapter explain in greater detail why a mixed pattern of donor assistance to peripheral conflict emerges, regular failures to address peripheral conflict contrasting with some positive steps. They explain how foreign aid agencies' own internal limitations, and the ways in which agencies relate to recipient governments, often limit their scope to engage in the potential fields of peacebuilding highlighted in Chapter Two.[109] The parts stress structural factors affecting the translation of donors' global peacebuilding policies into specific foreign aid practice, providing examples from Aceh, Sri Lanka and elsewhere. Emphasis is placed on donor policy formation at the national level given its significance for the formulation and implementation of peacebuilding plans, as is later explained. Of particular interest is what insight existing literature provides to help explain why aid agencies are at times able to set up programmes to tackle peripheral conflict, when in other cases they do not do so despite global commitments to promote peace as a central part of aid policy. The rest of the chapter looks beyond existing literature on horizontal inequalities and related approaches, considering material analysing foreign aid interventions more generally. Some of the core lessons of development practice established over past decades have been un-learnt in the peacebuilding field (Neufeldt 2007), indicating a need to revisit a wider body of literature in order to take research forward.[110]

The following parts of this chapter each apply one of three inter-related themes to enable exploration of the core issues and constraints that affect donor peacebuilding in peripheral conflicts. The first theme, *motivations,* considers the reasons behind donors' differing interests in peripheral conflicts. The second theme, *the interface*, explores how donors engage with domestic recipients, focusing on critical

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[109] See Ch.2 (Part 2.7).
[110] Chambers (1983), Porter, Allen & Thompson (1991), Killick (1998), and Gibson et al. (2005) address wider failures to build on knowledge of development practice.

relationships with central government departments. This theme shows that specific bodies within recipient governments play a role in shaping whether and how donor aid is provided at the same time as being actors in peripheral conflicts. The third theme, *practice,* considers how recurring practical issues of implementation add further barriers to implementing external peacebuilding approaches that only some agencies overcome.

3.3 Motivations: diverse reasons for foreign aid

Motivation here means the underlying reasons or interests that lead to action and behaviour, encompassing both the interests and incentives that affect donor policies and aid funding decisions and the structural roots of international development policymaking.[111] The motivations of aid actors are explained here with reference to political economy analyses of aid. Use is also made of anthropological analyses of foreign aid institutions and literature on incentives to help explain the specific interests of aid agencies and their staff. Anthropological and political economy approaches are combined in this way in analyses of aid provision with specific relevance for peripheral conflict environments.[112]

This section first briefly addresses the interests and political incentives that dominate donor countries' foreign policies and aid funding decisions. Structural trends that affect foreign aid decision-making and practice can be identified, moving beyond suggestions that ignorance is the main problem (Stewart et al. 2008:297). The section then addresses the structural roots of development itself, explaining how development as typically conceived and practised by aid agencies focuses on the socioeconomic progress of nation state units and struggles to conceptualize horizontal inequality and peripheral conflict. Finally, the section considers what properties are shown by aid agencies in cases where foreign aid is used to address peripheral conflicts.

3.3a   Foreign aid, political interests

This short subsection acts as a basis for the following subsections by explaining how foreign aid provision in peripheral conflicts should be seen in its wider political context.[113] Foreign aid has always responded to a variety of interests and influences, with the self-interest of donor governments a prominent feature. This can be traced from the Marshall Plan in the 1940s through to former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's statements that aid for Africa is in Britain's interest (CNN 2005). Links between foreign aid and intervention in conflicts are a perennial element of donor policymaking, often as part of wider foreign policy agendas. Agencies as varied as Oxfam, Unicef and the World Bank all have their roots in conflict and post-conflict related humanitarian assistance and reconstruction in the aftermath

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[111] See Woodward (2007:159) for a similar application of motivations to peacebuilding interventions. It is used as a wider concept than 'interest' or 'incentives', avoiding associations with economic rational action theories (see Eckstein 1996). The term's more specific psychological meaning is not implied here.

[112] For example Uvin (1998), Muscat (2002), Esman & Herring (2003), Paris (2004), Eyben (2006b).

[113] Space limitations restrict the depth of analysis presented here to a brief overview, closer attention being paid through the rest of this chapter to wider motivations and the actual process of aid provision. In this way, the chapter aims to look beyond straightforward political explanations of patterns of foreign aid.

of the Second World War. The Cold War context of the 1960s saw overtly politicized transfers of foreign aid to allies of the Soviet Union and the USA alike.[114]

More recent engagement in peacebuilding by foreign aid agencies can be seen as a manifestation of an enduring development-security nexus (Duffield, 2001, 2007). Aid budgets are still used for wider donor government policy objectives, including security. UK donor DFID's budget for Afghanistan has repeatedly been increased since the presence of British troops there. Increased aid expenditure in Afghanistan has little in common with the universal objectives found in DFID policy statements or the UN's Millennium Development Goals. DFID's Secretary of State, Andrew Mitchell, said: *"Using the UK's aid budget to secure progress in Afghanistan will be my number one priority"* (Helm & McVeigh 2010). Meanwhile, the more influential former Defence Secretary, Liam Fox, explained what 'progress' meant for the UK Government in this case: *"We are not in Afghanistan for the sake of the education policy in a broken, 13th-century country. We are there so the people of Britain and our global interests are not threatened"* (ibid.)

Solving peripheral conflict is often of less direct foreign policy concern to donor governments than higher-profile conflicts elsewhere. At times, as the cases of Sri Lanka and Aceh showed, peripheral conflict may be a minor factor in the overall shape of an aid programme and in cases is passed by completely. An extreme example of conflict avoidance in aid delivery existed in Sri Lanka, where national data used by many donors simply missed out the affected provinces of the north and east. The areas appeared on many maps as a blank space, devoid of people as well as violence (see Figure 3a).

As explained in Chapter Two, peripheral conflicts rarely present a security threat to donor nations and can in many cases be comfortably ignored. In the event that they are perceived as a threat – for example through a perceived risk of international terrorism from the group Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao, or through the potential for economic losses in Aceh, a province aligning a major international shipping lane and with natural gas reserves – the common response of donor nations at a policy level has for decades been led by their own security objectives: friendly governments are given aid and unfriendly ones are denied it (Addison 2000:406). In some cases, donors support military efforts to win peripheral conflicts. Examples are commonplace of donors providing some funding for peacebuilding initiatives while also maintaining military links with a government trying simultaneously to win peripheral conflicts: the UK's aid and defence involvement in Sri Lanka from 1999 to 2005, and the USA's engagement in Thailand from 2006 to 2009, are two recent cases.[115]

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[114] For example Rostow (1960).
[115] Burke & Mulakala (2011). Also interviews with British High Commission Officials and USAID Official 2.
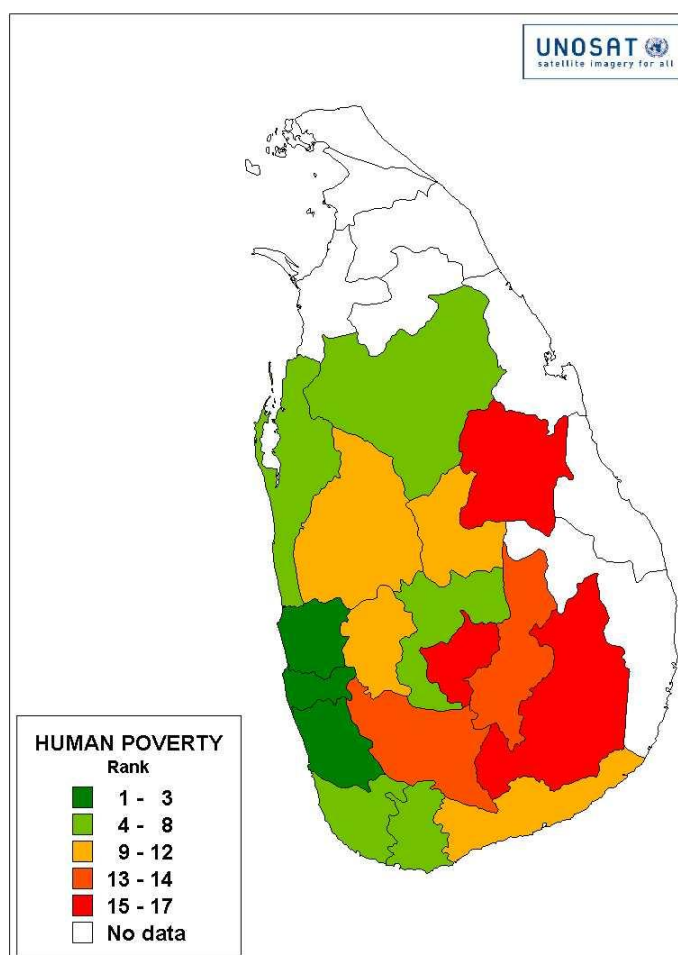
Relationships that shape aid flows, whether through direct bilateral assistance or indirectly through multilateral organizations, are still typically established between donors and recipient nation states as part of wider foreign policy agendas encompassing commercial and other interests beyond security (White 1974, Hopkins 2000). Existing analyses of Japanese aid to various South and Southeast Asian countries affected by peripheral conflict demonstrate clearly the domestically powerful Japanese commercial interests that are served by fostering strong relationships with recipient governments.[117] Such interests are unlikely to benefit from efforts to use foreign aid to address controversial issues such as peripheral conflict.

3.3b   The deeper roots of development intervention

Although the foreign policies of donor countries have long exerted a considerable influence on whether and how donors choose to attempt to address peripheral conflicts, they are not the only determinants of engagement. The motivations for providing foreign aid can also be traced back to the value-laden

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[116] UNOSAT (2003/2008).
[117] See in particular Arase (1995, 2005).

roots of developmentalism. The notion of development rests on ideas of progress that, at least in the dominant form of aid from the mid-twentieth century on, involve the establishment of modern, 'civilized' and peaceful independent nation states in the 'developing' world (Cowen & Shenton 1996:5). The UN Millennium Development Goals give an illustration of how these emancipatory aims are established by development agencies chiefly around socioeconomic indicators of progress, funded in part by donors but measured and implemented mostly by nation states.

Development plans and targets are commonly framed by governments and international organizations through national level socioeconomic statistics that do not capture political aspects of domestic development processes, including their associations with horizontal inequalities (Boyce 2002:1032, Stewart et al. 2008:297-298, Francis 2010). Donor-funded projects are still typically implemented in close association with central state institutions (see the next part of this chapter) and are likely to back political and economic measures that generate or exacerbate perceived horizontal inequalities in cases where the state itself discriminates against minority groups or peripheral areas. In the extreme case of Rwanda, as Peter Uvin has shown, aid flows backed a relatively strong regime up to the point of orchestrating mass genocide (1998:226). More widely, as was explained in the previous chapter, development initiatives are often an aspect of wider nation-building that in many countries contains strong ethnic as well as civic properties, their impact stretching beyond the narrow and ostensibly apolitical socioeconomic framework adopted by many aid agencies.

Stewart (2008b:17) finds that the inclusion of horizontal inequalities in development policy dialogue appears to require radical addition to socioeconomic debate that is ordinarily primarily focused on securing the adoption of an internationally recognized liberal policy framework, promoting efficient markets, and achieving poverty reduction. She criticizes this mainstream discourse for its blindness to horizontal inequalities and other differences within national populations. The negative impact of some structural adjustment policies on internal conflicts including those connected with strong horizontal inequalities has been widely addressed.[118] It is hard to find direct links between macro-level policies and impact on peripheral conflicts in particular, although the effects of specific projects and sectoral interventions can be more easily traced. For example, Herring (2003) comments on foreign aid projects that accompanied economic reforms in Sri Lanka from the 1970s, finding that while donor funding was intended to support continued socioeconomic development, it also effectively financed the continued spread of political patronage networks and backed projects like the Mahaweli scheme with highly skewed ethnic outcomes. Other case studies reach similar conclusions.[119]

Recent peacebuilding interventions have also regularly failed to recognize the challenges presented by horizontal inequalities. Although conflict units and other sections within foreign aid agencies do on occasion address peripheral conflicts directly (for example in Aceh), we have already seen that they typically offer relatively small sums of money for such peacebuilding efforts in comparison with overall

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[118] For example Paris (2004), Stewart & Brown (2006).
[119] See for example Uvin (1998), Esman & Herring (2003).

aid budgets. We have also seen that larger projects such as reconstruction work after the 2004 tsunami in Aceh tend to avoid such politically sensitive terrain unless given a political lead by both donor nations and the recipient government. Donors regularly steer clear of political issues with little apparent immediate relevance for programming or policymaking (Leftwich 2001:152-153). Some, including the multilateral lending banks, have no official mandate to engage in anything overtly political, while others including UN agencies maintain a strong respect for national sovereignty over what are commonly considered domestic concerns beyond the reach of international agencies.[120] Socioeconomic approaches framed within mainstream development policy discourse are effectively depoliticized, thereby justifying involvement in conventional activities but limiting the scope to address more controversial issues like peripheral conflict and associated inequalities.[121]

Where foreign aid agencies do engage with domestic politics rather than remaining ostensibly apolitical, many of their efforts are criticized by Frances Stewart (2008), Peter Uvin (2000) and others who promote greater attention to ethnic conflict. Support for 'good governance' rarely addresses the exclusion of minority groups from political power according to various assessments (Eyben 2006, Stewart 2008:298). Promotion of democracy may fail to incorporate adaptations to ensure minority representation in national or subnational political forums (Brown 2004, Paris 2010:341).

Even aid agencies that make an effort to recognize political context still struggle to integrate perceptions of identity into planning, despite a wealth of academic literature on sub-national identities and the complex interplay of horizontal and vertical divisions. The proposed 'ethnodevelopment' of Bjorn Hettne and others has had little impact, having been reduced internationally to specific policies and safeguards on avoiding unintended impact on indigenous people (Hettne 1993). Critics have recognized the inherent ethnic bias of many international development processes: *"...the neglect of the ethnic question in development thinking is not an oversight but a paradigmatic blind spot"* (Stavenhagen 1986).

While it is possible to include ethnicity and identity in political economy analysis and policy preparation, as some exceptions demonstrate,[122] reviews have found that such considerations remain marginal to mainstream aid delivery (Castellino 2009). Aid officials may be aware of ethnically skewed project outcomes or state policies and patronage that commonly shape who benefits and who loses out from development processes yet remain powerless to address them.[123] John Cohen (1995) describes how, despite recognising that a government capacity-building programme in Kenya was supporting civil servants belonging to some ethnic groups and marginalizing others, there was little that foreign aid staff could realistically do about it given a lack of control over domestic patronage relationships and networks that affected government agencies.

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[120] See Ch.8 for case studies.
[121] The universally acceptable language of the Millennium Development Goals illustrates this point clearly.
[122] See Booth et al. (2005), DFID/Netherlands Embassy (2005).
[123] See Ch.2 on such processes. Also Sparke et al. (2004).

The patterns described here are seen in recent mainstream liberal approaches to development but are not limited to them. There is no guarantee that other models of development will enable foreign aid agencies to address concerns relating to peripheral conflict more effectively. Approaches that give a greater role to state institutions (rather than the market) may also marginalize the periphery and focus overwhelmingly on socioeconomic factors rather than a wider balance of considerations. Addressing peripheral conflict, and recognizing ethnicity more widely, did not figure prominently in donor assistance prior to the advent of neoliberal approaches in the 1970s, nor does it feature as a significant factor in foreign aid from non-Western countries.

The long-term growth of non-Western donors is a significant trend of relevance to this discussion.[124] Many peripheral conflicts occur in middle-income countries, where the more poverty-focused of the Western donors rarely still run large programmes. This increases the importance of Japan, China, India and various Middle Eastern and other countries, along with the regional concessional lending banks. In Thailand, for example, the two largest donors since the mid-1970s have been the Asian Development Bank and Japan.[125] International competition among donors can work to increase recipient governments' bargaining power, as has been seen in Sri Lanka, where recent reluctance to lend or grant funds to Sri Lanka lost what little policy leverage Western donors once had.[126] The Sri Lankan Government instead received up to US$1 billion annually from China in development and military assistance. This includes the construction of a large port that is likely to be used as a regional logistical and servicing base by the Chinese navy (Page 2009). Further support has been provided by Iran and South Korea (Goodhand & Walton 2009:312).

Non-Western donors have generally presented a still more consensual model of foreign aid as part of inter-state diplomatic relationships than that emerging from Western donors, with greater expectations of state involvement in development processes and less domestic civil society or NGO activism. Aid is seen by many Japanese bureaucrats as a strictly state-to-state interaction (Arase 2005, Harmer & Cotterrell 2005). Asian governments also tend to maintain stronger respect for each other's sovereignty. For example, the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) is mandated to deal with cross-border disputes, but not to engage in the internal affairs of member states (Askandar et al. 2002).[127]

3.3c   Variety within foreign aid

Foreign aid is rarely uniform, however, with a disparate range of voices and influences shaping development policy and spending, leading to diverse practices and outcomes (Hopkins 2000). Just as it is naive to expect a single international community that responds coherently on the diplomatic stage, so

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[124] This is not a new trend. Japan and the Asian Development Bank have been major donors in South and Southeast Asia since the 1970s.

[125] See Ch.6.

[126] Increased unconditional aid funding after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami also weakened policy leverage. See Burke & Mulakala (2011:167), Frerks & Klem (2011).

[127] Non-Western bodies including the Japanese and Malaysian Governments, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and some NGOs have supported peace processes in South and Southeast Asia (Askandar 2005, Lam 2008), but non-Western foreign aid is rarely associated with such initiatives or used to promote related transformative outcomes.

are notions of a development community based around shared principles also misplaced (Weiss 2001:423).

The following example as well as the more detailed primary data introduced in later chapters demonstrate cases where donors have, for various reasons, broken with the pattern described so far in this section and addressed peripheral conflicts. The World Bank's promotion of peacebuilding in Aceh and elsewhere in Indonesia shows both how important specific context can be in determining whether an aid agency takes peripheral conflict seriously, and also the variety of approaches that can exist within one agency. Its work on peacebuilding in Aceh has been led by its social development unit, which is dominated by professionals coming from anthropology and political science backgrounds rather than the economists found in other sections of the agency. This unit ran various conflict-related programmes supporting the wider peace process in Aceh with some positive impact (Multi-Stakeholder Review 2009).

The most significant role of the social development unit across Indonesia was managing the World Bank's involvement in the Kecamatan Development Programme (KDP), an initiative that absorbed US$1 billion of loan funds (Murray Li 2007:230). KDP is an extensive national network of village-level funds rather than anything directly related to conflict, but its prominence within Indonesia and its importance for the World Bank's overall country portfolio enabled social development specialists in the World Bank to use it as a basis for supporting peacebuilding in Aceh (Barron & Burke 2008, Barron et al. 2009). This was a result of specific circumstances and the interests of an aid agency in maintaining its reputation. In the 1990s, both the World Bank and the Government of Indonesia became mutually unacceptable partners in mainstream development fields: the Indonesian Government was associated with corruption and human rights abuses, while the World Bank became seen by many in Indonesia as an icon of the corrupt, cronyistic Suharto era of excessive borrowing that led eventually to financial crisis and political strife. By 2005, projects with a social development ethos that could be distanced from a publically discredited mainstream constituted a majority of the World Bank's lending portfolio to Indonesia.[128] More conventional development approaches were effectively politically non-viable. With KDP as the basis of the World Bank's portfolio, staff interested in peacebuilding interventions were able to use the opportunity and positive reputation that KDP had fostered to support many other initiatives in Aceh aiming to back the peace process including the reintegration of former combatants, local livelihoods projects for widows, and support for impartial local media reporting.[129]

As this case shows, it is misleading to expect consistency even within a single aid agency. Internal contestation and hypocrisy are not uncommon, with different units involved in long-term struggles to capture resources or exert influence. Economists, conflict specialists, sector specialists, experienced field workers and bureaucratic office managers are all likely to have very different views of the world and respond to specific interests. Specialist divisions within agencies commonly promote contrasting

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[128] Interview with World Bank Official 1. Also Murray Li (2007:230).
[129] Interviews with Patrick Barron and Anthea Mulakala.

approaches.[130] NGOs also present a varied range of approaches and motivations, from highly conservative purveyors of charity to more radical supporters of change (Duffield 2007:25).

Donors have addressed peripheral conflicts to varying degrees in Aceh, Sri Lanka, Mindanao, the Far South of Thailand and elsewhere. A combination of the factors described in this chapter appears to explain their interest in peacebuilding. First, as already explained with reference to Aceh and Sri Lanka, aid agencies require an amenable recipient policy environment that often includes government pursuit of a negotiated peace. More contextual institutional political issues, such as the positive relationship with recipient government representatives that enabled World Bank staff to launch peacebuilding initiatives in Aceh, are also significant.

Second, aid agencies are more able to respond where political motivations to do so exist within donor governments. Where parties to a conflict are considering negotiations, donor countries may be able to bolster rather than damage diplomatic relations by supporting peacebuilding objectives, as occurred in Aceh in 2005-2006. Elsewhere, donor interest in promoting peace may result from perceived global security risks associated with continued conflict (as seen in Mindanao), although such concerns often lead to efforts to support governments militarily rather than find a negotiated peace, as has already been explained. Donor concern may stem from a range of other influences and interests: international or domestic advocacy from vocal diaspora populations (for example Sri Lankans in Europe and North America), religious groups (for example Western concern for minority Christian groups in Burma) and human rights campaigners. Certain national contexts encourage broad concern for minority groups and victims of state oppression, including Sweden's background of solidarity (Danielson & Wohlgemuth 2005) and a Canadian vision of internationalism as part of its own national identity (Munton & Keating 2001). Japan's violent modern history and consequent limits on foreign security interventions lead to promotion of human security principles as part of closer associations between aid and peacebuilding (Tan 2005, Gilson 2007). Some countries (Norway, Switzerland) and organizations (the UN, the European Union) actively pursue opportunities to associate themselves with peace processes, employing donor assistance as well as diplomatic interventions in the process.[131]

Third, aid agencies' overall approaches to development affect their ability to address peacebuilding concerns. Agencies that diverge from narrow perspectives of development based around aggregated national or even global goals and consider aspects of horizontal inequality are more likely to address peripheral conflict. Many donors have sufficiently nuanced perspectives to commission political analyses that often address issues of group marginalization, commonly leading to new initiatives or shifts in country programme priorities (Landell Mills et al. 2007, United Nations undated). Elsewhere, Unicef's focus on minority groups in Thailand is a result of a partial reorientation of the agency around a broad vision of child rights and related issues of justice rather than concentrating on narrower poverty

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[130] Promoters of specific issues within aid agencies comment on the ability to take forward agendas within institutions but the subsequent failure to 'mainstream' them into operations (see Moser & Moser 2005).
[131] See for example Goodhand, Klem & Sorbo (2011) on Norway's role in Sri Lanka.

reduction goals.[132] Foundations like the German state-funded Stiftungen have developed programmes that stem from their focus on political aims around justice and equality rather than socioeconomic development in many countries. This, along with their non-government status, enables engagement in fields of peacebuilding or promotion of equality that most aid agencies, including many development-motivated NGOs, struggle to enter.[133]

In other cases, agencies need to be subdivided or considered in depth in order to understand their internal variety and often their contradictions. Motivations for allocating development funding change over time and space in response to many variables. Institutional factors including rivalry and market positioning between and even within agencies (Cooley & Ron 2002), pressure to disburse budgets, and changes in aid delivery mechanisms (Gibson & al. 2005) all make critical differences to agency orientation. For the World Bank in Aceh, the unusually prominent role of their social development unit that emerged through circumstance rather than design created space to address peripheral conflict. Aid agency staff state that key individuals took advantage of specific circumstances to devise a set of peacebuilding interventions. Prominent figures include the long-term head of the World Bank's social development unit in Indonesia and the country director at the time, along with staff based in Aceh from 2005.[134]

3.4   The interface: donors and recipients

Analysis of patterns of aid interventions also need to consider how donor officials' actions are shaped at the interface with government officials. The interface is viewed here as a significant influence on international agencies' efforts to address peripheral conflicts in contexts where the scope to operate is restricted by state institutions, especially at the national level. Although the term interface commonly refers in development studies to interactions between extension workers and farmers (see Long 2001:73), the higher level that is addressed here is particularly significant in assessing why foreign aid agencies often struggle to address peripheral conflicts.

One of the defining elements of foreign aid is the complexity of the relationship between the donor and the recipient state.[135] It affects how aid is provided and what impact it has. This relationship, or interface, is an upstream issue occurring before implementation with considerable influence on subsequent outcomes (Eyben 2006). The interface described here is in essence a bureaucratic and centralized encounter between aid agency staff and senior recipient government officials, despite some donor promotion of wider participation and critical analysis of domestic political systems. Studies of development practice often focus on interface dynamics where bureaucrats and officials meet,

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[132] Information from interview with Andrew Morris and interview (a) with Unicef Sector Specialist. See also Ch.9.

[133] See Ch.6.

[134] Interviews with World Bank Official 1, Robert Wrobel, Anthea Mulakala, and interview (b) with World Bank Sector Specialist 2. Also Barron & Burke (2008).

[135] Ch.2 explains how the nature of the state is of great importance in situations with marked horizontal inequalities (see Stewart et al. 2008:295). The default position holds that aid flows as a result of *"Mutual trust and shared values"* (Edgren 2003), but the reality is normally very different.

especially in Asian countries with low levels of dependency on aid flows and relatively strong government bureaucracies (Mosse 2005, Gibson et al. 2005:61, Jerve & Hansen 2008).

As is explained below with reference to peripheral conflicts, foreign aid typically requires the support and action of figures in the recipient government in order for funds to be transferred and spent. Even donor support for non-governmental organizations often needs government approval. For foreign aid providers, the way in which they interact with recipient governments affects how they operate and is of considerable importance in determining whether they address peripheral conflicts. As seen in Chapter Two, many governments of countries experiencing peripheral conflicts do not demonstrate sustained commitment to finding peaceful and just solutions to violent unrest. In such situations the interface can effectively pull those foreign aid agencies interested in addressing peripheral conflict away from programmes or policies aiming to promote sustainable peace.[136]

The donor-recipient encounter is typically highly centralized and excludes those living in peripheral conflict areas. As seen in the previous chapter, national political processes including the practice of foreign aid provision tend to marginalize local elites and wider populations from peripheral conflict areas. Donors normally work to design and establish country programmes and projects with elite planning institutions or sections within government ministries such as the Indonesian national development planning agency BAPPENAS or the External Relations Department in Sri Lanka. Many such agencies were originally established with foreign aid assistance, providing donors with a national counterpart in order to enable them to disburse funds.[137]

Interface patterns are hard to research. For example, donors and governments rarely publish or even disclose information on programmes that are proposed but turned down.[138] Various anthropological and political studies examine policy level interactions, considering the roles of donor and recipient bureaucrats in aid relationships as a subset of broader appraisals of the anthropology of organizations (Wright 1994, Verlot 2001, Eyben 2003). Specific studies of aid relationships explore how donors interact with governments, with emphasis often given to 'bargains' agreed in private between officials on both sides (Jerve et al. 2008). In an insightful and detailed study, David Potter considers the tactics of Japanese donor representatives and government 'partners' in Thailand and the Philippines. In both countries, donor and recipient officials predict the other party's position through anticipatory bargaining processes that enable common ground to be reached. Donors and the government habitually manoeuvre around each other to find mutually acceptable approaches, anticipating each other's positions and adapting accordingly (1996).

Economists have addressed 'ownership problems', with external agendas that shape foreign aid rarely fitting domestic priorities (Martens 2005). In considering the 'broken feedback loop' that stops donors

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[136] See Mosse (2005) on how aid officials' interactions with counterparts can direct programme implementation and even policy formulation.
[137] DTEC, the Thai equivalent, was established in this way. See Ch.8.
[138] See Eyben et al. (2007) for an account of the difficulties of researching this field. Many reports that address sensitive issues are not published (Cohen 1995).

responding to domestically defined needs, Elinor Ostrom and others have emphasized the importance of listening to final beneficiaries themselves rather than the more immediate recipients that donors engage with, typically central government representatives (Ostrom et al. 2002:251). However, as seen in the peripheral conflict cases of Sri Lanka and Aceh, donors effectively work predominantly alongside one party to the conflict, with international recognition of state sovereignty and legitimacy normally being far stronger than recognition of rebel groups. Donors that do wish to consult representatives of non-state conflict actors face significant problems. In many peripheral conflicts (such as the Far South of Thailand), insurgents and their leaders remain underground. In other cases, even where some leaders are openly identifiable and at times accessible, diplomatic and legal barriers limit access. American foreign aid officials had limited scope to engage with representatives of the LTTE in Sri Lanka after the USA designated them a foreign terrorist organization in 1997.[139]

Aid agencies' engagements with representatives from peripheral areas who are not affiliated with rebel groups are also rarely comprehensive. Aid bargaining processes between donors and recipients are usually restricted to capital cities, especially in those developing nation states with relatively strong bureaucracies and centralized authority that are often affected by peripheral conflict. Typical donor practices reinforce this trend.[140] In Aceh, as has already been explained, aid agencies needed to broker agreement with central government actors before they could approach local figures. In other peripheral conflict cases too, the local interface between field worker and farmer or even negotiations with local officials tend only to take place if central government approval is granted first.[141] Efforts by donors to consult beyond a limited number of central government counterparts do occur, although a tendency to revert to norm is strong. IMF and World Bank-led Poverty Reduction Strategies that were introduced in 2000 included 'civil society' consultations in order to move decision-making away from the centre. In some places this was considered at least partially effective (Eyben 2004). Consultations with non-governmental actors were never obligatory in middle-income nation states, however, and even in poorer recipient states were widely seen as superficial in practice (VENRO 2003, Curran 2005). In many places the World Bank and other donors that followed its lead subsequently downgraded civil involvement in planning to a minor role (World Bank/IMF 2005). Stewart et al. (2008:298) find that ethnicity and horizontal inequality are particularly absent from Poverty Reduction Strategies, even in countries that are evidently heterogeneous.

Peripheral conflicts regularly involve politically sensitive issues.[142] Acute concern over foreign involvement is apparent not only in insular states like North Korea or Burma whose governments actively resist external involvement in their internal affairs, but also many others on relatively good terms with Western powers: Indonesia, India, Thailand and so on (Newman 2009). Key departments within recipient governments are still less likely to accept foreign intervention in the field of peacebuilding than in many others. This chapter has already described how in Aceh only a trickle of

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[139] Vaughn (2011). See also Goodhand, Klem & Sorbo (2011).
[140] See Ch.3 (Part 3.5) on aid practice.
[141] See Ch.8 on this process in Thailand.
[142] See Ch.2.

international involvement in conflict-related programming was allowed by the Indonesian Government both before and immediately after the huge international humanitarian response to the tsunami of December 2004. Following the peace agreement of August 2005, more donors gradually began to work on peacebuilding issues. This involved several levels of protracted negotiation with government in Aceh and in the capital, Jakarta.[143]

Gradually, as Indonesian Government concern over external interference lessened, a select number of donors that had maintained close relationships with the government throughout were allowed to address peacebuilding-related issues. The projects that emerged reflected the interests and practical capacities of both donors and the government. Donors continued to keep away from issues like human rights that were controversial in the circumstances. They avoided logos and signs at project sites so that work would appear to be government-funded.[144] Despite strong international goodwill in the aftermath of the tsunami and additional donor resources made available specifically for addressing the conflict, the government still chose to pay for most peacebuilding- related work out of the national budget (Barron & Burke 2008).

In many cases the sensitivity of the issues concerned and the pressure for donors to maintain a good aid relationship means that efforts to address conflict may be ineffective. International funding for the Mahaweli project in Sri Lanka is one such case.[145] American and Canadian officials tried in the 1970s to improve the ethnic balance of future beneficiaries in the huge irrigation and settlement scheme, but their complaints were mostly ineffective and the project went ahead. Efforts to change its form had little impact given the broader political and economic development agendas agreed by the government and donors alike. Mahaweli consumed a huge share of national public investment once work began in the early 1980s, with sizeable donor support. It was regarded by Sri Lankan politicians as a symbol of national identity. The unequal settlement schemes under the project have since been identified as a salient example of government action that fuelled resentment and laid the ground for the emergence of the Tamil Tigers (Herring 2003).

Where foreign aid does flow, bureaucratic elites in relatively strong central government structures have considerable influence over how aid is used, especially in middle-income environments (Goodhand & Walton 2009:315). Powerful figures and key government agencies in recipient nation states are able to negate, accommodate, and even direct high levels of international involvement for their own ends (Ottaway & Lacina 2003, Mallarangeng & van Tuijl 2004). Even if technocrats operate transparently they often back policies that reflect the typical urban bias of modernization including the marginalization of peripheral minorities (see Harrison 2001, Barnett & Zuercher 2008). Understanding these processes and the responses of aid agencies requires case-specific analysis.[146]

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[143] Burke (2008), Merikallio (2006).
[144] See Huber (2004) on international avoidance of human rights issues in Aceh. Also Barron & Burke (2006).
[145] See Ch.3 (Part 3.3).
[146] Later empirical chapters on the Far South of Thailand provide such data.

For aid recipients, donors represent a potential supply of funds but are commonly also perceived as a risk to sovereignty. A critique of foreign aid as imperialism that appears radical in the West has long been mainstream in much of the rest of the world, with little need to disprove expectations of donors as purveyors of *"Disinterested international munificence"* (Hayter 1971:5). Fear of interference related to legacies of colonialism, of nationalism founded around struggles for independence, and of postcolonial American or occasionally Soviet impositions run deep in the popular psyche (Piew 1971, Buruma & Margalit 2004). The Indonesian military, for example, only accepted the intervention of the international Aceh Monitoring Mission when it was agreed that neighbouring Asian countries would contribute up to half of the monitors. European countries were seen as too interfering and UN involvement was wholly unacceptable to a military stung by the earlier separation of East Timor (Barron & Burke 2008:20-21). Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the Malaysian Government has regularly banned NGO as well as donors and United Nations agencies from operating inside the country (Tan 2005). Thailand has acted similarly (Killick 1998:67), while Burma reluctantly and belatedly allowed international aid after Typhoon Nargis in 2008 on the condition that ASEAN rather than the UN or the World Bank assumed a coordinating role (Bellamy 2010:152).

Rosalind Eyben et al. (2007) explain how Western donor representatives, with technical perspectives and a belief in universal improvement, fail to grasp that they are regularly viewed by recipient governments as a threat to sovereignty and a continuation of a colonial tradition. Technical assistance, for example, is regarded by many donors as a key step for reforming structures and institutions. For recipients meanwhile, a foreign expert may be accepted into a government department as a necessary if unwanted condition of wider financial assistance, rather than as an agreed strategy to achieve results (ibid.:171-2; also Eyben 2006).[147]

More forceful efforts to influence reluctant central government elites led to the rise – and subsequent fall – of conditionality as a donor policy. Its overall achievements have been mixed at best, with evaluations suggesting that stipulations of what governments need to do in order to continue receiving aid rarely achieve their purpose (Killick 1998). This is especially the case in countries that are not typically dependent on donor funds, including many experiencing peripheral conflict. Aside from important debate over the flaws of the structural adjustment policies to which conditions have in many cases been attached, most political or conflict issues are seen as sovereign issues outside the ostensibly apolitical remit of the IMF, the World Bank and other key donors. Where conditions beyond macroeconomic policy are attached to aid provision, they regularly fail to be implemented – even in nation states that depend on donor resources.[148] Efforts to apply conditionalities over issues linked with peacebuilding confront a lack of interest on both sides of the interface (Boyce 2002:1031). Donor countries are often insufficiently motivated to damage relationships by insisting that commitments be honoured, while recipient governments have shown themselves able to adopt and adapt terms attached

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[147] On technical assistance in Cambodia see Godfrey et al. (2000) and in Indonesia see Hamilton-Hart (2006).
[148] For example, donor conditionality designed to reduce forest clearance in Cambodia has not significantly shifted government policy (Le Billon 2000).

to aid to reflect existing dominant domestic political interests (Killick 1997, World Bank 1998, Orlandini 2003). The conditions necessary for conditionality to work on peacebuilding are simply not present in most cases (Goodhand & Sedra 2007:15). Donor promotion of conditionalities as a lever to secure a peace process in Sri Lanka from 2003 to 2005 failed. Neither the LTTE rebels nor the government accepted the terms, and donors were not themselves fully committed (Frerks & Klem 2006).

Donors have over time dropped many elements of conditionality and aimed to focus on supporting rather than instructing aid recipients (White & Dijkstra 2003). More recent post-conditionality approaches commonly return to the earlier donor stress on statebuilding, along with what are presented as recipient-led agendas: moving from 'donorship' to 'ownership' (Oxfam 2004, OECD 2006). However, in doing so donors have not necessarily gained greater understanding of how the relationship with recipient governments operates. It is argued below that associated recent trends including the promotion of aid 'partnerships' and 'harmonization' further limit the scope of aid agencies to address controversial issues like peripheral conflict.

The notion of an 'aid partnership' between donor and recipient has become a near-universal mantra in aid agencies.[149] Donor-government aid partnerships appear to offer efficient ways to deliver aid, reducing 'transaction costs' by avoiding strings of projects and associated time-consuming negotiations. However, although aid partnerships may enable transfers of funds or skills that further existing dominant development trajectories, they are less likely to change policy or practice.[150] As already shown, ownership and partnerships are in reality more issues of brokering common ground, or agreeing on aligned interests, than sharing the same agenda. Given differences between donors and recipients, it is impractical to expect fully shared interests except in narrow technical areas. Efforts to address issues relating to peripheral conflicts are made particularly hard by expectations that consensual partnerships can be formed given that the aid recipient (i.e. state institutions) is often a violent protagonist. As explorations of the partnership agenda have noted, considered relationship-building is a more realistic approach than promotion of full partnerships (Khan & Sharma 2001, Eyben 2006).

Critiques of donor partnerships tend to concentrate on the different forms of direct and indirect authority that they bestow on the donor, given asymmetric power relationships and a relatively disempowered recipient (Harrison 2001, Crawford 2003, Abrahamsen 2004). Studies of aid partnerships in Asia, where many recipient governments have the economic independence and institutional capacity to decline or re-channel aid to suit their interests, take a different approach by examining the interface closely rather than assuming that donors dominate relationships (Jerve et al. 2008). Where the state is relatively empowered, the risk may be more of what Maxwell and Riddell (1998:258) term an *"Inflexible partnership"* than of external imposition. In inflexible partnerships, donors support recipient governments to pursue policies that they themselves do not approve of.

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[149] See ADB (2007), UNDP (2009b), United Nations (undated), World Bank (2009). Also Ch.8.
[150] The concept of a partnership between donor and recipient is not new. See Pearson (1969), OECD (2003).

A concurrent trend towards donor 'harmonization' further limits the scope to adapt aid provision.[151] Stemming from a desire to end the coordination problems that undermined conditionality, common agenda-setting by groups of aid agencies alongside the recipient government shifts aid delivery 'upstream'. It moves the emphasis from individual projects towards sectoral approaches and even from sectors towards generalized budgetary assistance (Foster & Fozzard 2000, OECD 2006). This shift places still more emphasis on the relationship between donors and the central government. It means that donor officials have even less incentive to meet anyone outside a small group of foreigners and senior bureaucrats. In countries where policymaking is already an exclusive domain, harmonization risks constructing a lowest common denominator that reinforces the power of ruling elites and makes it still harder to tackle peacebuilding issues (Eyben 2007). By focusing the interface on a single central level, it restricts the more sensitive approaches necessary to support domestic advocates of change (Brocklesby, Hobley & Scott-Villiers 2010), as is explained in the following section.[152]

3.5   Constraints in practice

The universal difficulty of turning plans (even if agreed at the donor-government interface) into practice is a key determinant of outcomes rather than a secondary issue and should be considered as such in explaining how donors act (Koponen 2004, Richards 2005:18).[153] The practical challenge of implementing peacebuilding policies affects the scope of donors to address peripheral conflicts and needs to be integrated into analysis alongside other considerations. Many practices common to aid agencies limit their scope to address peripheral conflicts, while the common properties of peripheral conflicts create particular practical challenges. This section addresses these challenges by looking at the difficulty of adopting conflict-sensitive approaches, before considering how institutional practice limits the scope for positive involvement in peripheral conflicts even where donors are 'sensitive' to the problems. It then considers what practical steps enable donors to promote peacebuilding given the common properties of peripheral conflicts. The section builds on literature from the sub-discipline of development practice that has evolved over several decades and has specific relevance to international aid agencies.

International donor guidelines state that agencies should *"...systematically consider the positive and negative impact of interventions on the conflict context in which they are undertaken..."* (OECD 2007). Many donors have responded with policy initiatives, although simply promoting conflict-sensitive policies or pointing out how conflict stops attainment of Millennium Development Goals does not guarantee any changes to practice (Fukuda-Parr 2010:124)**.** One wide-ranging review found that donors rarely provide any internal sanction for neglecting to perform the necessary assessments to ensure conflict-sensitive programming (Woodrow & Chigas 2009). It also found that the practical steps needed

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[151] The content of donor harmonization is based around the OECD Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005, and is associated with the UN Millennium Development Goals. See also the Accra Declaration (OECD 2010b) on achieving the Millennium Development Goals in crisis settings.
[152] See also Ch.9.
[153] On implementation challenges see also Parnwell (2003:100) and Paris (2010:346).

are rarely adopted, with donor institutions' own practices often being inappropriate for difficult peacebuilding agendas.

Donor country office representatives spend a high proportion of their time attending meetings in central government ministries, ingratiating themselves with the senior civil servants or politicians on whose goodwill their projects depend.[154] Aid programmes often stem from the relationships forged through such work, the fulcrum of turning wider policy into practice. This process discourages donors from addressing controversial issues, especially ones that are only of concern to marginal and peripheral groups with little access to the donor-recipient interface. On a personal and professional basis, strong incentives discourage raising difficult issues that will make a complicated job harder. Through pragmatic self-censorship, donors avoid challenging topics.[155] As David Mosse (2005) describes, developmental realities are commonly presented by institutions in ways that suit existing capabilities or agendas, enabling them to fulfil new peacebuilding policy obligations without considering the more fundamental changes that would be required to address them meaningfully.[156] Various researchers have explored how aid agency staff justify ongoing aid programmes by denying the reality of conflict and its structural causes in Nepal, Uganda, and Sudan (Caddell & Yanacopoulos 2006, Marriage 2006). This is in part a logical response to the institutional incentives that have already been described, but can also be interpreted more psychologically. Denial of contradictory stances and hypocritical actions form part of everyday living strategies (Cohen 2001:57, Demick 2010).

Eyben (2006b) links such patterns of denial with the tendency of bureaucracies to privilege ethics of technical disinterestedness in which individuals are considered as uniform objects. Officials in aid agencies or recipient government institutions nonetheless inevitably reproduce many of the attributes of the society and the institutions of which they are part. Discriminatory attitudes to restive peripheral minority populations are therefore reproduced by officials while being presented as part of neutral technical management.[157]

On other occasions, donors would like to address peripheral conflict but the practical changes required to take forward a peacebuilding agenda that falls outside narrow socioeconomic development aims are a significant barrier. Aid itself generally consists of a fairly limited array of inputs: funding, training, construction of buildings or infrastructure, and on occasion more imaginative ways of transferring skills or ideas including policy advice. It is in many senses a blunt practical tool. Research has explored and documented how perverse incentives and constraints within donor institutions and across the interface limit what aid can achieve, even for donors that prioritize human rights and justice like the official Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) (Gibson et al. 2005).

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[154] In addition to the interviews conducted on aid actors in Thailand as part of this research, see Barron & Burke (2008) on aid actors in Aceh, and Burke & Mulakala (2011) on aid actors in Sri Lanka.

[155] Aid practitioners working on country programmes comment on the restricted nature of their daily practices that concentrate on finding ways to transfer resources expediently. See Eyben (2006).

[156] Such practical concentration on official transactions by donor officials reinforces an approach that has been described as: *"...an understanding of the world that trivialises the significance of society, culture and power as forces that shape history and individual lives"* (Eyben 2006b).

[157] On discriminatory official attitudes to peripheral minorities see Dwyer (2005), Chaiwat (2005).

Large projects in tune with recipient government objectives are likely to suit donor bureaucracies, enabling loans and grants to be disbursed faster than the more complex, politically sensitive and devolved approaches typically needed to work on peripheral conflicts. Some donors overtly recognize this, aiming for example to reduce the 'transaction costs' of financial transfers almost as an end in itself given widespread criticism of wasteful expenditure.[158] Donor systems established to ensure that standards are met further reduce the flexibility to respond to specific circumstances. Management tools like logical frameworks prescribe measurable, contained project aims (Gasper 2000). Social, indigenous and environmental 'safeguards' are conducted during project appraisal to ensure that negative implications are minimized, in effect implementing more cumbersome procedure in order to protect aid flows and at times limit some unintended damage.[159] These technologies have been criticized for their tendency to promote narrow, technical solutions to complex political problems (Dale 2003).[160] The burgeoning field of peacebuilding and development has generated its own array of management tools – guidelines, checklists, monitoring frames and training programmes – that also in practice limit what agencies can do.

Such management tools are institutionally useful, promoting application of conflict-aware policies without risking any loss of control by devolving management. Chains of accountability that stretch back to capital cities in donor nations lead senior managers of many agencies to assert and maintain centralized institutional control. In conflict areas, travel bans and security risks can compound these problems. Where individuals find ways of crossing these barriers, rapid staff rotation ensures a rapid return to the status quo. DFID, the UK development agency, has repeatedly been told through internal and external management reviews that it should enable localized responses by committing staff to longer international postings and investing in language skills, but it has not done so. Practical constraints of limited administration budgets and overall human resource planning reinforce central interest in maintaining control.[161] In this way, the structure of aid agencies can inhibit the localized responses to circumstance that appear to enable engagement in peripheral conflict environments.[162]

Involvement in peripheral conflicts generally requires modifications to aid agencies' standard institutional practice, the first of three common elements of donor practice enabling them to address peripheral conflicts that are identified here. The challenges of tackling institutional change have been addressed in many sectors and disciplines. Significant issues in this context include an avoidance of guidelines and prescribed approaches, placing more emphasis on devolved responsibility and the scope to find specific solutions or build local relationships. Long-term evidence suggests that devolved and process-based approaches can assist donor efforts to work on challenging issues. The value of localizing

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[158] Public communication stresses the need to be efficient with aid expenditure. See Duncan (2010).

[159] More significant departure from, rather than protection of, mainstream development models remains elusive in the absence of clear political backing from both donor and recipient governments (Hall 2007:169).

[160] For other examples see Uphoff (2003) on as US-funded project in Sri Lanka, Porter, Allen & Thompson (1991) on an NGO programme in Kenya, or Mosse (2005) on a UK-funded project in India.

[161] Personal communication with Sue Unsworth (Institute of Development Studies, Sussex), April 2009.

[162] Some development practitioners refer to 'creative deviance', or the space for individual staff members to devise interventions that reflect circumstantial opportunity and specific context (Discussions with Tom Parks and Nat Colletta, The Asia Foundation, February 2012).

decision-making and moving away from rigid blueprints is well recognized in the aid practice literature, although often poorly integrated into aid agency structures (Salmen 1987, Rondinelli 1993). These lessons are especially relevant to peripheral conflict contexts in which relevant aid interventions need to move beyond the standard aid interface already described. Process-based approaches that engage with a wider range of actors enable programmes to be built up over time, taking into account and responding to conditions and perceptions at both local and national levels. The participatory approaches undertaken in eastern Sri Lanka and described by Norman Uphoff (2003) are one example of an approach in a conflict-prone area that puts such lessons into practice at the local level.

Experienced operational specialists express scepticism of technocratic approaches to highly political issues, for example the emerging field of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), preferring to stress political dialogue rather than technical programming (Knight 2008). Those donors trying to work on conflict issues in Aceh during the peace process achieved some success through combining a capital city presence with strong field capacity. Given sufficient devolved authority, it was possible over time to build experience and negotiate ways of engaging with the local government and other partners on the ground including former rebel leaders. The World Bank's KDP programme was applied and adapted alongside other initiatives to provide local-level post-conflict assistance (Barron & Burke 2008, Multi-Stakeholder Review 2009).

A second common element of donor practice when addressing peripheral conflicts is carefully considered engagement with the state, occasionally in combination with support for non-governmental bodies. Analysis of aid practice underlines the importance of committing sufficient time and resources to find willing partners within government and to gain understanding of where the boundaries lie (Potter 1996, Eyben 2006, Jerve & Hansen 2008). Such commitments can in cases help agencies achieve enough 'common ground' to gain government permission for work addressing peripheral conflict. This typically involves laborious and continual 'interface management', in cases spending years building contacts with central government institutions. Further contacts must be fostered with relevant line ministries or local levels of government.[163] These laborious practical steps receive little attention outside tight donor circles. They are especially important in situations where achieving the objective of aid provision involves finding ways to change elements of government policy and practice, as is often the case in peripheral conflict contexts.[164]

Selective negotiation over time on specific issues also requires strong understanding of the concerns and sentiments of state officials, including a degree of self-reflection on how donors themselves are perceived (De Herdt & Bastiaensen 2004, Eyben et al. 2007). In peripheral conflicts it also requires the flexibility to respond rapidly to shifting political circumstances and seize opportunities to work with different officials or institutions, in cases proactively seeking and supporting incremental changes to

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[163] Donor officials commonly mention these steps. Information from interviews with UNDP Official 1, Jean-Philippe Thouard, UNDP Official 4, World Bank Official 3. Also Eyben (2006).
[164] Ch.2 (Part 2.7) explains what incremental steps towards addressing peripheral conflict might be viable in the absence of wider support from the recipient government.

government policy or practice or backing specific government agencies rather than waiting for official invitations or full-scale peace processes. The work of The Asia Foundation in building support for local government reforms addressing the Far South of Thailand is one such example.[165] In cases, personal relationships underpin involvement: the International Organization of Migration's work addressing conflict in Aceh was partly made possible through good personal dynamics between their head of mission for Indonesia and Hamid Awaluddin, the minister of justice and human rights.[166]

Breaking down a government into its constituent parts often reveals certain fields of activity or government departments that share common ground with donors (Potter 1996). Detailed policy analysis and lengthy experience helps show where change is likely. It also demonstrates the value of indigenous peacebuilding approaches above generic international models (MacGinty 2008). For example, sub-units within various ministries of the Thai Government are seen by some donors as sharing their own policy objectives on minority rights.[167] Similarly, domestic non-governmental bodies can use donor funding to build on entry points that are not too threatening to the state, yet still conduct advocacy on challenging issues. Many aid agencies would need to alter their practice considerably in order to conduct careful interface management of this sort, for instance taking a far more realistic approach to donor harmonization and aid partnerships.

Investment in knowledge and contextual understanding is a third common element of practice. Stewart et al. (2005) find that the first requirement for devising policies that address excluded groups is careful diagnosis to identify the most salient characteristics. Closer reading of the political incentives of local actors and the ways in which they interact with external interventions are seen to produce some useful initiatives (Richmond 2008), enabling locally relevant responses and avoiding universally applied and technical views of governance or unidimensional promotion of multi-party democracy. Various aid agencies prioritize knowledge and local understanding, whether formally developed as applied research or built up through long-term local experience. The Asia Foundation has built programmes with local NGO partners on the basis of decades of work and networks of contacts in many countries. Staff within the World Bank invested heavily in research in Indonesia, while Unicef commonly commissions detailed situational analyses.[168]

These steps enable aid agencies to identify and respond to specific opportunities that may arise or disappear as the dynamics of peripheral conflicts and national politics shift over time (even where underlying horizontal inequalities commonly persist over long periods).

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[165] See Ch.9.
[166] Discussions with IOM project manager, Banda Aceh, March 2006.
[167] Information from interviews with UNDP Official 4, Andrew Morris, and interview (c) with Tom Parks.
[168] See Ch.9 on Unicef's situational analyses in Thailand.

3.6   Chapter conclusion

Overall, existing research shows that although foreign aid can play a variety of valuable roles in peacebuilding it has only done so to a limited extent in peripheral conflicts. Explaining the pattern of foreign aid involvement with peripheral conflict is not straightforward and is worth examining in closer detail. Rather than being explained as a result of ignorance or blindness on the part of donors, as writing on horizontal inequalities has tended to do, this chapter has shown how common structural tendencies of aid agencies make it especially challenging for them to address peripheral conflicts. Many donors fail to address peripheral conflict and in cases their programmes may reinforce existing inequalities, as Stewart et al. (2008:315) and others have found. Evidence from peripheral conflicts suggests that donors are not necessarily less progressive than states in this regard (ibid.:297). Influential domestic political actors in states experiencing peripheral conflict regularly have little interest in attending to the concerns of marginalized minority peripheral populations or pursuing steps towards a negotiated peace that may challenge constructions of national identity and existing political structures. They may also have strong reservations about foreign involvement in highly sensitive issues, as this chapter has shown.

Foreign aid officials, for their part, also have many reasons to avoid addressing peripheral conflict even if peacebuilding is a stated global policy priority of their organization. The reasons that lead aid agencies away from peripheral conflict have been described in this chapter through sections explaining the motivations, interface negotiations, and practices of aid agencies. Barriers are created partly but not only by a lack of political interest in donor nations. Even where foreign aid is applied to promote universal goals rather than as part of a donor nation's self-interested foreign policy, implementers struggle to avoid relying on state institutions for the delivery of their aims and commonly restrict interventions to technical issues that sit within a narrow and predominantly socioeconomic vision of what constitutes development.

Given the politically embedded nature of horizontal inequalities associated with peripheral conflict, relevant interventions often involve efforts to change policies or political structures within the central state rather than simply funding area-based projects or backing government schemes.[169] Even basic service provision, proposed by Stewart et al. as a fairly simple measure that foreign aid can support, can be highly sensitive given difficult relations between local people and state employees. The middle-income status of many countries experiencing peripheral conflict furthers the lack of relevance of many traditional development approaches. Many donor interventions do aim to promote changes in policy or government practice rather than simply transfer resources and expertise, but the steps typically needed to address peripheral conflicts are particularly challenging. Approaching controversial issues of political marginalization and national identity rather than sticking to more consensual socioeconomic interventions risks damaging relationships with the recipient state and is harder to implement in practice, whether working with central institutions or aiming to engage in the periphery. Where there is no ongoing peace process to support, this leaves aid agencies with little room for engagement. At the

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[169] See examples in Ch.9.

same time, a relatively small-scale conflict that has little impact on national development statistics and generates little international political attention is easily passed over with few if any repercussions for aid agencies themselves.

There are, however, many instances of interventions that have had a positive role in reducing tensions or redressing the perceived inequalities that typically lie behind peripheral conflicts. Aid agencies are more likely to find ways to establish relevant programmes when recipient governments are pursuing some form of negotiated settlement, as occurred in Aceh for example from 2005, or on a wider scale during the aborted peace process in Sri Lanka. Elsewhere, however, incremental initiatives that promote change in the periphery or centrally can also be supported, as a small number of donors have achieved in the Far South of Thailand.[170]

Most often the opportunities for involvement are relatively slim, though, and require specific efforts and attributes on the part of aid agencies. As has been explained, agencies (or units within agencies) that do address peripheral conflicts typically diverge from mainstream socioeconomic approaches and recognize horizontal inequalities as structural problems. Continual changes since the 1960s have stimulated many different ways of promoting development. Some donors regularly move away from a state-centred focus on national economic goals towards a wider agenda addressing human rights, justice, social exclusion, inequality and democracy. They also display practical properties that enable them to convert their motivations into interventions, adopting practices that have long been recommended by development specialists addressing conflict environments (Uvin 2002, Esman 2003). Evidence presented in this chapter from Indonesia and elsewhere supports development practice literature criticizing management tools that reduce flexibility. Aid agencies that devolve responsibility to the local level are more likely to take advantage of circumstantial opportunities that arise. One especially critical step in peripheral conflict environments is the ability to manage the interface with state actors, both to gain permission for engagement and to find reformist bodies within government or elsewhere that can be backed. Modifications to aid agencies' standard institutional practice, carefully considered engagement with the state, and investment in knowledge and contextual understanding all appear to be important practical steps.

Given that aid programmes aiming to address peripheral conflict are usually implemented through domestic institutions, assume many different forms, and often support incremental change rather than direct tangible impact it is impossible to evaluate and attribute precisely their overall impact on peacebuilding. This research does not try to do so, concentrating instead on the design and implementation of donor approaches. When looking at peripheral conflicts, examples presented in this chapter and more detailed material on the Far South of Thailand presented in subsequent chapters suggest that, overall, much foreign aid does not concern itself directly with peripheral conflicts, while donors that do aim to address peripheral conflict confront a range of barriers that limit their effectiveness.

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[170] See Ch.9.

Chapter Four   Methodology

4.1   Overview

This chapter outlines the overall methodological approach before explaining key elements of the research process. Answering the research questions described in Chapter One involved building an understanding of the conflict in the Far South of Thailand and its implications for foreign aid agencies, before exploring how and why aid agencies address the conflict. Primary data was gathered chiefly through semi-structured interviews with foreign aid agency staff and their counterparts.

Emphasis is placed on understanding policy level processes rather than on evaluating impact.[171] The research approach avoids a narrow focus on project level outcomes, asking instead how and why aid agencies choose to address peripheral conflicts. Assessments of impact also run into many methodological problems over attribution.[172] This is especially the case in contexts like the Far South of Thailand, where at the time of research only a few foreign aid agencies were funding small-scale initiatives designed to influence wider processes and promote policy change rather than generate clearly defined and direct impact.

This research follows an iterative process that built a theoretical basis over time through combining both inductive and theoretically derived approaches. Categories of aid agency and of emerging themes that explain the reasons why agencies act as they do emerged through the research process, as primary data from interviews and other sources were interpreted, drawing on a range of literature addressing development practice and building on anthropological as well as social science sources relevant to the field. At the same time, theory was applied to guide the sorting and classifying of information (i.e. analysis) into a structure that could be used to present meaningful argument (Lincoln & Guba 1985, Ragin 1994:55-57). The process, described in this chapter, draws on the methodology of grounded theory in its approach to building a framework through the research period, applying an open-ended and exploratory approach to interpreting emerging data (Glaser 1998, Pidgeon & Henwood 2004, Charmaz 2005).[173] The form and content of later, empirical chapters reflect this process.

4.2   Constructing knowledge and the positionality of the researcher

Qualitative social science research commonly recognizes that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with the world around them. Social constructions are typically best understood through interpretive approaches that stress the value of understanding the perceptions and experiences of humans (Bryman 2001, Flick 2009). Studies of horizontal inequality have adopted increasingly

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[171] Assessments of project level impact have been conducted globally for many years. Many practical lessons are by now broadly known but often ignored by aid agencies (Neufeldt 2007). It is therefore important to concentrate on the reasons why aid agencies adopt certain approaches. See the final parts of Ch.3 for detail.

[172] On correlation and causation challenges in the social sciences see King, Keohane & Verba (1994). On evaluation and development practice more specifically, see Marsden et al. (1994).

[173] This approach is also described as *"Concurrent analysis"* or *"Constant comparative method"* (Bowen 2008:138).

interpretive approaches. Ostby (2008:145) finds that more individualistic approaches to inequality do not recognize the importance and subtlety of constructed group identities, while Brown and Langer (2010) place greater emphasis on ethnographic approaches to constructions of identity in case studies of conflicts including the Far South of Thailand.[174]

In defining and responding to the main research questions, initial concerns included finding a way to ensure that the subjects of field research could be approached without objectifying them as abstract entities to be understood through the isolation and testing of specific variables.[175] Interview-based approaches are commonly used to understand different aspects of international development practice, penetrating official policy statements and project reporting. The approach followed here adopts elements of what Mosse describes as a 'new ethnography of development' that employs multiple research sites in analysing policy construction as well as the translation of policies into practice (2005). By using semi-structured interviews alongside a range of other sources of data in a grounded approach, the study recognizes the significance of people's perspectives and also considers the wider context that affects how perspectives are formed. People's perceptions of their own and others' ethnicity[176] are integrated into explanation of the context of the Far South of Thailand, while the importance of aid actors' perceptions when turning policies into practice (Shore & Wright 1997) is a main aspect of the primary research.

Emphasizing the roles of individual employees helps demonstrate how policies are translated into practice in ways that do not follow the functional expectations of development planning (Long 2001:25). At the same time, a narrow focus on the specifics of agency risks passing over the chiefly political drivers of development funding that are particularly significant when dealing with conflict, and the implications of foreign aid's close relationship with institutions of the recipient state (Gledhill 1994:134). Donors' agendas and ways of working are usually more accessible and amenable to fine-grained analysis than accounts of foreign aid's almost conspiratorial contribution to Western hegemony sometimes attest.[177]

In exploring how and why donors act, the research draws on existing studies that focus in particular on 'upstream' actions surrounding project formulation rather than on implementation at field level.[178] These include negotiations between donors and governments as well as agencies' internal bureaucratic processes. It is possible within this approach to consider the incentives or interests that donor institutions and their individual employees respond to, recognizing political process without seeing development practice as a singular expression of authority and control (Grillo 1997, Long 2001, Barbero et al. 2003).

The approach adopted was also influenced by the institutional Analysis and Development Framework used to appraise the Swedish official donor SIDA (Gibson et al. 2005). The research design adopts a

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[174] Anthropological investigations of foreign aid agencies typically adopt similar approaches. See for example Eyben (2004), Mosse (2005).
[175] See Eltringham (2003) on researching conflict in Rwanda.
[176] See Ch.2.
[177] For example Escobar (1995).
[178] See for example Porter, Allen & Thompson (1991), Pottier (1993), Murray Li (2007).

multidisciplinary and to some extent multi-level approach to look at operational situations, policy-making environments, and the wider rules or processes that shape aid agencies' responses. The emphasis here is less on applying quantitative and economic frameworks premised on expectations of rational economic action[179] than on understanding the institutional and political interests that affect donor decision-making in order to interpret data on donors' actions and views. Development institutions are seen here as multifaceted and internally contradictory institutions that continually shift their discourses and incorporate new ideas (Bebbington et al. 2007, Hilhorst 2003).

A significant implication of recognizing the constructed nature of knowledge is the need for a closer examination of the role and positionality of the researcher. It is especially important in research approaches with significant inductive elements that otherwise risk passing by the researcher's own influence on interpreting findings. Influential texts by Thomas Kuhn (1996[1962]) and Karin Knorr-Cetina (1999) have demonstrated how human subjectivity imposes itself on those scientific facts we take to be objective. In social science, outside the confines of experimental methodologies, the subjective role of the researcher is perhaps still greater than in natural science. Since anthropology's 'crisis of representation' (Clifford & Marcus 1986), the specific context of any research project, as well as the individual perception and past personal experiences of the researcher, are increasingly recognized. Cross-cultural environments further add to the complexity of research: development workers and researchers alike from former colonial powers need a clear awareness of the power imbalances that can affect their own perceptions and others' perceptions of them (Asad 1973, Ferguson 2005).

Recognizing subjectivity and adapting accordingly within a broadly humanistic frame of analysis helps maintain a rigorous approach to the greatest extent possible (see Marcus 1986, Aunger 1995). In this research, I recognize the unavoidable subjectivity of the researcher and its impact on the direction of this study, including my own background. After growing up in multicultural London, the earliest research projects I undertook explored issues of identity and social change. Subsequent professional development work, often addressing the interests of minority groups in both conflict-affected and peaceful settings, furthered these experiences. I have been a native within the institutional culture of various different international development agencies in Thailand and elsewhere, observing at close quarters the translation of global development policy into country level practice (Gupta & Ferguson 1997, Mosse 2005:11). My academic background in human geography and then anthropology, followed by professional development experience, encourages an emphasis on specificity, eschewing value-laden and pre-ordained design processes (Olivier de Sardan 2005).

The research process could not be perfectly replicated by another researcher in the classic objective scientific fashion. With personal connections often necessary to gain access to initial interviews with aid agencies, and inside knowledge of aid agencies an important asset in framing questions to elicit valuable answers, the dynamic subsequently established and data gained were in some regards a unique result of circumstance.

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[179] For example Ostrom (2005).

Accepting that knowledge is socially constructed and that the significance of facts commonly lies in how they are interpreted does not invalidate the value of knowledge itself, nor does it necessitate questioning the presence of a concrete reality. Some accounts and explanations of events are more plausible than others according to grounds that may be constructed but are broadly agreed in most academic environments (Seale 1999:471). Such grounds do not force research approaches into oppositional or stereotyped expectations of constructivism or rationalism, but provide considerable space for different approaches that negotiate between the two (Hammersley 1995, Fearon & Wendt 2002).

In short, addressing subjectivity should further rather than detract from methodological quality (Golafshani 2003). While recognizing the validity of different interpretations and interpretive methods, specific techniques can still support efforts to approach 'authenticity' even if a search for absolute 'truth' is forgone (Guba & Lincoln 1994). Formal scientific validation (accuracy of measurement) and reliability (the extent to which research 'tests' would yield the same results under repeated trials) require more flexible application in qualitative work, with emphasis placed on credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln 2005:24, Tracy 2010). The various strategies employed here to achieve methodological rigour are explained through this chapter.

4.3   Using case studies

An instrumental case study approach is employed, involving *"...an intensive study of a single unit or a small number of units [...] for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units"* (Gerring 2007:37).[180] The case study approach applied here operates on two levels, providing a degree of variety that responds to the research problem.[181] First, I selected the Far South of Thailand as a sole case of a specific peripheral conflict that shares many characteristics with other similar conflicts, enabling wider conclusions to be proposed. Second, I selected particular relevant aid agencies and projects within the case study. This was achieved through purposive sampling, sifting out relevant and *"Information-rich"*[182] cases from an initial assessment of all current international aid agencies in Thailand (see Figure 4c). The relatively small number but diverse range of international aid agencies currently operating in Thailand made it possible to map all active programmes before selecting specific examples for closer attention, avoiding some of the risks of selection bias (Mahoney & Collier 1996). The small scale of donor involvement in Thailand when compared with many other, poorer conflict-affected countries has pros and cons: donors have less influence, although this means that a false expectation of high levels of impact is avoided, obliging analysis of how donors relate to and work with the government and other domestic partners rather than operate directly.

The selection of specific aid agencies for analysis emerged during research as the main argument was developed and themes and categories determined. A concentration on international agencies including

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[180] Also Stake (2005:445).
[181] See George & Bennett (2004:83).
[182] Bowen (2008:142).

NGOs whose primary purpose is closely related to development narrowed the research to a realizable field.[183] Other agencies not addressed directly in the case studies are still considered through an overall survey of donors that covers Western and non-Western agencies.

The research process did not identify a specific, single project to examine as is typically undertaken in ethnographic approaches to donor practice.[184] In practice no such project existed given that area-based donor-funded projects are uncommon in Thailand, but in any case such an approach would have offered a partial and limited set of data. Projects operate within time and space limits, while key donor actions and impact regularly occur around the margins of a project, or before the project even starts (Porter, Allen & Thompson 1991, Bond & Hulme 1999). Study of a discrete project is also likely to overlook other (often less conflict-aware) projects that may be more representative of overall aid provision.

The influence of national-level donor decision-making on whether and how peacebuilding objectives are operationalized emerged as a critical factor through the research process. A concentration on the national level of donor engagement rather than on global policymaking or on local political economy is considered valid for several reasons. The relative lack of detailed research on the dynamics of donor policy implementation at the national level makes it a valuable research field.[185] The approach followed also brings out the highly centralized nature of the Thai state and its significance for the maintenance of horizontal inequalities and related peripheral conflict in the Far South, as is explained in Chapter Five.[186] Furthermore, research data presented in later chapters shows that many donors aim to promote policy change in Thailand within the national government rather than to transfer resources or make a direct impact through their own interventions. Few donors operating in the Far South even have interventions with a direct 'footprint' or defined project area, and those that do typically aim to use such initiatives as pilot cases to promote government policy change rather than directly affect local conditions. All aid agencies transfer resources through domestic governmental or non-governmental partner organizations, most of which operate at the national level. Overall, this means that it is not possible to map the direct impact of aid on any specific locale.[187] While recognizing the limitations of the approach adopted in terms of addressing local dynamics, I also interviewed a wide range of people in the Far South and compiled secondary data in order to understand the local context of the conflict. Additional field level analysis would not have added significant relevant material.

Various other possible approaches were considered. A comparative study of different conflict areas was rejected over concerns that it would not have offered enough contextual depth and would also raise

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[183] International human rights agencies operating in Thailand included the International Commission of Jurists, Human Rights Watch, and Nonviolence International. Agencies promoting peace negotiations are not discussed here owing to the surrounding political sensitivity.

[184] For example Ferguson (1990), Uphoff (2003), Li Murray (2007).

[185] Studies that have addressed the national level of donor decision-making include Muscat (1990), Uvin (1998), Crawford (2003), Eyben (2004, 2007), and Unsworth (2009).

[186] Ch.2 explained the importance of understanding national dynamics and processes when considering peripheral conflict.

[187] Aid agencies have long recognized the need for political change, often at the national level, in order to achieve policy objectives. Indeed, many local projects exist primarily as basis for promoting higher-level policy change rather than an end in themselves, as Chs 8-9 explain.

problems of equivalence.[188] The lack of an available or sufficiently insightful set of projects to study ruled out the option of focusing on one specific sector, for example education. Investigating domestically funded initiatives as well as foreign aid could have added useful data but required local counterparts and contacts in Thai institutions that were not available.

4.4   The research process

The first stage of research included analysis of relevant literature. This covered various fields, most notably international development practice and peacebuilding, identity and ethnicity, nationalism and statebuilding in Southeast Asia, and contextual Thai Studies literature. Further background material, including information on the evolving political and security situation on the ground, was gathered throughout the research process. Sources included English language and vernacular mass media as well as discussions with contacts accumulated over time. Field visits during the research period to Aceh, Indonesia, as well as past research conducted in Aceh and Sri Lanka, provided additional comparative material acquired through interviews in those locations and through literature reviews.[189] Field visits to towns and villages in the Far South involving interviews and group discussions added understanding of local level dynamics.

A historical overview of development assistance to Thailand was an important requirement in order to place current donor involvement in context. Published and grey literature including material only available in Thailand provided data, along with interviews with experienced aid officials.[190] Existing data on contemporary foreign aid to Thailand was gathered from a range of published and unpublished sources as a basis for interviews and to test the accuracy of interview data, although academic literature addressing donor policy in Thailand, especially concerning the Far South, is very limited, while data on aid policies and funding flows released by aid agencies presents only a partial picture.[191] It was necessary to seek information directly from donor representatives or other close informants including consultants, staff of domestic aid recipient organizations, and government officials who work with aid agencies.

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[188] That is, trying to compare apples with oranges. See Locke & Thelen (1998), Gerring (2004).
[189] Burke & Afnan (2005), Barron & Burke (2008), Burke (2008), OPM (2009).
[190] Some of this work was able to build on past, unpublished research (Burke 2003).
[191] See Flick (2009) on combining research methods.

Figure 4a: The research process

Phase i. Initial data gathering	Early context interviews, grey literature, data on donor programmes and policies (c.four months from October 2007), building on previous understanding of Thailand, of other peripheral conflicts, and of foreign aid.
Phase ii. Initial case study interviews	Starting with accessible interviewees (late 2007/ early 2008).
Phase iii. Mapping emerging themes	Analysing coded interview data, outlining common issues and categories, selecting case studies (as above).
Phase iv. Deeper analysis	Building case studies and identifying emerging themes / classifications through further interviews, data analysis, literature review. Revising research sub-questions (particular emphasis over four months from February 2008).
Phase v. Revision of themes	Triangulating different data sources, international and domestic comparisons for validation (throughout, with particular emphasis over three months From May 2008). Revisiting themes / classifications.
Phase vi. Follow up interviews	Further validity testing with additional interviewees (over long period).
Phase vii. Writing process	Logic testing during writing, including final update interviews (over long period).

Interviews with aid agency staff were structured around issues, or subquestions, that evolved as information was gathered and assessed.[192] The following subquestion that enable a response to the first research question (considering the different ways in which foreign aid agencies addressed the conflict in the Far South of Thailand and what patterns of aid provisions emerged) were pursued: how the agency defined its policies including political oversight and the influence of funding sources; whether the agency followed policies or approaches for addressing conflict in general and for the Far South of Thailand in particular; how the conflict was understood by agency staff including different aspects of horizontal inequality; whether the agency had any interventions in the Far South or national interventions that affected the Far South at the time of research or historically; how interventions were designed to address the conflict and its causes; how approaches were devised; details of implementation and challenges encountered; relationships with 'partner' agencies and with Thai government departments; staffing patterns and background; intra-agency differences and tensions; and the availability of monitoring and evaluation data. From the information that emerged it was possible gradually to identify groups of donors and potential emerging themes that affect donor practice, although the typologies were not finalized until later in the research process. Definitive decisions over case study selection were also made later in the research process, emerging through 2008.

In addressing the second main research question (asking how the properties of the characteristics and causes of conflict in the Far South of Thailand affected aid agencies' ability to support peacebuilding), primary data on donors were considered in relation to contextual material from academic literature as well as interviews with aid agencies and other informants. Interviews explored how aid agencies addressed or were affected by key aspects of the conflict in the Far South of Thailand: the conflict's

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[192] The main research questions are found in Ch.1.

peripheral status in relation to national political processes; its low international profile; acute government sensitivities over external involvement; the prominence of horizontal inequalities; and the particular significance of identity and associated cultural aspects of inequality that lie outside aid agencies' typical fields of engagement.

Addressing the third research question on the properties of aid agencies that help explain the identified pattern involved devising and applying the framework of three themes as described in the following section. Specific issues were identified and refined under each theme as interviews and other empirical research proceeded and specific aid agency case studies were constructed.[193]

The main process of data collection involved extended periods of interviewing and associated research in Bangkok, where aid agencies working in Thailand have country offices, along with field visits to the Far South. Interviews evolved during the research process. Preparatory interviews, mostly conducted near the start of the primary research phase with a range of different actors in Bangkok, built background information, tested ideas, and established contacts for further interviews. Potential key informants were avoided in the initial stages, given the risk that there would be no second chance to follow up an interview if what later emerged to be important questions were not asked. Early emphasis was also placed on improving Thai language ability. Interviews conducted from October 2007 in Bangkok with representatives of international agencies and their operating partners from government departments or non-governmental organizations facilitated understanding of the overall situation of donor assistance and the Far South of Thailand.

Later interviews involved donor staff and others associated with the agencies selected as key case studies. As is typical for open interview research (Kvale 1996), later interviews addressed more specific issues of interest and tested earlier findings. They explored agencies identified as specific case studies in greater depth. They also engaged other actors (from other aid agencies for example) whose responses were used to cross-reference and check emerging themes as well as specific facts. By continuing to conduct background interviews with other donors and also referring to wider sources of information throughout the research process it was possible to situate the emerging material on aid agency case studies within a wider survey of donors and of the broader site of research, thereby checking its validity (see Chenail 1995).

Interviews with aid officials were predominantly conducted in Bangkok. Following time spent in the Far South of Thailand before starting this research, initial interviews with academics and NGO workers as well as informal discussions in villages in Pattani took place in October and November 2007. Interviews with students, rural development outreach workers, and academics were held in November and December 2007.[194] Informal discussions and interviews were also held in Kuala Lumpur and in Kelantan,

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[193] See Figure 6b for a typology of issues under each theme as they apply to each of the three groups of donors.
[194] Interviews in the Far South were initially facilitated by an NGO field manager and a Pattani-based university lecturer.

the Malaysian state bordering the Far South of Thailand. Further interviews with local officials and informal discussions took place in the Far South during 2008 and 2009.

Maintaining a consistent approach to recording and managing data is less arduous for a sole researcher than a field team (Maxwell 1992). There is still a need for a consistent transcription protocol, however (MacLellan, MacQueen & Neidig 2003). Key issues were noted down for all interviews: main discussion points and opinions, specific facts, salient quotations, and so on. The wider dynamics of each interview were also recorded including the location, circumstances and overall tone. Personal reflections were noted during and after interviews, using initials to distinguish them from interviewees' comments.

Interview transcriptions were entered onto a computer within one or two days, using a consistent recording method while recognizing the specificity of each interview and the limits of formal data comparison such as quantified content analysis (see Huberman & Miles 1994, Kowal & O'Connell 2004). Translation and interpretation challenges would have stymied any effort to conduct formal content analysis given that interviews were conducted in several languages – English, Thai and some Malay – and many interviewees who spoke in English were not native speakers.

An overview of donor programmes in Thailand was gradually established as interview data and secondary sources were gathered. Cross-referencing between different agencies (i.e. asking interviewees for their knowledge of other agencies as well as their own) increased reliability. Understanding why patterns of donor assistance emerged was a more challenging exercise. It involved using interview transcripts as a primary evidence source for identifying common themes that emerged across different aid agencies. Common themes were coded once a body of interviews had been conducted (early in 2008), rather than waiting until all data was gathered. This enabled subsequent interviews to check and explore emerging themes (Miles & Huberman 1994:196, Glaser 1998). I followed through original and transcribed notes using codes and highlighting to identify emerging common themes before collating comments accordingly (see Patton 1990, Bowen 2008). Drawing rough 'spider maps' further helped to cluster and compare data. Data analysis continued in this way as further information was gathered in 2008. Additional theoretical literature was reviewed throughout the data gathering process (see Shenton 2004). The initial list of research questions and sub-questions was revisited and gradually focused down.

I relied on the concept of 'saturation', or the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data, to decide how many interviews were enough (Guest, Bunce & Johnson 2006). This demands explanation of how such a qualitative judgement call is made (Bowen 2008:137). In this case, it was assessed through iterative analysis of emerging themes, and comparison between results achieved through interviews or other sources. By sorting and verifying data as the process unfolded, emerging gaps could be addressed through further research. Once saturation was reached, interviews tended to repeat already established facts or arguments, and it became increasingly possible to predict the answers that interviewees would provide. Over time, an empirical basis was established and themes distilled.

Linking theory with emerging empirical data from a range of sources in a partially inductive fashion does not cancel out the risk of bias (Huberman & Miles 1994:190, Van Maanen 1998). Triangulation was employed as part of the research process in order to reduce 'background noise' and test and strengthen the validity, reliability and consistency of findings (Flick 2004). Considerations included the need to distinguish widely repeated trends or institutional perspectives from unrepresentative statements or events; and a need to balance the perspectives of donors and others in Bangkok with views from the Far South of Thailand.

Triangulation of interview data both within and between cases was undertaken repeatedly to test the consistency of conclusions being drawn (Constas 1992), follow-up interviews enabling additional comparison. A similar approach was taken to writing up case studies, with material including quotations only being used when representative of a wider set of responses. Specific comparison was also made through applying a wider range of sources beyond interview data. Such comparisons considered aid provision in other peripheral conflict sites, notably Aceh and Sri Lanka. Explanation of the context of the Far South of Thailand is supported by comparison with other border areas and minority groups in Thailand, while violence in the Far South is compared with national level political violence in Thailand (see Chapter Five). Informal comparisons were also made with the actions of aid agencies working elsewhere in Thailand and not formally part of this analysis.[195]

4.5   Classifying aid agencies: three groups of donors, three conceptual themes

Expectations of what patterns of aid delivery would emerge shifted over time, as is common during iterative research (Ragin 1994, Charmaz 2005). Cross-case comparison of aid agencies facilitated a process of grounded analysis, building up a framework and testing it through comparison between groups. In this way it was possible to cluster cases into categories.[196] As data from interviews and other background research was gathered, a clear distinction emerged between a group of agencies that had current programmes addressing conflict in the Far South, and those that did not. A further group that had tried but failed to address the conflict then emerged, leading to a classification into three groups. Group One consists of donors that avoid conflict issues or simply do not address them. This group accounts for the bulk of aid funding to Thailand. Group Two consists of donors that try to address or 'work on' conflict (Goodhand 2001), but that do not succeed in starting programmes. This group illustrates some of the barriers that restrict donor attention to peripheral conflict. Group Three donors manage to implement programmes working on conflict, finding ways to bypass the barriers that stymied Group Two donors.

The group classification adapts existing comparisons of aid actors in conflict contexts, most notably that of Goodhand (2001) (see Figure 4b). The classification enables an exploration of the salient issues that cause donors to fall into different groups, as is explained in greater detail in Chapter Six. Chapters Seven

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[195] Additional material is also drawn from literature including the author's past publications and interviews conducted for unpublished reports (as indicated through references).
[196] See Yin (1984) and Huberman & Miles (1994:194).

to Nine provide case studies representing each of the three groups in turn. The groups can be seen as tendencies that may shift over time (and vary between peripheral conflicts). Reflecting the complexity of aid institutions, donors may move between groups or fund programmes in two different groups at the same time.

Three conceptual themes were also diagnosed over time (motivations, interface and practice), as already explained in Chapter Three (see also Figure 4b). The themes help explain the reasons why donors belong to different groups in the case of the Far South of Thailand, while their theoretical basis offers a way of exploring how donors address peripheral conflicts and the reasons why certain patterns emerge. The themes were finalized through the research process. Reviews of relevant literature including case studies of aid provision in peripheral conflicts suported the identification of significant findings within the mass of primary data. A larger number of sub-themes were initially diagnosed before the three themes were refined over time. The themes inter-relate, with each of the three groups of donors demonstrating certain properties across all of them. The selection of the three themes reflects a need to understand the influences that shape the individual and institutional decision-making of donors (motivations) as well as the constraints on actual implementation (practice), as explained in various other studies (see Porter, Allen & Thompson 1991, Mosse 2005). Interviews repeatedly demonstrated that the relationship between donors and government departments was significant to explaining how and why donors act in certain ways. This led to the interface being designated as a separate theme.

Charting of interests and themes to identify common threads enabled a selection of specific representative case studies that yielded useful information on critical issues. The case studies of aid agencies selected in Chapters Seven to Nine illustrate the main trends that are outlined in Chapter Six and summarized in figure 4b.

Figure 4b: Aid to Thailand: three groups of donors, three conceptual themes

	Group One: Mainstream aid	Group Two: Trying but failing	Group Three: Working on conflict
1) Motivation	Conflict avoidance or blindness. Main state-centric aid.	Stymied efforts to work on conflict.	Working directly on conflict
2) Interface			
3) Practice	Case Study in Ch 7: Asian Development Bank IMT-GT project.	Case Studies in Ch 8: UNDP and the World Bank.	Case Studies in Ch 9: Unicef and the Asia Foundation.

In constructing a narrative for each case study, attention was given to specific illustrative issues that emerged through the research process and demonstrate the attributes and external factors affecting how agencies address conflict in the Far South. Over time, themes were revised and assessed in the light of existing literature, including material on donor practice as well as studies of how aid interventions address conflicts and related inequalities. Draft text was later reviewed by various practitioners with a strong academic background or concurrent role in academic institutions.

The relevance of each case study is summarized here. Finding a representative case in Group One (see Chapter Seven) presented the greatest challenge yet remained critical to research given that most aid to Thailand, both historically and recent, falls into the category. Given an absence of involvement in peacebuilding, the researcher is confronted by a lack of material to work with and little incentive on the part of potential informants to cooperate. While a simpler approach might have been to exclude all Group One agencies, this would have presented an unrepresentative set of case studies that focused on a small percentage of overall aid flows. It would have failed to adequately tackle the reasons why aid agencies address or avoid conflict in the Far South. The Asian Development Bank's role in the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle Project emerged as a potential case study on the basis of a wide body of available literature documenting its past history as well as its contemporary actions, complemented by involvement in the peripheral conflict zone of Aceh in Indonesia as well as the Far South of Thailand. Past as well as present ADB staff and consultants were able to provide further information. Success in identifying consultants and former employees willing to talk openly about the

project's past record also facilitated research. The ADB is one of the largest donors in Southeast Asia, and has historically been a major concessional lender to Thailand.

In the cae of Group Two agencies (Chapter Eight), access to agency staff and other informants, as well as their prominent role as development agencies that address conflict situations globally, made both UNDP and the World Bank clear candidates for case studies. Selecting both of them rather than only one enriched the evidence available for analysis and enabled comparison between the two agencies. The selected Group Three cases, The Asia Foundation and Unicef, were identified as the two agencies with the most extensive programmes in the Far South. As with UNDP and the World Bank, the contrast between them affords useful comparisons.

Figure 4c: Case studies and interviewees

Key case study	Key informants	Comments / further sources
ADB: IMT-GT project (Group One)	Current ADB staff in Bangkok; international consultants and ADB staff involved in original design. Thai academic consultants to original plans and current new phase.	Discussion and interviews with informants in Aceh (also part of IMT-GT).
UNDP (Group Two)	Staff of UNDP Thailand, other UN agencies.	Repeat interviews and discussions over time.
World Bank (Group Two)	Current staff in Thailand and elsewhere; staff of partner agencies.	Supported by experience from the World Bank's engagement in conflict elsewhere.
Unicef (Group Three)	Staff of Unicef Thailand at different levels.	Detailed interviews, open provision of information.
The Asia Foundation (Group Three)	Current and past staff members, with repeat discussions. Staff of partner agencies.	Also interviewed staff of main funding agency (USAID).

Other key informants

International bodies in Thailand: European Union; French Embassy; German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ); Royal Netherlands Embassy; British Embassy; UK Department for International Development; The Canada Fund; Australian Embassy; US Agency for International Development; Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; Japan International Cooperation Agency; Japan Bank for International Cooperation; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); International Labour Organization (ILO); Raks Thai (Care Thailand); Oxfam UK; Actionaid Asia; Save the Children; Internews; International Commission of Jurists.

Thai bodies: Thailand International Cooperation Agency / Ministry of Foreign Affairs (TICA); Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC); Peace Operations Centre, Royal Thai Armed Forces; King Prajadhipok's Institute; government representatives from provincial administrations and line departments in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat; Deep South Watch; ISRA news agency; Thailand Centre for Muslim and Democratic Development; Young Muslim Association of Thailand; Chulalongkorn, Mahidol, Thammasat, Prince of Songkhla (Pattani and Hat Yai campuses), and Yala Islamic Universities. Many unaffiliated individuals were also interviewed.

4.6   Conducting interviews

Interviews are considered an appropriate method when seeking detailed information from a relatively small population of people who have specialist knowledge on potentially sensitive issues (Patton 1990, Kvale 2006). In total, over a hundred semi-structured interviews were conducted with aid agency staff, implementing partners, and other key informants. The interviewing process applied many of the principles considered important for 'elite interviews' (Goldstein 2002), although only a few interviewees could accurately be described as elite unless employing a very broad definition of the term. An open-ended approach was employed, enabling open discussion and encouraging informants to provide valuable detail rather than simply repeat policy statements or answer a series of structured questions (Aberbach & Rockman 2002:673-674). Interviews were designed to gain understanding as well as establish facts, accepting multiple perspectives rather than trying to extrapolate singular positions (Fontana 2003).

The research process and findings were inevitably influenced by whom I was able to meet.[197] Although an overall survey of foreign aid agencies working in Thailand (and especially those addressing conflict in the Far South) was established over time,[198] the selection of aid agency case studies was to some extent affected by access constraints. Reaching valuable informants who were willing to discuss the details of how aid agencies translate peacebuilding policies into practice would not have been viable within a short research timeframe. 'Cold-calling' usually elicited no response or at best an invitation to interview a junior member of staff or public relations officer. Occasional formal meetings arranged through official channels typically led to formulaic policy responses that provided little insight into actual practice. The relatively thin existing body of published research at the level of the donor country office is partly a reflection of these challenges.

On average, approximately ten informants were interviewed for each of the five key agency case studies, with some informants interviewed on more than one occasion.[199] Funders and recipients as well as direct staff members were interviewed. From initial entry points by email or phone, normally following an introduction through existing connections, it was possible to access further subjects through a modified form of 'snowball' sampling within a limited, specialized group (Christopoulos 2009). The sample expanded from initial contacts within a very small total population of potential interviewees by the use of various starting points rather than one centre, involving increasingly directive decisions over whom to interview.

Group Three international agencies that did address the conflict in the Far South were relatively accessible, offering plentiful data. For other agencies it was necessary to find willing interviewees from a wider range of people, in cases waiting to build contacts over more than a year. The most useful data

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[197] On this point see Fontana (1977), for example.
[198] Foreign aid agencies are listed at Figure 6.a.
[199] See the annexed list of interviews.

was normally provided by mid-level professionals and specialists rather than senior managers or public relations officers, being less concerned about institutional reputation and often better informed.

Beyond case study agencies, over fifty interviews with aid agency staff and informants provided data on other aid agencies and the wider context. Accessing government counterparts at the national level was challenging but made possible by working through contacts.[200] However, government informants only occasionally offered data of significant value. The difficulty of eliciting information through interviews with Thai civil servants and other domestic counterparts of foreign aid agencies is a limiting factor in this research.

Semi-structured guiding questions were prepared before each interview (see Kvale 1996:129). For interviews with aid agency staff, I usually emailed a brief outline of the research objectives in advance. I prepared for interviews by consulting available written sources and my acquaintances about the interviewees, their organization's structure, and relevant projects. Interviews with aid agency staff generally followed a similar sequence in addressing core questions of donor policy and practice. As the research process continued, it became increasingly possible to test emerging hypotheses that aimed to explain aid agencies' actions and positions regarding peripheral conflict through asking more pointed questions (see Kvale 1996:132). Where informants addressed specific issues I asked for facts to back up statements.

Gaining access to staff in different aid agencies and government organizations rarely gives the researcher the luxury to define the location or dynamics of the interview, although on occasion I could propose a suitable venue or suggest follow up meetings (see Aberbach & Rockman 2002). Interviews were often conducted in agency offices, a typical interview lasting one to two hours although some were shorter.[201] For many interviews I spoke with individuals separately, although in some cases it was not possible to separate colleagues. Repeat interviews, where possible, gave opportunities to follow up specific issues, check and verify outstanding concerns, and enable informants to speak in a relaxed environment.

I applied what have been termed *"Elicitation techniques"* [202] that are appropriate to situations where cultural and political sensitivity are paramount. For example, I did not use a voice recorder, having found that few people speak candidly on controversial issues in such environments when being recorded. With experience it is possible to take accurate notes, including quotations of a reasonable length, and transcribe shortly afterwards with little if any loss of accuracy. Operating as a single researcher with no institutional agenda enabled a flexible approach to interviews, helped foster personal ties, and reduced fear of repercussions on the part of informants. Discussion was for the most

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[200] Key government informants included several TICA officials, academics connected with government programmes, and Chueng Chatariakul of NESDB. Chulalongkorn University's Department of International Relations in the Faculty of Political Science facilitated access.

[201] Footnotes and the annexed list of interviews indicate the small number of interviews that took place by phone or email rather than in person.

[202] Johnson & Weller (2001:493).

part kept fluid and neutral phrasing was preferred in order to avoid leading questions. I was careful to withhold difficult questions around conflict issues until a rapport had been developed. Depending on how an interview proceeded, it was often possible to use increasingly probing questions in response to emerging issues (see Babbie 2010:183).

At times interviews resembled a discussion rather than an imposed research tool (see Denscombe 2007:185). Unlike the classic 'neutral' interviewer, at times I offered my own opinion and let a conversation flow in order to encourage an informant to speak more directly (see Fontana & Frey 1998:56). Informants often appeared more comfortable discussing their own organization or sensitive political issues outside an office environment and many interviews took place in a café or restaurant. In this way, it was possible to move beyond the public face or 'front stage' of institutions, with interviewees at times revealing more about 'back stage' actions than I had expected (Goffman 1959). On several occasions interviewees directly (and often confidentially) criticized their own organizations.[203]

The interviewer's status influences what information is provided and how it is interpreted. Interviews are inevitably a reflexive process to a greater or lesser extent (Hammersley 1990:9, May 2001:140). The level of access and openness achieved with aid agency staff and other informants is in part a consequence of my own professional experiences and my position as a European in Thailand. Foreigner status probably helped me to gain access both to donors and to informants in the Far South, although it hampered my ability to seek information from government informants given the sensitivity of international stances on the conflict in the Far South.[204]

Recognizing and using my own status helped elicit open responses. With a varied set of interviewees, it was important to consider carefully how I presented myself, and to be flexible. In interviews with donors, I emphasized my own past work experience with aid agencies and used appropriate terminology. Different approaches were employed when interviewing others including government staff (with whom I avoided confrontational discussion of the political context of conflict and concentrated instead on development issues) and Malay Muslim interviewees in the Far South (many of whom responded positively to comparisons between Aceh and the Far South of Thailand). Cross-cultural challenges were lessened by careful preparation, thereby reducing the risk of mistranslation.

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[203] Follow-up meetings that were too brief or casual to be listed as formal interviews are referred to in the footnotes as discussions.
[204] See the opening part of Ch.7.

4.7   Research ethics

Overall consideration of ethical issues began before fieldwork started and it influenced the shape of research. I used the UK Economic and Social Research Council's 2005 Research Ethics Framework as a basis for appraising ethical risks and followed University of London procedure. I consider here points specifically relevant to the research undertaken.[205]

Conflict environments present specific dilemmas, most immediately through physical risks to researchers and to interviewees (Barakat & Ellis 1996). Even though I was in little personal danger given the relatively low level of random violence and no efforts to target Westerners to date, I carefully considered the interviewees' safety. The act of an outsider asking questions in an area of active conflict between pro- and anti-government groups will almost certainly raise attention (Jacobsen & Landau 2003:193). In the Far South of Thailand, such problems are most likely to occur in rural villages with a strong active rebel and government security presence, although they can also arise in towns or in institutions like universities and hospitals.

Close understanding of context, achieved through preliminary visits and establishing local contacts, is especially important given heightened concerns in a conflict area (Goodhand 2000). When in the conflict area, I located interviewees through reliable contacts, checked that people were willing to speak to me, and aimed to avoid direct discussion of the conflict. On several occasions interviews were either cancelled or discussion was too bland to be of interest. When this occurred, I did not push hard to rearrange meetings or extract more useful information, regarding my own research as less vital than people's security and right to silence. I ensured the anonymity of any interviewee or other informant who requested it. Even where not requested, I withheld names (and in cases provided intentionally vague organizational affiliations or job descriptions) in order to protect informants where potential risk was diagnosed. In some cases I did not ask informants in the Far South for a full name in order to avoid associated suspicions.

In addition to risks of violence in the conflict area, staff within national or international organizations may risk damaging office relationships and potentially their careers by speaking openly (Harper & Jimenez 2005). This was an ongoing concern given that many interviewees and acquaintances openly offered information that could harm their organization's reputation. The anonymity of all comments made 'off the record' was also respected. Throughout the research process, I remained alert to any negative feedback from interviewees or other figures over the conduct of interviews and other steps.

In order to maintain a balanced position, I continually checked against drift towards centralized mainstream perspectives that stigmatize or marginalize peripheral views. I also ensured that a critical stance towards centralized authorities did not lead me to overlook unjustified violence or discrimination perpetrated by anti-government insurgents. I intentionally exposed myself to different views,

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[205] See also Association of Social Anthropologists (2007).

maintaining involvement through seminars, interviews and informal discussion in the Far South and in Bangkok throughout the research and writing period.

Careless handling of information on peace promotion could potentially damage efforts to support peace. For example, given nationalist concerns over rebel efforts to 'internationalize' the conflict in the Far South of Thailand, compiled and packaged data could help government control the activities of international initiatives to promote peace. I was careful not to release publically information that was provided in confidence and also avoided providing detailed breakdowns of relevant projects and funders.

Maintaining an honest approach includes accurate representation of others' views, as well as open treatment of the researcher's own position both in written outputs and during interviews. While it is important to present oneself in a manner most likely to elicit information from interviewees (for example by selecting which language to use or by stressing specific elements of the research objectives according to the background of the subject), I was careful to avoid intentionally misinforming or misleading subjects. I also made a conscious effort to avoid overtly adopting any stance on the conflict during the research period, avoiding public statements and maintaining a low profile. While recognizing inevitable subjectivity within social research, I also worked to maintain an even stance by judging all actors including belligerents against the same set of values.[206]

It has been suggested that researchers should contribute to improving the lives of people that they are documenting as well as remaining objective (Burr 2002). My interest in answering the questions posed in this study stems from a desire to help find just solutions to long-term conflicts as well as expand academic understanding. While I designed the methodology for academic purposes, I also recognized that building grounded contextual knowledge increases the likelihood of producing material and argument that can be used more widely (Jacobsen & Landau 2003).

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[206] On recognizing subjectivity while upholding consistent values see Cannella & Lincoln (2011).

Chapter Five   **The Far South of Thailand:**
                     Resistance, Identity, and Development

This chapter describes the characteristics and causes of peripheral conflict in the Far South of Thailand, providing a basis for later empirical chapters that consider whether and how foreign aid agencies have addressed the conflict. Many of the properties of peripheral conflicts identified in Chapter Two can be seen in this case, with localized violence in a remote border zone recurring in bouts over many decades. The chapter explains how specific triggers of violence can be identified in political changes at the national level, while longer-term structural marginalization of the Far South has persisted. Malay Muslims form the majority the Far South, but the area itself contains a small fraction of Thailand's population and at the national level Malay Muslims remain politically and culturally, as well as demographically and geographically, peripheral.

As well as explaining the roots of violence in the Far South, the chapter also considers the history of Thailand's political structure and upheavals at the national level, showing how partial democratization and recent national unrest have perpetuated the long-term marginalization of the Far South within what remains a highly centralized nation state. The chapter explains how the Far South is vested with little political authority nationally or even locally. Local leaders are caught between incompatible national expectations and local demands, with little influence over the contestation and shifting settlements that characterize the Thai national polity. Successive national governments have aimed to end conflict in the Far South through defeating insurgents,[207] at times offering concessions but little significant political reconfiguration.

The chapter considers how horizontal inequalities encompass cultural and political as well as socioeconomic factors in the Far South.[208] It stresses that the importance of these related forms of inequality depends on the perception of those involved, explaining how perceptions of marginalization fuel resentment against the Thai state. As Chapter Two showed, statistical analysis of actual inequalities often only makes sense alongside broader description of the context of a specific case, revealing the local comparisons that people make and the related historical basis of grievances.

Academic explanations of the conflict consider the effects of the construction and maintenance of a national Thai identity on one side and of an oppositional 'Patani' Malay Muslim identity on the other (Surin 1985, Chaiwat 2005, Thanet 2009, Liow 2009).[209] While it is necessary to break down and look beyond polarized explanations, this central theme is a consistent thread through explanations that draw both on the local context and on a main theme of Thai Studies more widely in explaining the significance of identity for maintaining national authority. In a detailed analysis, Duncan McCargo concludes that the

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[207] 'Insurgent' is the English language term most commonly used in respected sources to describe members of the violent anti-government movement in the Far South of Thailand.
[208] See Stewart (2008) and Brown & Langer (2010), as explained in Ch.2.
[209] The prominence of ethnicity and identity in defining the roots of the conflict in the Far South is also reflected in the views expressed by many Malay Muslims from the area, as these and other sources demonstrate.

conflict in the Far South is a war over legitimacy,[210] showing how the Thai state has acted to extend nationalist identity from the centralized bureaucracy and monarchy out to peripheral areas, attempting to assimilate minority populations in the process (2008:183).

The significance of identity is especially important for researchers and practitioners approaching conflicts from a developmental perspective that prioritizes socioeconomic above cultural explanation. Perceived inequalities affect how development initiatives are both formulated and received by many local inhabitants, with government policies and programmes commonly seen as a cause of increased antagonism rather than a vehicle of reconciliation. As is explained in this chapter, many initiatives for the Far South have been associated with pacification policies and are often perceived by Malay Muslims as part of long-term efforts to promote assimilation and assert central control.

5.1 Overview: long-term peripheral conflict, limited political settlement

Contested histories demonstrate the dominant and enduring fault lines of peripheral conflict In the Far South of Thailand. It is common for young Malay Muslim children in the area to receive two parallel versions of their own past. In a government school, they learn how the benevolent management of King Chulalongkorn in the late nineteenth century enabled the Thai kingdom to avoid colonization, absorbing into a modern and centralized nation state those peripheral protectorates that it managed to hang onto. This is seen as a nationalist achievement under pressure from the colonial powers of Britain and France who were chipping away at the kingdom from all sides (Smith 1991, Streckfuss 1993, Thongchai 1994).

Patani identity, meanwhile, draws on the history of the traditional sultanate. After school, often in a community-run *tadika* class, children learn about the past glories of the Patani sultanate and the centuries of struggle with the distant Siamese throne before sovereignty was lost in 1906 following an agreement between Britain (the colonial authority in the lower Malay Peninsula) and Siam. Patani was incorporated into Siam and subsequently split into the three provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat (Liow 2009). A key text in reproducing the historical basis of contemporary Patani identity is the Hikayat Patani, a historical account that chronicles the history and legends of the area (Teeuw & Wyatt 1970).

Violent resistance to Thai authority in the Far South has a long record. As is common with other peripheral conflicts, violence has recurred in bouts. The Thai state has never managed to establish full authority or broad-based legitimacy in the Far South. Malay Muslim resistance increased under the nationalist government of Phibun Songkhram, who reversed earlier efforts to grant Malay Muslims rights to cultural distinctiveness on his return to power in 1947 (Forbes 1982). Unrest flared up as local leader Haji Sulong mobilized dissent and was subsequently imprisoned. In the 1948 Dusun Nyor incident, up to 400 Malay Muslims and 30 police are thought to have died (Surin 1985:161, Chaiwat 2006b). Haji Sulong was later to disappear, probably murdered by Thai security forces (Thanet 2004).

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[210] Legitimacy is defined in Ch.2 (footnotes to Part 2.1).

The divide between the Thai state and Malay Muslims remained, with violence led by several separatist groups returning in the 1960s and increasing in the 1970s before petering out in the early 1980s. Contributory factors to the end to violence in the 1980s included a set of complementary state actions: more effective security policies, an amnesty offered to insurgents, major development expenditure, and more careful local administrative management (Ornanong 2001). General Prem Tinsulanond, Prime Minister for much of the 1980s, established the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC) in 1981. New security and governance arrangements gave a major role to the army in the Far South, while gaining the support of many of the Malay Muslim elite through political privileges and development funds (McCargo 2008).

However, the period of calm turned out to be temporary, demonstrating that no enduring settlement had been achieved, with the state's response devised following the transitory demise of insurgents rather than through negotiated settlement or fundamental reform. This pattern is consistent, with the Far South being too marginal to affect national political process. Key actors within the Thai state have also had little incentive to offer meaningful reforms or significant compromise as a 'secondary settlement' (Parks & Cole 2010) to representatives of an area whose 1.8 million inhabitants form under 3% of the Thai population (NSO 2005).

By the late 1990s, incidents including arson of school buildings were rising once more. Insurgent fragments had consolidated under a network often termed BRN Coordinate (*Barisan Revolusi Nasional* or National Revolutionary Front), a legacy of earlier unrest, and set about reorganizing (Human Rights Watch 2007). Violence flared again in a series of attacks on military bases in January 2004 and continued threreafter. From January 2004 to August 2011, violence in the Far South caused an estimated 4,846 deaths. Insurgents are believed to have been responsible for a clear majority of the deaths. Shootings were the most common cause of death, followed by bombings (Srisompob 2011).[211]

The number of incidents dropped from mid-2007, probably in response to more intensive military operations, but the actual rate of casualties only declined slightly as insurgents switched to a smaller number of higher-intensity attacks (ibid.). Overall, 59% of those killed were Muslims, the majority of whom were targeted by the insurgents and the rest by state security forces. The remaining 41% were Buddhist, almost all of whom were killed by insurgents.[212] Attacks on schools, government offices, and state-related bodies were the most typical form of violence. Almost half of all casualties are categorized as civilians, many of whom were government employees. Casualties among government civilian employees (civil servants, teachers, etc.) have outnumbered casualties among government security personnel (soldiers, police, and defence volunteers) (ibid.).

Insurgent tactics are typical of a weaker party in an asymmetric conflict, involving assassinating government workers and alleged informers or collaborators, planting small bombs in public places, and

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[211] This data, from Deep South Watch, is considered the most reliable that is available. Other sources such as Violence-related Injury Surveillance recorded by health posts and collated by SBPAC confirm the general pattern.
[212] Ibid. More Buddhists than Muslims have been injured.

burning government buildings. Insurgents are organized on the ground into small groups of around six people (usually local residents) operating mostly in rural areas of the Far South (ICG 2009).[213] Although Malay Muslim groups have detonated small bombs in Bangkok in the past, violence since 2004 has been restricted to or near the area corresponding to the former Patani sultanate.[214] Insurgent leaders have aimed to polarize the situation, targeting moderate Malay Muslims and inducing sufficient fear for many among the Far South's Thai Buddhist minority to leave the area. Some others have formed both government-sanctioned and illegal amateur defence forces (ICG 2007).

The state's main reaction has been security-led and often clumsy. A series of well documented excesses in 2004 included the killing of 32 insurgents who rallied in Pattani's ancient Krue Se mosque, the accidental suffocation of 78 protesters rammed into trucks following an anti-government rally in Tak Bai, and the disappearance of Thai Muslim lawyer and human rights activist Somchai Neelapaijit, probably murdered by police or other state officials.[215] Further detainment, disappearances and torture have been commonly reported and documented (Human Rights Watch 2007, NHRC 2010). Insurgents, meanwhile, working through small cells and using modern communications technology, have continued to operate. Local operatives work clandestinely and typically reside within their communities across the Far South, while the location and identity of senior leaders remain largely unknown (Human Rights Watch 2007:64, ICG 2010b).

A reasonable if incomplete picture of the cohesion and structures of insurgent leadership can be established from reports based on military intelligence and other sources. Various different Malay Muslim individuals from the Far South claim authority over insurgents on the ground. Many of them are exiled or amnestied leaders from previous periods of unrest.[216] Insurgent groups such as PULO (Patani United Liberation Organization) have continued a propaganda role in exile although their degree of influence on the ground is widely questioned.[217] Most accounts accept both the locally rooted nature of the insurgency and the presence of these different leadership structures, although one group, BRN-Coordinate, is widely recognized as the dominant structure (McCargo 2008:174, ICG 2009, Helbardt 2011). BRN-Coordinate appears to share some features of a network rather than a traditional hierarchy while also maintaining an effective control structure, being able for example to organize multiple attacks and bombings in different locations across the Far South on the same day.[218]

Active insurgents rarely encounter their peers in other cells or any insurgent leaders beyond their immediate organizer, thereby frustrating military intelligence gathering efforts. The overall number of insurgents is not known. One comprehensive review offers a figure of 3,000 operationally active insurgents and some 30,000 members overall (Helbart 2011:28-29).[219] Recruitment is carried out

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[213] These groups are sometimes termed RKK or *Runda Kumpulan Kecil* (Small Patrol Group).
[214] Separatists planted some bombs in Bangkok and in Hat Yai, Songkhla, 1977-1980 (Yegar 2002:150).
[215] See ICG (2005).
[216] The identities of current insurgent leaders are unknown.
[217] Discussions with Don Pathan, Bangkok, 2011.
[218] Such incidents have occurred repeatedly. See for example McCargo (2008:135), ICG (2008b:7-8).
[219] A figure of 1800-3000 active insurgent fighters is offered by ICG (2009), based chiefly on police data.

through several channels. Some potential insurgents are encouraged to join by peers, while many recruiters are teachers or others connected with educational establishments (ICG 2009, McCargo 2008). Recruitment often takes place in relatively privileged schools and colleges. For example, Thamma Wittaya school, a large, well-funded private Islamic school in Yala, has long been seen as a bed of active insurgent recruitment (Human Rights Watch 2007:22, Liow 2008:38-39).[220] Interviews with insurgents carried out by various researchers suggest that recruits are typically relatively young men, aged between 16 and 35. They are rarely from especially deprived backgrounds, with brighter, dependable young men preferred for clandestine training (McCargo 2008:149, Askew 2009a).

Insurgent calls to action are framed in ethnonationalist terms as well as appeals to wider religious (Islamic) and racial (Malay) solidarity (ICG 2005, Wattana 2006). Training for insurgent recruits and wider propaganda focus on repeated, emotional appeals to help in the struggle to recreate the glories of the past Patani Sultanate, with the Thai state presented as an illegal occupying force and religious oppressor (McCargo 2008, ICG 2009). Current insurgent leaders do not state their demands in specific terms, while lower-level cadres sometimes express vague political ambitions of an Islamic dominion of Patani (Askew 2009a). The aim of this approach appears to be to propagate within Malay Muslim communities an image of violence as a popular, justified reaction to state neglect and suppression (Helbardt 2011:7). Where insurgent claims that fall short of full independence are vocalized, for example through informal discussions or on internet websites with leaders from groups other than BRN-C, they are broadly similar to the still-unmet demands made by Haji Sulong in 1947 and repeated over subsequent decades: greater autonomy under locally elected leaders, official recognition for the Malay language, and implementation of Islamic customs and laws.[221] Leaders of older insurgent groups and others claiming close associations with active insurgent leaders have talked informally with intermediaries and Thai government representatives about the scope for some degree of autonomy for the Far South within the Thai state. However, it is not clear how close they are to instigators and perpetrators of the current unrest (Deep South Watch 2009).

5.2 The local context

The difficult relationship between a Malay Muslim peripheral minority and the nation state, and associated perceptions of horizontal inequality, are the dominant fault-lines of conflict in the Far South of Thailand, as this section explains. Ethnic difference is not in itself a cause of violent confrontation in Thailand. While a legacy of ethnic antagonism may be strong in the Far South, ethnic differences also exist in many other peripheral areas of Thailand that remain peaceful.[222] Most border provinces of Thailand contain large minority populations –often constituting a majority locally – who speak the same language as relatives across the border, including Khmer, Lao dialect, Malay, and minority languages spoken in Burma. Yet in contrast to the Far South, these areas of Thailand remain free of ethnic

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[220] Human Rights Watch use information from court depositions.
[221] Interview (b), KPI Programme Officer. For a summary of Haji Sulong's demands see Thanet (2004:32-33).
[222] Brown explains the same point with reference to various conflicts, drawing attention to the absence of conflict in Sabah, Malaysia, despite the presence of a minority group (2008:277).

violence. Religious difference is a factor that affects the Far South more than other peripheral areas, with a Muslim minority more clearly differentiated from the Thai Buddhist majority than is the case for those other minorities within Thailand who are themselves predominantly also Buddhist. Yet many of Thailand's Muslims reside fairly peacefully in other parts of the South that are not affected by conflict, in Bangkok, and in smaller numbers elsewhere in the country. Muslims living elsewhere in Thailand are generally more likely to accept state legitimacy and are better assimilated (Gilquin 2002). The relative calm of Satun, a Malay Muslim majority province that borders Malaysia on the western side of the peninsula, shows again that there is little inevitability about violent minority resistance (Parks 2009).

The overall population of Thailand is overwhelmingly Buddhist, with a Muslim population of below 5% (NSO 2000). Muslims live in all regions of Thailand but are concentrated in the Southern region, where 30% of the population is Muslim (see Figure 5a). The Far South (the southernmost part of the Southern region with a population of around two million) is around 80% Muslim, a proportion that increases in rural areas (see Figure 5b).[223]

Figure 5a: Religious composition of Thailand[224]

Region	Population age 15 and over (thousands)				% of population		
	Buddhist	*Islam*	*Christian*	*Total*	*Buddhist*	*Islam*	*Christian*
National	46,902	2,213	361	49,476	94.8%	4.5%	0.7%
Urban	16,109	482	147	17,737	96.2%	2.9%	0.9%
Rural	30,793	1,732	214	32,739	94.1%	5.3%	0.7%
Bangkok	6,461	157	66	6,683	96.7%	2.3%	1.0%
Central	11,458	174	63	11,695	98.0%	1.5%	0.5%
North	9,046	13	86	9,145	98.9%	0.1%	0.9%
Northeast	15,798	5	137	15,940	99.1%	0.0%	0.9%
South (including Far South)	4,207	1,864	10	6081	69.2%	30.7%	0.2%

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[223] Information from NSO (2004) using 2000 National Census data. 2010 Census results were not yet available. McCargo offers a similar figure (2010:2).
[224] Source: NSO (2004).

Figure 5b: Religious composition in the three main provinces of the Far South[225]
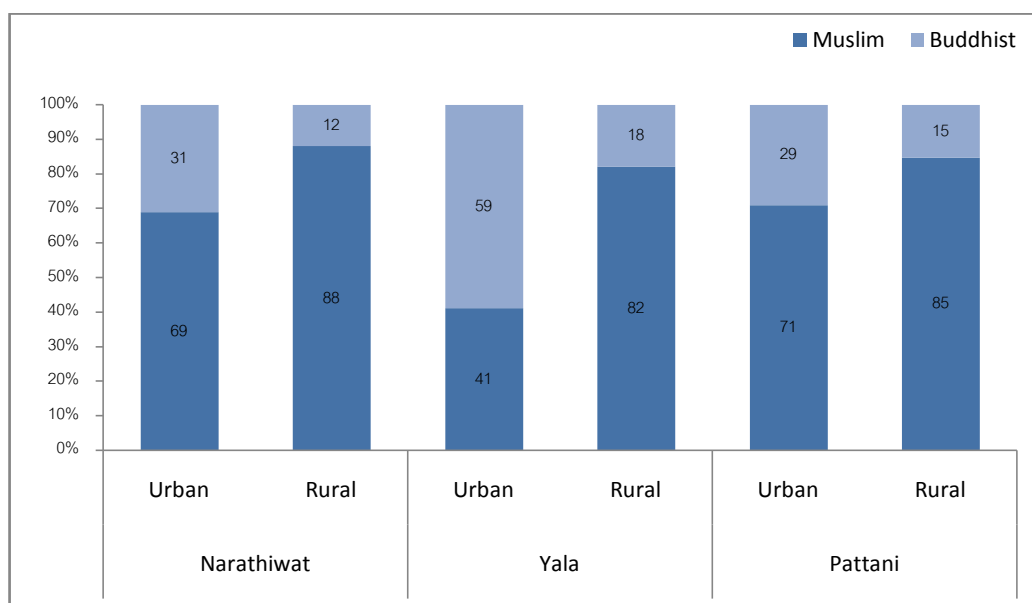
The Muslim population of Thailand generally follows a brand of Islam similar to that in most other Muslim parts of Southeast Asia, following the Shafi'i school of Islamic jurisprudence. In the Far South, the former area of Patani enjoyed considerable historical independence and developed close cultural links with lower parts of the Malay Peninsula (Liow 2009:13-14). Islamic practice in the Far South is relatively uniform internally, with few internal divisions. Some other forms of Islam are practised in the Far South, notably the reformist Salafi line promoted by Ismail Lutfi, the rector of Yala Islamic University. Joseph Liow explains that while Salafi Islam has been seen by some both in Bangkok and internationally as a dangerous form of Saudi-inspired extremism, it is more accurately seen in this location as part of a long-term pattern of externally influenced religious scholars challenging traditional and at times syncretic practices (ibid.:94-95).

The conflict-affected area is small. It covers roughly 13,500 square kilometres (DOPA undated), slightly larger than Yorkshire and slightly smaller than Connecticut. The main provincial towns are little over an hour away from each other by vehicle, while most rural areas are within an hour's journey of the nearest provincial town, normally on covered roads. The population mostly lives in small towns and dispersed villages situated along the coast or on rolling low hills. Inland areas are more mountainous and heavily forested, with low populations. Farming and coastal fishing are significant economic activities (Ward 1996). Small and medium-sized rubber plantations are commonplace along with rice paddy cultivation, small-scale vegetable farming and small-scale livestock rearing (Askew 2009b:63). Other typical occupations include construction, transport, food vending and government work. The main towns are oriented around services. Cross-border trade with Malaysia provides a further source of revenue and employment. As in many areas of Thailand, local employment opportunities are limited, especially for less educated people. A survey conducted in 2009 found that unemployment was the

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[225] Source: NSO (2004), presented in Kraiyos (2010).

most commonly cited problem facing communities in the Far South (TAF 2010). Many people in the Far South migrate for work to other parts of Thailand and to Malaysia.[226]

Analysis indicates similar overall levels of violent incidents in all three provinces of the Far South.[227] There is a fluctuating disparity between high-incident and low-incident districts within every province. Maps of government-designated 'red' (i.e. higher levels of violence) and 'green' (lower levels) zones resemble a patchwork, while the overall pattern is of widespread, low-level violence across the entire area.[228]

The Buddhist population in the Far South can be differentiated between mainstream Thai and Thai Chinese groups, although decades of Chinese assimilation means that boundaries are often blurred. While the Thai Chinese population is overwhelmingly situated in urban areas and engaged in various forms of commerce, some Thai Buddhists live in rural areas. Political and economic links between Chinese-Thai businesses and state officials across much of provincial Thailand received close attention from researchers in the 1980s and 1990s,[229] but such analysis has not been applied with any success to help explain recent insurgency in the Far South. Insurgents have on occasion targeted Thai Chinese-owned businesses as part of an unwelcome alien presence, while bombs were detonated in several commercial centres in the Far South over the Chinese New Year, February 2007 (ICG 2007b). However, these attacks are sporadic and small-scale in comparison with violence directed against more overt state-related targets (ibid.).

Specific incidents can often be related to local events. With insurgents operating in small, decentralized cells, patterns of violence reflect ongoing tensions and local concerns as well as security measures and the relative availability of soft targets such as schools or low-ranking state officials (ICG 2009). As occurs in many conflict environments, different sources of tension can lead to violence. For example, in one rural part of Narathiwat in 2007, business disputes over timber contracts ended up pitting local Thai Buddhist members of a voluntary village defence group against Malay Muslim supporters of a rival business interest.[230]

Local factors and criminal activities are not the root cause or the main driver of unrest, however. Respected sources uniformly agree on this point, contradicting government claims (based on evidence of links between insurgents and illegal acts including cross-border smuggling and drug trafficking) that

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[226] Little detailed socioeconomic assessment of the area exists. See Thant & Tang (1996), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2011).

[227] Violence-related Injury Surveillance data indicates 907 incidents in Yala, 915 in Narathiwat, 1036 in Pattani, and 84 in the four southernmost districts of Songkhla province from 2007 to 2010. A similar pattern is documented by Srisompob (2010).

[228] Several incidents have occurred in Hat Yai, the largest city in the South of Thailand, situated just outside the conflict area.

[229] See for example Montesano (2000).

[230] Interview with Diana Sorosi. See also Askew (2009b) on tensions over land deals.

violence is essentially a criminal problem.[231] Criminality has long been a serious issue in a poorly governed border area where corrupt authorities and underground groups have profited from irregular business. However, the well-documented and deeper ethnonationalist roots of the conflict show that such conservative explanations are inadequate. The porous borders and associated criminality that are sometimes cited as an element in the conflict in the Far South are common to all of Thailand's land frontiers.[232] Similarly, local political violence is a serious issue both in many parts of the Far South and in other parts of Thailand, but its impact on the dynamics of conflict is considered secondary to the main ethnic fault-lines and associated motivations for violence. In pressing this point, Srisompob (2010) has calculated that local politicians, village chiefs and subdistrict (*tambon*) representatives in the Far South amount to a small minority – little over 5% – of all victims in the conflict since 2004.

While most conflicts are to some extent multi-causal and multi-layered, the close relationships between informal sources of revenue (often from natural resources), contesting local elites, and insurgency that are found in some subnational conflicts are relatively insignificant in the Far South of Thailand. The clan feuding or *rido* found in Mindanao (Magno Torres III 2007, Lara & Champain 2009), or the disputes over land access and government-bestowed privileges between Gayo, Acehnese and Javanese settlers in central Aceh (Schulze 2006:235), do not have clear equivalents in the Far South of Thailand. Where researchers do address local causes of violence, they relate them to long-term central state penetration of the Far South and associated resistance.[233] Natural resources also play a relatively small and indirect role in the conflict. Where significant sites of natural resource exploitation do exist, notably the offshore natural gas that is piped across the northern end of the conflict zone and on to Malaysia, the perceived capture of benefits by a predominantly non-Muslim elite supports the existing local discourse that stresses the resentment of the central state and its associates.[234]

5.3   National politics: continued marginalization

Specific triggers contributed to the marked increase in unrest from early 2004, including the polarizing impact of aggressive and bigoted state reactions to acts of violence and even peaceful protest in the subsequent months. In response to the mass suffocation of protesters rammed into trucks by the military in Tak Bai, October 2004, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (2001-2006) is widely reported as having hinted that victims died chiefly as a result of fasting during the holy month of Ramadan.[235] Thaksin had already upset the uneasy consensus established in the 1980s by removing the the state bodies that had been established in the early 1980s to manage security, promote development and liaise with local leaders, including SBPAC (Askew 2007:39). Pursuit of a national campaign against

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[231] Reactionary politicians and nationalists emphasize the role of local disputes and crime (Connors 2006b, McCargo 2005b:26-30 & 2006). The ICG (2009:13) finds that insurgent links to drug and contraband smuggling rings exist but are not at the core of the movement.

[232] See for example Sturgeon (2007).

[233] For example Askew (2009b).

[234] See Ch.7 for detail.

[235] The offensive insinuation was repeated more directly by a subsequent prime minister, Samak Sundravej (Al Jazeera 2008).

illegal drugs that started in 2003 effectively gave the police a green light for extrajudicial killing of suspects of all descriptions exacerbated tensions in the Far South further (Ockey 2008:149-150).

Understanding the reasons behind the repeated outbreaks of violent conflict in the Far South and the failure to achieve an enduring settlement involves placing the region in the wider context of Thailand's recent history. Absolute monarchy only ended in Thailand in 1932, leaving a highly centralized state and a relatively powerful civil service. Following the decline of the monarchy at that time, the military fairly rapidly established itself as the key powerbroker, with subsequent decades seeing a sequence of governments typified by high levels of military involvement and frequent coups. Political settlements were typically achieved through struggles between elite groups (Wyatt 2004). Military authority persisted through the 1960s as economic growth accelerated, partly supported by American economic and military aid (Muscat 1990).

It was at one point fashionable to describe Thailand as a 'bureaucratic polity,' in which a highly centralized bureaucracy ensures order and directs developmental policymaking (Riggs 1966). The description may be dated and overly functionalist, yet it retains some validity. High-level bureaucrats, and civil servants more widely, have retained a strong role alongside the military. Civil servants are still mostly appointed centrally and rotated around the provinces. As part of the hierarchical chain of command that in principle leads ultimately to the king, and was fully established during the consolidation of Siam in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they have tended to see their role as guardians of independence against external threats and purveyors of assistance to the uneducated poor through acts of paternalistic benevolence carried out by government agencies or by the royal family directly (Wyatt 2004:270). Government officials tend to exert authority over those lower down the chain, even after steps taken towards decentralization. Meetings for village representatives are more likely to involve lectures than any form of participatory discussion (Arghiros 2001:30).

As Thailand modernized, mass involvement in political contestation grew. The period from the late 1950s through to the late 1970s witnessed communist insurgency in many rural parts of the country. Efforts to tackle the problem involved promoting social and economic improvements alongside nationalism based around the monarchy and a vigorous if often ineffective security response (Wyatt 2004:286 & 297; Marks 2007). By the 1970s, Bangkok's growing wealth had led to the emergence of a significant middle class. Students in particular pushed for democratization, leading to protests that were violently suppressed in Bangkok in 1973 and 1976. After a hard-line response and a subsequent period of instability, 'semi-democracy' prevailed through the 1980s. The government headed by Prem Tinsulanonda from 1980 to 1988 included many senior military figures, with limited power accorded to elected politicians (many of whom were former military officers). Justifying their semi-authoritarian approach mainly through a need to defeat communism, the government introduced many initiatives to

address inequality: strings of rural development projects targeting poorer areas addressed irrigation, infrastructure and education (Phongpaichit & Baker 2005:234).[236]

From the 1980s, representative politics came to the fore, in part displacing the *"Nonelected 'holy trinity' of monarchy, military, and bureaucracy"* (Thitinan 2008:140).[237] Gradually increasing representative politics that reflect a widening of the democratic mandate and expanded business power in a growing economy have repeatedly threatened more established elite groups in Thailand since the 1980s (Wyatt 2004, Pasuk & Baker 2009). The passage towards greater levels of representation has not been smooth, with further military coups in 1991 and 2006. Coups against civilian governments have been justified on the grounds that elected leaders and the web of business interests that surround them and their cabinets are corrupt and self-serving. Bangkok's middle-class population and many in the South have generally favoured the Democrat Party, with close links to the monarchy, military, and bureaucracy. The rural population elsewhere (especially in the heavily-populated and impoverished North-East) that make up a majority of the overall electorate typically vote for populist leaders with ties to large business concerns and entrenched rural patronage networks.

The 1997 Constitution emerged out of the 1991 military coup and subsequent withdrawal of the military from direct political intervention. The result of an exhaustive process of negotiation between groups with more conservative and liberal interpretations of democratic reform, the Constitution aimed to limit military intervention, nepotistic business interventions and corrupt practice in politics while ensuring commitment to democratic principles and party-based politics (UNDP 2003:36-37, Connors 2007:164-169).

Given a long history of hierarchical governance, impunity, and manipulation of institutions to suit specific personal or group interests, the 1997 Constitution was unlikely to create an accountable democracy in one step. In the event, billionaire businessman-politician Thaksin Shinawatra won the national election of 2001. A National Counter-Corruption Commission finding that Thaksin was guilty of failing to disclose assets and therefore ineligible for office was overturned by the newly established Constitutional Court shortly after the 2001 election, raising questions about the judges' impartiality. Subsequent manipulation of institutions and heavy-handed efforts to limit media independence followed (Painter 2006, Connors 2007:170-172). Thaksin won a further election in 2005 by a clear majority, before being removed from office in 2006 through a military coup that followed months of street protest and parliamentary stalemate. The 2006 coup removed a government that had itself repeatedly removed or ignored democratic and institutional checks on the role of those in positions of authority, providing some ground for military claims that they were tackling corruption and unaccountability. A long legacy of impunity on the part of both security institutions and politicians that

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[236] An amnesty for insurgents, the withdrawal of support for insurgents from China along with a split between China and Vietnam, public concern over newly established communist dictatorships in neighbouring Cambodia and Laos, and improved counterinsurgency methods all contributed to the rapid demise of the communist insurgency (Turton 1978, Pasuk & Baker 1997).

[237] Also Pasuk & Baker (1997).

affects the Far South and other parts of the country stretches from before the disappearance of local leader Haji Sulong in 1948 through to beyond that of Somchai Neelapaichit in 2004 (Anderson 1990, Human Rights Watch 2007).

5.4 Democratization, national protest and the peripheral minority

The Far South of Thailand remained marginal to the national political arena through a period of acute instability from 2006. The political context at the national level was characterized by extreme polarization into rival pro-Thaksin ('red') and anti-Thaksin (predominantly 'yellow') camps with different support groups. It can be summarized as a struggle between two rival patronage networks (McCargo 2010b), on each side involving mass mobilization by rival elites allied to different business networks (Connors & Hewison 2008:9).

Protests against Thaksin's elected, populist and capitalist authoritarianism from late 2005 pulled together different voices under a 'yellow-shirt' coalition, backed by elite interests that included elements of the royal family, military, and Democrat Party (Pye & Schaffar 2008). Over a tumultuous subsequent few years following the 2006 coup in which Thaksin's party won an election and was then forced into opposition, a pro-Thaksin 'red-shirt' coalition gained momentum. Protests that began relatively peacefully became increasingly violent in Bangkok in early 2010, with frequent bombings, grenade attacks and shootings widely and plausibly attributed to red-shirt elements (Todd Ruiz & Sarbil 2010). By the end of 20th May 2010, repeated use of live ammunition by the military, continued grenade attacks, and other incidents had resulted in an estimated 90 deaths, along with a string of burnt buildings in central Bangkok and in provincial capitals (ICG 2010b, Karuna 2010).[238]

One of the few points of agreement between the two opposing sides at the national level was on a conservative, nationalist response to violence in the Far South. Leaders and members of mass movements on both sides had little interest in supporting a Malay Muslim minority that shares a different group identity or addressing a minority conflict that could be presented as a threat to the nation. Efforts to address the complex inequalities and denial of cultural space that are associated with unrest in the Far South were not among either side's priorities. While red-shirt protesters opposed many elements of the Thai establishment, they showed little sympathy for the plight of Malay Muslims in the Far South. On 22 April 2010, a red-shirt group in the northeast held up a military transport train and refused to allow the soldiers inside to travel to Bangkok where military and police were deployed against fellow red-shirt protesters. The military responded that the troops were destined for the Far South, not Bangkok. Once red-shirt leaders were convinced that this was true, they were content to let the train go (Matichon 2010).

Government responses both to the crisis in the Far South and to the colour-coded conflict at the national level shared striking similarities. As prime minister in 2005, Thaksin established the National

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[238] Numbers are unclear given that many violent acts were anonymous, but all sources agree that the majority of deaths were among red shirt protesters. Hundreds of soldiers were also injured, and some killed.

Reconciliation Commission for the Far South, chaired by the venerable establishment figure, Anand Panyarachun, with Prawase Wasi as deputy. In 2010, with Thaksin in self-imposed exile overseas, the government established another reconciliation commission, this time in the aftermath of national unrest. It enlisted the same two figures as chairman and deputy. In both cases, the desire of the incumbent government to undertake any fundamental reforms has been minimal. Reconciliation has held little genuine meaning and significant attempts at negotiation have been avoided.

To summarize, Thai state legitimacy (which, as we have seen, is reliant on popular acceptance of paternalistic nationalism) has been challenged both at the national level and in the Far South. Lack of access to political process, along with manipulation of popular sentiment by protest leaders, has led to violence. National level political turmoil reflects a failure of agreement over methods of governance, with a defensive paternalistic elite threatened by Thaksin's business connections and populist patronage networks that tap into the resentment felt by many Thais against abuses of power and continued inequalities. Both sides involved in national contestation are in many senses products of the same system, with little genuine commitment to democracy, independent institutions, or constitutional process, nor to reforms that would address the resentment felt by many in the Far South.

Despite significant changes in Thailand's politics since the 1980s, including the irregular growth of representative politics already described, the country remains highly centralized. Policymaking relevant to the Far South is overwhelmingly conducted in Bangkok, with little responsiveness to local opinion, especially for a small, minority area of little electoral significance. The perceived marginalization of Malay Muslims in the Far South manifests itself in long-term challenges over language policies and the education system (Liow 2008), continued perceptions of unjust treatment of Malay Muslims by civil servants (see Figure 5c), specific incidents of miscarriages of justice including the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents in 2004, and a lack of domestic political leadership with influence at the national level, as is explained below.

Figure 5c: Residents' perspectives: the most significant underlying cause of violent conflict in the Far South[239]
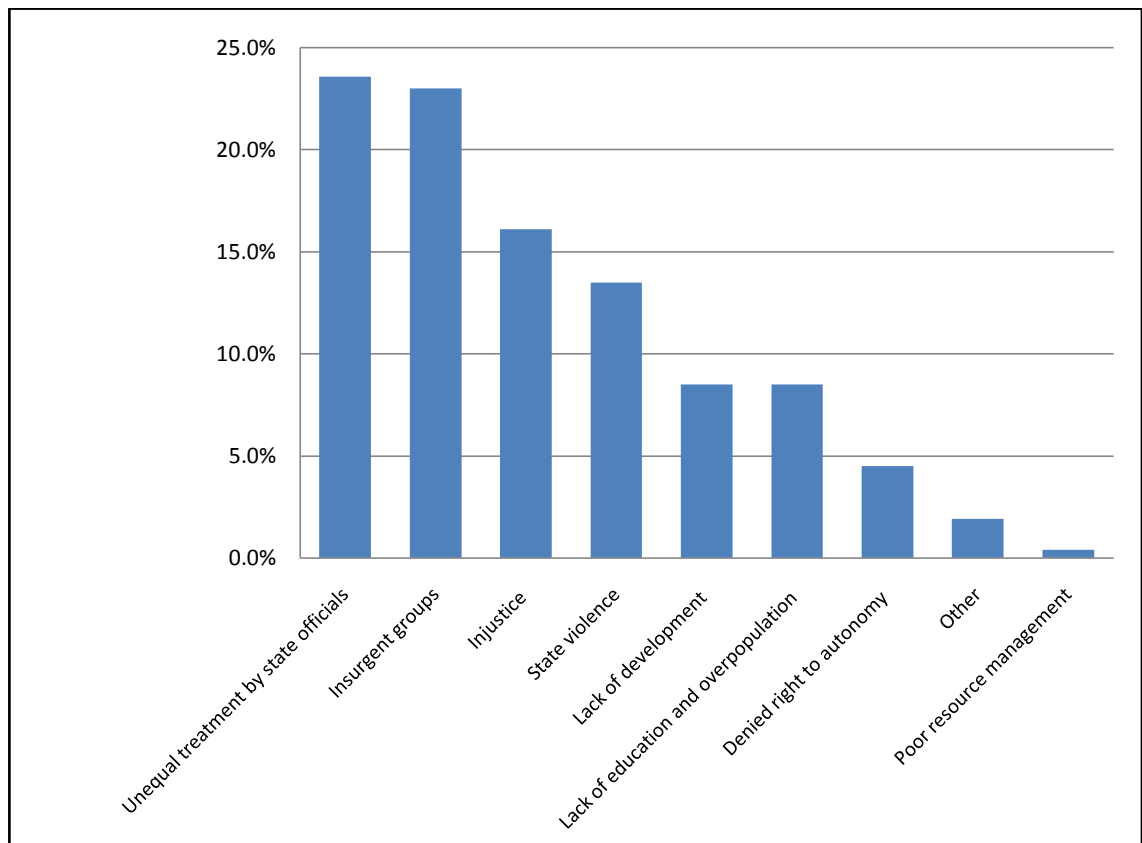
5.5 Divided peripheral elites

Thailand's gradual democratization was expected in the 1990s to help permanently end conflict in the Far South by creating greater space for marginalized voices including Malay Muslims. However, changes that were institutionalized in the 1997 Constitution to promote a party-based democratic system coincided with a subsequent rise in violence, first in the Far South and then nationally (Chaiwat 2005b:xii). The space for local leadership credible both to government in Bangkok and to people in the Far South, never large to begin with, was further squeezed. Duncan McCargo explains how, despite the rise to prominent national positions of power by Malay-Muslim politicians from the Far South, the form of representative politics that led to and was subsequently shaped by Thaksin fomented the resumption of violent conflict (2008). Thaksin's role exacerbated a longstanding crisis of political authority in the Far South, contributing to the failure of politicians and other elite figures from the Far South to establish recognized and non-violent ways of representing Malay Muslim interests. Leaders from the Far South have little scope to push for changes or accommodation at the national level, while also finding that the process of engagement in national politics has often reduced their local support base. The role of alliances or bargaining between central and local elites has been a less prominent feature of recent Thai history than it has in many neighbouring countries, with centralized government departments and

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[239] TAF (2010).

appointed provincial governors dominating the political scene (Wyatt 1969). Despite their relative lack of prominence, local elites have nonetheless managed to prosper, in cases intergenerationally, primarily through building ties with the central state as well as maintaining a local support base (McVey 2000:5-7). However, as is explained below, the divide between the population in the Far South and the central authorities of the Thai state limits the space for such negotiation, with no formal secondary settlement and little devolved political authority.

The gradual displacement of respected local educational, religious and political leadership in the Far South is a recurring theme in historical studies (Surin 1985, Marmarn 2002). The reverence accorded to heads of local religious educational establishments, or *pondok*, is often stressed. Young men who have had the opportunity to pursue study overseas or otherwise gain qualifications have traditionally gone on to assume low-income but high-status positions as *pondok* heads and traditional teachers (Madmarn 2002, ICG 2007). The assimilation of *pondok* into the Thai government education system has involved increasing collaboration with central authorities, with many schools having been transformed into state-accredited private Islamic schools offering both religious and secular education largely in the Thai language (Liow 2008). Private Islamic schools are offered subsidies some of which are calculated on a per capita basis, leading business-minded owners to compete for students.[240] Over time, local *pondok* and the status accorded to their owners or senior teachers have declined (McCargo 2008:42-43). At the same time, *pondok* have borne the brunt of government counter-insurgency efforts since 2004, being blamed for anti-government activities. Efforts to encourage *pondok* to register formally were stepped up and some were also subjected to surveillance (ICG 2007).

Senior religious leaders in the Far South are caught between seeking approval locally and gaining the assent of central state institutions. The Thai monarchy and state have placed emphasis on nationally recognized Muslim structures, including the Chularajamontri – a royally appointed leader of Muslims who is widely respected by Thai Muslims in much of the country. Since at least 1945 the Chularajamontri has never been a Malay Muslim from the Far South, however, and the figure is not seen there as a legitimate representative of community aspirations (Liow 2008:22). Islamic Provincial Councils supervized by the Chularajamontri, as well as other measures including the publically funded construction of central mosques in major towns in the Far South, have raised widespread cynicism over government intrusion into Malay Muslim affairs (Farouk 1988, Surin 1988, McCargo 2011)**.**

Local secular leaders are also seen as compromized. The 1997 Constitution furthered decentralization through elected provincial, district and sub-district officials. Over time, increasing numbers of Malay Muslims in the Far South have been able to speak sufficient Thai to access government positions in *tambon* (sub-districts) as well as in the local operations of line ministries such as agricultural extension (Cornish 1997). However, in conflict-affected districts of the Far South, sub-district officials often have to stay subservient to higher-level military and civil representatives. Malay Muslim local authority

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[240] Interview with Phaisan Toryib. Private Islamic Schools receive subsidies of around US$300 per student annually (ICG 2007).

figures must tread a difficult line between government security forces who often see them as insurgent sympathizers, and insurgents themselves who regularly assassinate those considered too close to the state (McCargo 2008:80-83). Villagers, meanwhile, lose respect for village chiefs as well as sub-district officials and other local government employees through their involvement in the commonplace corrupt practices that link local politics, administration and business (McVey 2000, Wyatt 2004:286-287).

Higher levels of Malay Muslim elites have also found themselves estranged from both their local support base and the hub of political power in Bangkok. At the provincial level, new elected administrative organizations were effectively sidelined by the subsequent direct appointment of unelected 'CEO' Governors from Bangkok (Painter 2006, Ockey 2008:150). The elected Chairman of the Provincial Administrative Organization for Pattani province, Zahid Al Yufry, complained in 2008 that as a result he was no more than a "*Seua kradat*", or paper tiger.[241] In order to move beyond a local and relatively marginal level of political office in Thailand's centralized political system it is generally necessary to engage with Bangkok-centred political parties and networks of well-connected actors. Various older and newer entrants into electoral politics from the Far South aligned themselves with the *Wadah* faction of Malay Muslim politicians, which during the 1990s was able to exert some influence and build connections with central power-brokers like General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, whose New Aspiration Party held power for a period in the 1990s. Thaksin's subsequent monopolization of the political landscape led to the Wadah faction being incorporated along with the New Aspiration Party into his Thai Rak Thai party, in the process losing what small leverage they previously had and further marginalizing Malay Muslims (Chaiwat 2009:98-99). Association with Thaksin became toxic in the Far South after the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents of 2004, further damaging former Wadah politicians. Several of them, including Wan Muhammad Nor Matha, who rose to become interior minister in Thaksin's first government, were further discredited in the Far South through their involvement in the money politics and evident personal enrichment that typified Thaksin's administrations (McCargo 2008:77-78). Den Tohmeena, a founding Wada member and the son of Haji Sulong, lost credibility in Bangkok after he was accused by Thai government authorities of separatist inclinations following the upsurge in violence in 2004 (ibid:63-69).

5.6   Perceptions of inequality

Analyses of horizontal inequalities have increasingly recognized the significance of the cultural context of identity formation in understanding cases of conflict related to horizontal inequalities (Brown & Langer 2010:51-52), while also acknowledging the importance of perception (Stewart et al. 2008). It is argued here that the economic facts of horizontal inequality are significant insofar as they feed perceptions of injustice along ethnic lines that have deep historical roots and contemporary resonance. Various commentators have found a 'worldview' in the Far South that is detached from other situations and in many senses informed by religion as much as socioeconomic evidence.[242] Responses and

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[241] Interview with Zahid Al Yufry.
[242] See Chaiwat (2005). On perceptions, see McCargo (2008:6).

attitudes shaped by views on group identity may not seem very rational to observers investigating political and economic aspects of conflict. However, when approached from an angle that incorporates notions of identity and recognizes perception as an aspect of horizontal inequalities, attitudes in the Far South can be adequately explained.

Economic explanations of poverty that are often repeated by Thai government representatives as a precursor to announcements of new development expenditures reflect a conservative perspective that denies the wider context of marginalization and injustice (Srisompob & Sobhonvasu 2006). In any case, the Far South is not especially poor in comparison with other rural or border provinces far from Bangkok. According to UNDP's overall Human Achievement Index, not one of the three provinces of the Far South was in the poorest ten out of 76 nationally in 2003 (UNDP 2003).[243] The three provinces became considerably wealthier along with the rest of the country as Thailand underwent massive changes from the 1950s to the present day, emerging as a middle-income economy.[244]

Per capita state expenditure in the Far South has typically been in line with the national average (Unicef 2006:26). Analysis of household survey data by district across the Far South does not reveal any clear correlation between the severity of violence and economic well-being at the local level.[245] Overall figures show little demographic change over time in terms of ethnicity, unlike some other peripheral conflict areas where migration and other demographic shifts (often in favour of the national majority) are a major cause of resentment. The proportion of Malay Muslims in the area has remained broadly constant or slightly increased as the impact of some inward migration of Thai Buddhists from elsewhere in the country is more than compensated for by a higher birth rate among Malay Muslims (G Brown 2008:260-261).

More careful comparisons do shed light on the context of the Far South, when accompanying a broader approach to peripheral conflicts. Appropriate areas to compare with the Far South that resonate with residents' lived experiences are the national capital, Bangkok, and the neighbouring Buddhist majority province of Songkhla rather than remote provinces in the Northeast. While the Far South is no poorer than many other remote and border areas of Thailand, it is considerably poorer than Bangkok, and moderately poorer than Songkhla (see Figure 5d). Over a longer period, provincial GDP per capita in the three provinces of the Far South declined by around 20% relative to the overall national average between 1978 and 2003 (G Brown 2008:272-273), a trend that has not since reversed.[246]

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[243] One of the three – Narathiwat province – did fall into the bottom ten in 2006, following the escalation of violence. (UNDP and the Government of Thailand's Thailand Human Development Reports disaggregate data by province according to a range of indicators).

[244] Brown also finds that the southernmost provinces are not especially deprived, with far lower proportions of the population below the poverty line than many provinces in the Northeast (2008:272-273).

[245] Data sources: a) Number of Violent Incidents 2007-2010 by Violence-related Injury Surveillance data and b) 2004 income data by district, collated by SBPAC.

[246] Brown uses Thailand National Statistics Office data. Also Unicef (2006:20-21) using data from NESDB (2004).

Figure 5d: Gross Domestic Product per Capita: comparison of selected areas (Thai Baht / year) [247]
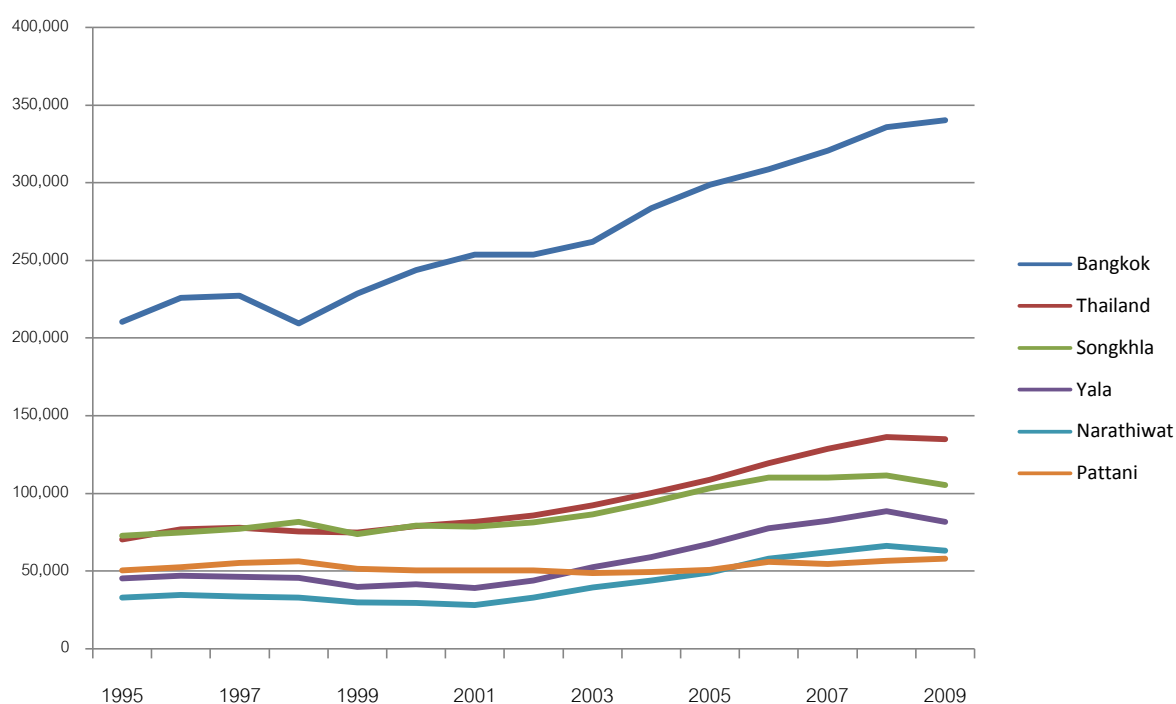
Trends of stagnating rural economies and increasing differentiation across Thailand are replicated in other border areas of Thailand. But in the Far South, comparisons are made along lines associated with ethnic identity and religion. In the early 1990s, a period of rapid economic growth and high rates of foreign investment, 60% of foreign direct investment into the five southernmost provinces of Thailand was directed to Songkhla, the only one of the five with a Buddhist majority population (Rao & Newton 1996).[248] Songkhla, in contrast with the Far South, increased its GDP in line with the national average at least until the mid-2000s after the onset of violent conflict.

Within the Far South, urban areas with proportionately larger Buddhist populations are wealthier than rural areas that are overwhelmingly Malay Muslim.[249] Rural incomes are on average 53.6% that of urban incomes across Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat.[250] A survey conducted in 2010 found that Malay Muslims are generally over-represented in lower income groups: in urban areas, one in five (21%) Muslim households reported income of less than 8,000 Thai Baht per month, compared with only 11% of Buddhist households (TAF 2010). Health statistics also become more revealing when disaggregated by religion. Data on the prevalence of underweight children under 5 years old show that Muslim children in

[247] Source: NESDB (2009).
[248] The fifth province is Satun. See Ch.7 on investment flows to Songkhla.
[249] While reliable poverty data disaggregated by religion is not readily available, some surveys and other sources do show prevailing trends.
[250] This figure is calculated from 2004 provincial level data compiled by SBPAC. The data did not reveal significant differences in average rural income when disaggregated by religion, demonstrating again the difficulty of using direct statistical comparisons to explain conflict patterns.

the Far South are disadvantaged in comparison with their Buddhist neighbours as well as against the overall national average (see Figure 5e).

Figure 5e: Percentage of children 0-59 months significantly underweight [251]
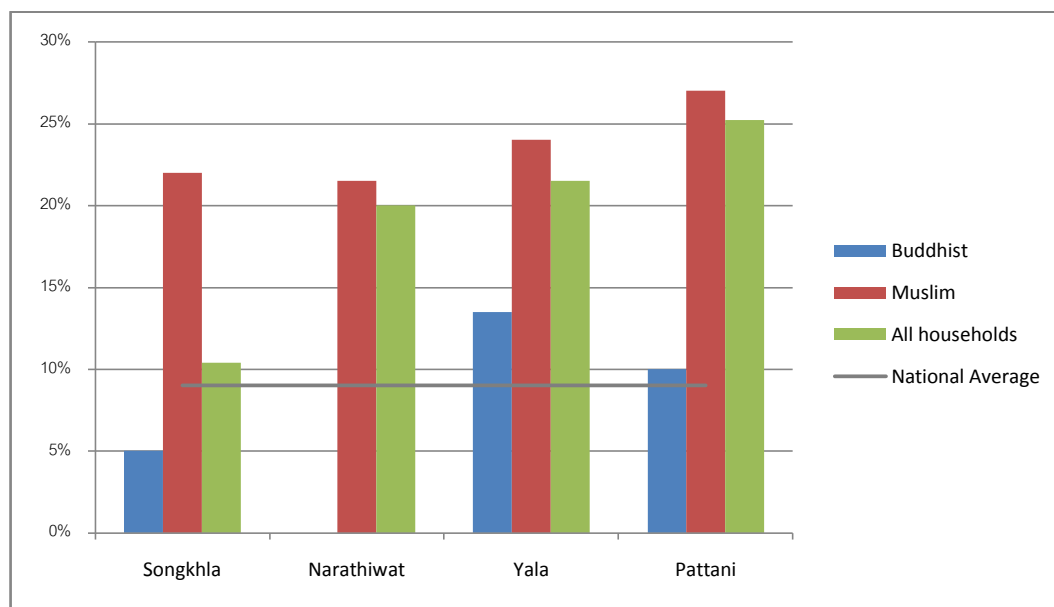
Education is a continual issue in the Far South that demonstrates the gap between many local people and the state. Many Malay Muslim parents choose not to send children to mainstream secondary schools, preferring Islamic private schools or occasionally more traditional *pondok* (Unicef 2006, Liow 2008). While offering religious instruction, most of these schools are considered to be of mixed standard in terms of the secular education that they provide. Young people often fail to achieve sufficient qualifications (and gain enough Thai language ability) to be able to access and perform successfully in government or private sector jobs.[252]

The overall conclusion is that while Malay Muslims in the Far South are not necessarily disadvantaged in comparison with people in other poor regions of Thailand including many Buddhist-majority border provinces, they are clearly worse off than their Buddhist neighbours in the same area and in neighbouring Songkhla.

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[251] Unicef (2006: Table 6, provincial statistical annexes). Data for Buddhists in Narathiwat not available.
[252] Among other sources see Madmarn (2002). This issue is expanded on in Ch.9.

5.7   Nationalism and failed assimilation policies

The construction of Thai nationalism affects how horizontal inequalities between Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhists are perceived and interpreted in the Far South. As already explained in Chapter Two, national identity is here seen as a symbolically constructed concept that often has enduring features.[253]

The spread of rapid transportation, mass education and national television increased central authority and a sense of common identity across Thailand. By the 1990s almost every village in Thailand could be reached overland from Bangkok within a day. Yet expectations that modernizing development would reduce identity affiliations have long been disproved in the social sciences; more complex explanations of group affiliation and its interaction with modernity are by now well established (Barth 1969). Rather than facilitating smooth assimilation, increased penetration of the nation state into the village has repeatedly generated resentment in the Far South (McCargo 2008).

Thongchai Winichakul (1994) describes the creation of an imagined Siamese nation within defined and recognized borders. A cultural and ethnic model of citizenship – 'Thainess' [254] – has been created, chiefly from ruling authorities in Bangkok. This conception of Thainess rests on acceptance of principles propagated from the top, rather than through either straightforward repression or a shared sense of rights. The strength of attachment to the notion of Thainess as a basis of national identity is considered to make many Thais at all levels resistant to notions of increased autonomy for the Far South (McCargo 2011).

Although Thailand is a multi-ethnic kingdom incorporating Chinese, Lao, Khmers, Burmese, Mons, Malays, Indians and numerous other minorities as well as ethnic Thais, governments have stressed homogeneity for over a century (Jory 1999). Streckfuss (1993) argues that constructions of race in Thailand are a consequence of efforts to legitimate the ruling authority of the Royal Chakri dynasty over territory in the face of French colonial expansion (1993). The construction of a 'Thai' identity involves essentializing 'otherness' – creating simplified opposites against which uniformity can be highlighted. Racial – and racist – constructions include not only the notion of Thai, but also various opposing and negatively stereotyped group identities with accompanying monikers: Chinese (*chek*), Western (*farang*), and *khaek* – a term literally meaning 'guest' which is used to describe Muslims as well as others from South Asia or the Middle East and unsurprisingly is considered derogatory in the Far South (Kasian 2009:267).

Assimilation policies that were expanded in the late 1930s pushed all those living in Thailand to adopt centrally determined cultural habits including clothing and Thai surnames as part of overt efforts to build a modern, unified nation (Uthai 1991, Phongpaichit & Baker 2005:132-133). Siam was renamed

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[253] Both Thai identity and Malay Muslim identity in the Far South can be seen in this light. Religious aspects of identity have been especially enduring.
[254] *Kwampenthai.*

Thailand[255] in 1939 in reflection of an ethnic 'Thai' identity. In the late 1950s, Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat engaged in an explicit project to create: *"…a unifying authority under which all elements of the nation can rally."* [256] As Connors explains, notions of democracy that took hold in the 1930s were subsequently incorporated into a national identity that defined people as royal subjects rather than citizens (2007). Thai nationalism has continued to be centred on the royal family over periods of military and civilian rule since the 1950s. The promotion of a unified national identity is pervasive (Vandergeest 1993). Elements include compulsory participation in the village scouts for all school children, a movement that in Thailand has focused on rooting out communists and promoting patriotic values (Bowie 1997), while loudspeakers broadcast the national anthem twice daily in many villages and public spaces.

The Far South is the one part of the country that has not accepted assimilation into a sense of Thainess. While the king is still widely revered there, police and other state officials are more likely to be seen as illegitimate at root. For example, the police-inspired murders of some 2,500 people in the campaign against drugs started in 2003 were accepted by most Thais as a way to improve the social environment and reduce crime, but they were resented in the Far South as yet another example of oppressive state brutality.[257]

For many Malay Muslims in the Far South, subsidiary tolerance (the state triptych of 'Nation, Religion, King' is clear in not asserting Buddhism as the only religion) represents a colonial imposition that impinges on traditional values and relegates their identity to an unacceptable secondary position (Surin 1985, Chaiwat 2005).[258] A website aligned with exiled leaders of the insurgency group PULO states: *"The Thai concept of nationhood is via complete assimilation in identity, culture, language, lifestyle and mindset into a single 'Thai' identity as [...] perpetuated by present-day Thai policies"* (Patanibook undated).

A (Thai Buddhist) headteacher of a multicultural primary school in Narathiwat Town I interviewed in 2009 expressed the need for tolerance and understanding, yet frowned when hearing children speak Yawi (Malay dialect) in the playground, commenting: "*Mai yom hai puud malayu*" ("*We don't allow them to speak Malay*").[259] Underlining the sensitivity of the language issue confronting the education system in the Far South, Yawi is referred to by many older Malay Muslims as *Bahasa Islam* (Islamic Language), fusing religion with dialect. Language reforms were one of the key proposals of the 2006 National Reconciliation Commission on the conflict in the Far South, recommending some limited official recognition of Malay,[260] and stimulating an elite nationalist backlash. Privy Council chairman General Prem Tinsulanonda, the chief adviser to the king, responded: *"We cannot accept that [proposal] as we*

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[255] *Prathet thai*.
[256] Thanat Khoman, adviser to Sarit (Bangkok Post 1959).
[257] See McCargo (2008:79 &119).
[258] Malay Muslims are marginal not only to Thai identity and political process but also to assimilation policies that were established principally to incorporate Chinese migrants and their descendents (Skinner 1957).
[259] Interview with Head Teacher.
[260] The Commission proposed wide-ranging but modest reforms and initiatives that were mostly ignored (NRC 2006, Chaiwat 2009).

are Thai. The country is Thai and the language is Thai ... we have to be proud of being Thai and having the Thai language as the sole national language" (Nation 2006).

For many rural Malay Muslims, a perception of a corrupt and intrusive external world is perpetuated through the definition of their own identity in opposition to it (McCargo 2008:81). These trends have been opportunistically exploited by insurgents who cast their message in spiritual and religious language, targeting Malay Muslims who associate with the state.[261] It is not surprising to see symbolism taken seriously in the Far South given its critical role in strengthening Thai as well as Malay Muslim group identity. In the Far South, the subsidiary position of Malay Muslim identity within the Thai state is represented symbolically in the fences surrounding the most culturally significant site in the Far South, Krue Se mosque (see Figure 5f).

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[261] See data in Srisompob (2009a).

Figure 5f: Krue Se Mosque, Pattani

28 insurgents and 3 security officers died at the historically and culturally significant Krue Se mosque in a stand-off that ended violently in April 2004. The dark fence in the foreground topped with a Thai Buddhist style post-head surrounds the mosque. It follows a generic design used at historical monuments across Thailand, unwittingly encircling a revered Muslim site within Buddhist imagery. The fence is an apt symbol of contested assimilation in the Far South of Thailand (Photograph by author, 2008).

5.8   Development and continued peripheral tensions

This section outlines the developmental history, current context and relevant government policies of Thailand and the Far South before explaining how development is perceived in the Far South. While poverty has declined across all parts of Thailand, the enduring horizontal inequalities already described in this chapter mean that development initiatives are often poorly perceived by many Malay Muslims in the Far South and typically end up feeding rather than lessening resentment.

Rapid economic growth began in Thailand after central planning authorities and ministries laid down the basis for capitalist industrialization along lines similar to those of other East Asian developmental states. Government development plans from the 1950s to the 1980s prioritized infrastructure – transport, energy, irrigation – along with efforts to promote foreign and domestic private sector investment. Military rulers worked closely with business leaders in planning the country's economic direction, with government developing the basic infrastructure for growth while encouraging domestic and foreign investment through measures including efforts to keep labour flexible and wages low (Pasuk & Baker 1995). By the late 1980s, Thailand was seen as part of a second wave of rapidly modernizing market-oriented East Asian 'tigers' (World Bank 1993). An average real growth rate of 7.5% was sustained from the late 1950s up to the late 1990s. The percentage of people classified below the poverty line fell from 57% in the early 1960s to 6% in 1998 (UNDP 2003:28).

In a classic pattern of transition, what had been chiefly a rural economy was rapidly becoming predominantly industrial and urbanized (Rigg 1997). An extreme example of urban primacy, greater Bangkok's population is some 20-30 times larger than the next largest city.[262] Increasingly export-oriented industrialization, tourism and other service industries created jobs for millions of previously rural Thais (UNDP 2003). Thailand's economy was liberalized and increasingly oriented around exports after an economic downturn in the early 1980s, leading to greater flows of foreign investment and a boom that continued until 1997. The economic crisis of 1997 caused a temporary reverse, although growth rates of 5% or more resumed within several years. Adult literacy, estimated at around 33% nationally in the 1950s, had risen to 85% by 1980, and was near-universal by 2005 (World Bank 2006c).

As the economy expanded and liberalized, the longstanding authority of bureaucrats and the military gradually became increasingly linked with business interests at all levels (Anek 1992). As elements of democracy were fitfully introduced from the 1970s on, local and national commercial actors used financial weight to gain political as well as economic power (McVey 2000, Arghiros 2001). Successive governments made repeated efforts to promote inclusive growth, tackle inequality, and encourage participation in the political and economic spheres but they generally took second place to central support for industrialization within what was still a very centralized structure (UNDP 2003:28).

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[262] Calculated using historical census data quoted in Wyatt (2004:302) and other data from MoI (2011). Figures vary depending on how population and city limits are defined.

For many Thais, developmental change is seen as a broadly positive process, with relative acceptance of the legitimacy of the state and of changes that have on aggregate brought higher standards of living. Yet rapid development has brought problems as well as benefits. The predominantly urbanized and largely assimilated Chinese minority generally benefitted from economic growth in Bangkok and in provincial towns (Ueda 2000:164). Rural populations in many areas profited less directly and were also affected by rising land prices, environmental degredation, natural resource depletion, and increased indebtedness through the repeated failures of rural development initiatives (Parnwell 1996). While eliminating mass poverty, Thailand also became increasingly unequal in economic terms from the late 1950s through to the mid-1990s.[263]

In the Far South, developmental change is commonly viewed cynically as part of unwanted external intervention.[264] We have already seen that traditional forms of political authority have been undermined through recent changes. As is explained below, development interventions are often perceived to feed ongoing horizontal inequalities (Unger 1998).

Detailed and accurate documentation of recent developmental initiatives in the Far South is limited. Typically poor project performance reflects the difficulty of working through local leadership structures given an environment of mistrust between citizens and state officials. Other problems encountered include poor diagnosis of local needs and misallocations of funds through unaccountable and hierarchical government agencies.[265] Anthropological research has documented the lives of Malay farmers and fishermen in the Far South over several decades (Fraser 1966, Cornish 1997, Dorairajoo 2002, Supara 2004 & 2008, Tan Mullins 2007, Askew 2009b, Tsuneda 2009). Often stressing the significance of local identity largely in opposition to a changing and increasingly penetrative external Thai environment, various development initiatives have been addressed. Agriculture and fishing have undergone major commercialization in Thailand. Rubber and fish are both priority export commodities at the national level as well as a source of local livelihood in the Far South, with associated government assistance including credit, technical advice, and infrastructure development seen as benefiting larger businesses before smaller producers (Rigg 1997:81). May Tan Mullins shows how local level corruption as well as formal assistance benefits commercial (and often Thai Buddhist) fishing interests in Pattani, whose large trawlers are officially banned from a zone stretching three kilometres from the shore in order to protect smaller (predominantly Malay Muslim) local fishermen and maintain fish stocks. In practice, the ban is not always enforced, with larger trawlers avoiding punishment by bribing officials or paying small official fines (2007:355).

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[263] Economic inequality levels are above those for comparable countries in Southeast Asia (such as Malaysia or the Philippines) despite starting from a lower base, although there has been a slight improvement since the mid-1990s (UNDP 2009c, using Gini coefficients of household income based on government household surveys).

[264] See Scott (2009) and Keyes (1985) on antagonistic polarization around ostensibly traditional values in opposition to developmental change in Southeast Asia.

[265] Preliminary findings from one ongoing field study examining special government programmes at the village level confirm the pattern already described in this chapter (personal communication with Ora-Orn Poocharoen of the National University of Singapore, January 2012).

Andrew Cornish describes the impact of a government project promoting increased rubber production through village level education and cooperatives in rural Yala, part of the Far South (1997). The gap between local Malay farmers and the mostly Thai Buddhist civil servants who implemented the project led to the failure of many of the project's initiatives. Cornish describes local farmers' perspectives of an alien government, divorced from the lives of Malay Muslim villagers by language, culture and attitude. Unsurprisingly, when such distance is combined with common institutionalized corruption, many rural people in the Far South have a low opinion of civil servants.[266]

A key element for farmers in Yala and fishermen in Pattani is the interpretation of the development encounter through an ethnic prism that greatly increases the level of cynicism with which civil servants are viewed. In Cornish's study, project failure was largely seen as symptomatic of an alien Thai state. Where farmers benefitted, success was attributed to individual effort or to Malay community leaders in spite of the government (Cornish 1997:105). Tan Mullins refers to common beliefs that the Thai state is inevitably corrupt as a result of its bankrupt culture, quoting a small-scale fisherman: *"There is no one that I can ask for help in the village, or in Thailand, as no one is honest and not corrupted. This is* rabob mueang thai – *the Thai 'model' or Thai way"* (2007:356).

Perceived discrimination by officials against Malay Muslims when visiting local government offices or passing through checkpoints has been reported from the Far South over many years (Supara 2004:175). Condescending attitudes among government officials are hardly unique to the Far South of Thailand, while long-term patterns of more serious human rights abuses including disappearances and torture are documented across the country (Anderson 1981, Human Rights Watch 2004, 2007)**.** But their frequency in the Far South and the context of perceived oppression mean that even minor incidents can trigger strong reactions: "*One normally mild-mannered Narathiwat imam [religious leader] became so enraged over his treatment by an obnoxious land department official that he now understood why some people decided to shoot civil servants"* (McCargo 2008:57).

These perspectives are not confined to the rural poor. A director of a Muslim Youth Council in the Far South whom I interviewed in late 2007 felt that: *"The way government thinks and people think are contrary ... Buddhists come here to control."* [267] Many Malay Muslims see government projects as clumsy efforts to win their support: *"We do not need the money, we need understanding; we need the government to understand our culture and our religion."* [268]

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[266] See also Thomas (1985).
[267] Interview with NGO Director 2. Other interviewees expressed similar views, confirming published material referenced in this section.
[268] Man from Narathiwat quoted in Scarpello (2005).

5.9   Using development to win

Development as a pacification tool has a long history in Thailand. Associated policies were implemented in the 1980s as part of a broader approach to build peace in the Far South and they figured in earlier efforts to defeat wider rural communist insurgency (Demaine 1986, Muscat 1990). Under the national leadership of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat and his successors, a series of five year plans from the late 1950s emphasized expansion of irrigation, roads, electricity and education, by doing so bringing development and incorporation of rural and peripheral populations into the state for security and national integration purposes (Wyatt 2003:272-273).

Senior Thai officials informally cite the phrase *'ao setakit thalai chon'*, or 'use economic growth to defeat the bandits'. Connors (2007:66) discusses the Community Development Department, created in 1962 as part of the Ministry of the Interior, to bring villages more closely into a nationally unified and controlled structure. Muscat (1990:174) quotes a field report on related local government development initiatives in the late 1960s: *"...the villager must be involved in meaningful activities with officials, and in a fashion that permits the villager to relate favourably to the government officials."*

More recent policies have followed similar trends. Following the surge in violence in 2004, Thaksin Shinawatra announced a special budget of 12 billion Thai Baht annually (US$400 million) for development in the Far South in 2005 and 2006, with funds channelled through existing organizations – most notably the military.[269] These policies were continued after his removal from office in 2006. The Democrat Party-led coalition that took power at the end of 2008 set out to design an economic development policy that would *"Win hearts and minds"* (Post Today 2009). In March 2009, a three-year budget of 76 billion Thai Baht (US$2.2 billion) was passed by the government for development in the Far South (Mangeronline 2009).[270]

A combination of strong influence over how budgets are spent, and genuine concerns over security threats, means that the military implement many projects in the Far South that are funded from civil budgets. Military projects from the 1980s and the 2000s have included infrastructure as well as various community schemes, some established as a direct basis for intelligence gathering and counter-insurgency measures (Bonura 2003, Public Relations Department 2008). Bonura documents the mixed impact of military development projects in the Far South in the 1990s, with security objectives and local mistrust inevitably limiting actual developmental impact.

Even beyond these pacification initiatives, developmental actions in Thailand often promote respect for authority. Thai NGOs, at times the government, and especially royal projects under the patronage of the king or queen, promote a range of programmes under the title *'sethakit phophiang'* or 'sufficiency economy' (UNDP 2007). Critics of sufficiency economy thinking have targeted its paternalism, regarding it as an effort by urban elites to legitimize authority and keep in place the rural population (Hewison

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[269] Interview with Chueng Chatariakul.
[270] This figure is not an accurate reflection of what was actually spent.

2008:207). Many royal projects are located in border areas of Thailand including the Far South, clearly designed to instil loyalty amongst minorities by demonstrating the benevolence of the national, royal hierarchy.

The Thai word for development, *kanphattana*, carries a set of meanings that are not commonly associated with typical Western developmental ideas of pursuit of affluence or social justice. *Kanphattana* implies progress towards a clean physical environment, achieved largely through investment in infrastructure – new roads, buildings and irrigation. The word evokes an organized, urban and modern setting, with a strong undercurrent of associated positive virtues of nationalism, order and respect for authority (Arghiros 2001:34-35). An illustration of this is a police promotion notice posted outside public buildings that states: *"Good behaviour and discipline. Thai police stepping towards development."* [271]

Even within more varied recent approaches to development, *kanphattana* is still associated with national progress and an ordered, respectful society, a set of values that overlap with the notion of Thainess and invite competitive comparison with other countries (Demaine 1986). Nationalist developmentalism is applied when tackling social problems: a young boy in Pattani, presumably having listened to government anti-drug campaigns, phrases social problems in a nationalist context by commenting: *"Marijuana stops the country from being developed"* (Unicef 2008:25).

A widely repeated comment attributed originally to the king states that the government should: *"Understand, reach out and develop."* [272] This typifies a wider benevolent and paternalistic expectation that top-down development, some limited participation, and security measures will help solve problems in the Far South as it appeared to have done in the 1980s (Ornanong 2001), with little perceived need for any more fundamental change in the political organization of the Thai state or the constructed identity of the Thai nation.

There is, however, a risk of presenting a thoroughly polarized picture by concentrating solely on unrest and depicting all efforts by the state to compromise as cynical hegemonic co-option rather than concessions.[273] Popular and state attitudes are rarely totally polarized (Horstmann 2004:76-99). A Unicef survey of youths in the Far South revealed common desires for security forces to provide more safety by doing their job better, rather than leave the region entirely, among Malay Muslims as well as Thai Buddhists (2008). Many Malay Muslims operate more comfortably within Thai society than separatists would like. Almost all young, and many middle-aged, Malay Muslims in the Far South speak Thai, and a significant number of local people are educated to a high level in the Far South itself or at universities elsewhere in Thailand (Chaiwat 2005, Bonura 2008:388).

Pragmatism and common desire for improved standard of living also exist in Thailand as elsewhere (see Mosse 2005:5). Where a policy or project is in people's interests, it is often accepted, unless too closely

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[271] *"Praphruet di mi winai tamruat thai kao klai phattana."* Bangkok, 2008.
[272] *"Khao chai, khao thueng, lae phattana."*
[273] See for example Che Man (1990).

associated with perceived oppression. These sentiments are captured by the following quotation from a local leader referring to the impact of the inept and deadly military response to protests at Tak Bai, Narathiwat in 2004:

> *In fact, the people here used to like Thaksin's policies, like boosting rubber prices and even his modernisation policies ... Before Tak Bai the people here participated in government development projects, now we're not interested in government projects any more* (Janssen 2005).

Some national and local NGOs have intentionally been crossing ethnic divides for some time (Dorairajoo 2002). One network supports sustainable small-scale fishing, where NGOs along with researchers from Prince of Songkhla University have cooperated with the Department of Fisheries.[274] More politicized engagement between local and national campaigners for rural rights has occurred over the Thailand-Malaysia gas pipeline, and over specific human rights abuses.[275] Some Malay Muslims and Buddhists in the Far South state that the sufficiency economy approach promoted by the king and Thai government agencies is also compatible with rural community needs and with an Islamic 'moral economy'.[276]

Many government officials do not aim to pacify insurgents through development initiatives. Civil servants in the Ministry of Justice, for example, see their work hindered by official impunity for the military and police through emergency legislation for the Far South, as well as unofficial impunity given political interference and a failure to pursue miscarriages of justice.[277] Even the conservative Ministry of the Interior contains internal groups pushing for concerted changes to policies that would promote more official acceptance of the local Yawi dialect and improve community-based planning. In support of such initiatives are various academic institutions and think tanks aiming to push the boundaries of what the state will accept.[278] On the ground, engagement by Buddhist local government staff in Malay Muslim areas is seen by many as perfectly possible with the right attitude and experience. A failure to achieve improvements for local people in the Far South is often attributed not to a lack of concern or oppression but more prosaically to inappropriate national projects pushed down from Bangkok – for example subsidizing small-scale cattle rearing when people in the Far South prefer chicken or goats.[279]

Still more significant is the SBPAC, reconstituted once more in 2006. It had in the past played a significant consultative and advisory role, settling local disputes and proposing development policies that included greater consideration of local context. External critics regularly accuse the reconstituted SBPAC of being dominated by paternalistic and often corrupt Bangkok-based bureaucrats (Askew 2007:49). Internal critics within SBPAC complain about military interference.[280] SPBAC does in cases offer the scope to consult with local leaders and to plan development projects that can involve the rural majority, moving beyond the army's 'hearts and minds' schemes or pork-barrel projects hijacked by

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[274] Interview with Yowalak Thiarachow. Also Johnson (2000:22).
[275] See Ch.7.
[276] Interviews with Somchit Grotkaew, Wii, and Aminah.
[277] Interview with Gothom Arya.
[278] Interviews with TICA Officials 1 and 2, and UN Official.
[279] Interviews with Local Official, Zahid Al Yufry, and Azman Tohmeena.
[280] Interview with Chueng Chatariakul. Also King-oua (2009).

influential political and business interests. One such potentially positive scheme involved promoting farming on some 95,000 hectares of abandoned paddy fields, through support for oil palm, rubber plantations or a return to rice cultivation (Pakhawan & Pathan 2007).

The record of following through steps that promote reforms to reflect Malay Muslim concerns, like the 2006 education sector strategy that was published in Malay, local Yawi and Thai, remains weak, however. Barriers on the ground and within the bureaucracy repeatedly block progress even if progressive policy is enacted (Liow 2009:30-33). For example, colleges and universities have lowered local entrance requirements for Malay Muslim students to allow for weak Thai language ability. This enabled more youths to enter higher education, but meant that standards then dropped to such an extent that many were unemployable once they graduated.[281] Forward-looking policies have repeatedly been undermined by a lack of institutional and political commitment (Manageronline 2009), consistent with a government approach that offers minor concessions but little fundamental changes to address grievances in the Far South.

5.10   Locating the conflict in the Far South internationally

As with other peripheral conflicts, international influences affect both the Thai nation state and insurgent groups in a range of ways. Perhaps most significantly, Thailand's borders and national security have long been supported by regional and global institutions.[282] Thailand has long been an ally of the USA, gaining preferential trade status and security guarantees during the Cold War. Since 2003 it has been a major non-NATO ally. Joint manoeuvres with US forces called Cobra Cold are undertaken annually in Thailand (Connors 2006).

Insurgent groups are also affected by international factors. Some insurgents and sympathizers draw parallels between Patani's struggle with the Thai state and a wider struggle of Islamic peoples against the USA. Anti-American sentiment exists alongside the typical suspicion of outsiders that alienated rural communities often exhibit. False rumours of CIA involvement are common in the Far South (McCargo 2008:xiii, Wheeler 2009). Any simplistic narrative directly relating the conflict to global tensions between Islam and the West is unfounded, however. No clear associations have been found between figures in the Far South and international extremist groups including Al Qaida and the regional grouping Jemaah Islamiya, even by security specialists with a keen interest in demonstrating such links (Gunaratna et al. 2005, Abuza 2009). Thailand's repressive response to rising violence in the Far South was not justified as part of a wider War on Terror, but as a crackdown on criminals (Ukrist 2006). Thai government relationships with the USA are also rarely straightforward, involving as much resistance as acquiescence and regular policy changes (Kavi 2004, Wheeler 2009).[283]

More diffuse flows of ideas are significant for insurgents' interests, though. For those promoting violence, global discourse of religiously motivated struggle against injustice influences local definitions

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[281] Interview with Chidchanok Rahimmula.
[282] On the role of ASEAN see Askandar et al. (2002). Ch.6 explains how foreign aid has supported the Thai state.
[283] The position of the USA regarding conflict in the Far South is addressed in more detail in Ch.6 (Part 6.4a).

of identity and provides justification (Roy 2006; Jory 2007:20). This is not a new trend; international linkages were in fact stronger in the past and insurgent leaders have talked openly since the 1970s of their prior links with the Governments of Libya, Syria and Iran (ISRA 2009). Wider religious, educational, migratory and trade links between the Far South of Thailand, the Middle East and other Islamic states are commonplace today as they have been for many centuries (Bradley 2008, Liow 2009). The worldview of Malay Muslims in the Far South looks in a different direction from most of the rest of Thailand, with less interest in the USA and East Asia and more regard for Muslim majority countries, compounding the domestic horizontal divide (Chaiwat 2005).

International military or diplomatic intervention in the Far South has been limited. Some informal, exploratory initiatives to engage insurgent leaders have been made by representatives of the Thai army and political leaders. Use has been made in these of neutral third parties, including on different occasions Mahatir Mohamad (former prime minister of Malaysia), Yusuf Kalla (then vice-president of Indonesia), and the non-governmental Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (Pathan 2008, Bangkok Post 2008). Discussions have remained unofficial and low-key, with the Thai Government aiming to ensure that the United Nations and other international bodies including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) do not offer recognition to insurgent groups or their aspirations (ISRA 2010).

As the next chapter explains, the incentives for foreign aid agencies to address conflict in the Far South are fairly limited given few foreign political or security concerns and concerted domestic government interest in avoiding international attention.

5.11   Chapter conclusion

Conflict in the Far South of Thailand exhibits many of the characteristics of other peripheral conflicts and horizontal inequalities more widely, with members of a minority group resisting central state authority in a geographically discrete area. Many factors combine to generate and maintain the causes and dynamics of the conflict, encompassing the dominant political economy and culture of the nation state and its interactions with a peripheral part of the country. Some aspects of peripheral conflict also seen elsewhere are especially prominent in the Far South of Thailand: the clash between national and peripheral identities is pronounced, the state is especially centralized, and while the Far South is not poorer in economic terms than many other border areas of the country it remains politically and culturally marginalized at the national level.

In keeping with the approach followed in this thesis, this chapter has stressed how local level interactions need to be seen in the wider context of a history of conflict that is founded on the relationship between people in the Far South and the highly centralized Thai nation state. Understanding the impact and role of socioeconomic development in the Far South, including intentional development initiatives which are principally implemented through state institutions or

ministries,[284] requires approaching the peripheral region from a wider perspective. Four main points are highlighted here.

First, as has been explained, the specific history and geography of the Far South of Thailand and of its inhabitants are important in explaining the current conflict. Graham Brown draws a comparable conclusion in assessing conflicts associated with horizontal inequality across Southeast Asia, placing emphasis on similar contextual variables (2008:252). Second, the significance of both identity and perception of inequalities along identity-based lines recognized by Stewart et al. (2008) as common characteristics of many civil conflicts are especially significant in the Far South of Thailand. The long-term promotion of ethnically rooted nationalism as a means to create unity and legitimacy through explicit policies including the assimilation of minority groups is a key contributor to conflict in the Far South. The Far South of Thailand is not the poorest part of the country, and has gradually improved in terms of average socioeconomic status. But socioeconomic comparisons between Thai Buddhists (who are on average better connected to the state) and Malay Muslims in or near the Far South reveal strong disparities that run in the same direction as cultural status and political inequalities.

Third, the Far South is marginalized politically within the nation state. This point is particularly significant for international development agencies whose chief point of engagement in Thailand is at the level of the nation state, as subsequent chapters explain. The absence of inclusive power-sharing is significant in explaining the level of violence in the Far South. The form of the Thai state and its modes of engagement in the Far South leave little scope for alliances between local leaders and central authorities, while the population across all of Thailand are conceptualized as subjects rather than as citizens (Connors 2007, McCargo 2011). Thailand's centralized and hierarchically structured polity has shifted over time, but a lack of interest in tackling the Far South through enacting any fundamental changes or committing to a negotiated settlement has remained through both military and civil-dominated governments. Recent shifts towards more representative national politics had a damaging impact as previous government mechanisms to manage state-society relationships in the Far South collapsed, while Malay Muslim concerns remained peripheral to political protest at the national level. Even government organizations established to promote peace like SBPAC remain wedded to central government approaches and attitudes rather than based on local concerns: while having offices in the Far South, SBPAC is chiefly staffed by civil servants on rotation from national government departments and is closely linked with the central National Social and Economic Development Board.

Fourth, this chapter has shown how, across a range of fields from education to natural resources to employment, both government development initiatives and economic change more widely are in practice heavily shaped by horizontal political and cultural status inequalities. Typically forming part of efforts to build local allegiance to the state, many development initiatives are viewed cynically by a majority of Malay Muslims. Over-represented in poorer and rural demographic groups, they are more likely to experience the negative sides of developmental change and of poorly executed initiatives.

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[284] There are exceptions including NGOs but as already explained they are generally small scale.

The evidence in this chapter confirms Stewart's statement that the nature of the state is important in determining whether serious conflict breaks out and persists (2008:19-20). It follows that development interventions need to change how the state operates if they are to help promote peace in the Far South. However, with the maintenance of national identity closely associated with the state's centralised authority, the notion of autonomy agreements and negotiated settlement as a means to resolving the peripheral conflict in the Far South is contrary to the construction of the nation for many influential Thais (McCargo 2010). At the same time, international experience and some positive examples from within the Thai state suggest that developmental inputs can present opportunities to address some causes of the conflict, reduce grievances, increase pressure on the government to change policies, and find common ground across divides.[285] The mixed experiences of aid agencies aiming to pursue such opportunities are covered in subsequent chapters.

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[285] International experience of incremental approaches is outlined in Ch.2. Some reformist approaches within Thai government departments were explained in this chapter. For more detail including internationally funded and non-governmental initiatives, see Ch.9.

Chapter Six   An Overview of Foreign Aid and Conflict in the Far South of Thailand

This chapter provides an overview of past and contemporary foreign aid flows to Thailand, grounding the aid agency case studies that are discussed in the following three chapters. Primary research findings are summarized, with evidence drawn from a range of donors and placed in the context of literature addressing salient points that emerged through the research process. Contemporary donors are divided into three groups following the structure already introduced in the methodology.[286] This structure helps to illustrate the diversity of approaches across agencies and to explain the pattern of aid provision in relation to conflict in the Far South of Thailand.

In appraising donor flows to Thailand, methodological challenges emerge from the limited availability of primary information. Much historical material on aid provision is either not in the public domain or is only held in archives located in countries providing aid. It was possible to access data held in Thailand, in the UK, and online. Various reviews of foreign aid to Thailand including those by Caldwell (1974), Lobe (1977), Steinberg (1986), and Muscat (1990) provide further material. Available primary and secondary information on historical and contemporary aid flows that specifically target the Far South is extremely thin.[287] Databases (such as OECD/DAC development statistics) and information offered by aid agencies themselves also give little information on how much funding is directed towards addressing conflict in the Far South. As a result, interviews with aid agency staff and other informants comprise the main source of information for this and the subsequent three chapters.

6.1   Introduction to foreign aid in Thailand

Many donors still operate in Thailand (see Figure 6a for detail). Overall flows are relatively small, however, given both the reduction of grant assistance over time as Thailand became a middle-income country and Thai government policy decisions not to borrow from concessional lenders including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Overall aid flows are relatively low when compared with non-concessional state borrowing and private sector capital inflows. Recent donor funding is equivalent to under 3% of government revenue (Bank of Thailand 2008, OECD 2009).

In financial terms, Japan is the only remaining large aid donor to Thailand, with annual net positive transfers that ranged from US$118 million to US$854 million between 2002 and 2008 – roughly half of all contributions over this period. The far larger short-term loans provided by the IMF and other agencies following the Asian economic crisis of 1997-8 were mostly repaid by 2003.[288] The key multilateral lenders in Asia, the ADB and the World Bank, have maintained small programmes of

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[286] See Figure 6b.

[287] One exception is the material on the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle Project (see Ch.7). Lack of information reflects the low levels of donor attention to the Far South and the tendency of donors to work through national programmes that do not address the area's specific needs, as this thesis explains.

[288] US$17.2 billion in short-term financing provided in 1997-8 by a range of agencies led by the IMF was mostly repaid by 2003, ahead of schedule. Data from Pasuk & Baker (2000), Bank of Thailand (2009).

technical assistance given Thai government policy not to borrow from them.[289] Around a dozen other bilateral donors and UN agencies all ran grant programmes of between US$5 million and US$50 million annually between 2002 and 2008. In addition to official aid, many international NGOs and foundations operate programmes in Thailand, often channelling official donor funding.[290]

The low profile in Thailand of the so-called 'like-minded' bilateral donors from northern Europe, Canada and Australasia is largely a result of Thailand's emergence as a middle-income country. Often vocally dominant even where financially small, their absence affects patterns of donor engagement: the common multi-donor agendas and focus on human rights, gender equality and poverty reduction that like-minded donors promote are rarely in evidence in Thailand.[291] Given little government interest in supporting common planning with aid agencies, and low overall donor influence, the shared approaches and pooled funding mechanisms commonly found elsewhere do not exist. Absent mechanisms include poverty reduction strategies, sector-wide approaches, and even the annual joint donor 'consultative group' meetings. The Thailand country programmes of most donors have focused neither on shared global poverty reduction goals nor on 'donor harmonization' (OECD 2005).[292]

Official and non-governmental foreign aid agencies have worked on many different issues in Thailand with little common thread.[293] Common areas of engagement include continued mainstream economic development and poverty reduction through loans and smaller grants. Donors promote issues seen as significant globally, including environmental management and pollution control, and social concerns including the welfare and rights of ethnic minorities. The influx of people from neighbouring countries attracts donor attention: there are somewhere between one and two million foreign migrants living in Thailand, the majority of them Burmese.[294]

Some donors have limited their programmes to specific issues. For example, the official German aid agency GTZ has concentrated primarily on strengthening the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (GTZ et al. 2009). Other donors retain a collection of initiatives that reflect their own diverse interests rather than a coherent set of priorities. Japan has provided a variety of small-scale grants for a wide range of social issues that loosely fall under a 'human security' banner (but generally avoid the Far South), in addition to infrastructure loans and continued provision of more traditional technical assistance (Embassy of Japan 2007).

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[289] This policy shifted in 2009 under the administration of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva. See Ch.9 (Part 9.1).

[290] Aid flow data is unreliable given problems including non-reporting, double-counting, disparities between disbursements and commitments, exchange rate fluctuations, fund-raising within Thailand by international agencies like Unicef, and loan repayments. Statistical difficulties are greater where overall flows are small. For example, OECD/DAC statistics (2009) show Thailand as a net provider rather than a recipient of aid in 2007-2008, reflecting loan repayments. Figures used in this chapter are cross-checked against data sources from international bodies, the Thai Government, and aid agencies.

[291] Informal 'like-minded' groups of donors form according to themes in some nation states in order to pursue common interests (OECD 2006:21).

[292] Thailand is used as regional hub by some aid agencies.

[293] This pattern was also seen when Thailand was a major aid recipient in the past (Muscat 1990).

[294] The International Organization of Migration (IOM 2010) estimates the number of migrants in Thailand at 1,157,000, or 1.7% of the population, although other estimates are higher. 140,000 Burmese live in official camps in Thailand (Thailand Burma Border Consortium 2010) and many more live elsewhere.

Historically, as the following section explains, donors helped build the capacity of the Thai state to achieve mainstream development objectives. Repeated projects over many years extended infrastructure, health and education across much of the country. Foreign aid gradually strengthened the state bureaucracy and contributed to mass poverty reduction. It supported a private-sector-led and export-oriented economy that in the late 1980s and early 1990s reached spectacular rates of growth. The Far South received little targeted donor or NGO support even when aid flows were greater in the 1960s and 1970s. It remains a low priority area for many donors. Literature on aid to Thailand has rarely mentioned the Far South in any context; the difficult relationship between local people and the state, as well as overt violence, is very rarely referred to.

Of the three groups of donors identified in this research, Group One represents the norm or mainstream, consisting of donors that have avoided conflict issues in the Far South or simply do not address them. In financial terms, historically and at present, this group includes the bulk of foreign aid to Thailand. Group Two donors have tried to support peacebuilding, but have struggled to do so. The barriers that donors in this group encountered are chiefly the result of their relationship with the state. Group Three consists of donors that managed to implement programmes working on conflict, typically aiming to address conflict through promoting state reform or improving service provision. These donors found ways to bypass the barriers that stymied Group Two donors but they are few in number and the scope of their operations was relatively limited.

Figure 6b provides a table summarizing the characteristics of the three groups of donors. The data that informs this table is summarized in this chapter and explained in greater depth through the more detailed case studies provided in the subsequent three chapters. Care needs to be taken in analysing donor positions since many donors that aim to address conflict try to maintain a low profile. For example, they may discreetly fund other agencies (often NGOs) in order to avoid attracting attention. In addition, any single donor may have funded simultaneously programmes characteristic of more than one of the three groups here identified. For example, Group Three donors may have funded some peacebuilding work at the same time as other programmes that did not have any intended impact on tensions in the Far South. Nonetheless, the group categorization is a useful means of understanding how and why aid flows assume specific forms.

Figure 6a: Foreign aid to Thailand and the Far South, 2006-2008[295]

International Agency	Wider programmes for Thailand	Focus on Far South
GROUP ONE – Mainstream aid, not considering conflict		
Asian Development Bank	Major lender, totalling over US$5 billion from the late 1960s. Very few loans today. Current focus on public-private partnerships for large-scale infrastructure projects, reforms to domestic capital market, environmental management.	Technical assistance to projects that affect conflict-affected area but no focus on conflict.
Japan – JBIC and JICA	Largest aid donor to Thailand. Focus on major transport infrastructure, technical education and research, industrial expansion and pollution control.	None
IMF	Major loans following 1997 Asian crisis repaid by 2003.	None
France	'Trilateral partnerships', education links, industrial assistance.	None
Germany	Strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and environmental work.	None beyond the work of autonomous government-funded political foundations.
Other Bilaterals	Range of small programmes, mostly relating to trade, higher education, high profile social and environmental issues.	Some small Embassy funds.
Most International NGOs & UN Agencies	Wide range of work focused on local empowerment, usually with Thai NGO implementing partner.	None
GROUP TWO – Reformers trying but failing to address conflict		
World Bank	Major donor in past, very few recent loans. Three loans for transport, electricity management, environment. Larger loans and reform promotion after 1997 Asian economic crisis completed by 2004.	Grants programme, likely civil society emphasis. Stalled.
UNDP	Promotion of Thai Development Goals (local version of Millennium Development Goals) and broad governance-related aims.	Little progress on promotion of linked up UN approaches especially around governance.
European Union	Range of funds for projects in health, environment, higher education, 'stability', 'capacity building of Non-State Actors', trade and investment. Support for displaced populations along Burma border.	Failed to establish planned links with government departments. Funding for NGOs, foundations on Human Rights, education.
GROUP THREE – Promoting peacebuilding with some programmes		
USA: USAID and other agencies	Major donor in past, now less significant. Support for NGOs on social issues. Other support for specific issues: child labour, environment.	Range of programmes, mostly with NGOs. Military assistance to Thai Government.
Unicef	Increasing focus on marginalized children – migrants, ethnic minorities.	Promoting reforms and extension of services to meet needs in conflict affected area. Working with government and NGOs.
Various international NGOs: Raks Thai, Oxfam	Wide range of work focused on local empowerment, usually with Thai NGO implementing partner.	Livelihood initiatives with community focus, typically linking with advocacy for policy change.
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung	Programmes across Thailand with governance / democracy focus.	Particular efforts to support domestic bodies.
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung	National programmes on rights, equality, governance.	Supporting advocacy initiatives.
The Asia Foundation	National programmes on education, democracy.	Long-term involvement in education, advocacy on decentralization.
Internews	Media approaches for improved access to information and democracy.	Major US-funded programme of assistance for local media.
Human Rights NGOs	Wide range of human rights issues.	Support for domestic NGOs, research, awareness raising.

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[295] Data sources include OECD/DAC statistics, Thai Government data, aid agency data, and interviews.

Figure 6b: Characteristics of the three groups of donors with reference to conflict in the Far South of Thailand

	GROUP ONE	GROUP TWO		GROUP THREE	
	Attributes limiting work on peacebuilding	Attributes enabling efforts to address peacebuilding	Limitations hindering implementation	Attributes enabling implementation on peacebuilding	Limitations
Motivations	• Prioritizing poverty reduction and economic growth of nation states; low interest in subnational inequalities. • Weak understanding of horizontal inequalities, ethnicity and identity. • Technical international outlook masks political national context. • Low political prioritization of conflict.	• Elements of broad vision of development encompassing rights, equality, justice; recognition of negative aspects of socioeconomic development. • Some awareness of horizontal inequalities, ethnicity and identity.	• Continued commitment to national targets such as MDGs. • Low institutional prioritization of peripheral conflict.	• Broad vision of development encompassing rights, equality, justice; recognition of negative aspects of socioeconomic development. • Politically aware rather than technically oriented. • Understand the significance and policy implications of horizontal inequalities, ethnicity and identity.	• Inability to 'mainstream' conflict concerns across programmes. • Inconsistency of donor policies at country level. • Unrealistic expectations of what democratic change ordinarily offers minorities.
Interface	• Relationships with central state institutions fundamental to operations. • Low levels of interaction with other agencies / individuals. • Institutional and individual 'denial' enables smooth relationships.	• Aim to address state policy in order to have impact. • Central state support sought for interventions addressing conflict. Some relationships with other state actors and non-governmental bodies.	• Wider relationship ('partnership') with central state based around other priorities. • Insufficient focus on building relationships with government institutions.	• Recognition of diversity within state institutions. • Careful management of relationships at different levels. • Work with non-governmental agencies, closer involvement with 'beneficiaries'.	• Restricted by what state institutions will allow. • At times conservative in supporting modest reform agendas.
Practice	• Use of national level statistics and targets. • Skill-sets prioritize macro-economic approaches and top-down planning. • Uniformity within institution / strong top-down management culture, less devolved authority.	• Broader skills and outlook of some staff. • Some procedural flexibility and freedom for staff to pursue more varied development agendas.	• Poorly equipped to build gradual relationships with state and other actors. • Limited knowledge base. • Funding constraints. • Restrictive operational tools and mechanisms.	• Emphasis on local engagement with a wider aim of policy change. • Building knowledge as evidence base. • Flexible to local concerns rather than applying set policy agendas. • Variety within institutions: a range of approaches and fields of action.	• Often still centralized, ground presence restricted. • Limited by institutional structures and processes, need for local 'partners' to disburse funds according to required methods. • Lack of scope to evaluate impact.

6.2   **Group One: mainstream aid, not considering conflict**

As this section explains, the two largest donors to Thailand in recent history, Japan and the ADB, have not appeared to take account of the conflict in the Far South in any significant sense through direct funding allocations or policy decisions. Other donors, including China, Germany and France, also appeared to pay very little attention to the conflict in their main aid engagement with Thailand.[296] Some other aid agencies did demonstrate a concern for conflict problems in the Far South with some of their assistance, although even then the rest of their work still fell into this Group

The previous chapter showed that many Thai government development initiatives have supported nation-building and the consolidation of central control, in the process abetting the perpetuation of resentment among Malay Muslims in the Far South. This section explains how Group One foreign aid has tended to support the expansion of Thai state agencies with little consideration for horizontal inequalities and peripheral tensions in the Far South. It addresses issues raised in the literature review (Chapter Three), showing that many donors have had little political motivation to address conflict in the Far South, while following technical approaches that have prioritized socioeconomic development at the national level and have insufficiently appreciated relationships between the nature of the Thai state and the causes of ongoing peripheral tension.

6.2a   Historical overview: supporting state expansion

Group One donors have made up the bulk of past aid flows to Thailand. They supported government development programmes and backed state policies that fostered economic growth and reduced poverty. Dominant contemporary aid trends stem back to American assistance along with World Bank loans that supported Thailand's rapid modern industrialization from the late 1950s. Thailand was at that time a mid-sized aid recipient, with the USA, the World Bank, other bilaterals and UN agencies contributing significantly. Total US aid to Thailand from the 1950s through to the early 1980s is estimated at around US$1.5 billion, at 2004 prices.[297] The USA was by far the largest donor, reflecting its broader political interest in supporting a Cold War ally in Southeast Asia. Major investments were made in infrastructure, including a network of roads to and from the northeast with military as well as developmental applications (Muscat 1990). At its height, US support represented some three-quarters of total donor flows (Amnuey 1968:63).[298]

Thailand's government budget was never heavily dependent on aid, though: overall aid flows rarely exceeded 10% of the budget in any given year.[299] This low level of aid dependency was not unusual: for the US Government it was a typical country programme, more so than in the small number of

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[296] Information from interviews with GTZ Official, French Aid Programme Officer, and Jean-Philippe Thouard.
[297] This figure is derived from US congressional data (see Muscat 1990:31-32) and the OECD/DAC database (OECD 2009).
[298] The focus on the US aid programme in this section reflects its historical prominence and availability of data.
[299] Figures from Muscat (1990). Short-term IMF loans created some temporary dependency in the early 1980s and late 1990s. See Ch.6 (Part 6.3).

strategically important countries where their aid volume was at times large relative to the recipient economy, such as South Korea, Taiwan, or Israel (Muscat 1990).

In keeping with the dominant modernization model, aid increased the capacity of the state in many fields, assisting its geographical spread into peripheral areas. Thailand's progress up to the 1970s, described in the previous chapter, involved the extension of infrastructure and administration out from the centre. Aid projects increased the government's technical competence, especially in line ministries such as health and education, and in central planning agencies including the National Economic Development Board. Foreign aid supported a cadre of experts at senior levels of government: by 1986, 40% of permanent secretaries, director-generals, provincial governors, and other key senior position holders had been trained under USAID support (Muscat 1990:55). Government institutions increasingly reached down to the level of the village, often for the first time. Donor funding was instrumental in enabling Thailand to be one of the few developing countries to introduce primary health care on a national scale by the 1980s, according to Unicef (1986). Thailand's relatively closed, centralized and elite-dominated government became more efficient and developmentally oriented over this period, although it never approached the guided developmentalism of Singapore, South Korea or Taiwan (Pasuk & Baker 1997:26-27).

The US Government and other donor governments paid concerted attention to communist-linked insurgency until the mid-1970s, with Thailand considered vulnerable both to invasion and to domestic insurrection.[300] The Thai Government welcomed military and development aid linked with suppression of internal rural communist unrest. Western donor nations were interested in providing it as part of efforts to reduce Soviet and Chinese influence in Southeast Asia (Muscat 1990:149-151). As Connors (2007) and others describe, US development aid was initially used for projects that promoted national integration. Subsequently, as war in Vietnam and fear of communist insurgency inside Thailand escalated, the overt aim was counter-insurgency. Government projects concentrated especially on *"Unconquered rural peripheries"* (Connors 2007:61) across Thailand, with foreign aid backing the expansion of irrigation, roads, electricity and education and enabling the state to extend its reach into local areas where central authority had in the past been tenuous. Foreign, chiefly but not only American, funding backed the extension of departments of the Ministry of the Interior including the Local Administration Department and the Community Development Department down to the village level. US-funded aid projects concentrated on the north and northeast of Thailand, the poorest areas and also those where the risk of both internal communist insurgency and external invasion (from Vietnam) was considered greatest. Levels of US military aid to Thailand during much of this period exceeded US foreign aid, with security objectives also being the primary determinant of the kinds of projects funded through development assistance (Caldwell 1974:27).

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[300] Some commentators link the unrest across much of Thailand at that time to development processes that increased rural resentment of the state (Wyatt 2003, Connors 2007:71-72).

Caldwell (1974) and Muscat (1990:175) state that rural development projects across a wide range of sectors promoted economic improvements primarily as a means to increase contact between state officials including teachers and villagers. Many different income generation projects stressed reaching out to local people, although the terms under which participation was permitted were defined by the centre, heavily guided by state information dissemination and fear of oppression if countering the official line, while affording little democratic space at a higher level (Connors 2007:72). The success of these efforts in increasing local people's support for the state is considered uneven. Communist insurgency continued well into the 1970s. Caldwell (1974:136) found that many American-funded projects succeeded in improving rural livelihoods, yet still did not foster any greater sympathy among rural people for the government. Parallels exist with more recent efforts to 'use economic growth to defeat the bandits' that do not appear to have helped to stem violence or build public sympathy for the state in the Far South of Thailand, as described in the previous chapter.

In the mid-1970s, US involvement declined along with the end of conflict in Vietnam. Japan and the ADB became Thailand's largest donors. Despite increasing cynicism in the USA and other Western donor countries over the role of the state in development, the main trends of donor funding continued. While less overtly focused on counter-insurgency, Japanese aid has typically provided similar flows of capital and technical expertise to governments, in the process showing considerable respect for authority and sovereignty (Arase 1995). The most common form of Japanese assistance to Thailand has involved concessional loans for power, transport and other infrastructure carried out by parastatal bodies like the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand. Oversight typically rests with the Ministry of Finance, while implementation is sub-contracted to Japanese companies or Thai-Japanese consortia. The Asian Development Bank's assistance is similarly composed.[301]

A range of views on the overall benefit of foreign aid provision to Thailand suggests that its impact has been mixed, supporting both positive and negative aspects of political and economic change in Thailand. Robert Muscat (1990) provides a positive historical assessment from an insider's perspective, showing how aid-funded projects helped to increase wealth and reduce poverty, despite the odd glitch. Undoubtedly, aid flows contributed to mass poverty reduction and improved health and literacy, as basic services were rolled out to a majority of the population within one generation. In addition, they contributed to a subsequent boom in the non-governmental sector (Gary 2004:58-59). Less positive assessments indicate that aid flows might have helped reduce poverty but also supported a state largely captured by elite interests and hardly capable of providing a coherent direction. Unger compares unfavourably Thailand's weak dirigiste developmentalism with more rapidly growing East Asian states (1998). A further critical standpoint holds that foreign aid exacerbated the vast gulf between an increasingly middle-class capital city and the predominantly rural hinterland (Chai-Anan & Morrell 1981).

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[301] From 1987 to 1991, Japan's foreign assistance to Thailand consisted of 91 billion Thai Baht of concessional lending and 20 billion Thai Baht of grants – 16.7% of total capital expenditure during Thailand's sixth national plan (Pranee 1990:52).

The impact of export-led industrialization and subsequent financial deregulation promoted from the 1970s on by the World Bank, IMF and other agencies can also be seen as mixed. The changes increased both internal divisions and vulnerability to external shocks, while also furthering economic growth and poverty reduction (Pasuk & Baker 1998:316-319). Indirectly, foreign aid further opened up economic opportunities for well-connected entrepreneurs at all levels to benefit from government contacts, make fortunes, and then cement their positions by seeking political office (McVey 2000, Arghiros 2001).[302]

The impacts of both the extension of the state into peripheral areas and the deterioration of local authority structures in the Far South were addressed in the previous chapter, which showed that many Malay Muslims who question overall state legitimacy are likely to stress the negative aspects of developmental change, associating it with wider long-term political and cultural marginalization. Donors have supported overall socioeconomic improvements but, as we have already seen, the basis of resentment in the Far South that fuels insurgency rests with a range of horizontal inequalities that Group One foreign aid was not designed to address.

6.2b   Donor decision-making

Whether promoting liberalization or encouraging state expansion, many initiatives in Thailand that have been supported by foreign aid show little evidence of efforts to address horizontal inequalities and related ethnic differences. For several reasons, many recent donors to Thailand still tend to overlook the conflict in the Far South despite their global peacebuilding commitments. First, and perhaps most significantly, donor nations have little political motivation to promote engagement with the Far South. At the policy level, there is limited international donor concern over conflict in Pattani. Politically, Thailand remains an ally of Western and Asian donor countries. Diplomats in Bangkok informally agree that it would take a more obvious threat to their national interests, such as a bomb attack on an international tourist resort, for their countries to take conflict in Pattani sufficiently seriously to risk damaging their relationship with the Government of Thailand.[303] The conflict in the Far South has presented few if any risks for other nations to date, with foreigners hardly having been targeted and little evidence linking insurgents with international networks.[304] The area is not relevant to international pursuit of development objectives as it contains a small proportion of Thailand's population and has little direct impact on aggregated national level goals.

Second, significant elements of foreign aid practice that are underpinned by overly technical conceptualization of the state further restrict interest in addressing conflict in the Far South.[305] The typical donor conception of the state has long been recognized as simplistic (Ferguson 1990, Pincus 2002, Fine 2006:122). Expectations of a functional and technical (or 'Weberian') state are especially

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[302] One USAID adviser with many years of experience in Thailand stated unofficially that ADB's success in enforcing local private sector sub-contracting of road construction had the greatest impact of any aid intervention that he had seen in Thailand (Interview with Dennis Zvinakis).

[303] This view was repeatedly mentioned in confidence during interviews with aid officials, including AUSAID programme officer, USAID Official 2, and British Embassy Diplomat.

[304] See Ch.5 (Part 5.10).

[305] On depoliticized aid and technical approaches see Ch.3 (Part 3.4).

pronounced in Thailand. Cultural tendencies towards conflict avoidance in social situations that are immediately apparent to any visitor give a false aura of a relaxed, trouble-free environment.[306] Given strong vestiges of the 'bureaucratic polity' first described in the 1950s (Riggs 1966), donors often encounter sufficient technocratic expertise and efficient management to form an impression of effective, rational authority.[307] Meetings in Thai government offices usually start and end on time. An outward impression of consensus around a hierarchical system of control is maintained, it being unusual in Thailand to question authority in a public, formal environment.[308] Planning workshops that donors like to fund as part of project design usually end in mutually agreed lists of future actions.[309] The impression received by many aid agency staff on a short visit or a typical three-year posting is of smooth, managed governance. It takes longer to realize that actions agreed on in workshops or meetings are rarely followed through unless they coincide with existing dominant interests.[310]

Along with most aid receiving nations, and mirroring highly centralized government structures, donor offices – even specific project offices – are overwhelmingly concentrated in Bangkok, Thailand's capital. For most donors in Thailand, a lack of directly implemented field projects means that they have had little if any presence outside the capital. Most international donor officials in Thailand that I interviewed liaised with partner institutions – government agencies and departments, or NGOs – whose head offices were also usually in Bangkok, giving them a view of Thailand that looks from the centre outwards.

Many elements of horizontal inequalities were rarely explored by donors interviewed for this research, let alone addressed effectively. Despite the prominence of identity-based as well as more conventional political analyses of the Thai nation state in academic literature, both interviews and existing published sources show that many donors remained wedded to technical views of the state.[311] A detailed review of donor policy and project literature conducted during this research provides little historical evidence of awareness of horizontal differences in Thailand. The exceptions are a few American aid-funded reviews that for security reasons considered the relevance of ethnic difference for irredentist or anti-government movements in the 1960s, focusing in particular on the predominantly Lao-speaking northeast (Lobe 1977). Donors have also given attention to the socioeconomic status of impoverished minority upland groups in the far north. On the other hand, Malay Muslims and ongoing latent or overt violence in the Far South have typically not attracted donors' attention.[312] With donor policies and interventions mainly driven by the message of national statistics and socioeconomic indicators, at the same time as being overseen by politicians preoccupied for many decades with security concerns in

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[306] An assumed norm of peaceful consensus begins in tourist brochures, with the country marketed as a tropical, feminine, faux-Buddhist paradise.

[307] Interviews with international donor officials recently arrived in Thailand repeated this perspective, for example interviews with DFID Senior Adviser and European Union Official.

[308] On conflict avoidance in the Thai workplace, see Wasita (2007).

[309] I participated in many such meetings in Thailand and elsewhere between 1999 and 2006 while working for agencies including DFID, ILO and Save the Children (UK).

[310] Several donor officials who had spent longer in the country mentioned this point during interviews (interview with Michael Stievater and interview (a) with UNDP Official 4).

[311] Subsequent chapters contain case study evidence.

[312] For some exceptions see Thieme (1965) and Thomas (1977). As well as websites, academic sources, and interviews with long-serving foreign aid officials, information used includes grey material accessed in Thailand.

Southeast Asia, there is little evidence that donor officials questioned the formal discourse of Thai national unity in any meaningful sense. Rather they effectively accepted the official line that Thailand was a successful assimilationist state (Reynolds 1991, Chai-Anan 1991).

Overt conflict in the Far South was ongoing throughout much of the 1960s and 1970s, but remained localized and of low intensity, with few if any direct implications for Western donor nations. In any case, as in many other Asian states, Western donors were soon overtaken in size by the ADB and Japan, whose greater respect for national sovereignty and tendency to support national development policies made them even less likely to focus on a difficult and sensitive conflict area.[313] Support for Thai NGOs has also largely bypassed the Far South, where many local civil groups have been poorly linked into national NGO networks and insufficiently resourced to be able to bid for funds on their own.[314] Available NGO literature, like official donor sources, has rarely mentioned the Far South.

Chapter Five explained how national policies and development initiatives have typically ignored horizontal inequalities in the Far South even though they frequently have an unintended impact on them, reproducing perceptions of inequality among many Malay Muslims. Many examples exist of foreign aid programmes that backed national policies and initiatives without considering their likely impact on horizontal inequalities in the Far South. In addition to the case presented in Chapter Seven, the education sector offers further evidence. Donor-funded technical assistance has continued a long trend of building government capacity in the education sector, in overall terms helping the government address higher national human development targets and the labour needs of economic growth (Nairn 1966, World Bank 1988). A Japanese funded project begun in 2001 to provide computers and information technology skills for secondary schools is a typical example. The project supported centrally defined objectives with a team of specialists based in the Ministry of Education in Bangkok, whose aims did not extend beyond narrowly defined transfers of technical skills.[315] The structure and aims of this and other similar projects emphasize that alignment with government objectives has been regarded by donors as a critical element of success, echoing the findings of a regional Asian Development Bank education sector review:

> *All successful projects were relevant. They reflected governments' education strategies and were aligned with the countries' expressed development needs* (Hutaserani 2006).

Interviews conducted with Group One aid agencies revealed no evidence of any incentives for project or country office staff to jeopardize success by challenging the appropriateness of 'expressed development needs', especially if approaching sensitive issues of nationalism. In the Far South, assimilation through schooling and language tuition has long been a contested pillar of government pacification policy. An apolitical donor view of education as a technical issue of economic or human development

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[313] The role of Japan, ADB and other Asian donors is explained elsewhere (see Ch.4). Also Arase (1995), Shimomura (2008). Interviews that confirmed this perspective included those with JICA Programme Officer, JBIC Programme Officer, Oranuch Jetwattana, and JICA Education Project Manager.

[314] Information from interviews with NualNoi Thammasathien and Jon Ungpakorn.

[315] Interviews with JICA Programme Officer and JICA Education Project Manager.

demonstrates the gap between most foreign-funded development interventions and the roots of conflict in the Far South.

The failure of Group One donors to account for conflict and related ethnic tension (documented in more detail in Chapter Seven) does not seem to be a result of naivety or lack of understanding. Many of the donor officials I interviewed expressed personal interest in problems in the Far South, often showing genuine concern or frustration at the failure to find a solution.[316] But these thoughts were effectively left at the office entrance, not being relevant to their work. Officials appear to have demonstrated the common practices of denial necessary to continue with daily office life (Caddell & Yanacopulos 2006). It is not only a matter of personal denial. Donors were aware of the context of conflict in the Far South of Thailand, and indeed of conflicts across Southeast Asia, but many simply did not see it as an issue of pressing professional concern. An economic adviser covering Southeast Asia for DFID, the official UK donor, said: *"Conflict is an issue, we're aware of it, but I'd be lying if I said we put serious time into it."*[317] Conflict had to compete for attention with nine other DFID policy priorities in Southeast Asia. Interviewees explained that it was only considered a key issue where it was a political priority for the UK.[318]

The French bilateral aid effort has encountered similar issues. A former aid programme manager with their embassy in Bangkok saw their work in Thailand as involving: *"...a broad range of objectives which you have to merge if you want a successful programme."* [319] Interviewees from both DFID and the French aid programme stated that maintaining a bilateral programme that fulfils institutional requirements involves satisfying many internal interests: different sections of the head office, various ministries, the personal concerns of the ambassador, and lobbying groups in the donor country. Where a conflict did not show up strongly in national development data, and was kept away from international political attention, there was little motivation for aid officials to make their own lives harder by trying to address it.[320]

6.3   Group Two: reformists trying but failing to address conflict

In response to increased violence in the Far South from 2004, some donors tried to implement local adaptations of global peacebuilding policies although they often found it hard to do so. Interviews with donor officials from Group Two agencies including the World Bank, UNDP and the EU showed that using aid to promote reform or change confronts greater practical barriers than funding the state to extend existing structures, with considerable resistance from the Thai state stopping or delaying their plans. These statements are explained and justified below before being addressed through case material in Chapter Eight.

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[316] For example interviews with Paul Walters, Luis Benveniste, and Oranuch Jetwattana.
[317] Interview with Paul Walters.
[318] Interviews with Paul Walters and British Embassy Diplomat. These statements were made despite DFID's conflict unit based in the agency's London headquarters being at the forefront of global promotion of conflict sensitive approaches to aid.
[319] Interview with Jean-Philippe Thouard.
[320] Interviews with Jean-Phillippe Thouard and Paul Walters.

Group Two is perhaps best seen as a phase or a characteristic: donors may plan some programmes that fall into this category, while funding other programmes that do not consider conflict at all. Or they may eventually find a way past the interface with the state over time.[321] In any case, the category serves to show how the translation process from external policies into domestic practice, and the continued significance of domestic sovereignty, mean that foreign aid has struggled to address peripheral conflicts even where it prioritizes peacebuilding and related issues of equality and justice.

Frustrated donor efforts to change how the state works and to promote more equal development outcomes have a long history in Thailand. David Steinberg (1986) documented how in the late 1960s rural insurgency fed on resentment at perceived exploitation by local government officials in Thailand. The situation induced the USA to promote improvements in notoriously corrupt provincial administrations and to extend service delivery and infrastructure to poorer areas. Awareness grew among US officials that their own earlier 'top-down' support had in cases exacerbated inequality and heightened local corruption. USAID projects increasingly aimed to improve accountability and decentralize government systems, rather than simply provide funding, equipment or training (ibid.).

But projects hit barriers when attempting to reform rather than to support the way in which government works. Assessments conclude that projects were more effective when supporting the interests of domestic power brokers, especially in central government.[322] As already explained, government efforts to decentralize or promote participation were limited in practice. For example, one internal review of US policy on decentralization conducted in 1967 suggested that projects should not aim to devolve significant power to the local level even if considered good practice, since Thai officials did not envisage any departure from a unitary state.[323] Elsewhere, externally motivated efforts to promote local level decision-making failed to achieve the required approval of senior Thai officials (Muscat 1990:283). US financial support to the Thai police is an example of this trend (Lobe 1977). It achieved results when it aimed to strengthen the capacity and power of central command. When efforts were made to support village-level security measures through local community policing initiatives, the result was a counterproductive failure. With a police establishment that held no real experience of participatory engagement, greater power vested in authorities at the local level simply resulted in further repression. This probably increased popular resentment – the very problem that the project was aiming to reverse at the outset.

Over this period, foreign aid interventions were largely unable to change the way in which the state operated if significant modifications in political relationships and distribution of authority were needed. For example, donors made little headway in promoting steps towards decentralization that included elements of local participation in decision-making and oversight of government procedures (Wilson 1970). Examples of failed externally promoted 'reform' projects abound, from progressive education

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[321] The World Bank and the EU's programmes on the Far South were initially suspended but did eventually continue at a later date (Interview with World Bank Official 3).

[322] Sources include Nairn (1966), Lobe (1970), Muscat (1990), Unger (1998) Chairat (2000), Orlandini (2003).

[323] See Muscat (1990:283). The review itself, like much historical material on donor programmes, was not available to the author.

projects of the 1950s (Nairn 1966), to decentralization efforts in the 1970s (Muscat 1990:279), to conditionality attached to IMF loans in the 1990s. Even interventions held up as examples of influential external intervention, stretching back to a famous World Bank mission in 1958 that allegedly assisted the alignment of Thailand's development policies around liberal economic principles, appear to have done little more than support an already increasingly influential group of reformers at high levels of government who saw advantage in gaining foreign support for their arguments (Unger 1998:62).

More recent efforts by donors to impose changes directly have also had little success. IMF policy prescriptions following the bailout of 1997-8 were largely circumvented, even though the 1997-8 financial crisis had put the Thai Government on an unusually weak footing and IMF agreements with stipulations for significant reform measures had been reluctantly accepted (Killick 1998:62). Only some measures were ultimately implemented, with Thai bureaucrats and politicians largely able to reinterpret them into a form that suited their pre-existing categories and objectives. Barbara Orlandini explains how the technocratic content and power implications of global 'good governance' policies were 'consumed' or reinterpreted to fit a domestic discourse, stressing a very different model of governance from the expected international norm (2001; also Chairat 2000). In this and other similar cases, people in positions of authority within central departments of the recipient government who manage donor flows, including politicians with executive responsibilities as well as senior civil servants, may have had more power to use aid as they saw fit than is often perceived, even at a time of crisis (Orlandini 2001:134-138). In Thailand, externally promoted reform objectives are repeatedly incorporated into prevailing domestic interests: liberal international development discourse is translated to fit dominant domestic interests (Connors 2003:434). So even if international good governance prescriptions or other donor stipulations had included issues relating to the roots of conflict in the Far South, they would probably not have been implemented.[324]

Donors' ultimate need to disburse funds regardless of whether reforms are implemented, along with their inability to impose policy change, often make imposed conditions unenforceable; typically they are either only accepted if the measures were ones that the government was already planning to undertake, as occurred with earlier IMF aid to Thailand from 1982 to 1984, or they are not carried out at all (Killick 1998). The conditions identified by James Boyce (2004) as necessary for peace conditionalities to work certainly do not exist in the Far South of Thailand, nor in most other peripheral conflicts: the political context could not be described as open to considering change, aid flows are relatively small, and neither donors nor recipients have made peace their top priority.

Outside short periods in the early 1980s, and again during the Asian financial crisis of 1997-8, the Thai Government has not been dependent on external assistance and has been able to pick and choose the loans or grants that it wishes to receive. Influential figures at high levels of government could effectively select the donor with the most preferential terms: the best loan repayment terms and the lowest levels

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[324] Unsurprisingly, given little attention to horizontal or other inequalities in donor economic reform packages more widely, there was no mention of such issues.

of interference in domestic affairs.[325] This means that donors have had limited scope to address controversial fields including unrest in the Far South.

In almost all interviews I undertook with donor officials, interviewees stressed the importance of central government approval and subsequent support for effective aid delivery in Thailand.[326] The ways in which donors engaged across the interface with government emerged as a result to be a critical determinant of the scope to use aid to approach conflict-related issues. With few directly implemented, area-based aid projects, donors dealt predominantly with national-level technocrats or politicians. Rather than being co-opted locally, as may occur in less centrally controlled contexts (Barnett & Zuercher 2008), aid in Thailand was more likely to be captured centrally. It is important therefore to look more closely at how the donor interface with central state institutions has operated and at the Thai Government's position over external involvement in conflict-related issues in the Far South.

Scope to work on conflict has been restricted chiefly by the Thai Government's desire not to 'internationalize' the situation.[327] Interviews with Group Two donors in Thailand revealed that a main reason why some aid agencies have failed to engage more in peacebuilding work is simply that the state did not allow them to do so directly, as Chapter Eight explores in more depth with reference to UNDP and the World Bank.[328] Discussions with such donors revealed how the dynamic of the interface with central government bureaucrats was a key element of donor officials' daily lives in Thailand.[329] Most donors aiming to engage in the Far South had to gain approval from at least one of several layers of government. Group Two donors (notably UNDP, the World Bank, and funding from the European Union) were held up at this interface at the time of research.

In the case of the European Union, the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs was highly resistant. The EU's large annual trade deficit with Thailand might in theory have provided leverage given an export-dependent Thai economy, motivating Thai politicians and bureaucrats to maintain good relations. In practice, EU plans for a moderate programme of support (sourced from its global Instrument for Stability Fund) to work on the roots of conflict in the Far South were blocked.[330] The EU office in Bangkok tried to find a common Thai government position that would enable assistance to flow, given the initial interest shown by line ministries in receiving funds that had stimulated their initial efforts. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs chose simply not to respond following an initial meeting, in the process letting the proposed plans quietly die.[331]

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[325] Ch.7 (Part 7.1) provides an example of the Thai Government intentionally playing competing offers of concessional finance against each other in order to obtain the best deal.

[326] For example, see quotations from World Bank and UNDP officials in Ch.8 (Parts 8.5-8.6).

[327] Ch.5 provides further explanation.

[328] Most notably, interviews with World Bank Official 3, European Union Official, UN Official. See also the UNDP and World Bank case studies in Ch.8.

[329] See Ch.3 on aid relationships in practice. Interviews with donor and government officials in Thailand provided first-hand information on the aid relationship, as later chapters explain in detail.

[330] Interview with European Union Official.

[331] Ibid. The varied interactions of donors with different government departments and agencies are addressed further through case studies in Chs 8-9.

The EU then paused before deciding to continue with a smaller programme of support channelled through international NGOs.[332] This did not in itself guarantee a route around the interface with government. Even if central control were circumvented, mechanisms that rein in all international aid workers include procedural issues like work visas and official red tape. Freedom of movement has historically existed across most of Thailand but donors and many international NGOs have been discouraged from setting up offices, or denied permission to do so, in or even near the Far South.[333] The international NGO registration process appears to have been used by the government as a tool of control, with fear of being refused work permits acting to keep international staff to a consensual line.[334]

Donor efforts to provide assistance to national rather than international NGOs also hit barriers. The Thai non-governmental sector has received donor funding for several decades (Linklater et al. 2001, Gary 2003).[335] Many NGOs in Thailand challenge government policy and practice through grassroots movements and actions. NGOs are often involved in advocacy and campaigning through networks like the Assembly of the Poor (Missingham 2004). At the same time, it has been charged that NGOs and other civil organizations supported by donors function within existing ways of working, rather than outside them. Much of the Thai NGO movement works within many of the conservative and nationalistic expectations of the central state bureaucracy and associated elite groups (Connors 2003:433). Signficantly, national NGOs have repeatedly encountered barriers if trying to engage with the Far South, where many community leaders are initially sceptical of interference from outside (as Chapter Five explains). One experienced NGO activist from conflict-affected Yala province dismissed organizations working in the Far South yet not run by people from the area as opportunist and irrelevant.[336]

6.4   Group Three: promoting peacebuilding with some programmes

6.4a   Donor motivations that promote engagement with peacebuilding

This research finds that several international agencies managed to address the conflict in the Far South of Thailand through their programmes, despite the barriers already described. From 2006 to 2008, agencies engaging in the Far South supported initiatives ranging from one-off meetings to programmes of several million dollars. Active donors included Unicef, The Asia Foundation, and the US Government aid agency USAID. Other bilateral donors provided some small aid grants, with several foundations and international NGOs also active. These agencies generally engaged through intermediaries, implementing very few programmes or projects directly. The bulk of donor funding on conflict issues in the Far South

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[332] Ibid.
[333] Interviews with TICA Officials 1, 2, & 3, and UNDP Official 3.
[334] Interview (c) with International NGO Manager.
[335] The picture is complicated by an ambiguous boundary between the international and the domestic. Some international NGOs have set up Thai subsidiaries that are largely self-managed (for example Raks Thai / CARE) and increasing domestic fundraising complements international flows.
[336] Naive engagement in the Far South by groups from outside the area has also led to work being manipulated by both local insurgents and state security officials (Interviews with Local NGO Director, NGO Director 1, and UNFPA Official).

flowed through NGOs, although government departments and agencies were also involved in implementing some initiatives.

Group Three donors were varied. Different strategies and tactics were adopted at the national and local levels, supporting advocacy on policy issues, academic debate, and pilots for policy reform within central ministries. By examining how these donors worked, and the limits they encountered, further light is shed on the relationship between aid and peripheral conflict. This section outlines their main characteristics (with more detailed case material found in Chapter Nine). It applies in turn the three themes of motivation, interface and practice both in considering the qualities that enabled these donors to work on peacebuilding in the Far South and in highlighting the drawbacks that limited what they could achieve.

With few forcibly displaced people, functioning markets, and the continued provision of at least basic services by the state, there has been little need for short-term humanitarian assistance in the Far South. Interviews and related research show that donors working on conflict in the Far South have chiefly been involved in small steps to address specific aspects of ongoing violence or to promote a negotiated settlement. These efforts have covered a range of fields, including: equality of access to services; justice and human rights; rural livelihoods and community development; discussion and advocacy on peace; and proposals for new policy on decentralization. Islamic organizations, often from the Middle East, provided religious and educational support.[337]

Agencies promoting peacebuilding in the Far South of Thailand have responded to different motivations and interests, although they all shared some properties. As shown in the examples of Unicef and The Asia Foundation in Chapter Nine, a broad vision of development that extends beyond socioeconomic considerations at the national level appeared to be a prerequisite for work on a conflict that only affects a small part of the country directly and is rooted in identity and nationalism. Literature produced by, and staff interviews with, Group Three aid agencies typically revealed a clear understanding of the basis of the conflict in horizontal inequalities and the role of a nationalist, centralized state in perpetuating tensions. The Asia Foundation, for example, comments that the area's *"…unique identity has long been threatened by Thai ethno-centric government policies*" (2009).

Group Three donors tended to adopt a more critical view of the state than other donors and emphasize human rights, justice and equality as part of their global objectives. It is perhaps surprising to see Unicef figuring highly in this group, an agency of the United Nations that typically works closely alongside governments. Their work in Thailand has increasingly promoted child rights and supported conflict-affected groups as well as minorities more widely: Unicef staff in Thailand showed firm commitment to

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[337] International assistance reaches the Far South through various Islamic religious channels and from governments in the Middle East. Much of this assistance is for religious works, typically mosque construction or scholarships to study overseas, but it also extends to building other community facilities. In the 1970s and 1980s, several Middle Eastern states funded larger development projects in the area but none are doing so now (Liow 2009:68).

these goals, a message put across repeatedly during interviews.[338] Careful management of close relationships with the state has enabled Unicef, despite some problems, to implement programmes in what would otherwise usually be seen to be controversial areas, promoting policy change on specific issues including education and service delivery.[339]

For NGOs like Raks Thai and Oxfam, the motivation to address conflict comes from an institutional focus on community-based approaches and the experiences of the rural poor.[340] Other Group Three agencies prioritize democracy and justice. For example, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) is the international charitable arm of the German Social Democrat Party, with a mandate for promoting democracy, peace and human rights. It has worked in the south of Thailand since 1992, emphasizing the rights of Muslims, and in particular Muslim women, alongside local and national partner agencies (FES undated). After the upsurge of violence from 2004, staff adjusted their focus to look more concertedly at the Far South.[341] Although FES originally budgeted only US$30,000 for the initiative, its work has been more overtly political and challenging than that of other agencies, with efforts to bring local voices and perspectives to the attention of more senior figures around issues of social justice. In the run-up to Thailand's general election at the end of 2007, they facilitated meetings between leaders of political parties and representatives of a network of women's groups from across the Far South, a level of engagement beyond the scope of most foreign aid agencies. They have worked quietly behind the scenes on other occasions to promote specific issues of concern in the Far South, using a string of political and institutional contacts.[342]

The EU, a provider of a far larger volume of foreign aid, managed to assist various human rights groups after its initial aims were frustrated by the Thai Government. Since Thailand is not one of the EU's priority aid recipient countries, funding was not managed by the unit responsible for the standard aid programme but by the foreign relations section which maintains a greater interest in democracy, rule of law and human rights.[343] EU officials saw pursuing justice in the Far South as an important element of their global obligation to promote human rights, a result of pressure from governments and non-governmental groups within Europe.[344] Other donors, including diplomats overseeing small embassy funds in Bangkok, pursued a human rights agenda that places the significance of individuals above that of the state, although the sums involved were often very small.[345]

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[338] All Unicef staff interviewed expressed a concern for disadvantaged groups and an interest in turning that concern into practice.

[339] See Ch.9 for further detail.

[340] Interviews with Yowalak Thiarachow and Kasina Limsamanthan.

[341] Interview with Sakdina Chatrakul Na Ayudhya.

[342] Interviews with Sakdina Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, and TICA Officials 2 & 3.

[343] The EU's standard aid programmes are run by the Directorate responsible for Development and Cooperation, otherwise known as EuropeAid. In this case the human rights programme was managed by diplomatic staff with a broad overall remit, the Deputy Head of Mission taking a lead role. Funding was sourced from a global EU fund for the promotion of human rights rather than from development funds or from the global 'Instrument for Stability' that the EU office in Bangkok initially tried to tap for work on the Far South.

[344] Interview with European Union Official.

[345] Interviews with British Embassy Diplomat, French Aid Programme Officer, and Johannet Gaemers.

USAID, the US Government aid agency, has taken conflict in the Far South more seriously than other bilaterals and dedicates more staff time to the issue. With a more political and less technical approach, USAID (and other US government agencies engaging with issues in the Far South) did not share the preconceptions of a rational government bureaucracy that influenced Group One donors' programmes. USAID staff stressed that the agency has always tended to keep clear of purely technical approaches and remains unashamedly politically engaged, as one part of the US State Department.[346] USAID takes an openly politicized perspective on Thailand, stressing the significance of peacebuilding for promoting democracy as well as reducing tensions with a Muslim minority.[347] USAID has provided funding to NGOs and foundations including Internews and The Asia Foundation. Their Thailand programme strategy review of 2008 recommended a clear focus on the Far South including further support for 'civil society' around peacebuilding (USAID 2009).

Such overtly political engagement, along with longstanding cynicism over the role of the USA, has generated suspicion of ulterior motives.[348] US Government interest in the Far South certainly reflects their own security concerns among other considerations, given the context of violent conflict and a Muslim population. Furthermore, the basis of wider American engagement is of support for a central Thai state that has not done enough to recognize the specific needs of the peripheral Far South (USAID 2009). Strong American-Thai diplomatic relations are underpinned by a long history of trade agreements and security cooperation. US military aid to Thailand is a very small proportion of the overall Thai military budget although at the time of research it was greater than the US development assistance budget to Thailand. In 2006, the US Government spent US$7,843,000 on security and military support to Thailand and just US$3,302,000 on development assistance including peacebuilding.[349]

However, actual initiatives on the ground contradict a singularly critical perspective on American involvement. Given no significant international extremist links with the Far South, the American response since 2006 has been dominated by straightforward peacebuilding objectives. Despite continued popular suspicion, researchers have found no evidence of direct US engagement beyond cautious and constructive initiatives that recognize the limits of external intervention in a conflict that can only be solved through policy changes made in Bangkok.[350] Even US security and military support has been more considered than may be assumed: funding for security forces emphasized human rights training, while for police and other law enforcement officials it concentrated on improved forensics – a field in which lack of expertise reduces the scope to follow transparent judicial process (Wheeler 2009). For USAID officials and most international staff in US-funded NGOs or foundations, their desire to build programmes promoting peace in the Far South of Thailand reflected a longer-term commitment to

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[346] Interview with Michael Stievater.

[347] Interview (b) with USAID Official 1.

[348] For printed examples of such suspicions expressed by Thai and Western commentators see Matichon (2005) and Montesano (2009c).

[349] Aid figures include spending on the US Peace Corps. In 2007, military aid was suspended following the 2006 military coup in Thailand , although training activities continued and all military aid was resumed in 2008 (Lumb 2008). US development aid to Thailand was expanded from 2009 (see Ch.10).

[350] Discussions with Anthony Davis, security specialist, Jane's Information Group, in Bangkok during October 2007. Also interview with Michael Stievater.

justice and non-violence, as well as an interest in presenting a positive face of the USA.[351] Involvement was not comparable with earlier concern over communist rebellion in Thailand during the 1960s and 1970s, nor with more recent actions in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

6.4b   Negotiating the Interface

Group Three agencies adopted different techniques in managing the interface and engaging with different parts of the Thai Government (see Chapter Nine). Some agencies including USAID and the EU partially avoided the interface by funding other agencies to do work for them. A desire to maintain good relations with the Thai Government rather than prioritize a conflict that remains peripheral encouraged this approach.[352] USAID in particular has sub-contracted programme management and funded large US-based NGOs and foundations directly. While we have already seen that these bodies remained subject to Thai government approval and monitoring, meaning that there was no guarantee that sub-contracting would offer a route to successful implementation, it may have removed the burden of interface management from donor officials.[353] One USAID official in Bangkok stated that in this way *"The US Embassy can have its cake and eat it,"* by funding activities yet also keeping a low profile that avoids negative overtones of US engagement and was less likely to affect relations with high-level figures in the Thai Government.[354]

Direct funding from overseas, rather than through in-country offices, also avoided some interface negotiations, effectively bypassing annual aid talks between donor and government. German political foundations including FES and Adenauer receive funding directly from the German Government on a global basis, while some international NGOs receive funds in a similar way.[355] International human rights groups rely on global legitimacy to maintain a presence.[356] The US-based NGO Human Rights Watch makes it hard for the Thai Government to accuse it of foreign pro-insurgent bias or infringements of sovereignty by openly criticizing insurgent abuses as well as those of the state and by employing experienced Thai staff (Human Rights Watch 2007).

Scope to negotiate the interface with government was influenced by the relative power of donors, with US funding apparently less closely scrutinized by Thai authorities than other sources. For example, US Government aid programmes and the US-associated Asia Foundation were the only funding sources that openly promoted programmes on the Far South on their websites, suggesting less need to tread carefully. The US Government may not have been able to act in Thailand with the impunity that it enjoyed during the early Cold War years (Caldwell 1974), but has nonetheless been bolder than other donor countries.

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[351] Information from interviews with USAID Officials 1 & 2.
[352] Interview (a) with USAID Official 1; interview with European Union Official.
[353] Interview (a) with USAID Official 1; also subsequent interviews with US officials.
[354] Interviews (a) and (b) with USAID Official 1.
[355] Interviews with Kasina Limsamanthan, Sakdina Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, and Athikom Saengchai.
[356] Interview with Paul Green.

Experienced Thai and foreign development specialists working in Thailand recognized that rather than trying to bypass the interface with the Thai Govenment, it was usually more effective to manage the relationship carefully over time.[357] Jon Ungkpakorn, chair of the Thai NGO Coordinating Committee, stated that despite concern over sovereignty, agencies wishing to work on building peace in the Far South through applying development approaches could find space to engage.[358] It is wrong to paint an impression of a homogenous state uniformly hostile to outsiders: the experiences of Unicef, TAF and others show how the diversity and incoherence of the Thai government system usually make some involvement possible without being fully co-opted by an incompatible agenda. Subgroups and departments within several ministries often held positions on conflict in the Far South that diverged from main government policy, some being more conservative and others considerably more tolerant. For example, certain units within line ministries encouraged foreign assistance that would help them improve how justice, health and education services respond to Malay Muslim needs in the Far South.[359] These units provided entry points that some Group Three agencies pursued.[360]

The German foundation FES followed a politically engaged approach that required especially careful brokering. Their programme supported efforts to advocate for policy reforms that would recognize the Far South's particular circumstances, engaging political parties as well as government officials in debate. Difficulties encountered included strong pressure exerted by the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Suspicious of FES's plans, TICA insisted on detailed monthly reporting – a highly unusual step.[361] Careful management of the relationship, through regular meetings and dedication of staff time, gradually built TICA's confidence until engagement was possible. The considerable investment of time and effort by FES in order to gain permission to operate a small programme on the Far South reflected a commitment to work in the area that many donors did not demonstrate.[362]

As explained in greater depth in Chapter Nine, the interface limited activities even for those agencies that did manage to negotiate a path with government counterparts. Such agencies often had to moderate their work in the process. At times, this led to fairly consensual approaches, supporting modest reform efforts within Bangkok-based bodies including government departments (e.g. Ministries of Education and Justice), semi-autonomous agencies (King Prajadhipok's Institute), and prestigious universities (Mahidol and Chulalongkorn).[363]

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[357] Such views were repeatedly expressed. For example, interviews with Andrew Morris and Jim Klein.

[358] Interview with Jon Ungpakorn.

[359] Donors and government counterparts in Bangkok repeated this message, including interviews with UNFPA Official, ILO Official, and Chueng Chatariakul.

[360] See Ch.9 on TAF and Unicef.

[361] For detail on TICA see Ch.8, especially Part 8.4.

[362] Interview with Sakdina Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, and interview (b) with Jost Wagner. FES, with a background in social justice and supporting the trade union movement (in Thailand and internationally), demonstrated stronger commitment to tackling inequality than most foreign-funded agencies.

[363] TAF (2009). See Ch.9 for greater detail. Also interviews with Unicef Project Adviser and World Bank Sector Specialist 1. Interviews in the Far South (including interview with NGO Field Workers and interview with NGO Director 1) revealed concerns that much funding remains within Bangkok-based bodies.

6.4c   _Practice_

Finally, certain elements of practice typified Group Three donors. The difference in levels of local knowledge between donors across Groups 1-3 is shown in the case studies presented through the subsequent three chapters. Interviews with staff of agencies including Unicef, FES and The Asia Foundation, as well as their operating partners on the ground, repeatedly emphasized the need to gain local knowledge. Attention to practical detail emerged through interviews with donor officials as necessary even for basic operational issues, for example to avoid the uninformed impression that the conflict area is a 'no-go' zone.[364]

Local operating partners emerged as essential to most international agencies' programmes in the Far South. Those agencies working there stressed the need to spend more time than in other parts of Thailand building good relationships with government and non-governmental bodies through whom aid is delivered, moving beyond rhetoric about 'partnership' towards practical associations.[365] The level of local understanding required extended to self-awareness of how a foreign aid provider is perceived by officials and citizens: international agencies working in the Far South adopted a low profile, often removing logos and branding from sponsored vehicles, buildings, and publications.[366] Stress was placed on building relationships and funding local bodies rather than imposing answers – steps that independent reviews recommend to development agencies globally, but that are less commonly put into operation.[367]

Despite many positive steps, explained at greater length with reference to TAF and Unicef in Chapter Nine, Group Three agencies still found themselves constrained by practical operating challenges that were intrinsic to the operations of most donors. A Thailand-based UN official said: _"…progress can be made, there are ways in, but the blockages are as much from within the donors as with the government …"_[368]

USAID was limited by procurement and contracting rules that reserved key roles for US-based organizations and kept assistance away from recipient governments. Funding stipulations gave high levels of everyday managerial authority to USAID staff, rather than allowing partners the scope to devise and amend appropriate approaches over time.[369] Other agencies found that their need for accountable,

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[364] With enough attention and informed local contacts on the ground, most parts of the Far South are not dangerous: Narathiwat town, in the heart of the region, can even be reached from Bangkok directly on the regional budget airline AirAsia.

[365] Interviews with UNFPA Official, Kasina Limsamanthan, and Andrew Morris.

[366] Donor representatives repeatedly referred to these points during interviews. Even the publicity-conscious USAID breaks from its normal practice by trying to avoid its otherwise ubiquitous signs (USAID 2009).

[367] See for example Eyben (2006), OPM (2009).

[368] Interview with UN Official.

[369] USAID uses various funding and contracting mechanisms. Information presented here is based on interviews with staff of USAID and their contractors in Thailand including TAF. In particular, interview (a) with International NGO Manager, and interview (a) with USAID Official 1.

documented project management made it hard to find local partners in the Far South, where local organizations are rarely formally structured.[370]

A lack of evaluation also held back donors. It is one example of how aid practice tends to reinforce conventional aid approaches and limit the scope for alternatives. Aid agencies working on conflict in the Far South have conducted little assessment beyond routine monitoring of expenditure and activities.[371] A weak evidence base on peacebuilding-related work adds further practical reasons why donors were likely to steer clear, encouraging a focus on easily monitored work like construction projects associated with Group One donors. With fairly small sums being spent, and little external scrutiny given a conflict that is far from the global spotlight, agencies have not allocated funds for evaluation. A senior representative of a US Government-funded NGO that works in the Far South and elsewhere in Thailand commented:

> *No one pays for it! The biggest problem is that when you are given some tiny budget, and proper monitoring and evaluation can cost upwards of twenty thousand dollars, it really becomes a question of whether it is worth it.*[372]

Demonstrating peacebuilding impact is not easy.[373] Evaluation can in itself become a difficult political act that affects conflict dynamics and is consequently simpler to avoid (Roche 2001, Cracknell 2001); in Thailand, publicly available evaluations would draw attention and could antagonize some government agencies: if any evaluations had been conducted by the time that this research was carried out, information was not placed in the public domain. The result was a lower profile for all work in the Far South, with less material on which to make funding decisions – further reducing donor interest in the area.

Along with evaluations, donors often use generic guidance in devising national approaches. Practical efforts to promote the use of aid for peacebuilding globally have focused heavily on guidance to promote better working methods, including 'toolkits' on conflict sensitivity, conflict mapping, and other technical approaches (Barbero et al. 2003). Interestingly, donors that were working in the Far South appeared rarely to have adopted such technical approaches even where addressing the conflict. The Asia Foundation and FES did conduct some strategic conflict mapping processes, but by 2008 neither they nor any others had overtly followed conflict sensitive guidelines, undergone training, or conducted specific assessment exercises.[374]

One related technical approach is 'mainstreaming' – integrating specific objectives into more conventional, or mainstream, donor programming. New initiatives and specialized units that aid agencies establish in response to particular policy agendas often encounter institutional and attitudinal

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[370] Interviews with European Union Official and Ahmed Somboon Bua Luang.

[371] Interview (b) with Tom Parks and interview with Andrew Claypole.

[372] Email correspondence with International NGO Manager.

[373] See OECD (2008).

[374] Interviews with officials of many Group 3 donors demonstrated this trend, including interview (a) with Communications Specialist, interview with USAID Official 2. On toolkits and donor promotion of political change see Holland, Brocklesby & Abugre (2004).

barriers that block implementation or limit it to isolated interventions (ADB 1996, Moser & Moser 2005).[375] Donor mainstreaming is especially relevant given evidence that aid's greatest long-term impact in Thailand has resulted from slow changes achieved across many programmes. Furthermore, Chapter Five explained how changes in national policy rather than isolated and localized initiatives are likely to be an essential component of any successful and sustainable peace process in the Far South. Little mainstreaming of peacebuilding into donor programmes in Thailand appears to have happened in practice, however. Even Group Three donors rarely addressed related concerns across their overall programme for Thailand and provide small amounts – typically 10-20% of their funding – to the Far South.[376]

6.5   Chapter summary

This chapter has presented an overview of foreign aid as it relates to the Far South of Thailand. It set out the general trends that became apparent through the research process, described the patterns of aid provision that emerged, and explained why aid agencies acted as they have done.

The chapter has explained how many Group One donors have not addressed peripheral conflict in the Far South of Thailand. A repeated inability of foreign aid programmes and projects across Thailand to recognize horizontal and other inequalities is of particular note. Earlier and contemporary flows of funds have been channelled mostly through the central Thai state, whose approach to development has been associated with assimilation efforts and related incorporation of minorities into a national polity that have perpetuated the marginalization of Malay Muslims in the Far South (as outlined in Chapter Five). Foreign aid has in cases funded national development initiatives that are often perceived negatively in the Far South. Examples referred to in this chapter include programmes in the education sector that made no effort to recognize the specific context of the Far South despite the sector's salience to identity-based tensions in the area.[377] It is rarely possible to map the direct impact of donor support for such programmes down to the local level as they are brokered through national state instititutions. Generally, however, antagonistic identity construction in the Far South is linked with economic, political and cultural status inequalities that have persisted through decades of economic growth, much of it supported by donor funding and policy prescriptions that have not addressed the area's specific problems nor the role of the central state in perpetuating them. The findings in this chapter support other research which notes the common failure of foreign aid to recognize and account for horizontal inequalities, even in conflict-affected areas (Stewart et al. 2008).

A combination of various factors introduced in Chapter Three and discussed in this chapter with reference to the Far South of Thailand means that foreign aid has tended to steer clear of a complex problem like peripheral conflict: donor interest in maintaining diplomatic relations; a state-centric view

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[375] Gender campaigners have long recognized the mixed record of efforts to mainstream specific objectives into wider development policy, with policy 'evaporation' commonplace (Moser & Moser 2005).

[376] Further detail is provided in Ch.9 (Part 9.6).

[377] As well as the information presented here, see Ch.7 for further case study material.

of security; development models based around improving national-level socioeconomic statistics that inadequately recognize minority rights and horizontal inequalities; the inability of donors to challenge the sovereign authority of the recipient; and practical weaknesses when negotiating the interface with the state or implementing projects.

Yet foreign aid is varied and some donors have attempted to address horizontal and other inequalities in the Far South of Thailand, most commonly by aiming to promote shifts in government policy and occasionally by promoting community-level development. Donors are not always less responsive than central states to issues of horizontal inequality. Indeed, in this example of a peripheral conflict that is marginal to mainstream government policymaking, the opposite is at times the case and it is the state that restricts donor efforts to address horizontal inequalities.[378] Where aid to Thailand has aimed to change how the state works in ways relevant to the conflict in the Far South – for example, through devolving authority or promoting local accountability – it has on many occasions failed to make an impact, chiefly as a result of domestic government reluctance to accept such perceived infringements of sovereignty.

Studies suggest that foreign aid projects in Thailand have been more likely to achieve their stated aims when supporting rather than trying to change domestic policies.[379] Of particular relevance to conflict in the Far South, donors have rarely been allowed to approach issues that are seen as relating to national identity or sovereignty, such as language policy in education. Many initiatives stalled at the interface with the state, donors not having the level of commitment or practical aptitude to negotiate a successful path. Foreign involvement in peace promotion in the Far South has been discouraged by the Thai Government. There has been little in the way of brokered negotiations, peace monitoring, or other related peacebuilding measures including foreign aid designed to address conflict.[380]

Group Three exceptions exist where donors successfully integrated peacebuilding objectives for the Far South into their national strategies and implemented programmes on the ground. As this chapter has shown and Chapter Nine illustrates in greater detail, such donors were motivated by commitment to objectives that diverge from the narrower socioeconomic foundation of most Group One donors (notably the ADB and Japan but others too), with more politically astute agendas and priority given to various issues including justice, human rights, equality, democracy, and also security. They possessed the commitment and wherewithal required to negotiate the interface with the state. Finally, they placed emphasis on flexible, knowledge-based practice and engagement with different local bodies at a range of levels. However, even then, Group Three donors typically only addressed problems in the Far South through a small proportion of their funding for Thailand.

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[378] This finding challenges the position of Stewart et al. (2008:299).
[379] For example Caldwell (1974), Muscat (1990), Pasuk & Baker (1997).
[380] Some domestic and international efforts to promote dialogue have taken place, with little success to date.

Chapter Seven **Conflict Blindness: The Asian Development Bank and Planning the Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand Growth Triangle**

This chapter explores the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) support for the design of the Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT), a project that includes the Far South of Thailand within its geographical reach. It reviews the genesis and design of IMT-GT in the 1990s, focusing on the role of the ADB. It asks whether and how international involvement in the project took into account the dynamics of the conflict in the Far South including associated horizontal inequalities. It then considers the reasons for the ADB's approach and actions in the project. The chapter addresses the implications of the ADB's engagement with specific sections of the central government rather than with people or institutions more representative of the population in the Far South itself. The chapter describes how, as a mainstream aid intervention that pays little if any attention to peripheral conflict, IMT-GT is an example of the first and largest of the three groups of foreign aid projects explained in the previous chapter. The chapter finds that even though the Far South lies within the IMT-GT project area, issues surrounding conflict and horizontal inequalities were almost entirely avoided in project design and implementation. The chapter also describes the project's work in Aceh, a separate site of peripheral conflict, before moving forward ten years to detect similar ongoing patterns within a revival of the same scheme in both places.

Given the perennial difficulties of evaluating the impact of foreign aid projects on conflicts,[381] especially for initiatives that support several intermediary agencies across a range of activities, this chapter does not aim to assess the direct effect of the ADB's support to IMT-GT on horizontal inequalities. It looks instead at the documentation and disputes surrounding the ADB's role in the planning of IMT-GT in order to establish how the ADB considered factors relevant to peripheral conflict. Assessing impact would in any case be a forlorn effort, since IMT-GT did not come fully to fruition. With the onset of economic crisis across the region in 1997, the plans that ADB assistance helped to devise were mostly not realized.[382] The chapter considers the lack of attention paid by foreign aid-funded projects to horizontal inequalities in the Far South even in fields of intervention that have fuelled perceptions of inequality in the area. The significance of perceptions of inequality in the Far South of Thailand has already been noted in Chapter Five and related to the wider findings of Stewart et al. (2008).

As already explained in Chapters Two and Three with reference to work on horizontal inequalities by Stewart et al. (2008), donors' support for national economic growth rarely raises questions over how proposed reforms and investments are filtered through state institutions and how they may affect relationships among different horizontal groups within a nation. In the case of IMT-GT, as this chapter explains, the project's cross-border element was based on broad expectations that increased international trade is beneficial, with little understanding of how economic changes may affect horizontal inequalities and associated peripheral conflict within the Far South of Thailand.

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[381] See Ch.6 (Part 6.4c) for further explanation.
[382] Interview (b) with Keith Ward.

Chapter Two showed how perceptions of inequality and injustice are critical aspects of peripheral conflict (Brown & Langer 2010). This chapter describes how the planning processes of the Thai Government and the ADB alike were geared around larger-scale economic interests. IMT-GT became aligned with a development vision responding to central government directives and business sector lobbying. The chapter shows how planners gave little consideration as to how benefits would be shared between different ethnic groups or indeed how they would affect the majority of people in the Far South. ADB assistance was provided to national planning authorities that devised initiatives reflecting the dominant political economic trends in Thailand and their implications for horizontal inequalities. With an emphasis on increasing trade and maximizing economic comparative advantages across national borders, internal ethnic divisions and a history of violent conflict effectively passed ADB project planners by.

The ADB's involvement in the planning of IMT-GT is selected here as a representative case of Group One foreign aid for several reasons. First, it is a rare example of an internationally funded initiative that focuses on the Far South of Thailand. Most Group One aid projects may affect the Far South indirectly through interventions at the national level but do not specifically concentrate on the area. Second, as this chapter shows and as is typical of much external assistance to Thailand historically, it has promoted top-down planning to stimulate economic growth while giving little attention to how benefits might accrue to different groups or lead to skewed outcomes in a specific local context.

Third, IMT-GT's cross-border reach and long time frame – starting in the early 1990s, being largely suspended in the late 1990s, and then resuscitated in 2006 – offers useful additional perspectives. It enables comparison of its role in the Far South of Thailand with its role in Aceh, another site of peripheral conflict. The long project time frame means that ADB's role can be related to controversial economic development plans for the south of Thailand. These include investments linked to a new gas pipeline between Thailand and Malaysia, along with still more ambitious plans to develop a 'Southern Industrial Seaboard'.

Finally, considerable information on IMT-GT was available: IMT-GT has been extensively documented by ADB staff, independent academics, and consultants.[383] Communication with former ADB consultants and staff was also possible, giving access to undocumented versions of events as well as official histories. Focusing on historical aspects of IMT-GT enabled greater openness among informants. Information on how Group One agencies operate with respect to horizontal inequalities is hard to gather and no purely contemporary project would have offered such information. Group One donor officials and government counterparts were reluctant to discuss negative implications of ongoing projects during interviews carried out for this research, while existing published and grey literature provides little information.

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[383] In addition to online data, key archives consulted included: Sasin Institute of Business Administration, The World Bank information Centre, and Thailand Information Centre (all in Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok); and the IMT-GT repository in Prince of Songkhla University (Hat Yai Campus).

7.1   An overview of Asian Development Bank support for the planning of IMT-GT

The official account of IMT-GT starts in 1993 with a meeting between the former Prime Minister of Thailand, Chuan Leekpai, and his Malaysian counterpart, Mohammad Mahathir. With agreement also gained from President Suharto of Indonesia, the project was begun with the aim of increasing economic development in neighbouring regions of the three countries. The regions included the northwest Malaysian sultanates of Kedah, Penang, Perlis and Perak, the Indonesian provinces of North Sumatra and Aceh, and the five southernmost Thai provinces: Satun, Songkhla, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. This area covered some 200,000 square kilometres and included 20 million people (ADB 1995, Thant 1996). According to the key ADB official involved, all three governments then wrote a joint memo asking for assistance in formulating a masterplan for implementation.[384]

IMT-GT was established during a period of record economic growth for Southeast Asia. Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia appeared to be following in the footsteps of Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore. The ADB was asked to undertake an extensive set of appraisal studies, using technical assistance grants to fund international consultants and separate national consultant teams in each of the three countries. The ADB's most significant task in the IMT-GT was the provision of technical assistance for the design phase. Subsequent implementation was designed chiefly to be a government undertaking without donor support (Thant 1996).

The large numbers of consultants employed by the ADB to design the project raised some minor concern among government officials at the time, even though they were funded through the ADB grant funds rather than loans to governments.[385] International and domestic appraisals of all three regions covered what are described in project documentation as five core sectors: trade, investment and labour mobility; industry and energy; agriculture and fisheries; tourism; and transport and communications.[386] This led to the formation of working groups for each sector, and three major conferences. In all, the ADB states that it identified nearly 100 projects, programmes and policies required to develop the growth triangle over ten years (ADB 2008b). High-level government leadership supported the project from the start, with discussions of IMT-GT taking place at the margins of annual ASEAN ministerial meetings as well as between civil servants.[387]

The Thai corner of the growth triangle includes the three conflict-affected provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat. The other two provinces of the Far South also included in the scheme are the small, peaceful west coast province of Satun, and the economically more dominant Thai Buddhist majority province of Songkhla (ADB 1995). Songkhla includes the trading town of Hat Yai, the region's commercial capital, which is host to the bulk of the area's industry. The early 1990s was a period of calm in terms of tension and violence between government forces and Malay Muslim insurgents, the unrest of the late 1970s having died down.

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[384] Email correspondence with Myo Thant, 15 January 2008.
[385] Interview (b) with Keith Ward.
[386] See especially Thant & Tang (1996).
[387] Interview (a) with Keith Ward; also Thant & Tang (1996).

The notion of a cross-border growth zone had already been applied with some success elsewhere in Southeast and East Asia, for example in the Pearl River delta of southern China and Hong Kong (Thant 1996). The overall goal of the IMT-GT was to accelerate private-sector-led economic growth and facilitate the economic development of its regions by exploiting underlying economic complementarities and comparative advantages. Economic growth, largely fuelled by continued inward investment from outside the region, was expected as a result of facilitating trade across borders, maximizing factor cost differentials to maintain productivity despite rising wage levels (ADB 2008b).

The ADB has supported cross-border growth regions since the early 1990s, following commitments in its charter to promote regional economic cooperation. It has also backed economic linkages within country blocs, including the six countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion (ADB 1993).[388] Such projects enable the ADB to promote its international role as: *"...an 'honest broker', a catalyst for dialogue and cofinancing, provider of advisory and secretariat services, and major financier of projects"* (Bryant for ADB, undated).

7.2   Disputing the project's initial direction

At the international level, IMT-GT was presented as a concrete opportunity to promote political and economic linkages (ADB 1995). The three governments involved in IMT-GT may have shared common interests in economic growth although each inevitably had specific goals related to domestic political and economic concerns. National governments played a key role in project formulation including the selection of project sites (Srisompob et al. 2000). Of particular relevance to IMT-GT in two of its three sub-national zones is continued lack of trust of government on the part of a local population: in the Far South of Thailand, and in Aceh, Indonesia. Although overt violence had declined to a low level in the Far South of Thailand at the time of project design, underlying conditions that led to unrest had not been fully addressed – as the upsurge in violence roughly a decade later eventually revealed. In Aceh, meanwhile, high levels of tension were ongoing as IMT-GT was established (Smith 2002).

For Thailand, reasons for involvement in IMT-GT were less clear than for Malaysia and Indonesia, with more obvious benefits to be had from linking west coast Malaysian capital and industrial production to Indonesian natural resources and labour.[389] The project was taken seriously by several Thai government departments, however, as seen by a commitment of US$120 million to projects promoted under the IMT-GT banner by 1996, following initial rounds of ADB-supported appraisal work (Thant 1996).

A closer reading of events reveals some of the varied motivations for involvement at the Thai corner of the triangle. As has often been the case in the Thai political system, a range of powerful voices held different and at times contradictory concerns and interests (Pasuk & Baker 1997). Thailand's engagement commenced under the first government led by Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai of the Democrat Party, with a strong support base in the south of Thailand. Chuan's own home town is only

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[388] The six countries of ADB's Mekong Sub-Region are Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, China (southwest), and Burma.

[389] Interview (b) with Keith Ward. Ward conducted economic appraisals for IMT-GT in all three countries.

just outside the IMT-GT area. As with all Thai political parties, the Democrats in the south rely on networks of local members of parliament and influential business associates (Askew 2008), whose influence may well have shaped IMT-GT. Meanwhile, the government's central planning unit, The National Economic and Social Development Board, appears to have been primarily interested in future national industrialization strategies, most notably the long-term promotion of a new industrial zone, known as the Southern Industrial Seaboard and associated with exploiting the availability of offshore natural gas from the Gulf of Thailand (NESDB undated, NRCT & PSU 1994, King 2005).

Such interests stand in contrast with earlier public statements from the Thai Government on IMT-GT that had stressed a different concern – for welfare and stability in the three provinces of the Far South – as a motivation for involvement (Srisompob et al. 2000:42). A concern for welfare and stability is consistent with a series of developmental overtures towards peace pursued in the Far South through the 1980s. Early on in the formulation of IMT-GT, concerns within the Thai Government over conflict in the Far South appear to have resurfaced. Security policy statements from SBPAC in 1997 suggested that the emergence of IMT-GT could help solve security problems in the area if 'properly administered' (ibid.:44). On one occasion, Thai officials unsuccessfully asked Malaysian officials to include Kelantan, the Malaysian state across the border from Narathiwat, in the project's scope. This would have widened the project beyond the main transport link between the west coast of Malaysia (including Penang) and the industrial area around Songkhla, a narrow corridor that bypasses the conflict area of the Far South, potentially extending the project's reach and impact more comprehensively into the rural Malay Muslim-dominated periphery. The request went unheeded.[390]

Most documents on IMT-GT, however, show little concern for security. Any overt connections with peacebuilding were actively avoided. Chueng Chatariakul, a government planner with experience of designing government peace and development programmes for the Far South throughout the 1990s, commented that as an international project IMT-GT was steered away from sensitive conflict related issues, despite statements made by SBPAC.[391] For its part, the ADB was encouraged to keep clear of any issues that counterparts in the Thai Government (chiefly the National Economic and Social Development Board) felt were politically sensitive.[392]

Beyond government agencies, various observers hoped that IMT-GT could be used to promote broader, more equitable development needed to underpin peace. Preeda Prapertchob from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok proposed a more human-focused approach to IMT-GT that would consider economic growth from the perspective of rural Malays. He comments on the generally mixed experience of Muslim majority villages across the south of Thailand during periods of economic transition, with

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[390] Interview (b) with Keith Ward. Interviewees including Keith Ward suggest that Malaysia's exclusion of Kelantan was probably connected to Malaysian government efforts to reverse the electoral success of the opposition PAS (Islamic Party of Malaysia) there from 1990, demonstrating once more the influence of domestic politics on international projects.
[391] Interview with Chueng Chatariakul. Also Minutes of IMT-GT Fifth Senior Officals' Tripartite Meeting, 19-22 December 1995.
[392] Interview with Chueng Chatariakul.

greater social problems and persistent economic hardship than in most Thai Buddhist majority communities (Preeda 1995). Muslim commentators from the Far South shared similar concerns, worrying that IMT-GT would exacerbate inequalities and damage community mechanisms (Hanateh et al. 1996).[393] Preeda proposed placing stability and security as a primary objective of IMT-GT, without which investment would not spread out from a narrow corridor between Songkhla and Penang into conflict-affected areas. Since that narrow corridor was already more developed than the surrounding areas, and also disproportionately Thai (or Chinese-Thai) Buddhist rather than Malay Muslim, the concern was that increased horizontal inequalities would result.[394]

Emphasis, Preeda states, should have been placed elsewhere: on community level approaches rather than large initiatives; human development and skills training rather than human resource mobilization and labour mobility; small scale investment rather than large foreign direct investment; and the promotion of cultural conservation for local interest rather than mass tourism (ibid.). These proposals may not have addressed deeper-seated problems over access to political power in the Far South, but they did present a viable means of addressing problems over government-community relations and the perceived marginalization of Malay Muslims.

7.3   The role of the ADB

As I explain below, the constraints and incentives under which the ADB's contribution to IMT-GT has operated are circumscribed by the Thai state institutions receiving the ADB's technical assistance, as well the ADB's own respect for sovereignty and its orientation around creating an enabling environment for international capital flows. In Thailand, published material shows little if any consideration by the ADB of any issues related to conflict or ethnic tensions, even where they directly affect how the state operates (Thant & Tang 1995, ADB 1993, 1995, 1995b, 1995c).

For its part, the ADB tends assiduously to avoid any links between its programmes and political issues, especially violent conflict. As an international publically owned bank, the ADB's mandate is for non-political, economic development.[395] Asian board members including Japan, India and China hold a high proportion of shares and exert corresponding influence in pursuing a stronger non-interventionist policy than other multilateral agencies with a greater Western presence. This means that the ADB has a mandate for criticizing or attempting to reform a nation state's economic policies, but on all other issues is effectively obliged to refrain from criticizing or acting against recipient governments.[396]

At the same time as keeping out of politics, the ADB claims publicly at times that cross-border regional projects and increased international trade bring peace, stating for example in a review of Greater

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[393] See Ch.5 (Part 5.5).
[394] Also Sumalee et al. (1999).
[395] The original agreement establishing the ADB states: *"The Bank, its President, Vice-President(s), officers and staff shall not interfere in the political affairs of any member, nor shall they be influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member concerned. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to their decisions"* (1966: Article 36, Para.2).
[396] Interview (b) with Keith Ward; also interviews with Oranuch Jetwattana and Roykaew Nitithanprapas.

Mekong Subregion projects: *"The biggest dividends are the prevalence of peace, the increased trust and confidence among the countries, a sense of common purpose, and the inroads being made to reduce poverty."* [397]

The supposed peace dividend of increased trade through economic liberalization and infrastructure investment is taken here and in other the ADB reports as established fact. Extensive research has documented more widely how changing trade patterns in fact have a range of impacts on conflict depending both on wider circumstances and specific context (Saez 2008). The ADB's statements on peace hide the potential risks inherent in such projects.[398] Policy-level expectations that private sector investment stimulated by IMT-GT would inevitably lead to peace (as encapsulated in the above quotation) misread the political economy of the Far South of Thailand, as the subsequent sections of this chapter discuss.

From the ADB's perspective, its technical assistance to IMT-GT supported measures for enabling private-sector-driven growth (ADB 1995). However, a closer look at both the political economy of the Far South of Thailand and at the practice of the ADB's engagement demonstrates that the likely impact would have been to further strengthen those business interests closest to government, with a strong ethnic bias. Srisompob et al. comment that for the Far South of Thailand: *"...the engine of growth involves complex webs of interplay between socioeconomic and political realities at the international, regional and local levels"* (2000:41). Close and exclusive relationships between privileged business actors and the state are the norm in many developing countries and they certainly dominate in rural areas of Thailand including the Far South (Arghiros 2001, McCargo 2008).[399] Srisompob et al. found that: *"...whereas the emergence of growth triangles in the region reflects a recognition of the limits of state-led liberalization activities, the market-driven dynamic does not operate outside the constraints of state sovereignty and control"* (Srisompob et al. 2000:41).

The research of Sribompob et al. confirmed outstanding concerns that IMT-GT would fail to provide the specific inputs that local Malay Muslim business leaders felt that they needed to compete with other better-funded and better-connected firms. Interviews with business leaders from the Far South revealed a strong perception that IMT-GT's approach fed the existing dynamic in which Malay Muslims repeatedly lost out when new opportunities were promoted by government (and in this case international) concerns from outside the Far South. These sentiments were summarized by one businessman who stated: *"The government is focused only on narrow issues ... in which the local Malay-Muslim people did not directly take part"* (ibid.:45). According to Srisompob et al., local business leaders felt that while development initiatives could benefit the local Malay Muslim population and improve relations between Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhists by promoting opportunities for all ethnic groups and economic classes, government-sponsored schemes were unlikely to do so.

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[397] See Bryant for ADB (undated).
[398] The ADB did not make similar statements over IMT-GT itself and instead avoided any mention of conflict, demonstrating the gap between global policy statements and the practice of implementation.
[399] On liberalization in Thailand and the cronyistic relationships subsequently established see Bello et al. (1998) and Hewison (1989).

Furthermore, there is no guarantee that addressing the concerns of Malay Muslim business leaders would in itself ensure that IMT-GT or other initiatives help mitigate tensions leading to conflict in the Far South. Chapter Five reviewed literature describing splits within Malay Muslim elite groups, figures that form close political, business or vocational relationships with Thai state institutions often being locally discredited as a result of their actions. In this light it is fair to assume that unless IMT-GT were to engage or offer benefits to a wide number of Malay Muslims, rather than those best positioned to access government support or engage in project planning, the overall results may be little better in terms of addressing conflict than if it bypassed Malay Muslims entirely.

The following paragraphs investigate the ADB's practical involvement in IMT-GT, including how its inputs were formulated and what it recommended. Research reveals little engagement by ADB staff with the political economy of the regions concerned, and a weak understanding of the role of the state or of the concerns expressed by local businessmen. It shows very low recognition of tensions between local people and the state. IMT-GT was a multi-country project and the ADB's input was directed from Manila in the Philippines rather than from respective country offices.[400] International consultants were contracted to provide the assessments, divided by sectors rather than by country. This left little in the way of domestic knowledge or attention to issues that cut across all sectors, including political, cultural and social analysis, as well as environmental considerations. As a technical assistance package rather than a loan, the ADB's involvement was also subject to fewer 'safeguard' checks than would otherwise have been the case.[401]

Aid agencies regularly try to hire consultants with context-specific experience, but often fail given English language requirements, tight deadlines, and a preference for sectoral knowledge.[402] For a multi-country project covering specific areas within three different countries, local knowledge is still less likely to emerge. One consultant contracted for the initial studies with little contextual background found himself responding to a last-minute call: *"I was only hired a few days before, heard about it the end of one week and was on a plane to Manila [ADB headquarters] over the weekend. I knew nothing about it".[403]*

The scope of these initial studies was defined by the dominant discourse employed by the ADB and IMT-GT member governments, chiefly promoting government actions to facilitate larger, capital-intensive development initiatives. Operating to specific terms of reference that did not emphasize conflict, ethnicity or horizontal inequalities, and selected for technical fields of engagement, international and domestic specialists appear to have engaged in limited local consultation and relied largely on expert knowledge or statistical information.[404] In a pattern also observed elsewhere, the advisory process

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[400] Email correspondence with Myo Thant.

[401] Interview (b) with Keith Ward. Also ADB (1995).

[402] Interview with Paul Walters. Other donor staff interviewed registered no surprise at the ADB consultants' lack of local knowledge, regarding it as a common occurrence in many agencies.

[403] Interview with International Consultant.

[404] Interview (b) with Keith Ward.

established by the ADB led to reports that follow a predictable and narrow format.[405] The key recommendations emerging from the reports were for a range of infrastructural programmes, regulatory measures, and transport investment to increase cross-border trade (ADB 1995).

For each of the three countries involved in IMT-GT, domestic teams of consultants were also hired. In Thailand, research centres at Chulalongkorn and Thammasat Universities in Bangkok, and the Hat Yai campus of Prince of Songkhla University, were involved (Thant & Tang 1996). Country-specific studies that followed the international studies do provide more specific local content. But with the experts involved again being sectoral specialists, and given little focus on wider readings of social context or political economy, a similar pattern of recommendations emerged.[406]

Counter-statements expressing a different interpretation of how development interventions might affect economic growth and development in different sectors were presented in some reports, although they appear as the individual concerns of specific consultants rather than a proposed trajectory. The IMT-GT international agriculture and fisheries sector review, for example, suggests that subsidies or other limits to a free market may be in the interests of both smaller farmers and overall development performance. However, with little scope to link such a statement to the broader proposed measures that are framed in the context of facilitation of free trade, the observation did not influence the overall proposed planning framework (ADB 1995b).

A failure to engage in a reality that is more complex than suggested by the economic model being promoted is evident in the tourism sector. Knowledge of the geographical area appears weak. For example, the IMT-GT international consultancy report states that the southernmost area of Thailand has no valuable tourism sites (ADB 1995c:56). This is accurate only so far as there are no existing centres for long-haul visitors from developed countries. However, Pattani and Narathiwat provinces do contain significant Muslim and Buddhist religious centres that are important pilgrimage stops for coach tours within Thailand, as well as from Malaysia and Singapore (Horstmann 2002). The provinces are also endowed with national parks and abundant beaches, as even a vague understanding of the area or a superficial field trip would have revealed.

Analysis of the political economy of tourism in the Far South of Thailand would also have shown a close web of connections between hoteliers, property speculators and the state. In a pattern seen across Thailand and more widely, tourism development has involved highly contentious links between powerful local businessmen and high-level politicians or civil servants (Cohen 2008; Hitchcock, King & Parnwell 2008:33-34). Reports by both international and domestic consultancy teams hardly touch on any of these issues. Although the domestic consultancy report provides more local detail than the internationally written overview, the issues mentioned here are not addressed (Chula Unisearch 1997).

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[405] For example ADB (1995). On the narrow confines within which development knowledge is produced, see Quarles van Ufford (1993) and Mosse (2005).
[406] See for example Team Consulting (1994); also Chula Unisearch (1997).

Sensitive issues surrounding tourism are avoided through employing technical language. The domestic consultancy report finds that: *"It is the basic difference in attitudes between the Thai and Malaysian cultures regarding permissible types of entertainment that enables this activity to thrive along the Thai side of the border"* (ibid.:55-56). This explanation, in addition to shoe-horning a notion of culture into an economic model of factor price differentials, is presumably a euphemism for prostitution, the dominant tourist business of Hat Yai and a range of other smaller towns in the Far South catering mostly for Malaysian male visitors. The likely social impact of promoting increased cross-border movement, in this case an expanded sex industry, is not addressed by the ADB. Apart from the associated likelihood of labour and gender exploitation, the sex industry is also a propaganda tool for insurgents, demonstrating the moral corruption of the Thai state. 'Entertainment' areas in the Far South have been targeted with remote-controlled bombs on several occasions since the upsurge in violence from early 2004 (Askew 2006).

In defence of the ADB's role in IMT-GT, it could be argued that the huge economic and human development improvements in Thailand since the 1960s have largely been a result of top-down strategies promoting state support for private sector investment. The point here is not to contest this broader argument, but to relate it to continued conflict in the Far South. The social and economic issues discussed above bear direct relation to the scope for peace and justice in the area, given widespread and deep-seated local perceptions that the fruits of development are unevenly distributed by an often oppressive and discriminatory state, as described in Chapter Five. This context is hardly recognized in ADB project documentation. Even if it had been, there is little space in their approach to accommodate it.

This same overall discourse is repeated throughout the IMT-GT reports and confirmed through interviews with those involved. Myo Thant, the ADB manager responsible for developing IMT-GT in the 1990s (and by 2007 their principal economist for regional cooperation), commented that conflict and related concerns over horizontal inequalities were simply not considered at the time.[407] Wichien Chatupote, associate professor at Prince of Songkhla University in Hat Yai and contributor to the domestic reports in the 1990s, feels that IMT *"Just flew over"* local political, security, and cultural issues.[408]

These issues are not just specific to the Thailand corner of IMT-GT. In one report, an international consultant diagnoses weak local government involvement in top-down schemes as a drawback. It mentions as a final comment that social equity is a matter of concern. However, this statement is then coloured by misjudgement: *"The fact that all three subregions [in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia] are relatively homogenous, ethnically and culturally, should help to reduce the potential for social disharmony."* (Naseem 1996:52)

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[407] Email correspondence with Myo Thant.
[408] Interview with Wichien Chatupote.

It is unclear whether the author was oblivious of or simply chose to gloss over simmering tension and social exclusion in the Far South of Thailand along ethnic lines, as well as ongoing violent separatist conflict in Aceh. At the time that IMT-GT was conceived, recent violent conflict had been considerably more acute in Aceh than in Thailand: from 1989 until the late 1990s Aceh was under effective martial law, and witnessed thousands of deaths through military and insurgent action. Aceh gained a global reputation as the site of human rights abuses committed by the Indonesian security forces and suffered from a long-lasting breakdown in relations between the local population and the Indonesian Government.[409] Yet from the perspective of IMT-GT, one international consultant felt that conflict was *"Background noise"* both there and in the Far South of Thailand. On visiting the Acehnese provincial capital of Banda Aceh for a couple of days, he found that: *"...there didn't seem much of a problem ... we walked around the market and it seemed peaceful."* [410]

Aceh may have seemed quiet during a short visit, largely because it was under martial law at the time (DOM – *Daerah Operasi Militer* or Military Operations Area) (Smith 2002). Quite apart from any broader concern for suffering induced by conflict, the significant economic implications of conflict for the promotion of inward investment flows were practically ignored. The more complex relationships between the roots of conflict and Aceh's economic growth, including the industrial complex based around a large natural gas field situated near the heartland of the insurgent movement, were not even touched upon.[411]

How was such a depoliticized economic discourse perpetuated? The overriding impression is that it was simply not in the interests of either the ADB or of most of those in the government agencies involved in the project to raise issues of political conflict. Domestic consultants may have provided some more detail in their reports than their international peers, but they were employed to address a similarly narrow set of objectives. By virtue of their role and position in main academic institutions, Thai consultant teams presented a national rather than an international voice, but one that did not represent the Malay Muslim population of the Far South and tallied instead with the general IMT-GT planning process. There was very little effort either to gain the views of local people, or to listen to the concerns raised by academics outside technical fields.[412]

Interestingly, personal communication and interviews with various people involved in the ADB's contribution to IMT-GT revealed considerable personal knowledge of conflict and horizontal inequalities in both Aceh and the Far South of Thailand. This understanding appears to have been lost in the technical approaches used in formal settings, suggesting that professional approaches encourage the technical rendering of known reality as a product that supports the underlying interests or received

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[409] Figures of casualties are unreliable. Killing, torture, arrest without trial, collective punishment, forced relocation, sexual assault, bombings and kidnappings were at their height during the military campaign of 1989-1991. See Smith (2002:76-77).

[410] Interview with International Consultant.

[411] On the relationship between Aceh's economic development and conflict see Robinson (1998) and Aspinall (2007).

[412] Interview with Wichien Chatupote. Also Chula Unisearch (1997).

discourse of those concerned. As has been addressed in many critical accounts of development practice, the technical tools, jargon, project planning mechanisms and other implements of the development practitioner promote professional engagement along narrow, consensual lines and an avoidance of politically contentious issues (Murray Li 2007, Ferguson 1990:270).

7.4   IMT-GT's decline and reincarnation

All three countries involved in IMT-GT suffered massive economic shocks during the Asian financial crisis that hit in 1997. Virtually all new investment was suspended. Most IMT-GT plans were shelved except for small low-cost initiatives like academic exchanges between universities.[413] After a short hiatus, wider development planning in the Far South of Thailand then continued. The most notable project to go ahead since then in the Far South of Thailand was the Thailand-Malaysia gas pipeline, a long-term goal of successive governments as well as related private sector and state-owned industrial interests. The pipeline programme included plans for major industrialization along Thailand's southern shoreline, in an area of predominantly Malay Muslim farming and fishing communities (King 2005:102).

Recent industrial development in the Far South of Thailand has been largely confined to the corridor that the pipeline follows, from Songkhla to Sadao on the main route towards Penang. Indeed, fifteen of the twenty-one major IMT-GT projects proposed by the ADB for southern Thailand were originally concentrated in this narrow corridor (King 2005:100). The gas pipeline hits the shore in Chana district of Songkhla province. Once a quiet rural backwater, it now looks desolate, the remaining fishing villages nestling between largely polluted scrub and salt marsh that surrounds new industrial developments: fish processing plants, a power plant and a gas separation facility.[414] According to King's study and a wealth of reports from activists and academics[415], the new industrial developments were carried out with little if any consultation or participation of local people, who were subjected to a barrage of government propaganda over the supposed positive impact of development in the area and yet subsequently felt that they had few benefits to show for it (King 2005). One group complained that developers breached Islamic principles by laying the pipeline through what was labelled holy soil near Ban Pa Ngam mosque, as well as commenting on sewage emissions and foul smells from the gas separation plant. They vowed to protect their rights, lifestyle and religion from attack by government officials, the national Electricity Generating Authority (EGAT) and the national petroleum company (PTT) (King 2005:102, Nation 2007).[416]

As the pipeline project inched forward over the course of a decade, local groups and national NGOs organized popular protest. According to a public inquiry and extensive coverage by local activists, developers ignored planning regulations before intimidating, deceiving, and attacking protesters (Lohmann 2008). The pipeline, and associated industrialization in the area where it hits the shore,

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[413] Interview (b) with Keith Ward. Also Sumalee et al. (1999).
[414] A sour industrial odour hangs over the area, which I travelled around extensively in May 2008.
[415] See for example Midnight University (undated).
[416] The pipeline generated considerable domestic and some international media coverage that confirms King's findings.

became a symbol of the struggle between local citizens and nationally defined development priorities as outlined in IMT-GT. Surveys carried out as part of the environmental assessment for the gas separation plant accompanying the pipeline show that 80% of villagers in Chana thought that their quality of life would suffer as a result of the development (Allison 2000). At one point, local protesters in villages took the rare step of appealing, ultimately in vain, to the Malaysian prime minister, a fellow Malay Muslim, for assistance (King 2005:103). In a further unusual turn, protesters also appealed to the Thai military to stop the pipeline and associated industrial development (Nation 2007b).

Non-participatory, top-down development initiatives are not unique to the Far South and the ADB has been the target of similar protest elsewhere in Thailand.[417] The ADB's role in the gas pipeline has been indirect, with the government and state-owned PTT taking the brunt of the criticism. Protesters typically link general criticism of abusive state practices with the ethnically charged context of the Far South.[418] A perception of the external environment, and especially the Thai state, as a threat is commonplace in the Far South. One response to increasing and what is often perceived as overwhelmingly negative encroachment by the state is to retreat into a rural, closed existence, in keeping with James Scott's observations on highland minorities in the far north of Thailand and neighbouring areas (2009). Inward-looking reactions to perceived external threats are seen in a common reluctance to migrate for paid work despite high levels of under-employment in rural areas. These tendencies are most noticeable when the external engagement would imply exposure to mainstream Thai Buddhist government or private sector institutions.[419] Where the state does operate at the village level, it may be seen as exploitative and invasive (Cornish 1997, Supara 2004).[420] Fear of eviction over disputed land rights, a common issue across Thailand and elsewhere, becomes further charged in the ethnically-fraught context, leading to assertions of indigenous rights: *"It is our land, why must we move?"* [421]

Withdrawal from economic development and engagement with the external world is not a universal norm in the Far South, however. Complaints are often directed at the lack of development rather than a desire to reject any change. A common view is that top-down projects simply never happen, as for example with a proposed industrial estate outside Narathiwat Town that was budgeted for but never built.[422] Other investments fail to have any impact on the rural, conflict-affected zones, leading to widespread cynicism: *"Maybe there are projects but I do not see any development in the conflict areas. From the ground there's very little."* [423]

The pattern repeatedly demonstrated through the sources referred to above suggests that many local residents do not oppose industrial development, but they do feel that the way in which projects like the gas pipeline have taken place has further cemented perceived inequalities. Although new investment

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[417] The most prominent example is the Klong Dan Water project, Samut Prakan (Bello & Focus on the Global South 2002).
[418] See for example Supara (2004:133-140).
[419] Information from various interviews in the Far South, including NGO Researcher and Local Businessman.
[420] See Ch.6 for examples of the same phenomenon in rural Thailand in the 1960s.
[421] Modeeyoh Palpukee, local resident, quoted in Supara (2004:71).
[422] Interview with Chidchanok Rahimmula.
[423] Interview with NGO Project Officer.

may indeed generate jobs, its impact has to be read politically through the horizontal social fractures of the area. Across the spectrum there is a wide sense of alienation from the state, as explained in Chapter Five. Concerned government officials, NGO fieldworkers, businessmen and local residents repeatedly express the need to listen more to the views of Malay Muslims and present a different form of intervention. One NGO worker, expressing commonly stated views, felt that the government *"...does not understand the ground reality of the three southern provinces."* [424] Staff from the Narathiwat Community Development Department, the local branch of a normally consensual government agency, bemoaned the failure of state development efforts to engage more effectively by responding to people's needs.[425]

There is no evidence to suggest that the ADB recognized or addressed this situation. Even uncontroversial efforts to promote local level consultation were not conducted, according to one published assessment (King 2005). A more positive response to the ADB's role was given by researchers at Prince of Songkhla University's Hat Yai Campus, who were involved in the local study for IMT-GT carried out in the early 1990s. They felt that a focus on the region supported growth and built local institutional capacity, in the process supporting wider decentralization processes essential to spread economic development beyond the zone around Bangkok.[426] While the potential value of decentralization as a way to build locally responsive governance is understood by many in the Far South, in this case it assisted a narrow set of government and industrial interests along a corridor that effectively bypassed most of the Malay Muslim Far South (King 2005:101-102).

As I explain below, IMT-GT's inputs have been filtered through the relationships and contradictions that define the political economy of development in the Far South of Thailand, involving a mixture of dirigiste planning, clashing departmental interests and political nepotism. The dirigiste side is seen most clearly in the long-term plans of the National Economic and Social Development Board for the Southern Industrial Seaboard, reflecting the perceived need to find a new area for industrial expansion given concerns over shortages of water and power in the main existing industrial areas nearer Bangkok rather than any more parochial issues. The gas pipeline and IMT-GT fell within this broader long-term objective (NESDB 1998). One option being considered by NESDB was to locate a new industrial expansion area across the Far South, with infrastructure and industrial projects stretching from Pattani on the east coast to Satun in the west.

Clashing departmental interests were seen in the continued development perspectives of the NESDB and SBPAC, the body responsible for peacebuilding initiatives in the Far South. SBPAC's interests in promoting greater confidence of the local population in government led it to continue questioning the value of top-down approaches to industrialization in 2007-8, just as it had done the 1990s.[427] One scheme that fell within the broader Southern Seaboard initiative was for a 'land bridge' and associated

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[424] *"Rattaban yang mai dai khao chai pheun ti nai sam changwat pak tai"* (Interview with NGO Outreach Worker 3).

[425] They repeat the King's widely repeated expectation that civil servants should "*Understand, reach out, and develop".* Interviews with Bakrie and Chamroen Laopitak.

[426] Interview with Chatichai Ratanachai.

[427] Interview with Chueng Chatariakul.

port and industrial development across the Thai-Malay peninsula. The 'bridge' would transport cargo overland from one coast to the other, apparently reducing shipping costs between East Asia and Europe. In May 2008, a feasibility study was approved by the Thai Cabinet to be carried out by Dubai World, the investment company owned by the United Arab Emirates Government.[428] The conflict in the Far South of Thailand presented an obstacle: it was an unavoidable issue for a company based in a Muslim country, given the upsurge in violence from 2004 on. Dubai World chairman Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem justified the project to reporters in 2008:

> *In the past, our company had experience in developing projects in many conflict-impacted areas. We found that local residents are not easily lured to violence if they have jobs and enjoy higher incomes ... in our view, building economic stability is a key to creating political stability* (Nation 2008).

In this repeat of the ADB's expectation that economic growth brings peace, the more complex issues of who benefits, and how projects are perceived locally, are not entered into.

Development planning under IMT-GT inevitably followed political interests, as seen in the promotion of *halal* food production as an export for global Muslim markets. Re-launched by former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and presented as an initiative to help Muslims in the Far South, it has widely been seen instead as a means to channel support to major financial food processing companies whose owners built close business relationships with the prime minister (Supara 2004:19).[429]

After a long gap, during which time IMT-GT consisted of inter-governmental talking shops with little concrete follow-up action,[430] the project was resuscitated in January 2006 when leaders of the three countries agreed to a new growth triangle initiative. The new expanded project area covered the entire south of Thailand, Indonesian Sumatra, and peninsular Malaysia, with a similar set of objectives as before. Despite a major upsurge in violence in the Far South of Thailand, conflict and related inequalities again received no attention. The ADB was involved once more, in November 2006 agreeing a new programme of US$1 million of technical assistance for development planning. This time the ADB received financing for its support from the Chinese Government. Once more, project documentation and the terms of reference for consultants gave no indication that any specific attention should be given to conflict or related issues (ADB 2006).

The ADB recognized that institutional weaknesses hampered the continuity of the earlier project. In response, effort was made to build lasting structures as well as to secure high-level backing.[431] But despite the emergence of serious violence, the ADB is still apparently 'flying over' the issue of conflict, demonstrating no greater ability to understand local political realities than was the case in the 1990s.[432]

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[428] Thaksin Shinawatra was living in Dubai and effectively operating as prime minister in exile when the feasibility study was approved. The same company won a contract to run the major port in the east of Thailand when Thaksin was prime minister.

[429] Thailand held the lead role within IMT-GT consultative meetings for developing the *halal* food industry.

[430] Interview (a) with Keith Ward.

[431] Interviews with Wichien Chatupote and Chatchai Ratanachai.

[432] Interviews with Wichien Chatupote, Chatchai Ratanachai, and Oranuch Jetwattana.

At that time, when there was very little overt violence in the Far South of Thailand, failing to factor in conflict was more forgivable than it was in 2006. Fifteen years on, with regular and overt violence in the area, such oversight is still more notable. Greater global awareness of existing donor tools such as conflict sensitivity frameworks or viable alternative ways of providing foreign aid could all have influenced the project, yet have had no impact.

In IMT-GT's first and second phase, the ADB was never in a position to exert strong influence, being constrained by a relationship in which they provided limited technical assistance in response to government requests. But they still might have been able to support a range of positions, perhaps through careful selection of technical expertise. Alternative voices still acceptable to the Thai Government include representatives of SBPAC, who hoped to harness development funds in order to build peace in a more considered version of the 'peace through economic growth' argument proposed by the director of Dubai World.[433] NGOs and academics like Preeda Prapertchob have promoted a locally rooted version of development that would have involved more devolved decision-making and popular participation. In the event, IMT-GT and the ADB's support to the scheme have repeatedly served to support top-down economic planning, in doing so weakening the scope for promoting any alternative vision (King 2005).

7.5   How representative is IMT-GT?

With aid usually provided through the interface between donors and recipient states, it is often hard to isolate the impact of a specific project. The IMT-GT project is not led by the ADB, so care should be taken before attributing blame for any shortcomings. The key agencies are the governments of the three countries involved.

In this case there is no evidence that the ADB tried to increase the sensitivity of IMT-GT to tensions between Malay Muslims and the government in the Far South of Thailand. There is also no evidence to suggest that its involvement increased the likelihood of more locally rooted planning that could have responded better to the needs of both smaller investors and the Malay Muslim population more widely. Indeed, extensive use of international consultants and national consultants based outside the conflict area, along with little if any local consultation, served the purposes of central planning authorities regarded as alien by many Malay Muslims in the Far South.

Efforts to reduce domestic horizontal inequalities might have helped redress the subsequent imbalance. Development approaches more focused on local people's definitions of need – from small-scale farmers to local businessmen – were encouraged by various Thai commentators already referred to, including some working within government agencies, but were not promoted by the ADB nor by their counterparts in the NESDB. Such approaches might have been more able to respond to the interests and demands of the Malay Muslim population in the Far South.

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[433] Interview with Chueng Chatariakul.

IMT-GT's relationship with conflict in Aceh was similar, suggesting that the context in the Far South of Thailand is not an exception. ADB documentation reveals no evidence of efforts to take into account the likely impact of the province's long-term instability on potential inward investment, let alone a set of broader developmental issues. For example, the perceived preference on the part of the Indonesian Government for offering opportunities to rival businesses based in the large city of Medan, in the neighbouring province of North Sumatra, was resented by business leaders in Aceh.[434] IMT-GT exacerbated this perception, with enterprises based in Medan more able to benefit from the scheme than poorly capitalized and less networked Acehnese traders. IMT-GT's originally proposed investments in Indonesia clearly prioritized capital-intensive sectors active in North Sumatra, with little attention to smaller businesses and logistical needs in more isolated Aceh (ADB 1995).

The revival of IMT-GT from 2006 repeated the same pattern. It occurred at a time when a peace process had gathered steam in Aceh, leading to an agreement on increased autonomy for the province in August 2005. The newly elected Governor of Aceh, former insurgent leader Irwandi Yusuf, initially hoped that this time round IMT-GT might support his efforts to attract investment and provide a needed peace dividend. However, after initial meetings appeared once more to offer nothing to Aceh and only benefit larger Medan-based concerns better linked into central government, Irwandi informally commented that in future he would ignore all IMT-GT related issues, choosing not even to read any communication sent to him.[435]

Some of the ADB's more recent public documents on Thailand mention a wider set of concerns including social issues and inclusive development strategies (ADB 2007). But there is little incentive for the government or the ADB itself to promote these issues unless failing to do so presents a risk to larger projects.[436] The ADB does now pay more attention to identifying local concerns in project design, although this appears chiefly to be a marginal exercise to ensure that mainstream loans are not threatened. In 2007-8 the ADB provided a US$300,000 grant to help plan new elements of the long-awaited Southern Seaboard scheme. Among other inputs, it funded a rapid series of short meetings with chambers of commerce across the south of Thailand to feed local ideas into the central planning mechanism. It was hoped that this would then lead to a longer participatory process carried out by local universities for the NESDB, the government's central planning body, thereby improving their long non-consultative tradition. Yet ADB support did not consider the political economy and ethnic diversity of the south or the conflict beyond these measures. One meeting did take place in Pattani, within the conflict area, although the risks of marginalization of the local population in proposed plans, or the question of the degree to which participants were representative of anything beyond personal interest, were not addressed. Given the history of political and economic interests dominating policy implementation over economic planning in the south, ethnic disparities and the perceived injustice that

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[434] Interviews with Adli and Firmandes.
[435] Interview with Adviser to Provincial Governor.
[436] The ADB has taken on board social and environmental issues through more rigorous 'safeguard' screening during the design of projects in order to avoid some of the more egregious unintended impacts of loans in the past, but this does not appear to represent any fundamental shift in overall approach (Interviews with Oranuch Jetwattana and Roykaew Nitithanprapas).

results, it seems unlikely that a little consultation in chambers of commerce with business representatives will make a meaningful difference.[437]

Regional projects may be especially prone to overlook specific sub-national actors given their international perspective, with project formulation often taking place outside the remit of a donor's country level office. However, similar trends can also be seen in projects operating solely within Thailand. As explained in Chapter Six, the majority of international aid provided to Thailand has rarely incorporated issues of minority groups and their relations with government, whether configured as an issue of peacebuilding, core-periphery relationships, horizontal inequality, or any other relevant approach.

7.6   Chapter conclusion

The ADB's inputs to IMT-GT were in practice blind to conflict and to horizontal inequalities. The ADB supported central planning bodies within the Thai Government that had little interest in addressing issues of horizontal inequality associated with conflict in the Far South. The ADB had little engagement with other bodies and individuals including academics, NGOs, inhabitants of the Far South and at least one government agency (SBPAC) that were concerned with inequalities and the associated history of unrest. ADB support to IMT-GT backed the dominant trajectory of growth and government policymaking, with proposed inputs promoting an enabling environment for larger private investors. As has been widely addressed by many researchers and explained in this chapter and earlier chapters, the most likely main beneficiaries of such initiatives – had they come to fruition in the 1990s – would have been networks of well-connected local economic and political actors including politicians, senior civil servants, and businessmen. Historically, these local elites have operated in close association with central state institutions, both in the Far South and elsewhere in Thailand (McVey 2000). IMT-GT was perceived by many in the Far South of Thailand as another typical government intervention assisting overwhelmingly Thai or Thai-Chinese Buddhist financial interests, rather than benefitting the majority Malay Muslim local population.[438] Even the involvement of some Malay Muslim business representatives in projects stemming from IMT-GT may have done little to dispel a perception of inequality among many Malay Muslims in the Far South, with those in privileged positions often being regarded by insurgents as turncoats and more widely as a small co-opted elite that is too close to the central government and does not represent wider interests.[439]

In 2007, the ADB announced a new Country Partnership Strategy with Thailand, stating in a press release:

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[437] Interviews with Oranuch Jetwanna and Roykaew Nitithanprapas. Also Bangkok Post (2007). ADB national planning documents written in 2008 departed from earlier ones by referring to social differentiation and even the need to understand the complexities of local political economies, but then proposed little in terms of new action (ADB 2008, 2008b).

[438] See Srisompob et al. (2000) and King (2005). Also interviews including Bakrie, Local Businessman, and Chidchanok Rahimmula.

[439] See Ch.5 (Part 5.5).

This important new partnership aims to fortify our relationship with Thailand to jointly work towards achieving sustainable economic growth, both at the national level and within the region (ADB 2007b).

The press release continues:

The Country Partnership Strategy at the national level supports Thailand's efforts to enhance its competitiveness in the global economy and promote higher levels of private investment. Core strategic areas of partnership include development of infrastructure, capital markets, and environmental sustainability. At the regional level, the partnership focuses on increasing Thailand's role and capacity as a regional development partner through co-financing projects in neighboring countries, promoting subregional trade and investment, and further developing Asian bond markets.

In this description of the ADB's priorities there appears little scope for a more sophisticated perspective on the impact of development on ethnic relations in the Far South. The case study confirms the findings of Stewart et al. (2008) over the lack of policy level attention to horizontal inequalities shown by many aid agencies. Where connections between conflict and development are made by the ADB, as this chapter showed, underlying assumptions about the beneficial impact of increasing trade flows and investment also appear flawed. The longevity of peripheral conflicts in Southeast Asia and further afield, often in a rapidly developing context, suggests that economic growth is likely in cases to further the reproduction of horizontal inequalities rather than bring peace. A broader issue here concerns the challenge of building awareness of peripheral conflict problems into foreign aid agencies whose policies are primarily geared around the promotion of socioeconomic growth at the national level with little attention to distributive implications.

In addition to the ADB's overall orientation (or motivation in the terminology of this thesis) around socioeconomic growth, their engagement with state institutions appears further to limit the scope to address peripheral conflict. This relates to the role of the interface between donors and the state, as has already been explained in earlier chapters. Institutionally, the ADB remains state-centric, central government agencies (especially those addressing economic planning and infrastructure) being a necessary recipient of most donor funds and loans. The ADB interacted in IMT-GT with central planning institutions and not with other government bodies including SBPAC that demonstrated greater awareness of horizontal inequalities and concern for conflict in the Far South. The ADB did not engage in any extensive way with governmental or non-governmental agencies more representative of people themselves. This is not simply a matter of the ADB's own preference, but that of the Thai Government too. As this chapter has explained, international agencies are kept away from sensitive institutions like SBPAC that address tensions relating to conflict in the Far South.

More widely, good relations with key central ministries and agencies are essential to fulfil pledged aid targets and to maintain what aid officials call a 'spending pipeline'. For the ADB and also for the World Bank, the two large multilateral development banks operating in Thailand, their main aim is to re-

establish a significant portfolio of loans.[440] This is nothing new: as already stated, the ADB's original interest in IMT-GT was partly motivated by the possibility that the project's proposed infrastructure plans would lead to future loans. In July 2008, the ADB talked of efforts to establish funding for an infrastructure 'mega-project', competing with loans already offered by the Japanese and Chinese Governments for new subway train lines in Bangkok (ADB 2008c; Bangkok Post 2008b).

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[440] See for example Shivakumar (2005).

Chapter Eight   **The Interface between Donors and Central Government**

Agencies as a Barrier to Addressing Conflict

"Everything donors try to do in the South clashes with nationalism." [441]

Having explored in the previous chapter an example of a Group One donor initiative that does not try to address conflict issues in the Far South of Thailand, this chapter considers Group Two donors that try but fail to engage with peacebuilding. Some international development agencies have tried to set up programmes of assistance in the Far South of Thailand since the re-emergence of significant violence at the start of 2004. Building on increasing global experience of aid in conflict situations, they have attempted to support steps towards a just future peace and occasionally to help redress the impact of violence on people's lives. UNDP and the World Bank are two of the largest agencies that attempted to do so, yet at the time of research they had failed in their efforts to start a programme. The two agencies form the basis of this chapter.

The chapter continues the investigation of the reasons why aid agencies differ in their ability to address peripheral conflicts, considering how and why both UNDP and the World Bank initiated yet struggled to implement related programmes for the Far South of Thailand. It finds that, despite some desire to address the conflict, the interface between donors and their key interlocutors in the recipient state steers donors away from such programmes. The chapter shows the practical obstacles that donors encounter in trying to promote a peacebuilding agenda. It considers the low overall levels of interest in peacebuilding that the two agencies demonstrated, before describing how recent promotion of aid 'partnerships' in Thailand and elsewhere returns aid delivery to a consensual norm that reduces the scope to take a nuanced and critical view on the central state.

The quotation at the start of this chapter reflects recipient government concerns over maintenance of sovereignty that, I argue here, have a significant impact on how aid agencies operate and how aid is used. When dealing with conflict and peacebuilding the concern is often still greater. In Thailand as elsewhere, relationships across the interface between aid donors and the government are played out through these ongoing tensions.

In order to understand how and why donors approach peripheral conflict in the Far South of Thailand, it is important to consider the 'aid relationship' between donor and recipient that was described with reference to peripheral conflicts more widely in Chapter Three. [442] For donors, a perennial tension exists between forming a necessary relationship with government on the one hand and promoting changes on the other (Gibson et al. 2005). 'Common ground' may be hard to identify when donor policy is not sufficiently aligned with government action. Conflict contexts usually exacerbate these tensions (Potter

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[441] Quotation from interview with UN Official.
[442] See Eyben (2006).

1996, Barnett & Zuercher 2008). Nationalist sentiment that often surrounds peripheral conflicts, as already described in Chapter Two, may make them especially sensitive sites for external engagement.[443]

This chapter uses case study material to explore the perspectives of Thai government officials whose support is critical for any donors offering to support promotion of peace in the Far South. It shows how donor efforts to address peripheral conflicts encroach on sensitive issues of national identity that are themselves often critical elements contributing to and perpetuating peripheral conflicts.[444] Protection of sovereignty is not the preserve of war-hungry reactionaries: a pro-peace perspective may be seen as fully compatible with strong nationalist sentiment. For example, elderly statesman and former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, head of the former National Reconciliation Commission for the Far South, when asked by an American journalist in 2005 what his country could do to help with the conflict, responded: *"Tell them to stay the hell out of here"* (Pauker 2005/2006:85).[445]

There are some strategic reasons for rejecting international involvement, given that anti-government groups in the Far South look to build international concern in order to strengthen their case (Pathan 2007). Much more widely, however, 'internationalization' of the conflict is seen as a loss of sovereignty, something that stokes a nationalist reaction almost as much as concern that any concessions to insurgents will 'divide the nation'.[446] Fear of external intervention, especially in a sensitive location, raises strong sentiments among many Thais over the unity of the Thai nation.[447]

Other examples demonstrate similar concern over external involvement. Following the case of Imam Yapa Kaseng, an Islamic preacher from the Far South of Thailand who was beaten to death in a military camp in Narathiwat's Rue So district in March 2008, Thai Army commander General Anupong Paochinda instructed his soldiers not to injure or kill any Muslims during interrogations at military camps. Such acts, he said, might provide justification for intervention by the United Nations or the Organization of the Islamic Conference, bodies that the Thai state has repeatedly managed to keep at arm's length.[448] Rather than being concerned over the human rights abuses themselves, or over a violent local backlash that the incident might provoke, General Anupong's misgiving was over the risks of subsequent foreign involvement.

A common perspective even among Thai peace activists is that foreign bodies can play little role in finding a solution.[449] This fits in with a nationalist line held more widely across Thailand that sees foreign

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[443] Donors often fail to consider themselves as active participants rather than neutral onlookers in the domestic context. For example, political economy analysis that has become increasingly commonplace among aid agencies rarely includes consideration of the role of donors themselves (Duncan & Williams 2010).

[444] On national identity and peripheral conflicts see Ch.2. The theme is discussed with reference to Thailand in Ch.5.

[445] Anand Panyarachun is a diplomatic figure not usually prone to using harsh words. Commentators including Pauker have used this quotation an example of the strength of nationalist feeling over issues that relate to national unity.

[446] 'Divide the nation' is a translation of the commonly used phrase '*Baeng chat'.* See Ch.5 on national unity and on international aspects of the conflict.

[447] See Thongchai (1994) and McCargo (2008, 2011).

[448] Memorandum of the Internal Security Operations Command 4th Region, 29 March 2008, translated and quoted in ICG (2009).

[449] Interview with Gothom Arya. Also discussions with Robert Hygrell, PACTA, Bangkok, January 2010.

aid as well as other external interventions as primarily exploitative. It does not help that most aid agencies attempting to address conflict in the Far South are Western or seen as dominated by Western interests, playing into a legacy of past fears of colonization and a perceived neo-imperialist present (Connors 2006). Many people in the Far South are also suspicious of foreigners, fitting their own situation into a global context of tension between Islamic communities and the USA.[450]

8.1   UNDP and the World Bank

As is explained below, while the World Bank has typically promoted economic liberalization through promotion of structural adjustment and subsequent reforms, UNDP has taken a more critical line on such policies. At the same time, both UNDP and the World Bank have tried over several decades to modify their overall approach to development, responding to long-term criticism over the 'collateral damage' and ineffectiveness of many interventions by moving away from the conventional socioeconomic modernization paradigm. Aspects of these changes include more critical perspectives on the role of the state and greater concern over conflict issues. These shifts have been closely scrutinized, some recognizing them as significant steps, others considering them – in the case of the World Bank in particular – as a facade that obscures continuity based around the vested interests of wealthy nations, powerful elites and capital (Pincus 2002, Easterly 2002, Harrison 2004).

In looking at the two agencies' work across Thailand, this section builds on themes introduced earlier, in particular the interface with the state. The next section then considers their attempted involvement in the Far South. Since both UNDP and the World Bank approach the conflict in the Far South as part of their overall aid provision in Thailand, analysis has to start from their national level programmes and relationships with the Thai state. Over time, the Thai Government has demonstrated its capacity to accept foreign aid only when it suits specific domestic interests and to shape any assistance that is provided (Muscat 1990). As explained in Chapter Five, those interests, defined by national level politicians and influential civil servants in the central bureaucracy, only at times match the priorities of donors. The gap between global donor priorities and recipient interests is especially apparent when dealing with peripheral conflict, an area of considerable ethnic and political tension that intensifies the nationalist sentiment affecting how foreign agencies can approach the interface with the state.

UNDP's global policy and operations apply a broad definition of development based on a *"Vision of societies built around people's genuine needs"* (UNDP 1993:95). This stretches well beyond an emphasis on economic growth alone, beyond even the broader notion of socioeconomic progress seen in the Millennium Development Goals. A wider perspective on development is seen in UNDP's Human Development Index and annual Human Development Reports. With a more holistic definition of what constitutes progress, these are intended largely as a check and balance on the perceived economism of the IMF, the World Bank and the regional development banks (UNDP 1990). From an early stage, UNDP incorporated human rights approaches into its overall framework. It has continued to show a strong

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[450] See Ch.5.

policy commitment to reducing poverty as well as responding to social and environmental concerns that have emerged over time.[451]

UNDP also has a more political role, with in-country responsibility for heading up and coordinating the overall UN development effort. It has a higher-level relationship with governments than is the case for most other donors, the UNDP country head often also acting as a UN in-country figurehead. Given that both recipient and donor nations have representational rights at the UN, UNDP not only responds to donor interests but is also more closely linked to the recipient government than is the case for bilateral agencies (Murphy 2006). Partly as a result of this, and partly out of a broader commitment to reduce externally defined aid provision by stressing local 'ownership' of development funds, UNDP tends to prioritize the role of domestic institutions and focus on 'capacity building' measures (Fomerand 2004:180). UNDP provides grants rather than loans and normally offers technical assistance rather than hardware. It is, however, ultimately dependent on donor nations for funding.

UNDP has worked in many different sectors in Thailand, with current programmes on HIV/AIDS prevention and care, environmental management, community development, decentralization, and improving aid partnerships. It has never been a large donor to Thailand: the role of Bangkok as a UN hub for much of Asia is institutionally more significant for UNDP than its country programme.[452] UNDP's annual project budget for Thailand in most years is small, just US$600,000 in 2007, with the country office having to seek extra funding from donors for any additional work.[453] Since Thailand reached middle-income status, UNDP has focused on specific development challenges rather than overall economic development. It has aimed to find ways to promote human rights and equal access to development. Prominent in UNDP's approach, in keeping with its global stance, is a focus on improving the way in which government operates. Recent projects include a 'people's audit', a planning tool that promotes popular feedback on the delivery of public services.[454]

With little funding of its own, UNDP promotes 'harmonized' approaches, emphasizing its role as a coordinator of UN agencies and the wider international development effort in Thailand. Within the UN system, UNDP takes a lead role in planning national approaches through a UN Partnership Framework (or UNPAF).[455] In 2005, UNDP managed what was described as a "*Global first*" by conducting the UN national planning process "*In partnership*" with the Thai Government.[456] UNDP then discussed five separate sectors with different stakeholders including government departments, before finally submitting the plan for approval by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[457]

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[451] The titles of successive Human Development Reports (e.g. UNDP 1990, 1993, 1994, 2001) give an indication of the agendas that the organization aims to set.

[452] Interview with Robert England.

[453] Interview with Sirisupa Kulthanan.

[454] Interview with Sirisupa Kulthanan.

[455] Interview (a) with Tom Beloe.

[456] Interview with Sirisupa Kulthanan. UNDP normally conducts more extensive coordination across all UN agencies operating in a country before discussing the overall framework with the government.

[457] Interview with Sirisupa Kulthanan.

The World Bank, meanwhile, has considerably altered many of its policies since its original commitment to post-war reconstruction and subsequent modernization following World War Two. These changes in many ways reflect dominant concurrent trends in aid provision being adopted more widely, especially among Western donors and most notably the USA, the World Bank's dominant shareholder. The World Bank's policy history is well documented, moving towards a neoliberal view of the state as predominantly predatory during the era of structural adjustment in the 1980s (Caulfield 1996), before adopting positions that combine liberal economic prescriptions with a range of other priorities. The World Bank has embraced a series of wider issues, aiming to integrate for example peacebuilding, environmental sensitivity, gender equality and poverty reduction (Pincus & Winters 2002). From the 1990s on, it followed the wider trend of promoting modified recognition of the importance of an accountable state within a liberal democratic framework, as seen in the concept of 'good governance' (Rich 2002:30). One specific change is the promotion of a role for non-state actors, conceived as civil society, rather than relying on the recipient state as a sole counterpart (Stiglitz 2002).

The World Bank was a major lender and a key influence in Thailand's early development approaches, along with the USA, in the 1950s and 1960s (Muscat 1990). Over time, the World Bank's lending portfolio in Thailand declined. Thailand has been a reluctant borrower from the World Bank since the 1980s (Shivakumar 2005). The agency came close to shutting its country office before the Asian financial crisis began with the crash of the Thai Baht in 1997. Emergency financing agreed during the Asian financial crisis was seen within Thailand as a national humiliation and repaid ahead of schedule. By 2005, the World Bank's loan portfolio was once again minimal, with just the tail end of one transport project remaining (World Bank 2009). The business case for remaining in Thailand was chiefly to keep a presence and maintain government connections, in case opportunities for further lending should open up.[458] World Bank country managers, like other senior donor figures, are usually keen to establish relationships with high-level government representatives in order to build a basis for future work. They often try to meet incoming politicians or officials after a change of administration as rapidly as possible in order to build relationships that could facilitate future loans.[459] The World Bank encouraged the incoming government following elections in December 2007 to launch large infrastructure projects that require major long-term loans (Nation 2007c).

In Thailand, as elsewhere, the World Bank has been a principal target of criticism for promoting economic liberalization as an agent of 'globalization' in the interests of Western capital, despite the agency's various policy permutations over time. Criticism has been angled at the World Bank for pushing a neoliberal consensus alongside the IMF and other donors, funding corrupt governments and damaging the environment (Caulfield 1996, Bello et al. 1998). Longstanding censure from academic and activist quarters is directed at the undemocratic and opaque relationships between recipient governments and donors, including the World Bank and UNDP. Both agencies are still commonly cast as being intermediaries between donor and recipient governments that support existing power structures and

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[458] Interview with Luis Benveniste.
[459] For an open account of such aspects of aid practice in Thailand, see Shivakumar (2005).

further disenfranchise others (Gibbon 1993, Pasuk & Baker 1998). With international aid seen as a supporter of controversial government development schemes in Thailand, the World Bank became a regular target of protesters who saw political value in linking domestic causes with a nationalist agenda opposing external involvement, focusing on the relationship between government and donors. The World Bank was in the firing line for its funding of the Pak Mun Dam in the northeast of Thailand, a government project that damaged local livelihoods more than had been predicted and produced less electricity than expected (TDRI 2000). The Asian Development Bank received similar treatment from civil groups for its funding of the corruption-ridden Klong Dan Wastewater Management Project in Samut Prakan, just outside Bangkok (Bello & Focus on the Global South 2002).

Over decades of operation globally, a range of safeguard policies and advisory groups within UNDP and the World Bank have been established with the aim of ensuring that projects do not unwittingly support human rights violations or lead to environmental degradation. Participation, decentralization, accountability and democratization are all embraced, along with peacebuilding. For example, a review of the Pak Mun Dam project found that it would not have been approved under new World Bank policies introduced after the loan was first agreed (TDRI 2000). For the World Bank in particular, however, many such measures are widely criticized as fig leaves, with the agency's endurance seen as: *"…partly attributable to the institution's ability to successfully politically manage new issues while leaving underlying realities undisturbed"* (Gibbon 1993:35). For example, World Bank support for the US$ 1.45 billion Nam Theun 2 hydropower scheme in Laos went ahead despite what opponents of the project saw as a failure to apply principles previously agreed through the World Commission on Dams (WCD 2000, Imhof 2005). Allegations of infringements of environmental and social safeguards have continued to plague an initiative that critics see as a test-case for the World Bank's ambitions to continue funding large dams and other infrastructure projects in many countries (International Rivers et al. 2010).

8.2   Encountering state institutions

Jonathan Pincus comments that one trend seen since the 1990s – a return to institution-building in World Bank policymaking – has been undermined by weak understanding of the state and of how external aid interacts with recipient institutions (2002). In Thailand, as has been observed elsewhere, the institutionally mediated interactions fundamental to the translation of policy commitments into practice within the World Bank's and other donors' projects are rarely incorporated into agency analysis (Orlandini 2003, Bebbington et al. 2007). As a concessional lending institution, the World Bank is ultimately dependent on recipient states as borrowers. It also relies on donor nations for replenishments of its reserves and for a range of separate trust funds backed by bilateral donors that enable it to offer grants. Trust funds such as the Post-Conflict Fund can be especially significant when supporting peacebuilding, as loans may be inappropriate or governments especially unwilling to borrow (World Bank 2006b).[460] UNDP, meanwhile, relies on donors for its grant funds and on recipients to execute projects. There is pressure on both agencies to build a good relationship with senior

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[460] On the Post-Conflict Fund, see Part 8.5 of this chapter.

government officials and politicians: while the World Bank needs to loan funds, UNDP resident representatives are notoriously concerned over offending their host government for fear of damaging their programmes or having their posting cut short: *"UNDP lives in terror of doing or saying something that will annoy the government."* [461]

It is reasonable to assume that the incentive for donors to satisfy their recipient counterparts is greater in middle-income countries like Thailand whose governments find it easier to turn down concessional financing and therefore have more bargaining power.[462] The need for donors to maintain the support of officials and politicians at senior levels of central government is especially significant for their efforts to address conflict in the Far South of Thailand, where the highly centralized Thai Government is seen by many local inhabitants as the main problem. As is explained in Chapter Five, government actions are perceived by many Malay Muslims in the area to have usurped local political voice, undermined cultural integrity, and stymied economic opportunity. Foreign aid is commonly welcomed on the ground in the Far South if it is considered to act as check and balance on the state rather than a prop to corrupt vested interests.[463]

The previous chapter showed how foreign aid interventions in peripheral areas can play into the prevailing national political economy and associated perceptions of horizontal inequality. Both the World Bank and UNDP encourage newer approaches in efforts to avoid the problems that ensnared projects like IMT-GT. Promotion of local consultation and devolved planning that is more likely to reflect people's interests is sometimes part of World Bank policy statements in Thailand, and often part of UNDP's. These plans are occasionally implemented too. Examples include the World Bank Social Investment Fund (Ammar & Srawooth 2002), and various UNDP 'democratic governance' projects.[464]

However, attempts to promote such alternative ways of working that aim to increase local accountability frequently hit major blockages, stemming from the need of donors to maintain a relationship with the central state as well as resistance at many levels of government. One such example was given in Chapter Six, where American-funded efforts to improve local accountability as far back as the 1960s ran into multiple barriers. Further examples are provided later in this chapter. In Thailand and other countries that are not dependent on aid, efforts to challenge government agencies and political policies often result in programmes simply being cancelled or loans not being drawn. For example, not long after winning the general election in 2001, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra decided that Thailand would no longer accept any foreign aid (ABC 2003). The position was subsequently softened to allow technical assistance but not financial assistance.[465] It shifted again following the fall of Thaksin's government in September 2006 although a decision not to accept loans from the World Bank and the

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[461] Kalyani Menon Sen quoted in Murphy (2006:210).
[462] See for example Morten & Hansen (2008).
[463] See Ch.5 for further explanation. Malay Muslim interviewees in the Far South repeatedly expressed a desire for further external involvement to act as a check and a balance on the Thai state (interviews with NGO Field Workers 1 & 2, Srisompob Jitpiromsri, Zahid Al Yufry & Azman Tohmeena, and Phaisan Toryib).
[464] Interview with Somchai YenSabai.
[465] One such example is ILO's support for reducing child labour in Thailand. See ILO (2006). Information also from interview with ILO Official.

ADB remained and central government bodies still aimed to control closely what forms of aid were accepted.[466]

The Thai Government has rejected external assistance on various occasions. When IMF debt repayment was settled ahead of schedule by Thaksin's government in 2003, according to many commentators this was done for chiefly symbolic purposes, given outstanding government loans from commercial banks at higher interest rates (Connors 2006). A perspective of independence from external powers is central to Thai identity, the country never having been a long-term colony.[467] The earlier IMF-led rescue package in response to the financial crisis of 1997-8 had widely been seen in Thailand as a national humiliation and a loss of sovereignty (Ukrist 2001:24).

Technocratic government officials and politicians took a more pragmatic line than Thaksin on external assistance in Thailand, having long used it to support specific agendas without necessarily sharing aid agencies' policy objectives (Unger 1998:61-62). From this perspective, foreign aid may be regarded as both clumsy and self-interested, with foreign experts often seen as incapable of understanding the way in which Thailand works (Piew 1971).[468] Interviews with Thai civil servants who regularly engaged with aid agencies revealed a broad expectation that external assistance was commonly employed in the self-interest of the provider. With little expectation of adherence to universally established liberal values, foreign aid was rarely distinguished from other aspects of donor countries' foreign policies.[469] For example, one interviewee from the Thai donor liaison agency, TICA, felt that bilateral aid agencies should all be integrated with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of their respective countries in order to enable synergy with each country's wider diplomatic objectives.[470]

Conditions attached to aid may make it less desirable from the recipient government's perspective, including policies designed to protect human rights and the environment, reduce conflict, or promote transparency. While the Government of Thailand reduced borrowing from the ADB and the World Bank from the mid-1990s, it considered further borrowing from both Japan and China, whose loans are not necessarily offered at lower interest rates but come with fewer strings attached in the shape of accountability checks, human rights concerns, or screening for other issues including what donors call 'conflict sensitivity' (Harmer & Cotterell 2005). Japanese and Chinese state concessional lending agencies were played off against each other by Thai government officials in 2007 in order to secure the most advantageous terms for funding expansion of the Bangkok subway system, one US$400 million loan from China being described by a Thai government spokesman as a *"Bargaining chip."* [471]

In summary, the scope of the Thai Government to reject aid means that donors are more likely to be successful in establishing projects by following consensual, pro-state policies. As is explained in

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[466] Interview (a) with TICA Official 1, and interview with Robert England.
[467] Thailand's nation-building discourse repeatedly stresses the absence of a colonial history. This overlooks the Japanese occupation of the country during World War Two.
[468] Information also from interview with Robert England.
[469] Interview with TICA Officials 2 & 3.
[470] Interview (a) with TICA Official 1.
[471] Assistant government spokesperson Chodchai Suwanaporn quoted in The Bangkok Post (2007b).

subsequent sections of this chapter, newer approaches followed by the World Bank and UNDP's promotion of a human rights-based development agenda tend only to work when key brokers in the central Thai Government want them to.

8.3   UNDP and the World Bank's approaches to conflict

Globally, both UNDP and the World Bank have embraced, at least rhetorically, the post-Cold War fusion of development and peacebuilding. For UNDP, this rests primarily within a broader UN framework, linking development with direct engagement in conflict through peacekeeping and negotiation. UNDP manages conflict prevention inputs from its Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery in New York as well as its country offices, with staff focusing on conflict-related programming in many field locations and regional headquarters. A broad policy adherence to a concept of Human Security gives theoretical cohesion between security and development inputs, even if practical application of the concept may be less seamless (UNDP 2009). UNDP's work also includes concerted involvement in dialogue and post-conflict reconstruction and statebuilding, for example coordinating a temporary national government in East Timor from 1999 to 2002. Other, more specific inputs include work on elements of 'DDR' (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) in post-conflict settings and efforts to integrate conflict prevention into its wider programmes at times of ongoing or latent conflict (UNDP 2006).[472]

The World Bank's original full name – the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development – demonstrates its roots in post-war rebuilding. In keeping with its core areas of business, its main peacebuilding role today consists of loans for reconstruction. It is also involved in specialist fields like security sector reform and provides some grants through non-governmental organizations.[473] The World Bank's general policy line is that active engagement is only possible in a post-conflict scenario and not while conflict is ongoing. In active conflicts, involvement is officially reduced to 'watching brief' status (World Bank 1998b:42). Fitting a conventional and misleading expectation of peace as a norm (Howard 2000), this approach gives little space to consider how to engage in situations of long-term conflict that persist alongside otherwise normal development, as occurs with peripheral conflicts.

The World Bank has commissioned extensive research on the causes and effects of war. Predominantly approaching conflict from an economic development perspective, the direction of the research and its findings and recommendations have been the subject of contentious debate (Cramer 2002, Collier et al. 2003). While World Bank approaches to conflict have moved from post-conflict reconstruction to more holistic 'conflict sensitivity' (World Bank 2004), they have been largely premised on contentious notions of state fragility and failure that tend not to view power and conflict as intrinsic to the phenomenon of the state (Hameiri 2007). Issues surrounding the state's relationship with horizontal inequality and other

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[472] See also UNDP (2009), as well as UNDP (1994).
[473] Funding for grants administered by the World Bank is provided by bilateral donors through trust funds (World Bank 2006b). The World Bank does administer grants as well as concessional loans through the International Development Association but this is typically reserved for least developed countries and is not relevant for Thailand or most of the other sites of peripheral conflict listed in Ch.2.

core aspects of peripheral conflict, and the implications of how aid agencies relate to state counterparts, are afforded little space in such approaches.

Barriers against incorporating peacebuilding as a part of aid operations have been especially evident when donors aim to address peripheral conflict in the Far South of Thailand, as is explained below. UNDP and the World Bank have been reluctant to mention conflict in the Far South at all. Their websites reveal very little on conflict-related programming. During interviews conducted for this research, senior and mid-level donor officials were often initially reluctant to talk about any issues relating to the conflict, in cases openly expressing concern over the damage it might do to their relationship with the government.[474]

Both UNDP and the World Bank reacted to the escalation of violent conflict in the Far South from 2004, attempting to start up programmes in keeping with their global policy statements on conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding.[475] In an ongoing conflict with an unrecognized, anonymous and violent opposition confronting a government that is pursuing a predominantly military approach, implementing such policy is not straightforward, as subsequent events showed.

8.4   UNDP's frustrated attempts to address conflict in the Far South

In September 2005, UNDP funded and helped to organize a meeting held at the JB Hotel in Hat Yai, the largest city in southern Thailand. Hat Yai lies just outside the conflict-affected area and has itself suffered from occasional bombings. This particular event was run by the Thai Government's National Research Council and Prince of Songkhla University. The meeting was titled *"Reconciliation and Rehabilitation Process for Local Communities in Southern Thailand".* Its aims were:

1. To seek academic cooperation and find appropriate ways for reconciliation and rehabilitation of local communities in southern Thailand among academic institutions, private businesses, particularly in the trade and tourism industries, and civil society.

2. To gather and assess existing body of knowledge in political science and public administration among leading academics in regards to theories and case studies about an appropriate reconciliation process and mitigation of conflicts in the Muslim South.

3. To learn from views of experts in the areas of political science and public administration on recommended solutions of existing political, security, social and economic challenges in southern Thailand (UNDP 2005).

The event was publicized on UNDP's website as part of a planned series of academic conventions to address issues in the Far South. The press release following the meeting was the last public UNDP statement relating to the conflict. Since then, no further meetings have been announced and the UNDP staff responsible have moved on to work elsewhere. A UNDP representative confirmed that the

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[474] Interviews with UNDP Official 1, World Bank Official 3, and interview (a) with UNDP Offical 4. Over time, better contacts and a greater level of trust enabled interviews to be conducted and information gathered on what donors had attempted to do or were doing.

[475] Interviews with UN Official and World Bank Official 3.

organization had not managed at the time of research to implement this or any other programme addressing conflict issues in Thailand.[476]

The failure to take this or other programmes forward was chiefly a result of Thai Government reticence over external involvement, meaning that even a series of workshops was blocked by officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[477] According to confidential information provided by UN staff, UNDP involvement was resisted still more strongly than that of many other agencies, given the agency's overall coordination role and links with the United Nations at a political level.[478]

The relationship between donors and government in Thailand has never been straightforward. Donor funding – especially from the USA – was originally instrumental in setting up the government's Department for Technical and Economic Cooperation (DTEC), renamed the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) in 2004 and subsequently moved to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (TICA undated). In spite of this, donor projects were rarely able to build access to high levels of decision-making and were typically kept at arm's length. We have already seen that foreign aid has rarely had a direct impact on Thai government policymaking. Many Thai officials have long held a clear idea of how international aid can support their predetermined aims in a technical capacity, rather than expecting it to provide direction (Caldwell 1974:90-92). In addition to these attitudes, a complex language that is difficult to learn provides another barrier against foreign intrusion into Thai institutions. Donor-imposed 'invention of ignorance' (Hobart 1993) is consequently less pronounced than in some other contexts: with cultural, linguistic and bureaucratic walls keeping foreigners out, the capacity of external agencies to push an agenda and deny the relevance of local knowledge or skills is limited (Piew 1971:42).

UNDP, like all donors, requires government approval in order to operate. Grant aid officially needs to be approved through TICA, and concessional loans through NEDA (the Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency) in the Ministry of Finance. Most aid agencies work with a line ministry in addition to TICA or NEDA.[479] The general objective is that TICA and NEDA retain overall control while more downstream issues are left to line ministries, although roles and divisions of responsibilities are not consistent. The extent of higher-level involvement from top officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or at ministerial level also varies depending on the sensitivity of any particular issue.[480]

For UNDP's work in Thailand, TICA is a key government body. UNDP also needs support from another part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of International Organizations.[481] The UN's UNPAF country planning framework, coordinated by UNDP themselves, forms the basis of the approval process with TICA. The 2007-2011 UNPAF was approved in 2006, after a year-long negotiating process.

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[476] Interview with UNDP Official 1.
[477] Interviews with UN Official and UNDP Official 2.
[478] Interview with UN Official. For example, in late 2007 UNDP was involved in sending a team of experts to brief senior UN diplomats in New York on the situation in the Far South of Thailand.
[479] Interview (a) with TICA Official 1.
[480] Interviews with UN Official and World Bank Official 3.
[481] Interview with UN Official.

Conflict-related issues do not figure in the plan, with one UNDP staff member stating that it *"…did not touch on southern issues at all."* [482]

The main approval process still leaves the separate and time-consuming task of building and maintaining a functioning relationship with the line ministry or agency responsible for project implementation or oversight, although this process can at times be partially avoided by working through non-governmental channels. For UNDP, with a broad focus on governance, the relevant counterpart is often a section of the highly centralized and conservative Ministry of the Interior. This complicates UNDP's work: civil servants in sectoral ministries in fields like health or education are often more willing to cooperate with donors. [483]

Civil servants in TICA were more positive about including the conflict area within national approaches than on approaching it in isolation. [484] This stance is in line with the government's desire to ensure that the area is fully considered part of the Thai state. Even when extending national programmes to the Far South, however, barriers were encountered. One UNDP sector specialist said that TICA blocked approaches to meet local government counterparts in the conflict-affected provinces, frustrating efforts to adapt programming to specific needs in the area. [485] UNDP was effectively restricted to rolling out uniform national models – an approach that has in the past been counterproductive given a need to address the specificity of the current crisis as well as the Far South's specific society and culture. [486]

Bypassing government entirely was not an option UNDP considered: *"We have to work with government or we cannot get involved."* [487] UNDP feels insufficiently confident of its standing with the Thai Government to want to push hard on controversial issues. UNDP staff felt that their organization does not aim to incorporate conflict issues into wider approaches, with one adviser expressing a fear for their general presence in the country: *"We are welcomed at this stage, but cannot mention conflict."* [488]

In 2006-2007, UNDP staff tried to promote a shared multi-agency UN plan for addressing relevant conflict issues, including a round of internal planning and participation across UN agencies. A common approach would have shared the relative success of some other UN agencies, notably Unicef, in setting up programmes. The idea did not come to fruition and in hindsight staff informally accepted that it was probably a mistake to try. [489] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs apparently received the plan and then simply failed to respond. [490] Other UN agencies informally criticized the plan as a rapidly designed project wish list conceived by UNDP's sectoral planners, with one interviewee feeling that it insufficiently

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[482] Interview with UNDP Official 2.
[483] Interview with UNDP Official 3, and interview (a) with UNDP Official 4.
[484] Interview with TICA Officials 2 & 3.
[485] Interview with UNDP Official 1.
[486] Ibid.
[487] Interview (a) with UNDP Official 4.
[488] Interview with UNDP Official 5.
[489] Interview with UN Official, and interview (b) with UNDP Official 4.
[490] Interview with Unicef Project Officer 1.

considered both central government sensitivities and the specific challenges of the conflict-affected area.[491]

UNDP's relative advantage at common planning and partnership with government given its elevated position within the UN system in comparison with technical agencies like UNFPA and UNICEF did not help it find a niche. A lack of funds has also hindered UNDP's efforts, given little success at sourcing donor contributions.[492] UNDP continued to try to find an entry point: in 2008, in-house specialists with experience of other conflict situations convened to redesign their overall approach. They considered whether it might be possible to form stronger alliances with other government ministries, given failure to make headway with their longstanding counterparts in the Ministry of the Interior. No immediate progress was forthcoming from this initiative, either.[493]

8.5   The World Bank's blocked efforts: interface barriers and practical constraints

The World Bank's experience has many parallels with UNDP. Interviews with World Bank staff about their work regularly included the phrase *"The government invited us to..."*, leaving it unclear how the invitation arose. Accordingly, I was told near the start of one interview with a World Bank staff member that they had been 'invited' by the Ministry of the Interior's Community Development Department in 2005-6 to commence a programme of grant support with resources from the World Bank's global Post-Conflict Fund.[494] This Fund was set up in 1997 in recognition of the limitations of normal sources of World Bank finance in conflict situations. It is designed to be a flexible source of funding to support planning, piloting and analysis of new activities. Recipients can include governments, non-governmental bodies, or international organizations. It is not a large fund in comparison with most World Bank loan arrangements, amounting to an annual average of just over US$10 million to be divided between ten to twenty grants per year (World Bank 2006b). Post-Conflict Fund policy focuses attention on the restoration of the lives and livelihoods of war-affected populations. According to the World Bank, the fund *"…has often 'tested the limits' of Bank operational procedures and ventured into subjects that are innovative for the Bank and are adding to state-of-the-art knowledge"* (2002).

In 2006-2007, the Post-Conflict Fund approved a request from the World Bank's Thailand office to support initial background work on understanding community level dynamics and relationships between communities and public officials in the Far South.[495] With an apparent invitation from the government, and funding secured, the country office assigned staff with high-level contacts and relevant experience to the new project. Using Post-Conflict Fund resources, the office then developed a programme for selected institutions within Thailand to build a body of research and devise a set of practical measures that could be implemented.[496] Always concerned over government sensitivities, the office secured the

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[491] Interview with UNFPA Official.
[492] Interview (a) with UNDP Official 4.
[493] Interview with UNDP Official 3, and interview (b) with UNDP Official 4.
[494] Interview with World Bank Official 3.
[495] Ibid.
[496] Ibid.

involvement of respected academics at Chulalongkorn, Thammasat and Mahidol Universities in or near Bangkok for initial studies costing some US$200,000. A subsequent programme expected to flow from these initial steps was to be in the region of US$1 million.[497]

The inital aim of the programme was to exchange Thai and international experiences of government engagement at the community level.[498] The wider goals were both to reduce the perceived distance between the state and people in the conflict area and to improve appropriate service provision. The final shape of the programme was not defined, with the research stage acting as an ongoing planning process. Research was designed to build the involvement of key figures as well as to produce a relevant approach. In keeping with many organizations that have experience of promoting social issues in Thailand, World Bank officials stressed the need to support locally defined activities and objectives rather than impose external planning.[499]

With staff in place, funding available, and the scope to design a project through the kind of sensitive and flexible process that most development experts recommend, the signs were good. But in late 2006 a bloodless military coup in Thailand overthrew a government already incapacitated through political protest, and planning came to a halt. As outlined in Chapter Five, a military-led interim government remained in place until the end of 2007, and future World Bank initiatives were put on ice. As interviews were being conducted in late 2007 and early 2008, World Bank staff were hoping that they would be invited by the government to start their programme once more.[500]

The relationship between a major donor like the World Bank and the government is more complex than one of invitations and cancellations. In order to re-start the programme, the World Bank would have needed to re-enter a series of negotiations with various government representatives.[501] The World Bank and other concessional lending institutions engage primarily with the Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (NEDA), under the Ministry of Finance.[502] Despite the huge misfit between the small grant-funded peacebuilding programme described above and the Ministry of Finance's interests, the same contacts were still paramount. The World Bank coordinator stated: *"We have to report to NEDA whatever we do."* [503]

Like other donors, the World Bank also had to engage with different line ministry counterparts depending on the sectoral focus of each project (in this case the Ministry of the Interior), an ongoing relationship that at significant points may involve the minister or high-level civil servants.[504] More junior staff were involved on a day-to-day basis.[505] Although overall government policy might have been to

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[497] Interviews with World Bank Official 3 and Social Sector Consultant.
[498] Interviews with World Bank Official 3 and Patrick Barron.
[499] Ibid.
[500] Ibid.
[501] Interview (a) with World Bank Sector Specialist 2.
[502] Interviews with World Bank Official 3 and UN Official.
[503] Interview with World Bank Official 3. Discussions with other World Bank staff in Vietnam, Indonesia and Sri Lanka revealed similar views and trends.
[504] Interview with UN Official.
[505] Interview with Luis Benveniste.

keep foreign governments and organizations out of internal political conflicts, many line ministries, agencies and local authorities saw the situation differently – and, depending on the domestic political climate, often had some leeway to engage with donors.[506]

Even where the central bodies TICA and NEDA were reluctant to offer support, scope existed for foreign-funded technical assistance programmes in sectors where the World Bank had traditionally been involved and still maintained a presence – in education, for example.[507] These conventional development sectors were less politically controversial. They offered softer entry points given the potential for support from within at least some parts of the government line ministry concerned. Approaches in these sectors might have enabled the World Bank to engage in issues relating to peacebuilding in the Far South despite a change of government – as some Group Three agencies have managed.[508] However, as I explain below, such potential opportunities were not taken up owing more to barriers within the World Bank than resistance from government.

World Bank staff with cross-sectoral remits saw benefits in coordinating across different fields of expertise within their country programmes in order to take advantage of such sector-specific opportunities. One specialist complained: *"It would be good if we could work as a team."* [509] However, even if such internal coordination were possible, further internal barriers emerged. Another World Bank specialist felt that such collaboration would not in any case be a good idea, since it risked an *"Overly enthusiastic response"*:[510] a desire to set up projects as fast as possible through deploying short-term foreign consultants who need to be deterred from doing more damage than good, given a lack of understanding of local context.[511]

8.6 Rhetoric and reality

This practical reality sits uneasily next to policy statements over holistic approaches to conflict sensitivity. At a global policy level, UNDP and the World Bank have been at the forefront of donor efforts to recognize the significance of conflict, criticizing failure to consider the effect of their support on tensions that lead to violence. One report comments:

> *Because education, especially primary, is seen as an unambiguous public good, development agencies tend to focus on increasing coverage and/or quality without considering that education may exacerbate conflict. The education sector is rarely an innocent bystander in societies undergoing wrenching political and social turmoil—it is often an active player in the conflict, manipulated by the state or grievance-driven groups around issues such as the language of instruction, the content of curriculum and textbooks, and ethnic or geographic access [...] Applying a conflict assessment framework that carefully looks at the role of the*

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[506] Interviews with UN Official, ILO Official, and UNFPA Official. For an example of a donor project working and negotiating closely with a line ministry see ILO (2006b).
[507] Interview with Luis Benveniste.
[508] See Ch.8.
[509] Interview with Social Sector Consultant.
[510] Interview with World Bank Official 3.
[511] Interview with World Bank Official 3. Reference can be made to the use of foreign consultants in ADB's support for IMT-GT (see Ch.6). Poor coordination, dysfunctional operating practices, and pursuit of narrow technical sectoral approaches are not unique to Thailand. See for example Porter, Allen & Thompson (1991), Mosse (2005).

education system as part of the problem as well as the solution would better inform donor interventions in support of education access in conflict-affected countries (World Bank 2004:22).

This positive statement may be the view of conflict experts, but is not necessarily adopted by education sector specialists, managers, or project partners. Indeed, outside the Post-Conflict Fund initiative, there appeared to be little awareness of conflict as an issue for the World Bank in Thailand. Despite a long history of lending for education in Thailand, World Bank reviews and evaluations of the sector over many years have made little specific reference to the different context of the Far South. Issues including language of instruction, incorporation of Islamic schools into the state sector, the role of religion in schools, and inadequate numbers and calibre of local Malay Muslim teaching staff, are all passed over (World Bank 1998; 2006c).

Although by 2005 the World Bank was no longer providing new loans to the education sector in Thailand, it maintained a relationship with the Ministry of Education and funded analytical policy research.[512] The 2006 issue of the World Bank's Thailand Social Monitor focused entirely on secondary education in an impressively detailed 95-page analysis that addresses issues of equity and quality. Despite the level of detail, it makes no mention at all of challenges in the Far South such as major deficits in secondary level achievement as well as the broader role of education in the conflict.[513] The fact that efforts to extend compulsory education from six to nine years were cynically regarded by some Malay Muslims as another element of imposed assimilation (Madmarn 2002:79) passed the authors by, despite their focus on equity. Language issues, central to conflict problems as well as to low educational achievement in the Far South, are mentioned in the report only with regard to migrant children from other countries (mostly Burma) rather than those born as Thai citizens. The 2006 report states that: *"Language of instruction has also been a problem as alien children may not be fluent in Thai."* The subtext is a false assumption that all Thai children speak fluent Thai. Many Malay Muslim children struggle to learn Thai at school as other languages are spoken at home (Unicef 2006:39, Liow 2009:107).

One explanation for the World Bank's oversight of education problems in the Far South might be that the issue was simply too politically sensitive to publish in any report. The Government of Thailand had been keeping international agencies away from such issues for decades. Interviews with World Bank sectoral staff in Bangkok (and in other recipient countries) repeatedly showed that they only occasionally regarded conflict as a development issue even if some of their colleagues were trying to address it. One interviewee regarded conflict as an issue for political resolution rather than development: *"For us, conflict is a subtext, no more."* As far as internal conflicts are concerned, the adviser stated directly: *"We do not tackle them."* [514]

A similar picture emerged from the perspective of a recipient of World Bank funding in Thailand. Gothom Arya, an academic and former senator who has spoken out in favour of greater autonomy for the Far South, accepted World Bank support for the peace research institute that he directs at Mahidol

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[512] Interview with Luis Benveniste.
[513] See Liow (2009) on education in the Far South.
[514] Interview with World Bank Sector Specialist 1.

University. His institute provided initial analysis and organized wider consultation before the Post-Conflict Fund project on community-government relations was suspended. Gothom felt that the initiative had real potential to support local groups advocating for peace and related policy changes. Yet at the same time he felt that the World Bank is best seen as a business, siding with whoever would allow it to operate. Inevitably, it takes mainstream positions that lead to hypocrisy on issues like intellectual property, where it will defend Western donor interests. In Gothom's view, the World Bank is: *"Sometimes on different sides, sometimes cooperating. It's the mainstream, it won't disappear."* [515]

In Gothom's experience, the World Bank's flexible properties were underpinned by a need to ensure that its most influential shareholders are content. Its role extended only as far as such a position allows, with no expectation that policy commitments to peacebuilding (or indeed many other universal goals) significantly affect donor policy and practice.

To summarize, the way in which the World Bank operated as a result of its mixed priorities, working structure, and interface with central government institutions tended to hinder the agency's scope to address conflict in the Far South. The World Bank was not unique among donors in this regard. Despite its links with wider UN pursuit of peacebuilding and a more holistic view of development, UNDP demonstrated similar internal sectoral divisions, with only a small minority of staff incentivized to take forward peacebuilding as an objective. Many UNDP staff interviewed in their Bangkok office appeared to have little concern for or awareness of the peacebuilding issues that colleagues in a different section of the same office were struggling to pursue. [516]

We have seen that the modus operandi of both aid agencies, including sectoral divisions and project-based funding, made alternative approaches difficult to realize in practice in the context of the Far South of Thailand. The influence of the central government institutions that partner their operations meant that options for engagement were often already heavily circumscribed, with the World Bank and UNDP needing good relations with the government in order to operate. One World Bank interviewee stated: *"That's by definition. Our core partner is the central state. At best we can have a 'do no harm' policy. Everything we do has to be approved by the central state."* [517]

8.7   Contemporary aid trends: problems with partnerships

Although Thailand is no longer directly relevant to global efforts to reduce extreme poverty given its middle-income status, most development agencies working there placed strong emphasis on the notion of 'partnership' with the Thai Government. It was referred to regularly in donor literature and representatives of donors including the World Bank and UNDP were keen to press the point without prompting in interviews undertaken for this research. [518] UNDP's website refers to the *"Mutual Thailand-UNDP Partnership"* (2009b), while the World Bank describes its work with the Thai Government as a

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[515] Interview with Gothom Arya.
[516] Interviews with UNDP Officials 1, 2, & 3.
[517] Interview with World Bank Sector Specialist 1.
[518] Emphasis of 'partnerships' as a basis for programmes was a repeated theme of interviews (Interviews with UNDP Official 1, World Bank Sector Specialist 1, and others).

"True development partnership" (2009b). Given this common use of the language of partnerships and the implications for donors working with a government that may be pursuing policies counter to their own stated objectives on peacebuilding, it is worth considering the issue in greater detail.

UNDP places especially strong emphasis on relations with recipient governments. It has switched to 'national execution' of its programmes wherever possible, handing project management responsibilities over to recipient authorities, usually a government agency (Ssekandi & Lynne Johnson 2000). UNDP is also at the forefront of contemporary partnership approaches and in Thailand it used its role in promoting the UN's global Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to build a closer relationship with government.[519] TICA and other government bodies also emphasized the notion of partnership during interviews.[520] Global promotion of the MDGs coincided with former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's populist poverty eradication campaign, creating common ground with UNDP and leading to the creation of 'Thailand MDGs' in keeping with principles of national ownership.[521] Based around the MDGs themselves, the government and UNDP then set higher 'Thailand MDG Plus' targets, in recognition of Thailand's relatively advanced development status (NESDB 2005).

UNDP's partnership with Thaksin's administration cannot be separated from Thailand's wider divisive political context, with Thaksin himself at the centre. The establishment of MDG Plus targets received criticism from NGO leaders who said that the monitoring data were rigged to support Thaksin's self-promoting claims around poverty elimination.[522] UNDP staff informally accepted that the targets were unrealistic and politically motivated.[523] It was largely in tacit recognition of this that UNDP started a small project to help improve the capacity of their main high-level Thai partner, the National Economic and Social Development Board, to collate and interpret statistics impartially.[524] Criticism was then levelled by Unicef at the use of simplistic targets, the risk being that they reduced efforts to understand complex reasons behind social problems, promoting uniform nationwide responses instead.[525] This was especially significant for the Far South, given the region's unique context within Thailand and the need for political solutions rather than quantifiable goal-setting.

Even more significant were the controversial policies of Thaksin's government. Thaksin promoted high-profile pro-poor schemes yet at the same time ignored or intentionally undermined most of the principles of governance that many donors and NGOs promoted.[526] UNDP was only able to partner Thaksin's approach to poverty reduction by keeping its institutional gaze averted from what was happening elsewhere. Thaksin bungled the policy response to conflict in the Far South. He cancelled democratic decentralization in preference for directly appointed provincial governors, bypassed

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[519] Interview with UNDP Official 5.
[520] Interview with TICA Officials 2 & 3.
[521] Interview with UNDP Official 5.
[522] Interviews with Jon Ungpakorn and UNDP Official 5.
[523] Interview with UNDP Official 5.
[524] Interview (a) with UNDP Official 4.
[525] Unicef (2006) criticizes the national targets that UNDP was promoting.
[526] See Pasuk & Baker (2004) as one of many sources on Thaksin's methods of governance. This is a common paradox, given the ungrounded normative basis of much donor governance policy. See for example Unsworth et al. (2010).

constitutional checks and balances on executive authority, and committed widespread human rights abuses (McCargo & Ukrist 2005). Thaksin's development policies and top-down approaches to governance may have helped Thailand towards 'MDG Plus' goals, but through an apolitical 'partnership' UNDP concurrently lent support to a government pursuing policies that were contrary to UNDP's own stated policies on conflict reduction and human rights and had disastrous consequences for the Far South.[527]

As well as risking a dangerously naive view of consensual development based around common goals, the notion of partnership also supported a pretence that aid was no longer infused with political self-interest on the part of donor and recipient (Baaz 2005). To demonstrate this, one can look at how the Thai government agencies that run Thailand's own foreign aid projects as well as channelling in-flows of external assistance, NEDA and TICA, themselves used notions of partnerships. Thaksin decided during his first term as prime minister that Thailand should emerge as an important contributor to the UN's Global Partnership for Development by setting up its own foreign aid programme (United Nations & Government of Thailand 2004). The Thai Government began by concentrating initially on the neighbouring states of Burma, Laos and Cambodia, before extending to other Asian and African nations. It turned to donors to help it strengthen its own programme, receiving technical support from France, Japan, the UN and elsewhere for 'trilateral' partnership projects in other recipient countries (TICA 2009).

Thailand's own foreign aid programme has been used as a means to achieve foreign and domestic policy objectives. Presented using the global language of partnerships, projects including support for fish farming in Mozambique and forestry in West Africa respond to specific Thai business interests.[528] Programmes of cooperation nearer home, in neighbouring Cambodia, Laos and Burma, are still more closely aligned around Thai interests. For example, NEDA offered loan funding for road improvements in Cambodia that afford better access to and from Thailand (NEDA 2009). This pragmatic approach mirrors the aid programmes of many other European, North American and Asian donors: TICA is partly modelled on the South Korean official aid agency KICA, which was in turn influenced by Japanese JICA.[529]

As has already been discussed earlier in this chapter, Thai officials expected that Western donors' programmes were similarly designed around commercial or diplomatic self-interest and they entered into partnerships accordingly. There is little to suggest that the advent of a new form of aid 'partnership' might have involved relinquishing control or establishing shared goals that reduce self-interested approches unless common ground already existed. Indeed, at the same time as supporting the principles of the UN's Global Partnership for Development, Thailand's own external aid programme clearly promoted Thai interests abroad first and foremost (TICA undated).

As a comparison, Japanese aid agencies adopt a different, counterfactual perspective. Notions of an 'ownership dilemma' are not new to Japanese or other observers, with discussion of partnership around

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[527] See McCargo (2008:116 & 184).
[528] Interview (a) with TICA Official 1.
[529] Interview with French Aid Programme Officer. This interviewee worked on French-funded programmes supporting the establishment of TICA.

the MDGs seen as a continuation of an old theme (Anuman 2005:259).[530] In considering the legacy of Japanese lending for industrial development in Thailand, Shimomura finds that respect for domestic sovereignty promoted more effective aid projects. It did so by enabling government planners and politicians to find a viable way through local political struggles. By contrast, more rigid plans promoted by the World Bank met with failure (2008). Shimomura sees the common donor partnerships promoted by the UN and Western donors as implying more donor-led selectivity: *"...this is a key question for a developing country with any ambition to explore ideas of its own that are not in accordance with the conventional wisdom of major donors"* (2008:174).

An expectation that shared goals within common partnerships can define a consensual aid relationship may, in contexts where donors are strong and governments weak, further support donor control over recipient governments – as Shimomura says. In Thailand however, where donors were typically relatively weak and government strong, the opposite was more likely to emerge. While recognizing the rights of a legitimate government to domestic sovereignty, continued donor support for a partnership agenda undermined donors' limited efforts to address peripheral conflict in the Far South by tying them into tight relationships with a limited number of central state institutions. One recent study of how donor funded projects managed to achieve the domestic buy-in necessary for sustainable impact in Thailand concludes with a point raised in Chapter Three of this thesis – that many different approaches to relations between donors and recipients are possible, depending on local conditions and project attributes (Siriporn & Euamporn 2008). The aid partnership approach followed by the World Bank, UNDP and others appeared to take donors addressing issues in the Far South of Thailand away from the more considered interface management that could have helped to establish programmes addressing controversial fields, playing instead to a lowest common denominator.

8.8   Chapter conclusion

This chapter has addressed the ways in which concern for protecting sovereignty affects Thai Government responses to donor assistance. This is in the context of dominant forms of Thai nationalism that are relevant to the emergence and perpetuation of violent conflict in the Far South, as was explained in earlier chapters. As well as limiting the scope for a domestic political solution to the conflict, strong fear of perceived threats to an imagined Thai nation (Thongchai 1994) also appeared to hinder the scope for donors to play a role in promoting or supporting efforts to build peace.

At the time of research, the global peacebuilding policies of UNDP and the World Bank had not led to any concrete action addressing conflict in the Far South of Thailand. Both agencies had experienced setbacks, for two reasons: first, the Thai Government was reluctant to allow them to work on peacebuilding; and second, the aid agencies themselves were not sufficiently committed when faced with government resistance, retaining instead their reliance on established relationships with national state institutions in delivering aid programmes. At the same time as trying to work on conflict, other

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[530] Interviews with JICA Programme Officer, and JBIC Programme Officer. Informal discussions with Japanese aid officials in Bangkok, May 2008, repeated this perspective.

work such as the promotion of Millennium Development Goals and research in the education sector continued unaffected through close 'partnerships' with state institutions. Little regard appears to have been paid to the overall impact of UNDP's or the World Bank's country programmes on the causes and dynamics of peripheral conflict in the Far South.

This experience demonstrates that the scope for international involvement to promote a just peace is often limited for reasons that go beyond simple ignorance or a lack of local understanding on the part of donors. Their inability to achieve more stems in this case both from insufficient international commitment and a perennial issue of state sovereignty. In this regard, the significant issue is not whether international policies are more or less blind than domestic policies when it comes to addressing horizontal inequalities,[531] but more the importance of the interface between both donor and recipient that can lead to peripheral conflicts being overlooked. For the aid agencies considered here, it follows that in the absence of recipient government cooperation the conflict-aware aid policies that are now commonplace may not on their own enable implementation unless accompanied by shifts in the orientation of aid agencies in order to negotiate the interface with recipient state institutions more effectively. The steps required to move beyond this impasse are examined more closely in the next chapter.

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[531] See Stewart et al. (2008:297).

Chapter Nine   Islands of Donor-Funded Peacebuilding

As already outlined in Chapter Six, a minority of aid agencies have managed to implement programmes around peacebuilding objectives in the Far South, spending relatively small budgets in the process. They comprise the third group in this study. Two contrasting donors from this group, Unicef and The Asia Foundation (TAF), are selected here in order to understand better why such agencies work on peacebuilding and how they manage to do so. This chapter explores both agencies' motivations for working on conflict. It considers how they negotiated the interface with government counterparts and oversight bodies and the actual practice of establishing and implementing interventions.

Earlier chapters showed that some of the priorities of some donors – for example, tackling problems that minority groups have in accessing government services, addressing human rights, and promoting local level accountability – are relevant to addressing peripheral conflicts. While several agencies which espouse these values, such as UNDP, failed to operationalize them to address problems in the Far South of Thailand, this chapter provides evidence to demonstrate that other agencies have managed to turn such policy commitments into practice. Unicef and TAF were, at the time of writing, the two international agencies with the most comprehensive programmes relating to peacebuilding in the Far South.[532] As is explained below, Unicef concentrated its engagement in Thailand on making services more relevant to the needs of children and parents, working with government departments and NGOs. TAF worked in a similar way on education issues in the Far South and also took on more political concerns, including promoting thinking about political solutions to unrest and building civil networks. In this chapter, specific initiatives of both agencies are investigated to provide detail on why these two agencies have established programmes addressing conflict in the Far South while most other agencies did not.

9.1   Background to Unicef and The Asia Foundation

Unicef is rarely considered to be a cutting-edge or risk-taking organization. It has maintained a focus on neutral humanitarian support and child welfare since its formation as an agency of the United Nations just after the Second World War. It aims to remain apolitical, funding essential medical services where government has failed and contributing to global campaigns to promote mass vaccination, install clean water and sanitation facilities, and reduce infectious diseases (Egger 1986, Black 1996). Its annual budget is around US$3 billion (Unicef 2008).

Unicef proudly states that it is: *"...supported entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, foundations, corporations, non-governmental organizations and governments."* [533] It receives no share of national standing contributions to the UN and raises considerable sums from public contributions (Unicef 2008b:33). Well over half of the funds for Unicef's Thailand programme is donated by the Thai

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[532] Access to staff and availability of information made both case studies viable.
[533] This statement on funding sources is often written at the end of Unicef press releases. It is not inaccurate, although the majority of funding comes from governments rather than other sources.

public and Thai businesses.[534] This image of independent charity tells only part of the story, however. The most important single source of funds for Unicef globally has always been the US Government, followed by other donor governments, making it less fully independent than its publicity suggests.[535]

As well as the compromises that come with official sources of funding, Unicef's close relations with recipient governments cast it in a consensual light at the national level. Although often funding non-governmental organizations, its global mode of operation is to work alongside recipient governments in support of the UN's Millennium Development Goals. These attributes lead some academics and activists to criticize Unicef's approach. One strong critic, Vanessa Pupavac, sees its publicity-heavy approach, appealing to universal emotions through focusing on children, as a developmental facade justifying approaches that ultimately work to promote broader political and economic structures of exploitation. Its work in humanitarian emergencies and conflict environments has been similarly criticized (Pupavac 2002).

Unicef is unquestionably a marginal political player when considering how international bodies and powerful governments approach core political or economic issues, including conflicts and even decisions over humanitarian responses. But a negative view of Unicef that associates it with self-interested foreign policies of donor nations misses out various factors and in doing so risks creating a simplistic picture of the agency. Unicef's strong track record of major contributions toward reducing child poverty in developing countries over many decades should not be ignored (Black 1996). In addition to providing services, Unicef has also actively advocated for policy change on many issues, using research and reports such as its *State of The World's Children* publications to push for changes that support child welfare and uphold child rights. In the 1980s, Unicef drew attention to the negative impact of structural adjustment policies on the poor (Cornea et al. 1987). Since then, it has used child rights as a basis for advocacy on a range of issues, having adopted an overall approach based around the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Jonsson 2005).

Unicef's focus on rights, and a long-term humanitarian tradition of supporting the excluded as well as working with conflict-affected children, is reflected in its programmes across Thailand. These aspects of its purpose bring conflict and associated horizontal inequalities in the Far South of Thailand to Unicef's attention. Unicef's Thailand office increasingly concentrates on marginalized, peripheral groups: Burmese and other migrant workers and their families, ethnic minorities in the north, and Malay Muslims in the south. As is shown in this chapter, interviews with Unicef staff including senior managers and advisers demonstrated an outlook often rests outside conventional universal socioeconomic development thinking, prioritizing concern for equality and justice and emphasizing understanding local context through situational analysis and other research.[536] This wider institutional background enabled Unicef to take the conflict in the Far South seriously within its remit for children's development as part

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[534] Interview (b) with Communications Specialist.
[535] Unicef's Executive Director has been an American since the agency's inception in 1946. The US Administration proposes candidates, typically from a US public service background, to the UN secretary general (Lynch 2005).
[536] Information is drawn from interviews with seven Unicef Thailand staff members in Bangkok, 2007-2008.

of its overall approach for Thailand.[537]

Much the same could be said of UNDP, whose efforts to engage on issues relating to the Far South were not successful, as the last chapter explained. Unlike UNDP, however, Unicef has managed to build several active programmes, all of which aim to support Malay Muslim interests and tackle structural horizontal inequalities that underpin the conflict. Unicef has no long track record of working in the Far South, having only started planning specific programmes there from 2003-4.[538] Since then, it has developed associations with government agencies and non-governmental groups without incurring the wrath of more conservative and nationalistic figures within the Thai Government who blocked the efforts of other donors including the World Bank and UNDP. As this chapter explains, by integrating the Far South into existing sectors of activity within national plans, Unicef managed to build a considerable programme covering several sectors in a fairly short time.

Unicef's work in the Far South covers various fields: juvenile justice (*"Improved systems and procedures for children and young people in conflict with the law"*); HIV/AIDS prevention (*"Strengthening capacity of youth peer leaders"*); pre-school (*"Equipping of early learning centres and training of caregivers and parents"*); and mainstream education. This last category includes interventions addressing specific peacebuilding issues: improving the quality of teacher learning centres to address the lack of skilled local Malay Muslim teachers in the area, introduction of bilingual language instruction into primary schools, and improving maths, English and science teaching in religious schools.[539] Unicef staff expect to support further interventions for the Far South in future.[540]

Unicef's ability to manage a relationship with central government institutions has been critical to turning ideas into action, as this chapter explains. As with most other donors in Thailand, Unicef works to national plans agreed with the government. The agency has had an ongoing presence in the country since 1949 (Unicef undated (b)), with an annual budget for Thailand as a whole of around US$5 million.[541] As part of the UN family, Unicef has the additional task of keeping to the UN's overall Partnership Framework for Thailand (United Nations and Government of Thailand 2006), working within the conventional barriers of sovereignty that hampered UNDP's efforts to work on conflict in the Far South. Unicef has a fairly large office in Bangkok, with some forty professional staff.[542] The agency maintains a consensual image in the country, with the respected establishment figure of former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun as its 'goodwill ambassador'. Within Thailand, Unicef is perhaps best known to the public at large through its domestic fundraising efforts and for its campaigns to encourage breast-feeding.

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[537] Interview with Andrew Morris.
[538] Ibid.
[539] Information and quotations from informal table listing ongoing UN projects in the five Southernmost Thai provinces reported by UN agencies and compiled by UNDP in 2007.
[540] Interviews with Andrew Morris, Unicef Project Officer 1, and Unicef Project Officer 2.
[541] Interview with Unicef Sector Specialist.
[542] Interview with Andrew Morris.

The causes, strengths and weaknesses of Unicef's involvement in the Far South are explored through this chapter. To summarize, Unicef plays an astute game, maintaining a good relationship with critical gatekeepers in the central government and yet focusing on issues of minority rights and associated policy changes that at face value are potentially threatening to the state. This is achieved through careful management and through commissioning research that justifies a focus on specific groups. Various potential flaws in Unicef's programme and approach are also addressed later in the chapter.

TAF, the second agency considered here, diverges further from a conventional view of socioeconomic development. It is a more overtly politicized body, set up around politically defined as well as socioeconomic goals that brought it closer to conflict issues in the Far South from an early stage of its work in Thailand. Its head office has been based in San Francisco since it was first created in the 1950s.[543] It is a far smaller body than Unicef, with a global annual budget of some US$120 million. This is shared across twenty developing and developed Asian countries (TAF undated).

Rather than being based around ostensibly apolitical poverty reduction or humanitarian aims, TAF's ongoing interventions across Asia are more openly political:

> *The Asia Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to the development of a peaceful, prosperous, just, and open Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation supports programs in Asia that help improve governance, law, and civil society; women's empowerment; economic reform and development; and international relations* (TAF undated).

Various elements combine to increase TAF's scope to address conflict, including the stress placed on peace as an aim. It is non-governmental, giving it more freedom to operate outside the constraints of bilateral or multilateral agencies. Its relatively small budget means it need rely less on recipient governments, often the only viable channels for disbursing large amounts rapidly. Its overall vision is one not only of accelerating development but of improving how it takes place. The emphasis on justice as well as peace is significant in this regard. TAF staff, when talking privately and off-the-record, are often highly critical of government institutions, policies, and their impact on the causes and dynamics of conflict.

TAF has not always enjoyed a reputation as a non-governmental body. Since the 1960s, it has moved away from one of its original funding sources, the CIA. With the end of the end of the Cold War it has become even less focused on directly extending American interests (Shelley 2005:116). It is still largely dependent on US Government financing, through core contributions and specific project grants from USAID as well as other parts of the US Government.[544] TAF also retains some association with American political interests: the head from 2004 to 2011, Douglas Bereuter, was a former Republican senator. Recent success in raising sponsorship from other donor nations, multilaterals, and private sources have provided some balance.[545]

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[543] Interview (c) with Tom Parks.
[544] Interview with Anthea Mulakala.
[545] Ibid.

From the perspective of peripheral conflict, TAF has addressed highly relevant issues in various countries. A strong emphasis is placed on understanding *"Drivers of conflict"* through *"Rigorous, objective analysis"* (TAF 2008). TAF country programmes reflect this approach, often overtly recognizing the significance of identity and ethnic difference both to conflict dynamics and to government policymaking. This fits many of the recommendations made by analysts of aid-related interventions in horizontal inequalities and ethnic aspects of conflict (Hettne 1993, Uvin 1998, Stewart 2009). Across the region, TAF has implemented programmes addressing horizontal inequalities, development and justice. For example, it has promoted local level government consultations with Muslim mass-based organizations in Indonesia, and expanded access to the legal system and broadened the use of the Tamil language among police and officials in north and east Sri Lanka (TAF 2007). A stress on supporting accountable decentralization features prominently in TAF's programmes in conflict-affected areas. It also works more directly to support peace negotiations where there is space to do so (TAF 2009b).

TAF and Unicef both have strong links with the USA, as seen in the locations of their headquarters, their funding streams, and the nationaliy of their most senior staff. Both agencies claim to distance themselves from the more security-led and otherwise self-interested aspects of foreign policy, operating instead from a standpoint of justice and human rights and through context-specific, evidence-based responses. TAF aims to maintain an independent stance, reducing the likelihood of aligning with more controversial areas of donor funding or losing control of its programmes and ending up merely as a delivery mechanism for others. It has on occasion chosen not to tender for contracts from USAID despite being well positioned to do so, given concern about overly tight donor management control. TAF argues that in this way it also avoids the negative aspects of being associated with foreign agendas.[546]

9.2   How both agencies understand conflict in the Far South

As is explained below, in comparison with other donors, Unicef and TAF demonstrate fairly strong institutional understanding of the roots of conflict in the Far South and of the implications for development interventions. Both agencies have commissioned more extensive research on which to base their programming than have other donors, supporting institutional recognition of horizontal inequalities and the significance of identity. The research feeds into programming that aims to contribute to finding sustainable and equitable peace in the long term, given the absence of short-term options.[547]

Unicef's decision to work in the Far South from 2003 onwards led it to commission situational analyses and other background material prior to launching any programmes. Similarly, TAF has conducted surveys and research to examine the causes and dynamics of conflict in the Far South (Unicef 2006). TAF's knowledge base has been established alongside more direct experience and long-term engagement with partners closer to the ground. Research has led the agency's staff in Thailand to

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[546] Interview with William Cole and interview (d) with Tom Parks.
[547] The key point is that TAF and Unicef were motivated to build a strong understanding of context. The example does not imply that one particular form of research is preferable.

conclude that people in the Far South do largely want developmental progress, yet need support to take advantage of available opportunities on their own terms and to push for more just government actions in future.[548] The perspective is compatible with views commonly expressed by Malay Muslims in the Far South.[549]

Like Unicef, TAF has a long track record of operations in Thailand. Whereas Unicef only started prioritizing the Far South of the country in around 2003, TAF has worked there since 1961 (Liow 2009:162). This legacy shapes TAF's programme. Its country representative for Thailand, Jim Klein, begins his interview with a historical explanation of TAF's involvement in the Far South. He is an experienced hand himself, coming originally from the USA yet having lived in Thailand over many years. In 1961, Prime Minister Sarit Thanarat was overseeing a round of assimilationist efforts pushing Islamic private schools to join the state education system. TAF provided small grants to enable schools to fulfil the stipulated criteria to receive government funding, thereby avoiding forced closure or a likely future of isolated penury. TAF has continued to work in the Far South since then.[550]

The long term of TAF's involvement in the Far South stands out against other international agencies. The agency's various initiatives there total roughly US$1 million per year.[551] The Far South has remained high up their list of priorities. TAF's country summary sheet for Thailand mentions conflict in the Far South as one of only two key fields of involvement, along with promoting democracy. The concentration on education has continued and been expanded to other fields over time. Recent engagement has included promoting civil participation in political discussion on the Far South at the local and national levels (TAF 2009).

TAF programmes are: *"...based on the premise that the current violence can be traced to long-term grievances of the local Thai-Muslim population over discriminatory policies and treatment by the government, and a perception of marginalization in Thai society"* (TAF 2008:12). This recognition of minority concerns has placed TAF in a strong position to engage with the core issues behind the conflict, while keeping to its overall mandate and direction. TAF staff viewed critically the politically compromised form of much government development work in the Far South, which is chiefly designed to win the conflict and maintain state control rather than to address local frustrations.[552]

A decentralized and context-specific approach to planning implementation helped to put these overall aims into practice. TAF country representatives and other staff have often come from an applied political science background, with a strong emphasis placed on in-country knowledge and experience. Senior and programme staff in both TAF and Unicef stressed their independence from head office in formulating policy direction within broad institutionally defined approaches.[553] This has resulted in

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[548] Information from interview with Jim Klein. The same points were made by other TAF staff during interviews.
[549] See Ch.5.
[550] Interview with Jim Klein, TAF Programme Officer 1, and interview (a) with KPI Programme Officer.
[551] Interview with Jim Klein.
[552] Ibid.
[553] Interviews with Andrew Morris, Jim Klein, Anthea Mulakala, and Unicef Sector Specialist.

programmes looking at how services are delivered by addressing cultural and symbolic issues such as language policy, rather than focusing on quantifiable targets alone. TAF promotional literature states:

> *Programs in the south are designed to create equal rights and opportunities for Muslim citizens. […] The Foundation places a priority on strengthening effective institutions of democracy and resolving conflict in the three Muslim-dominated southernmost provinces [...] While the causes of conflict are complex, The Asia Foundation recognizes that identity, education, economic opportunity, and participation in local decision-making are the basis from which peaceful development will emerge* (TAF 2009c)*.*

Unicef staff also demonstrated strong awareness of the roots of conflict in discussions. A more cautious approach, however, was underpinned by closer links with Thai government departments that keep them to a milder, reformist line. Unicef funded NGOs and more progressive parts of government bodies, while aiming to keep an apolitical profile. One Unicef adviser stated: *"We are really not political. Our policies are so neutral ... we are not trying to mediate."* [554]

Unicef's scope to work on conflict when the rest of the UN has struggled to do so is a point of interest, with some Unicef staff regarding the wider UN system as a brake on their potential. Efforts to coordinate UN programmes can be seen as a lowest common denominator that risked damaging Unicef's gradually developed relationships and operations by associating them with the clumsier efforts of other agencies.[555]

Addressing peacebuilding in the Far South is not an easy task, given political sensitivities and the practical challenges of finding effective partners. Unicef's 2006 data-gathering exercise, seen as an essential tool to build their engagement, cost roughly US$1 million – a large sum for a fairly small overall programme.[556] There are certainly other, easier issues to approach in Thailand, so an obvious question to ask is why TAF and Unicef have gone out of their way to address conflict in the Far South.

The dominant reasons can be found within the underlying directions and political orientation of both agencies rather than local practice. An overview of typical aid agency motivations is given in Chapter Three. Motivations encompass individual and institutional incentives, and include deeper values and aims as well as responses to more immediate political priorities. In terms of deeper approaches to development, Unicef advisers repeatedly emphasized humanitarian goals and child rights during interviews rather than socioeconomic development alone. TAF staff, meanwhile, emphasized their politically engaged approach that stresses justice and democracy.

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[554] Interview with Unicef Project Adviser.
[555] Interview with Unicef Project Officers 1 & 2.
[556] Interview with Andrew Morris.

9.3 Programming on the Far South: building relationships

The next two sections explore how TAF and Unicef managed in practice to find a way to work on peacebuilding. This section considers how TAF and Unicef build associations with a range of organizations in aiming to address conflict-related issues in the Far South (while remaining on good terms with central state institutions). The next section focuses on the interface with central government institutions.

Unicef, and to a lesser extent TAF, used the same in-vogue language of 'partnership' as many other agencies. However, their partnerships were not as focused around the relationship with recipient governments as was the case with the Group One and Group Two agencies already explored in previous chapters. Instead, emphasis was placed on both government and non-governmental bodies. For example, Unicef's publicity material states that:

> *UNICEF works in close partnership with the Royal Thai Government, the private sector, NGOs, faith-based groups, youth groups, local communities and vulnerable children themselves to ensure the realization of child rights for all children in Thailand.* (Unicef undated (b))

This reference to multiple domestic actors differs from the narrower use of the word partnership to refer to high-level inter-governmental relationships that typically emerged from interviews with Group One and Group Two donors.[557]

While Unicef has established relationships with local non-governmental bodies like the NGO Young Muslims Association of Thailand, it also aimed to associate with the government even when most funding was channelled to NGOs.[558] It developed close links with high-level officials in various ministries; senior staff like Andrew Morris mentioned the significance of these links in giving Unicef room to operate. For Unicef advisers and sector-specific staff responsible for operational relationships within specific programmes, a key element was building relationships with key officials in sub-departments most open to changing established working practices. By doing this, Unicef has made some inroads. One Unicef adviser mentioned that officials in the Ministry of Education were *"Very progressive, facilitative, open to change."* [559]

TAF's longstanding work on education in the Far South has aimed to respond to the challenges of integrating traditional Islamic teaching with a modern, national education system (TAF 2009). Similar issues affect education policy in many countries, including Muslim majority Indonesia and Malaysia.[560] In Thailand, with an education system based heavily on national integration around a model that is partly secular and partly reflective of the majority Thai Buddhist population rather than a small Muslim minority, these tensions have not been well managed (as explained in previous chapters). The school

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[557] This is especially the case with more senior staff: for example, interview with Srisupa Kulthanan. See Ch.7 on UNDP and The World Bank for further detail.
[558] Interview with Unicef Sector Specialist.
[559] Interview with Unicef Project Adviser.
[560] See for example Jones (1991).

system is a prominent cause of tension between the state and many Malay Muslims in the Far South (Madmarn 2002, ICG 2009).

A majority of Malay Muslim parents in the Far South send their children to Islamic private schools rather than government secondary schools. Despite having considerable autonomy over management and teaching practices, Islamic private schools in the Far South are now mostly state-funded, receiving a levy per student. Their standards vary enormously, the best ones operating selective entry procedures and sending many students on to universities, whereas the worst are often small and poorly managed, employing sub-standard teachers while competing to attract students and the attached government subsidy.[561]

TAF has concentrated its efforts on improving the standard of secular teaching in Islamic private schools, aiming to demonstrate how to raise academic standards without compromising cultural and religious heritage (Liow 2009:162). In comparison with ordinary government schools, Islamic private schools dedicate less curriculum time to secular subjects. In addition, they often have fewer well-qualified teachers. Students are already at a disadvantage as they tend to speak local Malay dialect rather than Thai outside school. Poor Thai language ability hampers many school leavers in the search for private or public sector employment, or in higher education. As a result it exacerbates resentment, increasing youth unemployment and encouraging people to look to Malaysia or Muslim countries elsewhere for opportunities rather than within Thailand.[562]

Improving secular education standards makes good developmental and cultural sense. It has been a key theme of TAF in Thailand since the 1960s. TAF worked on vocational training with education institutes in the Far South in the 1980s.[563] It used high-level connections with heavyweight southern politicians from the Democrat Party (Surin Pitsuwan, subsequently foreign minister, and Chuan Leekpai, then education minister and subsequently prime minister) to promote government take-up of its pilot projects.[564] The promotion of positive popular engagement with wider Thai society while maintaining Malay Muslim identity runs through much of TAF's and Unicef's work. It is seen in other initiatives including Pattani Malay language training for officials, translation of official documents, legal assistance, and support for local media initiatives (TAF 2009).

TAF's most recent education initiative has promoted a contemporary science curriculum, beginning with a network of twelve Islamic private schools. Teachers and administrators were provided with training and tasked with devising a viable, modern and appropriate curriculum. The project was initially run by an NGO called Thailand Centre for Muslim and Democratic Development, or TCMD. TCMD was established using TAF funds, with much of the motivation coming from a former TAF staff member from the Far South, Alyas Haji Salah. TCMD's structure includes various respected civil figures from the Far

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[561] See Liow (2009). Also interview with Phaisan Toryib.
[562] Information from interview with Chidchanok Rahimmula in addition to other sources including Unicef (2006), ICG (2009).
[563] Interview with Jim Klein.
[564] Ibid.

South such as Ahmed Somboon Bua Luang, a former lecturer and local politician.[565] The aim was to build a cohesive NGO, thereby strengthening disparate local civil society at the same time as delivering specific projects like the development of a science curriculum.[566]

The project ran into difficulties, chiefly through the limited capacity and weak oversight of TCMD. As a new organization it needed more time and attention to develop than TAF initially gave it. Some training was carried out but deadlines were then missed, financial flows were not sufficiently transparent and the project was delayed. The expectation that oversight from senior figures in TCMD would ensure that the project worked proved wishful.[567] TAF staff were open about these shortcomings and at the time they responded in several ways. They adjusted their overall policy for building civil institutions in the Far South, placing emphasis on networks rather than on formal institutions. They also adapted their specific work on the science curriculum by reducing TCMD's role.[568] Coordinating responsibilities for developing the network of science teachers to build, test and promote a new curriculum were passed to Phaisan Toryib, the manager of Attarkiah Islamiah school and president of the Islamic Private School Association for Narathiwat province.[569]

TAF's mixed experience in this instance shows the limits to the external promotion of domestic institutions and also underlines the value of experience and flexibility. It is possible and perhaps justifiable to criticize the lack of institutional rigour in expecting TCMD to perform a role without adequate support. The initiative was described by one of TAF's officers as *"An experiment that didn't go so well."* [570] However, according to several informants, TAF's subsequent response rescued the programme and created opportunities to build on it in future.[571] The value of a flexible 'process' over pre-ordained 'blueprints' is recognized in development practice literature, in effect balancing a desire for greater rigour and accountability with a political realism and bottom-up perspective that appreciates the value of local experience and the scope to change when things inevitably do not go to plan (Porter, Allen & Thompson 1991).

TAF's politically aware approach, in which specific interventions fit into a broader perspective rather than sitting as 'project islands', enabled it to use a network of contacts to respond to changing circumstances. More conventional development agencies may have struggled to show such flexibility when faced with a lack of suitable operating partners in a politically complex environment, as was explained in Chapter Eight. The ability to find ways to work with local organizations that may have serious capacity constraints was mentioned regularly by staff of TAF, Unicef and other bodies as a critical prerequisite for working in the Far South.

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[565] Interviews with Alyas Haji Salah, Tayudin Osman, and Ahmed Somboon Bua Luang.
[566] Interview (a) with Tom Parks.
[567] Interview (a) with Tom Parks, and interview (b) with Consultant to TAF.
[568] Interview (a) with Tom Parks.
[569] Interview with Phaisan Toryib.
[570] Interview with TAF Programme Officer 2.
[571] Interviews with Alayas Haji Salah, TAF Programme Officer 1, and interview (b) with Tom Parks.

Unicef also showed capacity to disaggregate government into its many constituent parts, enabling it to find allies within government agencies.[572] This gave scope to find and respond to domestic agendas rather than impose solutions – a basic element of promoting change through external intervention (Grindle & Thomas 1991, Eade 2002).

9.4 Negotiating the interface with the government

Unlike UNDP and the World Bank (the Group Two case studies in the previous chapter), TAF and Unicef gained permission from central government institutions and were able to implement their programmes. Managing a relationship with government takes considerable care. Although no distinct evidence is available explaining the reasons for such decisions, it seems likely that Unicef's task was eased by its non-threatening child focus, while also possible that TAF's US funding base probably increased Thai officials' reluctance to cause problems for fear of wider repercussions.[573] But for both agencies that still left work to be done.

TAF and Unicef recognized the importance of government counterparts both to their own viability as actors and to any future hopes for peace in the Far South; they did not follow a tempting path that aims to keep as clear of officialdom as possible. Two examples of interface management in practice follow, one each from Unicef and TAF. The first is Unicef's commissioning of a situational analysis of the conflict context in the Far South in 2004.

Situational analyses are used by Unicef in many countries as a core tool both to build knowledge and, as in this case, to gain government support and promote efforts to change policies. Unusually for development agency publications that typically avoid discussing ethnicity (see Hettne 1993, Cohen 1995), Unicef's situational analysis begins with detailed historical background and an explanation of ethnic differences before mentioning specific development issues. Inequalities between ethnic groups – such as the greater school drop-out rates among Malay Muslims as compared with Buddhists – are addressed overtly through disaggregated data that demonstrate specific developmental challenges in the Far South (Unicef 2006:44). The analysis keeps a focus on social and economic issues of relevance to Unicef's mandate while providing broader explanation of the politics and cultural norms that lie behind such inequalities.

Analysis is based on wide datasets that give Unicef a body of information for planning purposes. Data presented in the final public document appears to be carefully selected to provide a socioeconomic justification for engagement that fits within nationally agreed plans. The southernmost provinces are compared with national data on progress towards Millennium Development Goals, in doing so demonstrating that they fall far below the national average. For example, poverty incidence (according

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[572] While more focused on non-governmental bodies, TAF's work with KPI shows similar traits. See next part of this chapter.

[573] TICA and other government agencies did not provide reasons for their decisions. TICA Officials 2 and 3 suggested during an interview that officials themselves need to remain confident that foreign donors were keeping to acceptable and previously declared plans, although higher levels of decision-making were likely to be more politicized.

to nationally defined levels) of almost 30% in the Far South compares with just under 10% nationally (Unicef 2006:25). The report concludes with a set of recommendations restricted to areas of child development where involvement is likely to be acceptable, keeping clear of political issues. So, while the analysis mentions *"...the long-standing gap between government and local communities",* and states that *"The current strife has further isolated government agencies from the population..."*, recommendations are carefully worded, proposing that Unicef *"Involve communities and young people in planning interventions",* and *"Harness the power of information"* (ibid.:59-60).

Unicef's subsequent success in implementing a programme addressing issues in the Far South suggests that through commissioning and guiding the written output of the situational analysis, the agency managed to build both a knowledge base and a basis for action. By avoiding politically controversial conclusions even if evidence pointed in that direction, the report helped to create a national level developmental justification for engagement in the Far South.

In this case, Unicef negotiated the interface with the state by finding acceptable approaches within its own expected socioeconomic remit. Unicef's decision to build programmes in the Far South was explained with reference to the area's relative deprivation and justified through its priotitization of the poorest regions across Thailand.[574] The same tactic was also applied in specific sectors: Unicef's child protection team commissioned research in the Far South, using it as an entry point without which involvement would *"Raise a red flag"* with government agencies.[575]

It is worth noting that other datasets do not necessarily confirm Unicef's national level justification, as already explained in Chapter Five. UNDP data suggests that the Far South is not more disadvantaged than many other border areas of Thailand when basing comparisons on socioeconomic data rather than on wider political and cultural perceptions. UNDP monitoring ranks the Far Southern provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat as less poor than many northern and northeastern provinces, according to most indicators.[576]

A superficial reading of Unicef's research outputs would lead to a conclusion that their focus on socioeconomic development indicators demonstrated the failure to understand cultural context often seen in Group One agencies.[577] Or perhaps Unicef was simply too close to the government to offer any more realistic solutions. Elsewhere, Unicef demonstrated sufficient understanding of the roots of unrest in the Far South to suggest that an alternative explanation is more likely. Unicef adopted a brokering approach by producing a socioeconomic justification that would be acceptable to gatekeepers in central government institutions, while not entirely signing up to it.[578] This enabled the agency to negotiate the interface with the state while maintaining contextually grounded objectives.

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[574] Interview with Andrew Morris.
[575] Interview (a) with Unicef Sector Specialist.
[576] See Ch.5 (Part 5.6).
[577] See the IMT-GT case study in Ch.7.
[578] Interviews with Unicef staff revealed strong understanding of the political and cultural context, with continued reference to inter-group dynamics and identity aspects of conflict.

The second example of interface management is TAF's support for high-level dialogue on future steps towards peace in the Far South. The aim was to support civil and academic pressure for peace, create space for public dialogue, and build practical ideas for future policy.[579] At face value this was a highly political objective, one that most foreign and even many local bodies would probably not have been able to approach. However, by supporting domestic constituencies and building contacts with appropriate agencies, TAF managed to find entry points and use them – as is explained below.

TAF has over many years developed a relationship with a key domestic partner on a range of issues in Thailand, the King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI). KPI is a semi-autonomous Thai think-tank and training body with an image of being relatively progressive while keeping within the boundaries of mainstream and elite central Thai perspectives. A specific act of parliament defines it as a state agency that operates under the supervision of the national assembly, rather than a government agency reporting to the prime minister. It is associated with the Thai royal family, yet supports open civil and academic involvement in policymaking on various issues including peace in the Far South (KPI 1998). Like TAF, KPI aims to bring disparate voices together, thereby promoting more coherent debate and advocacy. Most of KPI's funding comes from public resources, with occasional external funds for specific projects.[580]

In 2006, KPI identified a lack of space for advocates to engage mainstream policymakers on the conflict in the Far South. The initial aim was to build on the recently published report of the National Reconciliation Commission given the failure of the government to adopt any of its more significant recommendations. For TAF, KPI's high-level contacts and respected status were as valuable as their capacity to build networks across governmental and non-governmental bodies. An opportunity to work with an established partner on such a sensitive issue was accepted and TAF provided KPI with US$200,000 to help them *"Pick off low-hanging fruit"* from the Commission's report.[581]

Over time, KPI looked for additional ways to build on this base. General Ekachai Siwilat, Director of KPI's Office of Peace and Governance, proposed the idea of a peace study course that would expand and deepen senior level engagement in considering significant policy changes for the future in order to promote peace.[582] 92 'students' were selected, most of them experienced figures in a range of public and private institutions. At the end of the study course they produced a report that was considerably more practically grounded than other, earlier recommendations (KPI 2009). After some delays (caused partly by changing national politics and partly because the participants struggled to agree on a single approach for the report), it was launched in June 2009 at a high-profile day-long seminar that culminated in an address by Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva.[583]

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[579] Interview with Jim Klein.
[580] Interview (b) with KPI Programme Officer.
[581] Interview with Jim Klein.
[582] Interview (a) with Tom Parks, and interview with Ekachai Siwilat.
[583] 'Politics before military: towards a sustainable solution for the Far South' ('*Kanmeuang thong nam kanthahan: thit thang kan kae panha paktai su kwam yangyuen*'), Seminar at Miracle Grand Hotel, Bangkok, 30 June 2009.

TAF kept a low profile thoughout. In addition to providing funding, it followed the process and engaged to help address some of the perceived weaknesses in KPI's plan through discussing relevant issues with KPI's senior staff. This role included promoting a more effective advocacy strategy in order to maximize impact, rather than relying on the individual efforts of the course participants upon returning to their respective institutions. TAF also managed the relationship with its own funder, USAID, ensuring that diplomatic involvement was kept out of the picture so that the process remained a domestic one.[584]

KPI's role in peace promotion arguably took still more authority away from local voices. According to this line of thought, KPI has promoted minor reforms to the establishment rather than wholesale changes to how the Far South, and indeed the rest of the country, is governed. The various parallel peace initiatives organized by Bangkok-based organizations created some resentment, as many interviewees in the Far South were eager to explain.[585] KPI's approach can be defended, though: even if some people within KPI promoted conservative solutions rather than more fundamental changes, its work aimed to engage many different figures from the Far South, providing in the process a rare platform for policy engagement (Jitpiromsri & McCargo 2008:407). From TAF's perspective, KPI's work has been part of a long-term effort to open space for domestic discussion of critical issues essential for building peace in future rather than an attempt to find a rapid solution.[586] The process has encouraged discussion on possible decentralization and touched on issues of autonomy that are often hard to engage with in a state where criticism of direct central authority is frequently avoided, in part for fear of transgressing *lèse-majesté* laws.[587]

For TAF, efforts to promote pro-peace reforms by supporting positive elements of government policy appeared to have satisfied gatekeepers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Annual reporting according to a memorandum of understanding with TICA did not lead to the difficulties encountered by other foreign agencies and was usually discussed over an informal annual lunch.[588]

As interviews revealed, Unicef and TAF staff understood clearly that they were viewed with scepticism by some in the Thai Government and in non-governmental bodies, both in the Far South and Bangkok.[589] Agencies needed to retain the confidence of the Thai Government that they were keeping to their agreed mandate and working to support government policy, as well as ensuring that they were not seen as alien imposters by some residents of the Far South. The context is not only one of needing to remain neutral in a conflict area, but also of understanding the enduring colonial overtones of foreign aid and other perceived external interference.[590] All too familiar to most recipients of aid, such concerns are often overlooked by the providers (Hayter 1971, Eyben 2006).

Unicef and TAF have kept a very low profile in the Far South. Both agencies have preferred to send Thai

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[584] Interview with TAF Programme Officer 1 and interview (b) with KPI Programme Officer.
[585] For example interview with Local NGO Director and interview (b) with University Lecturer.
[586] Interview with Jim Klein.
[587] Strict legislation against offending the dignity of the reigning sovereign has long been used as a political tool (McCargo 2008:349-50).
[588] Interview (a) with Consultant to TAF.
[589] Interviews with Jim Klein and Andrew Morris.
[590] Interview with William Cole.

rather than international staff to the area and made concerted efforts to indigenize their operations. Unicef has a board of national trustees and raises funds domestically, and TAF employed Thai specialists in positions that might in the past have been occupied by foreigners.[591] This degree of self-reflection on the part of aid agencies was not always evident in Thailand or more widely. Most donors typically emphasized 'partnerships' with an associated and often false assumption that domestic groups – especially government institutions but also NGOs – saw them as allies.[592]

Overall, TAF and Unicef have managed relationships with government actors, appreciating the importance of the central government even when working in a peripheral area. At the same time, they were not co-opted into every aspect of a government agenda and retained some independence. They worked with non-governmental and selected governmental groups at the same time, an approach also used by other international aid agencies in Thailand (ILO 2006, Save the Children 2009).

9.5   Practice: some progress, some problems

These interface management strategies were dependent on practical elements of how TAF and Unicef operated. We have already seen how both agencies invested time and funds in building a knowledge base, establishing relationships with domestic actors, and developing programmes that gradually responded to specific needs. These and other steps move away from technical approaches or methodologies and towards more process-based, incremental ways of working (Gasper 2000:22-23, Roper & Pettit 2002). In accordance with what development practitioners term a 'process' approach, TAF and Unicef have not based their work on off-the-shelf conflict assessment and sensitivity tools designed to support donor or NGO involvement in peacebuilding. For both agencies, their long-term presence in Thailand, including well-staffed central offices, helped provide continuity and space to engage rather than simply adapting generic project blueprints. The long-term Thailand experience of managers in both agencies is also likely to have been a significant factor in basing approaches on context.[593]

TAF operated more flexibly than many agencies partly because it is a foundation rather than a typical donor. Freed from some of the constraints of conventional development practice (described in Chapter Three), TAF was able to fund a wide range of small programmes in response to the specific needs of local organizations. Its support for civil engagement in dialogue on peace enabled participating groups to take advantage of arising opportunities. For example, KPI was able to use TAF support to fund a one-off seminar on autonomy in response to a last minute request from one of their key contacts, a university lecturer.[594] The seminar used comparative experience across Southeast Asia as an entry point for raising issues otherwise unacceptable to more conservative elements in the government and the military. It was attended by many key figures in the Far South, helping to pave the way for future

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[591] Interviews with Jim Klein and Andrew Morris.
[592] See Ch.8 (Part 8.7).
[593] Andrew Morris, Jim Klein and other staff have worked in Thailand for longer periods than is common for international donor representatives.
[594] Interview (d) with Tom Parks.

debate.[595] This small example may seem almost trivial, but the cumulative impact of flexibility at this level of implementation is significant.

Despite learning from and applying experience more successfully than most other agencies in Thailand, practical constraints still limited Unicef and TAF at times. TAF's less structured approach comes with some costs. Internal criticism was made of inadequate monitoring of partner programmes, for instance assuming that local NGOs speak for rural Malay Muslims without checking on the degree of their representativeness or participation.[596] One staff member raised questions over the impact of so many small-scale activities, challenging the untested assumption that pilot training programmes, research, and exchanges would be taken up more widely or have a catalytic effect on local capacity.[597]

Unicef ran into different constraints, created in part by the challenges involved in keeping government actors supportive. Some differences of opinion were apparent internally: Unicef advisers generally wanted to be more proactive on conflict issues while senior management was more cautious. One adviser stated confidentially that self-censorship was more of a problem than the government itself, feeling that more risk-taking would be rewarded: *"We have not tested the boundaries ... we don't have a lot of say in Thailand as it is middle income status, you know they can take it or leave it."* [598]

Local NGO partners like the Young Muslim Association of Thailand also stressed to Unicef staff that as an international body they should be more outspoken on human rights.[599] The tension between risking involvement in politically sensitive issues and accepting a conservative government lead was evident in the more consensual line expressed by some Unicef staff:

> *At the end we have to find a consensus on how we work or it will have no impact, or be stopped. Although within that we should be more courageous. But a good relationship is more worth it in the long term.*[600]

Unicef and other donors have limited themselves through their own regulations, including UN security guidelines banning overnight stays and non-essential journeys to the Far South. This reduced the incentives for Bangkok-based staff to go to the area, compounding the refusal of the Thai Government to allow international agencies to open offices in the Far South.[601] The guidelines are extremely cautious given the fairly low-level nature of insurgency outside specific rural areas and the lack of attacks targeting foreigners. Significantly, UN security guidance is not devised simply through technical, apolitical appraisal, but involves discussion with civilian and security wings of government. This provides an opportunity for recipient government agencies to use it as an effective and ostensibly apolitical

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[595] 'Meeting on regional autonomy: lessons from Mindanao and Aceh peace agreement' (*'Kamnotkan sammana laek plian kho khit hen "botrian chak mindanao lae aceh korani khet pokkhrong phiset nai kho tok long santiphap"'*) 1 May 2009, Hat Yai.

[596] Interview with TAF Programme Officer 1, and interview (b) with Communications Specialist.

[597] Interview (b) with Communications Specialist. TAF has more recently tried to improve project appraisal and oversight while not shifting overall direction, according to Tom Parks (interview (c)).

[598] Interview with Unicef Project Adviser.

[599] Interview (b) with Unicef Sector Specialist.

[600] Interview (a) with Unicef Sector Specialist.

[601] Interviews with Unicef Project Officer 2 and Andrew Morris.

deterrent against close involvement.[602] Some Unicef staff were dismissive of other UN agencies like UNDP who set a tone that other agencies then followed:

> *There's a lot of people in the UN in Thailand who have no experience of conflict environments. They think it's big and scary and dangerous, and that results in action plans that don't take into account the situation.*[603]

Further limits stemmed from Unicef's own operating procedures. Some of Unicef's international staff had long experience of working in Thailand, although many others arrived having been rotated in the three-year postings typical of donors and diplomats. In addition, most Thai national staff had little experience of the Far South and managers admitted that this held them back. Most development agencies aiming to work in the Far South, including TAF and Unicef, struggled to find sufficiently qualified staff from the area itself. Learning curves were flattened by travel restrictions, meaning that local partners have been relied on more than usual:

> *We only really know how things are being presented so we're entirely dependent on their situation … we can't speak to people at all. We're not able to check our ideas. It's hard when you can't sit down with people; you're never quite sure where they're coming from.*[604]

The risks of partially-sighted engagement in a complex environment are considerable. Without careful adjustment in response to local feedback, programmes might either offend government and not get off the ground, or run too close to the government's side and be rendered ineffective or even counterproductive. For example, Unicef supported production of a translation dictionary between Malay, Thai, and Yawi (local Malay dialect) and the teaching of Yawi in the Thai script. This was a controversial step given close and tense associations between language, religion and identity.[605] The plan met some resistance from different ends of the social spectrum: conservative religious groups felt that local dialect should be printed only in the Arabic script, while some pragmatic parents wanted their children to learn normal Thai in order to get decent jobs.[606]

The implications of language policy for cultural as well as economic needs are complex and subjective given ongoing peripheral conflict in the Far South that is associated with perceptions of horizontal inequality, requiring considerable understanding of context. Some longstanding observers saw such policy experiments as continued – albeit diluted – efforts at forced assimilation. They preferred to promote straightforward multilingualism that creates less controversy and accepts plural identities.[607]

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[602] Interview with UN Official. Confirmed through discussions with UN security personnel in Aceh, February 2006, and in Bangkok, November 2007.
[603] Interview with Unicef Project Officer 2.
[604] Interview (a) with Communications Specialist.
[605] Local Malay dialect, called *Yawi* with reference to its use of the Arabic script, is also colloquially known as *Phasa Islam* (Islamic Language).
[606] Interview (a) with Unicef Sector Specialist.
[607] Interview with TAF Programme Officer 1.

The example serves to demonstrate the need for subtle approaches and a strong knowledge base, both of which are undermined by rapid staff rotations and failure to spend time in the field.[608]

9.6   Impact: small but significant

Definitive measurement of impact is difficult given a lack of thorough evaluation. The need to maintain a good relationship with government means that challenging questions over wider impact of initiatives on the scope for future peace often remain unanswered (see Chapter Six). Undertaking a comprehensive evaluation, with the political implications of sharing and addressing its results, could risk undermining the low profile and supportive approach that TAF and Unicef have needed to adopt in order to create the space to implement a programme in the Far South.

Evaluation is also hampered by the perennial evaluation challenge of distinguishing the impact of external interventions from other ongoing processes (Roche 2001). As explained in Chapter Six, effective externally funded programmes in Thailand have always tended to support ongoing trends by backing specific domestic bodies pushing for change, resulting in significant attribution challenges. As with other sectors of foreign aid engagement, the impact of any single intervention is likely to be less significant than the incremental consequences of repeated projects over time (Muscat 1990:279 & 287). Impact on specific policy targets – for example on promoting certain proposals of the government's 2006 National Reconciliation Commission such as improvements to the justice system or greater recognition of the Malay language in education – can rarely be attributed to donor-supported action as opposed to wider changes.

Interviewees in the Far South repeatedly mentioned that external donor engagement including specific programmes funded by TAF and Unicef was on the whole viewed positively on the ground.[609] TAF's more political mandate and its historical associations made it more obviously aligned with US foreign policy than Unicef. Muslim organizations in Thailand – both in the Far South and in Bangkok – are in places suspicious of its intentions given that it is an American organization (Liow 2009:163). However, with an alienating Thai state seen as the chief cause of unrest and inequality, many Malay Muslims in the Far South welcome external support especially if based around straightforward improvements such as educational opportunity or increasing the space for local political participation. Currents of anti-Americanism certainly exist although they are tempered by a desire for external support to counter perceived injustice. Interviews and more casual discussions in the Far South revealed little criticism of international development funding if it was attempting to redress inequalities. One NGO activist in

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[608] Even if Unicef involvement in the dictionary has not been productive, it might still be justifiable as a 'loss leader' to gain government support or to promote a broader raft of reforms.

[609] Examples include interviews with Ahmed Somboon Bua Luang, NGO Director 2, Somchit Grotkaew, and Abdurrahman Sebaru.

Pattani stated: *"As long as money does not just go to the government in Bangkok, we welcome any kind of foreign support."* [610]

Ultimately, available evidence suggests that Unicef and TAF have probably made modest yet positive contributions towards the likelihood of a just peace in future. The fields that both agencies have addressed emerge repeatedly in academic analysis and proposals for action in the Far South, for example on education (Liow 2009) and decentralization (McCargo 2008). TAF's support for Thai institutions promoting peace dialogue encouraged discussions on possible autonomy arrangements in 2009 that were unthinkable just two years earlier, a potentially significant early step. [611]

The two agencies' most significant impact may have been in creating the scope for further action in future. At the time of research, there was a broad feeling among donors that more space was opening up for international developmental engagement. It is likely that careful, considered interventions to date have played some role in this. Bodies as diverse as KPI, local NGOs, and reformers within the Ministries of the Interior and Education may be better positioned to promote more tolerant government policymaking and meaningful steps towards decentralization in the future. Perhaps equally significantly, donors themselves also learnt from several years of engagement in what was for most of them a new field of engagement. Interviewees from several agencies including TAF and Unicef mentioned potential future plans, building on work conducted so far and in cases possibly expanding to work with a wider range of domestic partner organizations. [612] Their learning encompassed not only the context on the ground, but also a practical understanding of what the Thai Government would allow and how to negotiate involvement.

The various arguments that could be put forward to refute the benefits of external assistance for peace promotion in the Far South are not strong, as is explained below. Such assistance could be seen to act as a safety valve, enabling the state to avoid making more concerted reforms (Easterly 2002). The small amounts of funding put into peacebuilding and the limited extent of programmes are unlikely to exert an overwhelmingly negative influence in this situation, however. External assistance could also be criticized for displacing genuine civil activism with ersatz externally funded NGOs based around imported agendas and for privileging self-appointed local representatives who speak good English (Edwards & Hulme 1995). But, as this chapter explains, both TAF and Unicef aimed to counter capital city and dominant NGO bias through backing domestic networks and other support reaching into the rural Far South. They had clear objectives for improving how the state operates rather than simply funding high-level bodies to carry out development as part of government-led efforts to win the conflict.

Further criticism could be made that foreign aid undermines sovereignty more broadly. In the case of

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[610] Interview with Sukri. Similar views were expressed by Sittipong Chandharaviroj, Director, Muslim Attorney Center (Discussion in Chaophrya Park Hotel, Bangkok 10 July 2011), who welcomed any support promoting improved and more equal access to justice.

[611] For example the seminar at Miracle Grand Hotel (op.cit.). Also McCargo (2010).

[612] Interviews with Yowalak Thiarachow and Edelweiss Silan, interview (b) with Unicef Sector Specialist, interview (d) with Tom Parks.

the Far South of Thailand, the small amounts and lack of influence of the international bodies concerned means that such views represent the kind of nationalist reaction that needs to be challenged. By finding ways around parts of the government (for example the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) or some sectors of public opinion that would prefer to block all forms of external involvement, TAF and Unicef were not succumbing to such extremism. A more substantive critical analysis would be that the reformist, conciliatory approach of both agencies bent over too far to accommodate and work with a government committing regular infringements of human rights in its ongoing military operations (Human Rights Watch 2007). Some staff working for human rights bodies shared this view. They cited disappearances, arbitrary detention, and use of local proxy militia as reasons why the government should not be partnered.[613] Both Unicef's and TAF's inability to speak out over abuses for fear of damaging their standing with the government and jeopardizing their programmes is from a purists' perspective untenable. More pragmatically, it could be countered that working with a government in order to promote change is perhaps better than carping from the sidelines. Either way, this critique emphasizes how the need to gain government approval limits what agencies can do, even for Group Three donors.

Criticism can also be directed at Unicef and TAF's relative inability to link programme aims in the Far South with their own national objectives effectively. The practical difficulty of 'mainstreaming' specific issues into overall national programme objectives that was referred to in Chapter Six is here apparent, given the peripheral status of the Far South within aid agencies as well as within Thailand. To mainstream peacebulding effectively it would have to be prioritized sufficiently for managers to address it across all sectors of work. Representatives of TAF, Unicef and other agencies commented that their overall programmes for Thailand were sensitive to problems in the Far South since they promoted democratization and decentralization. TAF for example, writes simply that: *"…the Foundation places a priority on strengthening effective institutions of democracy and resolving conflict in the three Muslim-dominated southernmost provinces."* (TAF 2009c). This statement is fairly uncontroversial in itself, but turning it into contextually valid action across a national programme involves more than relying on an unproven link between democracy and peace. Two issues arise here: the practical difficulty of mainstreaming and the continual risk of falling back on a range of inadequately questioned norms found in Western donor discourse. With only one exception, analysis of the assumed link between improved national democratic governance and peacebuilding in the Far South was absent from responses provided by TAF and Unicef interviewees, echoing much-criticized naive promotion of democracy and 'good governance' within aid programmes (Leftwich 1993, Paris & Sisk 2009).[614]

TAF and Unicef at times appeared to slip from the evidence-based, context-driven approach that drove much of their programming addressing conflict-related problems in the Far South to a more normative position that demonstrated little familiarity with the limitations of recent approaches to peacebuilding. Insufficiently sophisticated political analysis of this kind allows for little integration of the complex

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[613] Interview with International Human Rights NGO Manager.
[614] William Cole, TAF, discussed during his interview how difficult it was for Western donors to depart from normative approaches to democratization.

challenges that minority rights present for democratic structures in many societies, relying on a national model of multiparty democracy rather than considering group discrimination and the need for inclusive government more widely (Stewart et al. 2005). Despite the availability of literature explaining Thailand's convoluted, non-linear and partial democratic reforms (McVey 2000, Connors 2007, Askew 2008), as well as global analysis of the ways in which many forms of democracy can disenfranchise minority groups (Horowitz 2000, DeVotta 2004), unrealistic commitment to democracy has on occasion trumped more considered approaches. Analysis of how actual democratic process affects the specific context of the Far South of Thailand was not apparent.[615] Globally, neither democratization nor decentralization provides definitive solutions to separatist struggles given the number of different factors involved and the need to respond to specific context (Woodward 2007).[616]

9.7 Chapter summary

The two aid agency case studies presented in this chapter have shown that space for international peacebuilding in peripheral conflict can exist, even in unpromising contexts where conflict is ongoing and the government resistant. Unicef and TAF's interventions showed some of the possible ways to approach peripheral conflict. With careful practice, peripheral conflict could be addressed by these agencies while avoiding direct challenges to aspects of national identity that are typically too sensitive for foreign agencies to approach. More widely, the contrast between these Group Three agencies and the examples of Group One and Two agencies introduced in previous chapters demonstrates the varied spectrum of foreign aid provision. The contrast also brings out the factors that enabled some agencies to address peacebuilding despite the fact that it hindered others.[617]

Unlike Group Two agencies, Unicef and TAF employed many of the institutional practices identified elsewhere as necessary to close the gap between policy and practice in the field of conflict and development (Caddell & Yanacopoulos 2006). This enabled them to follow through at least partially their global commitments to promoting peace. Many of the steps taken heed lessons that have repeatedly been stressed in studies and evaluations of development practice but which, as earlier chapters showed, are still regularly passed over by aid agencies.

To summarize, TAF and Unicef demonstrated a basis for action in institutional experience and research. They showed awareness of the roots and dynamic of the conflict in the Far South of Thailand and an understanding of how centrally driven development processes can exacerbate horizontal inequalities. Unlike UNDP and the World Bank, the Group Two agencies discussed in the previous chapter, both agencies successfully negotiated the interface with the Thai state and other organizations. Although discussing 'partnership' with government, TAF and Unicef engaged selectively at different levels and adopted specific tactics (such as Unicef's approach to their situational analysis) in order to negotiate space in which to operate. Their approaches depended on practical and institutional attributes,

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[615] Similar trends have been observed in larger international peacebuilding initiatives, for example in Cambodia. See Roberts (2009).
[616] See Ch.2 (Part 7) on decentralization.
[617] A longer comparison of Group Two and Group Three agencies is found in Ch.10.

including flexibility and devolved decision-making authority based on acquired knowledge rather than generic policies, technical toolkits, or preconceived norms. Both agencies relied on informed staff with experience of the specific context.

Previous chapters explained that a failure on the part of many donors to address peripheral conflict in the Far South of Thailand was not simply a result of ignorance, with donor staff often well aware of problems in the area but not relating that knowledge to their work in any meaningful way. In order to understand why Unicef and TAF acted differently, it is important to understand the reasons why the two agencies were motivated to address conflict in the Far South and adopt practices that enable implementation. In both cases, a vision of development removed both from mainstream development agendas and an associated close relationship with the recipient state played major parts. By moving beyond standard socioeconomic development goals they demonstrated the fundamental difficulties of promoting peacebuilding in peripheral conflicts through the more conventional aid approaches that many donors follow. At a political level, both agencies' close relations with the US Government provided incentives for their senior staff to promote peace between an American ally state and an Islamic minority, in alignment with US foreign policy for Thailand. As stated in earlier chapters, there is no evidence of any significant US military or security involvement in the Far South.[618] Organizations like Unicef and TAF, with funding ties and policy links to the US Government, to some extent represented a softer form of US foreign policy. At the same time, mid-level project staff and advisers in Unicef and TAF were well aware of the wider context of aggressive Western foreign policies and associated polarization between the West and Islam. Discussions and interviews with Unicef and TAF staff repeatedly showed a strongly felt desire to engage positively with Islamic communities and to distance themselves from negative perceptions of America and the West more widely.[619]

In looking at both agencies, the limits to what can be achieved also become apparent. Their programmes were limited not only by what the Thai state allowed them to achieve, but also by their own shortcomings. Unicef's closer relationship with central government bodies presented influencing opportunities but also limited its scope to move beyond the promotion of relatively consensual reforms and restricted engagement at the local level, as some of its own staff themselves recognized. Neither agency could provide evidence to show how they ensured that other, larger programmes that they were funding in Thailand avoided backing the same government structures whose actions have over many years marginalized the minority in the Far South.

This thesis has already shown that the overall influence of aid agencies in Thailand is relatively limited, especially when engaging in fields that require a change of government direction before sustainable progress towards peace is likely. Without a closer overlap between their own peacebuilding goals and Thai government policies, the space that Unicef and TAF created to promote peacebuilding was

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[618] See Ch.5 (Part 10). In many conflict environments, the USA is of course involved militarily in addition to providing foreign aid. But in the Far South of Thailand, the conflict creates no direct security threat to the USA (unlike for example the perceived threat of Abu Sayyaf in the southern Philippines) and affords a less aggressive stance.

[619] Interviews with Unicef Project Officers 1 & 2, Unicef Project Adviser, and interview (a) with Unicef Sector Specialist.

restricted to relatively small initiatives. By contrast, the pressure of disbursing funds and greater scrutiny from Thai government authorities appeared, from a comparison between the three groups of aid agencies, to push donors with larger budgets into more consensual positions. TAF and Unicef on the other hand were able to negotiate space with the Thai Government, enabling them to address peacebuilding through small-scale initiatives from a perspective based around equality, justice and the rights of local inhabitants.

Chapter Ten   Conclusions

10.1   Overview of approach

Through a case study of foreign aid and peacebuilding in The Far South of Thailand, this thesis has responded to the following key research questions: do foreign aid agencies pursue peacebuilding objectives in the Far South of Thailand and what related patterns of aid practice emerge across different agencies; how do the characteristics and causes of conflict in the Far South of Thailand affect aid agencies' ability to support peacebuilding; and what properties of aid agencies help explain the pattern? This section provides a brief overview of findings before the research questions are addressed more directly in the subsequent sections.

The Far South of Thailand is explored here as a case study of peripheral conflict in South and Southeast Asia. Peripheral conflicts are understood to be long-lasting subnational conflicts between members of a minority group concentrated in a remote area and the central government of the nation state. They are typically associated with perceptions of horizontal inequality among the minority population that have cultural and political as well as economic dimensions. Grievances and associated violence often persist through periods of relatively rapid socioeconomic development, as seen in much of South and Southeast Asia in the late twentieth century and beyond.

The notion of horizontal inequality provides an analytical basis that links national development, ethnicity and peripheral conflict, as explored in Chapter Two in general terms and in Chapter Five with reference to the case study. Existing research addresses the common failure of foreign aid to address conflicts associated with horizontal inequalities and the mixed record of efforts to achieve peacebuilding objectives.[620] The originality of this research lies in the fact that as well as asking how aid agencies act in the specific circumstances of peripheral conflicts, it also aims to explain why organizations behave in a variety of ways in such situations.

In explaining the actions and operating context of a wide range of international aid agencies in Thailand, the empirical research presented in this thesis has drawn upon interviews and a variety of other sources including unpublished literature.[621] The case studies of aid agencies presented in Chapters Seven to Nine built upon wider understanding of the context of foreign aid provision to Thailand and of the conflict in the Far South presented in Chapters Five and Six. The aid agency case studies focused in particular on practical aspects of implementation, including the agencies' interactions with domestic government institutions and with the overall domestic environment. Data gathering and analysis concentrated on the national level, in order to examine in particular the translation of aid policies into practice and showing how, even when considering a sub-national issue, higher-level considerations often shaped

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[620] Anderson (1998), Uvin (1998, 2000), Goodhand (2001), Muscat (2002), Esman (2003), Herring (2003), Uphoff (2003), Huber (2004), Barron & Burke (2008), G Brown (2008), Stewart et al. (2008), Woodrow & Chigas (2009), Paris (2010), Brown & Langer (2010), Goodhand, Klem & Sorbo (2011), Goodhand & Korf (2011).
[621] See Sambanis (2004) and Flyvbjerg (2006) on similar applications of case study analysis.

donor interventions before they were implemented. Existing studies addressing related concerns have adopted similar research methods that do not formally test hyoptheses.[622]

Three groups of aid agencies were identified. Agencies in the largest group, Group One, tended not to address the conflict in the Far South of Thailand, a finding that chiefly supports existing analysis. This thesis found that a second group of aid agencies diverged from this default position by attempting in relatively modest ways to support peacebuilding processes. Yet the agencies in this group failed to operationalize their aims. By contrast, a third group of agencies not only aimed to promote peacebuilding in the Far South but also managed to implement relevant interventions.

The variety of aid agencies' responses to violent conflict in the Far South of Thailand is explained through applying a framework of three overarching themes that was refined during the research process. The three themes (motivation, interface and practice) supported analysis and interpretation of empirical material. They are based on a body of existing literature that extends beyond recent analysis of aid and conflict, building a holistic framework that explains the challenges and incentives confronted by aid agencies.[623] The breadth of factors addressed reflects the diversity and complexity of development assistance, with no single factor emerging as a sole determinant of actions.

10.2 Do foreign aid agencies pursue peacebuilding objectives in the Far South of Thailand and what related patterns of aid practice emerge across different agencies?

Early chapters reviewed literature explaining the context of peripheral conflict in South and Southeast Asia (Chapter Two), the varied ways in which aid agencies respond (Chapter Three), and the specific context of the Far South of Thailand (Chapter Five). Empirical findings were summarized in Chapter Six. Chapters Seven to Nine provided supportive case studies. The two largest donors to Thailand since the 1970s, Japan and the Asian Development Bank, were placed in the first of the three groups of aid agencies. They did not appear to have paid attention to 'mainstreaming' peacebuilding issues or to conflict sensitivity in their aid programmes, nor to have addressed the causes of horizontal inequalities that contribute to peripheral conflict in the Far South. Of other donors, smaller programmes in Thailand funded by France, Australia and Germany also fell into Group One. What is more, as the case studies of UNDP and The Asia Foundation showed, agencies that did aim to address conflict in the Far South with some of their programmes often failed to integrate the specific concerns of the Far South into the rest of their work in Thailand.

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[622] The national level of donor engagement has attracted considerable attention in development practice literature, for example Cohen (1995), Mosse (2005), and Eyben (2006). The primarily qualitative approach adopted in Ch.5 and elswhere in explaining the wider context of conflict in the Far South of Thailand reflects and responds to the prominence of culture and identity both in existing analyses of the conflict in the Far South of Thailand and in the field of Thai studies more widely (Anderson 1991:171-191, Thongchai 1994, Chaiwat 2005, Liow 2009).

[623] Key sources on donor motivations include Arase (1995), Addison (2000), Hopkins (2000), Leftwich (2001), Boyce (2002), Herring (2003); on the donor-government interface, Wright (1994), Potter (1996), Killick (1998), Eyben (2003), Ottaway & Lacina (2003), Eyben et al. (2007), Gibson et al. (2005), Jerve & Hansen (2008); on aid practice, Porter, Allen & Thompson (1991), Hobart (1993), Pottier (1993), Rondinelli (1993), Gasper (2000), Dale (2003), Orlandini (2003), Uphoff (2003), Herdt & Bastiaensen (2004), Caddell & Yanacopulos (2006).

Demonstrating Group One donor tendencies through detailed analysis of policy and practice is challenging. It is hard to research an absence of peacebuilding-related interventions and it is not generally possible to map the direct impact of aid projects on the causes and dynamics of peripheral conflict given the often indirect way in which aid is provided through government institutions and other domestic bodies. The importance of people's perceptions of horizontal inequality in peripheral conflict environments further complicates any efforts to draw direct links between donor action and violent unrest.[624] It is possible, however, to show whether donors considered factors relating to peripheral conflict in project preparation and implementation. Chapter Seven presented an example of the ADB's inputs into the design of the IMT-GT project that included the Far South (as well as Aceh) in its area during the 1990s. Recent resuscitation of the scheme and a similar lack of evidence of 'conflict sensitivity' in its work in Aceh suggest that conflict avoidance is an inherent trait rather than an outlier or relic of a past era before the explicit promotion of peacebuilding in aid agencies from the 1990s on.

Some development interventions do aim to address peripheral conflict, however. After explaining the common properties of such conflicts including the ways in which development processes can marginalise peripheral minorities, Chapter Two showed how various interventions can promote peacebuilding, from supporting advocacy groups to funding peace processes directly. With specific reference to foreign aid agencies, Chapter Three explained that there are cases of peripheral conflicts where foreign aid agencies have made a positive contribution to peacebuilding. In peripheral conflicts such as in Sri Lanka and Aceh, some aid agencies have promoted peacebuilding explicitly and directly, although these efforts have been relatively small-scale in size. In Thailand, the identification of Group Two agencies that attempted but failed to establish peacebuilding initiatives demonstrates the challenges involved in trying to turn peacebuilding policy into practice in peripheral conflict settings. At the time of research, UNDP, the World Bank and the EU had all tried unsuccessfully to establish such aid programmes for the Far South of Thailand, failing to gain necessary government approval. While recognizing that Group Two may in cases represent a transitional phase that some donors pass through, its identification as a separate group serves to highlight specific trends identified by the research, including the difficulty of providing foreign aid to promote change in fields that are not congruent with recipient government policy.

Chapter Nine introduced two aid agencies that fell into Group Three. The Asia Foundation and Unicef both managed to implement programmes promoting peacebuilding through small steps, working with local partners and negotiating a way through the donor-government interface. They showed that foreign aid could fund some peacebuilding-related work in the Far South even when the state was reluctant to allow it. Other agencies also addressing the conflict at the time of research and identified in Chapter Six included some German Foundations such as the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, small funds offered by foreign embassies in Bangkok to international and domestic agencies promoting human rights, and international NGOs working with local partners especially on

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[624] See Ch.2.

community initiatives. Their projects varied from the promotion of locally specific education policies to support for civil groups engaging in high-level advocacy, all sharing the aim of supporting changes to Thai state policy to better reflect the concerns of Malay Muslims in the Far South. They were normally small initiatives, with budgets from a few thousand dollars up to several hundred thousand.

10.3   How do the characteristics and causes of conflict in the Far South of Thailand affect aid agencies' ability to support peacebuilding?

Stewart et al. (2008:299) find that national policies are generally more responsive to horizontal inequalities than are international policies. Evidence from the Far South of Thailand does not fully support this view. Domestic policymakers may on average be more aware than international actors of ethnic differences in Thai society but that does not equate to more progressive policies from the perspective of peripheral minorities. As Chapter Five showed, Thai government policy has demonstrated over several decades a concern for the well-being of Malay Muslims but only on terms defined by the central state and without envisaging devolution of power or meaningful mechanisms to end their continued political and cultural marginalization. Thailand's legacy of centralized authority and a unitary national identity have to date given policymakers few incentives to deviate from a security-based policy in the Far South, a region of little relevance to national political process or economic performance. The concerns of people in the Far South are also marginal to the recent national political struggle in Thailand.

Earlier chapters described how the form of central state policies and structures, as well as associated promotion of what is often an exclusionary or ethnically defined form of national identity, are highly significant factors in the onset and trajectory of peripheral conflict.[625] For foreign aid agencies, close association with central institutions of recipient states is a core aspect of their working practice. Peter Uvin, with particular reference to ethnic conflicts, sees aid and the state as *"Two sides of the same coin"* (1998:226). In Thailand, with weak local government and an underground insurgency whose leaders cannot be contacted, representatives of the central state were the dominant if not sole domestic interlocutor for foreign aid agencies. In effect, aid agencies could only engage with one side of the conflict.

Given that aid flows typically pass through recipient government institutions, and require government permission even if provided to non-governmental bodies, the reluctance of the Thai state to accept foreign involvement in a sensitive domestic field was a key factor defining the pattern of aid delivery. A middle-income state with a sound fiscal position since the onset of serious violent conflict in the Far South at the start of 2004,[626] Thailand has had little economic need for donor assistance and aid agencies had little leverage with which to enforce what would be perceived by many Thai politicians, generals and senior civil servants as an infringement of sovereignty. What is more, as was described in

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[625] This tallies with the findings of Stewart et al. (2008:295) over the significance of the nature of the state for horizontal inequalities.

[626] Bank of Thailand (2004-2011).

Chapter Five and subsequent chapters, government bodies that were willing to accept donor support typically pursued policies closer to pacification than peacebuilding, providing development funding through conventional means as part of efforts to win over the local population and promote national unity. With many government schemes typically seen in the Far South as part of the problem rather than the solution to conflict, this left little space for aid agencies aiming to promote more conciliatory approaches and to influence policymaking. Senior Thai policymakers and other influential figures have generally demonstrated little interest in pursuing a negotiated settlement or offering meaningful reforms. The failure of Group Two agencies to engage demonstrates the difficulty of starting even relatively small-scale and incremental interventions promoting long-term resolution of conflict, let alone establishing more comprehensive international involvement in a peace process.

However, some opportunities for donor assistance did exist. Various central government bodies and sub-departments showed an interest in working with foreign aid agencies, often in association with a range of research institutes and non-governmental organizations. Group Two and Group Three agencies prioritized relationships with such partners and were sometimes able to initiate interventions addressing conflict in the Far South. The scope for such work was relatively limited. Aid agencies typically required the approval of government monitoring bodies including TICA in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who filtered out initiatives that were not in line with their interpretation of government policy.

The significance of identity in the conflict in the Far South of Thailand added futher challenges for aid agencies. As explained in Chapter Five, antagonistic ethnic differences that are associated with the construction of the Thai nation and of oppositional Malay Muslim identity are central to explanations of the violence. Political and economic inequalities are typically seen in the Far South through the prism of ethnic difference. This broadly corresponds with the findings of Stewart et al. over the importance of perceptions of inequality as well as material inequalities. From the perspective of many within the Malay Muslim minority, development may bring material benefit but is also part of conservative nation-building and imposed assimilation. While development processes and specific development policies and interventions can take many forms, in peripheral conflict areas they have often been dominated by and contributed to unequal core-periphery relationships around an intrusive power imbalance, patronage networks, and political structures that reinforce or at least do not counter existing horizontal divisions.

Empiricial data presented in this thesis showed that Group One foreign aid agencies did not take the prominence of ethnic identity and associated cultural status inequalities in the Far South of Thailand into account. For example, decades of donor assistance helped to expand and improve state education but did not significantly address the evident tensions in the sector in the Far South. Donors concentrating on poverty reduction and improving service provision have not prioritised the area. Conventional foreign aid policy, even if disaggregating national units and focusing on economic inequalities, appears in the case of many current and past interventions in Thailand not to have

considered the complex relationships between the implementation of development initiatives and the wider range of horizontal inequalities that have led to conflict in the Far South.

Foreign aid may generally be a poor tool for addressing issues that relate to cultural and political aspects of horizontal inequalities but there were identifiable entry points in the Far South, assuming that aid agencies were able to move away from conventional socioeconomic approaches and to develop an understanding of the multi-dimensional context of the area. Examples include some of the issues addressed by Group Three aid agencies that worked to help integrate Malay Muslim concerns over questions relating to government service delivery such as language policy in education, and to support discussion on forms of decentralization and political changes that would promote more representative local government.

The pattern of donor interest and involvement in peacebuilding seen in the Far South of Thailand is specific to the research period as well as the location, although it is considered to be fairly representative of other peripheral conflict contexts over longer periods. Many of the features of the Far South of Thailand are also found in other peripheral conflicts, with similar implications for foreign aid. Peripheral conflicts are characterized by a lack of donor interest and strong domestic government protection of sovereignty that keep almost all interventions aiming to address conflict at bay. Examples include Xinjiang, Tibet, various regions of Burma, and Aceh before the 2005 peace process. In some cases, such as Sri Lanka during the failed 2002-2005 peace process, or Mindanao over a longer period, a more supportive recipient government stance has led to a higher level of donor involvement in peacebuilding-related funding. The Far South of Thailand lies somewhere between these extremes, with relatively low overall levels of foreign aid provision.

10.4   What properties of aid agencies help explain the pattern?

This section chiefly considers the politics and processes of aid delivery itself. While accepting that international policies and statistics are often blind to or ignorant of many of the factors associated with horizontal inequalities (Stewart et al. 2008:297), the findings of this research indicate a range of structural and practical reasons why aid agencies tended to avoid addressing peripheral conflicts even if their staff were well aware of their existence. Interviews with representatives of all three groups of aid agency often demonstrated a relatively strong personal understanding of the dynamics and causes of conflict in the Far South of Thailand. However, that understanding was only occasionally translated into actual practice, even in agencies such as UNDP, the World Bank, GTZ, or the EU that have generic policies on how to address conflict.

10.4a   Motivations

Findings are summarized here according to the three intersecting themes of motivation, interface and practice. First, many aid agencies were not strongly motivated to address the conflict. This theme is broad and the key trends identified require further explanation. Of particular relevance to peripheral conflicts, successful promotion of linkages between peacebuilding and aid in peripheral conflict settings has to counter the continued focus of development generally and of foreign aid more specifically on narrowly defined aims that prioritize the socioeconomic progress of nation state units (Hettne 1993a), as was explained in Chapter Three. Peripheral conflict in the Far South has had little impact on Thailand's development indicators or economic performance and no impact on global development goals, so it can be fairly comfortably ignored by many aid agencies. Donors that prioritized socioeconomic progress at the national level often appeared to have limited scope to identify horizontal inequalities at the sub-national level, especially when the key indicators of inequality were political or cultural rather than socioeconomic alone. The findings presented here do not demonstrate a measurable negative impact of aid flows on peripheral conflict but they do show a common failure to conceptualize and address horizontal inequalities. The case study of ADB involvement in IMT-GT presented an example of project design that focused on national and regional economic interests despite operating in sub-national areas of both Thailand and Indonesia with minority populations and histories of conflict. Reports compiled by both international and national consultants did not identify the context of unrest in either place. An institutional approach that prioritized national economic considerations, avoided politically difficult issues, and provided little opportunity for the involvement of people in the project area gave little space to address horizontal inequalities or other aspects of peripheral conflict.

Foreign aid policy is seen here to be influenced by contested politics, different interest or advocacy groups promoting different agendas across different parts of donor governments. For bilateral donors in particular, but also for multilateral agencies, aid programmes form part of wider diplomatic relationships. Unrest in the Far South that is politically insignificant internationally has always received little attention from foreign aid agencies. A comparison can be drawn with the stronger response to a perceived communist threat in the 1960s and 1970s, showing that dominant aid flows did address conflict concerns when they were a central part of donor and recipient policy agendas.[627] However, this thesis has shown how aid practice is a result of many issues and process, with macro-political factors influencing but not defining how aid is provided in peripheral conflict contexts. In Thailand, aid agencies also had a more direct need to maintain a good relationship with the recipient government in order to be able to transfer resources. Agencies including the World Bank and the ADB aimed to persuade the Thai Government to resume borrowing and were reluctant to jeopardize their relationships with key individuals and institutions in the government by addressing politically sensitive issues. UNDP, meanwhile, aimed to lever its comparative advantage as a key interlocutor between the recipient state

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[627] Foreign aid tended at that time to support 'pacification' in an attempt to win the conflict rather than to promote a just peace. See Ch.6 (Part 6.2a).

and donors, a role that brought it closer to central government planning agencies and limited its room for manoeuvre. [628]

By contrast, Group Three donors that did address conflict in the Far South including Unicef, TAF and others demonstrated certain properties: a stronger commitment to operationalizing principles of equality and justice, while recognizing the negative aspects of centrally defined development policies from the context of a peripheral minority; political awareness rather than a technical mindset; and an understanding of the developmental significance of difference and ethnicity in addition to economic inequalities.[629] Unicef, for example, from an apolitical platform of universal child rights promotion, recognized and responded to internal disparities within Thailand. Work including their situational analysis (Unicef 2006) demonstrates strong understanding of horizontal inequalities and their causes in the Far South, while their interventions in fields such as education language policy responded to them (see Chapter Nine). TAF, meanwhile, has addressed problems with government approaches to the education of Malay Muslims in the Far South for several decades, reflecting a more politically engaged basis and prioritization of justice and human rights. In the case of the US Government donor USAID, interviews conducted as part of this research as well as other complementary written sources suggest that support for small initiatives addressing conflict in the Far South of Thailand including funding provided to TAF stemmed from similar interests and possibly from concern over potential future escalation of unrest in a Muslim area.[630] Group Two donors also demonstrated some of these qualities, but rarely with sufficient commitment or prioritization to turn intentions into practice.

Research shows that although Group Three agencies did not follow a single consistent approach, they did all aim to moderate the policies and practice of the Thai state in a variety of ways: through partnerships with well-connected institutions such as elite universities or the think-tank KPI (in the case of TAF); through involving more progressive government agencies or units that appear interested in addressing Malay Muslim concerns (in the case of Unicef); and through supporting independent advocacy aiming to change government policy (in the case of human rights promotion that received USAID funding, or the work of FES). Community-based approaches that a small number of donors backed in the Far South, for example in the World Bank's preliminary work or programmes funded by Oxfam and Raks Thai, also aimed as a primary objective to influence the government rather than transfer resources or skills at the local level. They supported engagement with government institutions either directly at the village or commune (*tambon*) level and at a higher level through networks and advocacy, aiming at wider policy change as well as localized impact.[631]

The focus on directly or indirectly changing how the central state operates partly reflects the limited alternatives in Thailand given a high level of centralization and the absence of a peace process. Even aid

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[628] World Bank interest in encouraging loans and UNDP's positioning is explained in Ch.8.

[629] See Ch.6 (Part 6.4) & Ch.9.

[630] See USAID (2009). Also interviews with UN Official and USAID Official 2, and interview (b) with USAID Official 1. Note however that such concern is fairly limited given weak evidence of international associations with the conflict.

[631] Interviews with Yowalak Thiarachow, Kasina Limsamanthan, and World Bank Official 3.

agency initiatives that aimed to address local conditions typically did so by pushing for change in the centre. Alternative approaches to addressing peripheral conflict, through development assistance identified in Chapter Two including strengthening local structures and backing supporting measures alongside peace negotiations, were less viable.

While there may be more options for local engagement in other peripheral conflict contexts, the focus of Group Three aid agencies in Thailand on changing how the state operates is not merely a response to the specific case. Given that the main underlying dynamic of peripheral conflicts involves the marginalization of peripheral minorities within developing nation states, it is understandable that those agencies aiming to address the long-term causes of unrest should consider how the central state engages in the periphery rather than focusing on more traditional localized development interventions.[632]

10.4b   Interface

The second theme is the way in which aid agencies approach the interface with key recipient government institutions. A comparison between UNDP and Unicef illustrates the key findings under this theme. Working alongside recipient government departments, both Unicef and UNDP promoted a 'reformed' approach to development that recognized inequality as an issue of concern, aiming to address issues such as human rights and justice as well as considering inequalities within nation states. Both agencies aimed to influence government policies in their respective fields. However, while Unicef managed to establish projects addressing policies that exacerbated horizontal inequalities in the Far South, UNDP's efforts to address the conflict were unsuccessful as they failed to obtain government permission to implement their plans.

In Thailand and elsewhere, UNDP operates through an especially close 'partnership' with government. UNDP's country director also acts as the most senior UN representative to Thailand and the agency has a relatively high profile. Desire to limit political (rather than less threatening developmental) concern in UN headquarters over the conflict in the Far South made Thai civil servants more reluctant to allow UNDP to set up any related programmes. At the same time, UNDP's circumstances forced it into a close relationship with the government. UNDP promotes 'national execution' of foreign-funded aid projects by recipient governments and in Thailand it worked closely with central government planning agencies in devising and reporting against a set of national performance goals in support of the UN's Millennium Development Goals.

These factors presented an especially challenging task for UNDP in comparison with other agencies. The difficulties were compounded by UNDP's own approach. While Unicef entered into a gradual process of programme development, commissioning a situational analysis and presenting their work as part of a

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[632] Indeed, it is hard to see how traditional development project interventions or community-based approaches will have any significant impact on the wider dynamics of conflict in the absence of an ongoing peace process or of fundamental changes to how central governments relate to peripheral areas.

national strategy to focus on the most deprived areas rather than a specific initiative for the Far South, UNDP began by launching a forum for discussing reconciliation. A more political step that was less carefully brokered, this led the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to cancel the forum and subsequent plans.

The differences between the two agencies were compounded by the availability of resources. With fairly independent and steady financing, Unicef was well positioned to develop a gradual approach, commission research and dedicate the time of their advisers to the issue. By contrast, interviews with UNDP staff suggested far less internal interest in addressing conflict in the Far South. Given little in the way of resources of its own, UNDP promoted itself as a coordinating body and devised a multi-agency plan for donor involvement in the Far South, a step that is likely to have further increased central government concern. UNDP was also hampered by its traditional association with project implementation alongside the Ministry of the Interior, in Thailand as in many countries a conservative body with a primary remit for maintaining authority. Unicef's ability to work with selected departments of line ministries such as the Ministry of Education offered greater opportunities to promote policy reforms to respond to Malay Muslim concerns.

The significant amounts of time and attention that Unicef put into developing a programme addressing conflict in the Far South also suggest a higher degree of commitment to the issue. Building working relationships with specific government units as well as non-governmental bodies was partly the result of the careful approaches of staff who appeared motivated to take forward a difficult agenda. Unicef staff who were interviewed uniformly expressed a desire to find ways to address inequalities and to support a peaceful resolution of conflict in the Far South more widely, with inputs planned or ongoing across a range of sectors.

Aid literature on government-donor relationships stresses the importance of government 'ownership' of donor-funded projects. Studies of contemporary and historical aid programmes in Thailand show that foreign aid projects often failed to achieve their objectives where they diverged from the interests of important central government bodies (Muscat 1990, Shimomura 2008). Economic assistance supporting socioeconomic modernization at the national level was easier to agree on than assistance for resolving social, cultural and political problems, as seen in the struggles of Group Two agencies. Problems arose for donors working in Thailand where the steps necessary to gain government approval for a project encouraged interventions aligned with the interests of the central state and not those of a peripheral minority. Interface processes meant that in practice donors often ended up supporting government objectives even if that was not their original intention, as case study research on countries affected by peripheral conflicts including Sri Lanka (Herring 2003) and Thailand (Orlandini 2003) has shown. Recent promotion of 'partnerships' and 'harmonization' around the Millennium Development Goals promotes closer ties to the state and sets disaggregated national targets for a relatively limited set of depoliticized interventions, limiting donors' options still further (Call & Cousens 2008:10, von Trotha 2009). The scope to promote policy change is likely to be especially limited in such circumstances.

10.4c   <u>Practice</u>

Finally, the everyday practice of how aid agencies operate also shapes how they can address conflict. Practical measures are necessary to turn global statements and commitments to promoting peace through aid provision into action. Group Two agencies including UNDP and the World Bank placed insufficient emphasis on the steps that would have been required to engage in the Far South of Thailand. For both agencies, concern with peripheral conflict was secondary to their interests in maintaining a good relationship with the government. The World Bank's main priority was to resume lending to the Thai Government and they put insufficient time or resources into the practice of initiating a programme for the Far South. Similarly, UNDP's commitment to 'partnerships' with the state and to their overall coordination function made it hard to maintain independence and plan the careful, low-profile approaches that would have been necessary for them successfully to negotiate the interface with the government. More widely, many donors in Thailand appeared poorly set up to approach complex issues that require flexible, contextualized responses.

Chapter Nine showed how Group Three agencies demonstrated specific practical attributes. They were able to respond to experience gained from decades of development work that has been documented in a wide body of literature yet is often passed over.[633] They committed time and resources to understanding the context of the conflict in the Far South, through commissioning research such as Unicef's situational analysis. It is also probably not a coincidence that key international managers in both Unicef and TAF had spent many years working in Thailand, giving them an informed and specific rather than a generic institutional outlook. The role of prominent individuals in responding to evolving circumstances and in using their experience to create opportunities for engagement appears significant, as was also seen in Chapter Three with reference to aid agency programming in Aceh. At the same time, staffing is not simply a matter of chance but reflects at least in part agencies' recruitment and deployment processes. All advisers and managers in both TAF and Unicef who were interviewed demonstrated a concern for rights-based principles and relevant analytical skills, while both agencies were willing to leave experienced managers in post in Thailand for long periods.

Unicef and TAF did not operationalize generic conflict guidelines or checklists that appear in international donor guidance on conflict-affected areas, but operated instead through careful engagement with and support for domestic institutions. They employed a high proportion of staff with political or broad social science training, enabling them to address political problems rather than retain narrow technical approaches. These skill-sets and associated outlooks contrasted with the small number of staff in UNDP and especially in the World Bank who demonstrated any expectation that factors leading to or perpetuating conflict in the Far South were relevant to foreign aid provision and their own organizations' remit.

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[633] See also Ch.3 on barriers widely identified in the literature on development practice.

Group Three agencies made considerable investments to gain overall government approval, while finding ways to work with identified governmental and non-governmental partners to promote incremental policy changes. They demonstrated the flexibility to adapt to circumstances, supporting a range of locally devised interventions that responded to the need to build functional working relationships with domestic institutions. Such flexibility was important given a dynamic national political scene and changing relationships between government institutions.

Despite their positive attributes, practical barriers still held back Group Three agencies. Their ground presence in the Far South was limited by government restrictions and by virtue of their country office being located in Bangkok. They had conducted little evaluation of their impact on the dynamics of conflict. The need to work through domestic institutions created a further barrier, with only a small number of institutions existing in the Far South that had the neutrality, technical capacity and financial transparency that donors require before transferring funds or even providing less tangible items like training. Finally, while their initiatives in the Far South demonstrated strong understanding of the horizontal inequalities affecting the area, Group Three agencies' work elsewhere in Thailand including national level interventions was not always as alert to the same issues. For example, the promotion of national democratic institutions undertaken by The Asia Foundation and other international funding agencies did not appear to reflect the specific representational challenges faced by ethnic minorities (Lijphardt 2008).[634]

Overall, certain attributes exhibited by aid agencies enabled them to establish programmes by taking advantage of specific circumstances. Case studies of aid engagement in other peripheral conflicts (see Chapter Three) suggest that the three themes identified here can go some way towards explaining the pattern and variety of foreign aid in other peripheral conflicts, although practices and patterns are likely to vary given the specificities and changing nature of operating environments and of aid agencies themselves. Some agencies demonstrate common tendencies in many countries. For example, a recent review offered little evidence that the ADB showed any deeper consideration of the links between development and conflict in other conflict environments (Balbosa 2010). Other agencies vary more considerably over space and time, as seen by comparing the World Bank's emphasis on addressing conflict in Indonesia in the mid-2000s with its weaker commitment in Thailand.

10.5   Can donors do more?

It has already been explained that the onset and prolongation of peripheral conflicts are not inevitable. To recap, where overt violence persists, various measures including a range of development interventions can help address grievances that sustain conflict and can on occasion support negotiated solutions to conflict. With neither side likely to win militarily and the creation of an independent nation from the peripheral area equally improbable, a sustainable end to violence in peripheral conflicts

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[634] See Ch.9 (Part 9.6). In this regard, Group 3 agencies appeared to fall back on accepted international norms of democracy that may serve to perpetuate horizontal inequalities (Ostby 2008:140-141).

commonly requires reforms to the central state that decrease the political, cultural and economic marginalization of a peripheral minority.

However, governments often have little incentive in peripheral conflict environments to undertake broader reforms or consider concessions to insurgents' interests. In the Far South of Thailand, following the upsurge in violence from 2004, successive governments offered a fairly free rein to the military, agreeing to increased commitments of resources and troops.[635] Development initiatives formed a second prong of the government response as part of efforts to win the conflict (Connors 2007, Pathan 2008).[636] As Chapter Five explained, development interventions have been applied to maintain control and to demonstrate the benevolence of the Thai state rather than to support any meaningful transfer of power, promotion of justice or other steps to address enduring cultural and political inequalities.

The insurgents' resilience and continued recruitment in an environment of widespread local support have not waned (ICG 2009).[637] Most analyses of the conflict in the Far South find that a peaceful resolution is likely to involve significant changes in how the Thai state operates in the area, including a politically negotiated approach offering some degree of autonomy and greater acceptance of cultural diversity as well as more immediate security and immunity for insurgent leaders.[638] Chapter Five explained how some space for promoting policy discussion on the devolution of power and associated measures does exist. Attempts to promote some limited yet substantial form of autonomy within the Thai nation state form a core element of most moderate attempts to support a negotiated solution, including external promotion by former Malaysian elder statesman Mahatir Mohamad (Nation 2010), repeated proposals of Thai politicians from different parties,[639] and advocacy initiatives promoted by civil networks and academics (KPI 2009).[640] Autonomy in one form or another has over time become less of a taboo subject, although it is still poorly received by influential military officers, the palace and senior civil servants (McCargo 2010), as well as holding little electoral appeal nationally. Significant changes at the national level may be necessary before meaningful devolution of power is viable.[641]

Foreign aid alone is unlikely to achieve major policy changes in such a context but it can support progress towards them. Indeed, some of the issues addressed by Group Three donors like TAF and Unicef were effectively aiming to do so. Aid agencies addressing the conflict in the Far South aimed to improve how the Thai state operates in the area in a variety of different ways. Past experience of aid

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[635] When Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva announced a policy of 'civilian politics leading the military' in June 2009, it was greeted with widespread cynicism given the strength of the armed forces embedded politically in the 2007 Constitution and in practice on the ground (Boonlert 2009, Pathan & Pradit 2009).

[636] The scope for a 'victory' against insurgents in the Far South through military force appears limited. As far back as 2006, some Thai military sources were saying informally that they had already exhausted all available options (interview with Senior Officer).

[637] The government has failed to investigate meaningfully any allegations of torture or extrajudicial killings (ibid.)

[638] See for example Vatikiotis (2006), McCargo (2010).

[639] Politicians include Abhisit Vejjajiva, Chaturon Chaiseng and Chavalit Yongchaiyudh (Bangkok Post 2009, Kom Chat Luek 2009, Funston 2009b:132).

[640] Reforms to central institutions have also been proposed alongside or as an alternative to decentralization, for example the suggestion of the formation of a discrete Ministry for the South (Srisompob & McCargo 2008).

[641] See McCargo (2011).

provision in Thailand suggests that there is scope to support policy change through building the capacity and mandate of domestic institutions attempting to bring about improvements. Examples include long-term assistance to the health sector and more recent interventions including Unicef's support for bilingual education in the Far South. This suggests that Group Three donors have been making a modest contribution towards the changes needed to bring sustainable and just peace to the Far South by working with selected domestic governmental and non-governmental institutions.

More donors have over time found small ways to support peacebuilding.[642] By 2009, the World Bank had managed to gain approval for a low-profile programme providing small grants to local NGOs in the Far South and subsequently for a US$600,000 community development initiative.[643] The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung was able to expand its programmes using new funding from the European Union, while the Asia Foundation and its Thai counterpart KPI were continuing to build civil networks and to promote public debate on political solutions to the conflict.[644] USAID also announced a programme of support for democracy promotion across Thailand through non-governmental bodies, with a component focusing on conflict in the Far South.[645]

Successive governments from 2008 on have been marginally more supportive of a limited level of international involvement but concerns over internationalizing the situation in the Far South remain (McCargo 2008:187, Nation 2009) and these new initiatives are small in scale. Those aid agencies managing to establish new programmes also retain a range of objectives in Thailand, in which the conflict in the Far South does not feature prominently. The World Bank's primary aim has continued to be the resumption of lending to the Thai Government, in 2009-20100 promoting a US$1 billion 'Public Sector Reform Development Policy Loan' (World Bank 2010). Meanwhile, USAID's new programme hit practical challenges. The limited capacity of local non-governmental groups to absorb additional donor funds was mentioned by many interviewees during this research. With the European Union already experiencing trouble spending its own peacebuilding budget, one informed observer said with reference to the USAID project: *"I know all the NGOs down there and can't see who they can work with."* [646]

Overall, while some donors appear to have found some ways past the interface with the Thai Government, and it is possible that over time they will find ways to establish increasingly effective interventions, their terms of engagement still appear circumscribed by the factors that have been described in earlier chapters. Unless the environment in Thailand changes dramatically, realistically achievable peacebuilding measures that donors can undertake are likely to be limited to the following: continued small yet valuable steps to promote policy change, largely through supporting sympathetic domestic institutions, that could be multiplied further over time; further positioning of agencies to be

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[642] Ongoing aid trends were monitored following the completion of most of the primary research in 2009.
[643] Interview (a) with World Bank Sector Specialist 2. Further discussions with World Bank Official 3 in October 2011.
[644] Interview (b) with Tom Parks, interview (b) with Jost Wagner.
[645] USAID (2009). Also interview (b) with USAID Official 1, interview (c) with Tom Parks, interview (b) with Jost Wagner, and interview with Johannet Gaemers.
[646] Interview with NGO Consultant.

able to respond to changing circumstances in future; and further avoidance of programmes funding forms of state expansion and unequal development that may indirectly contribute to conflict.

This research supports the existing literature which suggests that positive engagement in peacebuilding in peripheral conflict areas tends to be small scale, occurring where donors both prioritize inequalities and adopt practical steps that enable them to devise appropriate interventions and implement them (Esman 2003, Uphoff 2003). Foreign aid agencies (and their political masters) rarely have the influence, interest, scope or legitimacy to impose peace or significantly change the domestic context surrounding peripheral conflicts in the Far South of Thailand and elsewhere. Larger-scale interventions in such situations appear to be an option for donors only when domestic leaders are genuinely interested in a peace settlement rather than continued conflict or an imposed 'victor's peace'.[647] Even where donors have found space to promote peace, the result is often mixed. This study corroborates other research findings which suggest that large foreign aid projects are often too unwieldy to address such conflicts effectively. They commonly avoid conflict-related issues completely, while occasionally they impose externally derived solutions that have little domestic support or fail to achieve their objectives for a variety of other reasons. More ambitious approaches may disburse larger budgets but risk being unresponsive to different contexts on the ground, and failing to take into account agencies' own capacities to deliver.[648] Recent evidence from Sri Lanka shows the difficulty of successfully implementing larger initiatives (Herring 2003, Goodhand & Klem 2005). As is the case concerning the impact of foreign aid on horizontal inequalities more generally,[649] larger-scale foreign peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka have arguably had some negative impact, backing an externally oriented rather than domestically accountable government (Goodhand & Walton 2009) and swamping indigenous civil society by funding NGOs to run donor-defined projects (Liyange 2006).

Overall, these findings have several implications for international aid agencies. First, this thesis argues that using foreign aid to support peace promotion in peripheral conflicts necessitates a broader definition of development that extends beyond socioeconomic issues, disaggregating the nation state unit and understanding multi-faceted horizontal inequalities.[650] As has been described with particular reference to Thailand, development initiatives are themselves commonly loaded with identity-related significance as a result of the wider context within which they are devised and implemented. In order to address peripheral conflicts through foreign aid provision, inequalities along political and cultural as well as socioeconomic lines need to be understood. The associated rights of different groups require attention, rather than concentrating on narrow definitions of economic growth and poverty reduction. Agencies need commitment and incentives to turn common policy statements on rights, justice and equality into practice. Doing so is particularly challenging from within a conventional developmental

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[647] Aid interventions in other peripheral conflicts – in Aceh, Sri Lanka, Mindanao and elsewhere – have depended on the continued good will of domestic parties and been undermined when this has not been forthcoming (McKenna 1998, Aspinall & Crouch 2003, Frerks & Klem 2006, Barron & Burke 2008).
[648] See Hulme (1995), Landell-Mills et al. (2007).
[649] See Uvin (1998), Stewart (2008).
[650] See also Uvin (1998:226).

approach, social and economic statistics and standard development indicators such as the Millennium Development Goals only demonstrating some aspects of horizontal inequalities even if disaggregated.

Second, overarching or holistic peacebuilding approaches may sound good to concerned audiences in donor countries but are often unrealistic. The challenges of implementation explored in this research mean that narrower and less ambitious responses may be more effective at building on what has been learnt through evaluations of failed development projects over many decades, recognizing in the process the practical limits within which most aid agencies operate. Promotion of stronger government-donor 'partnerships' and inter-donor 'harmonization' can create a debilitating consensus around a limited set of large-scale and conservative interventions (Maxwell & Riddell 1998, Eyben 2007). The flexibility to support a variety of organizations, to negotiate space to operate, and to respond to changing political context emerged as critical qualities of those agencies able to operate in the Far South of Thailand. At a practical level, specific circumstances determined which approaches to peacebuilding might be viable in any one context. Flexibility (or 'process' approaches) and an emphasis on context-specific responses appear to be important qualities for agencies addressing peripheral conflicts.

Third, recognizing that development is a political and not a technical process (Holland, Brocklesby & Abugre 2004) is even more important for aid agencies addressing politically complex conflicts than it is in more conventional fields. Approaches to peacebuilding in peripheral conflicts should concentrate on understanding domestic context and working out how to engage effectively rather than on producing guidelines and toolkits. Putting this into practice is not simply a matter of conducting better analysis. It also requires further attention to the details of engagement at the interface with the recipient state and closer to the field. This in turn has implications for how aid agencies operate. It implies placing greater emphasis on contextual knowledge and on understanding the nuances and shifts over time within government agencies in order to find ways to establish and successfully implement interventions in a difficult environment. Concrete steps undertaken by agencies managing to address peripheral conflicts include prioritizing long-term staff postings, engaging local expertise on a continual basis, and devolving authority so that decisions are informed by sound contextual understanding.

The analysis presented in this thesis, and in a wider body of research on horizontal inequalities, suggests that sustainable and just resolutions of peripheral conflict require changes in how the central state works. This means that foreign aid agencies need to address the nature of the state in their interventions if they are to have any significant impact. In Thailand, some donors were able to do so through partnering sympathetic government agencies on policy changes or through supporting non-governmental advocacy aiming to build the influence of Malay Muslims from the Far South. Such work is slow, difficult to establish, and does not enable donors to establish loans or spend large grants. Yet it emerges in this context – and by extension in other similar peripheral conflicts – as the most useful input that donors can make.

This research was not able to assess local area-based development initiatives that aid agencies often fund elsewhere as part of conflict reduction approaches since there were very few such projects in operation in the Far South at the time of research. However, there is little reason to suppose that local grants or other investments would have had a significant impact on a conflict that is fundamentally about multidimensional horizontal inequalities and the marginalization of a peripheral minority by the central state. Studies have shown that many local initiatives in the Far South reproduce existing unequal power relationships (Cornish 1997, Bonura 2003). Even if it were to avoid doing so it is hard to see how the World Bank's Community Driven Development grants, implemented in other conflict-affected areas, or direct 'hearts and minds' initiatives offering benefits as an inducement to gain local level confidence in government, would have any discernible impact in the context of the Far South of Thailand unless they promoted higher-level changes in how the government works.[651] If agencies do choose to engage at the local level, initiatives that address more politically engaged issues, for example supporting advocacy networks promoting non-violent political solutions, or addressing a climate of impunity over human rights abuses, are perhaps more likely to make a positive contribution than ones that prioritize funding transfers.

Future research can build on some of the findings presented here. It would be valuable to explore further the reasons why aid agencies act in different ways when addressing peripheral or other similar conflicts. As has been explained, failures to put peacebuilding policies into practice are not simply the result of ignorance of operating contexts but can be related to agencies' political and institutional motivations and practices. This generates a range of potentially useful fields to address through specific analysis including further understanding of the interface between foreign aid agencies and domestic partners, a field in which limited data is available. Future research could also consider the specific interests and decision-making processes of aid agencies in conflict contexts, as well as the multi-level networks and relationships needed to support long-term, domestically-led peacebuilding initiatives across different government and non-governmental institutions. Detailed case studies of specific projects would enable multi-level analysis that was beyond the scope of this research. Initiatives that were funded domestically rather than through external assistance would provide valuable comparative material, as would in-depth research on non-Western aid agencies' work in peripheral conflict areas. Additionally, researchers could consider other fields of action that the merger of development and peacebuilding may overlook. With developmental options limited in peripheral conflict contexts, current or potential ways in which domestic and international agencies pursue other avenues to empower peripheral minorities could be explored.

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[651] See Ch.5 on Thai government initiatives to gain local confidence. Community-based approaches may work in other conflict contexts, for example as part of a wider reconciliation process in low-income settings where political change is under way and government capacity to fulfill demand for local infrastructure is weaker. See Robinson (2004).

Interview References

Single names or nicknames are used in keeping with local nomenclature systems. Thai interviewees are listed by first name. Discussions considered too short or casual in nature to qualify as an interview are not included in this list.

Interviewee	Affiliation	Date	Location	Relevant case study / status
Abdurrahman Sebaru	Manager, Community Development Department, Narathiwat province	20 May 2008	Cafe, Narathiwat Town	Other
ADB Official (name withheld)	ADB Country Team Manager, Colombo	June 2002	ADB Resident Mission, Sri Lanka	Other donor / recipient
Adli	Head of *Panglima Laut* fishing union, Banda Aceh	July 2005	Union office, Banda Aceh, Aceh	Other
Adviser to Provincial Governor (name withheld)	Governor's Office, Banda Aceh	1 July 2008	Restaurant, Banda Aceh, Aceh	ADB / IMT-GT
Ahmed Somboon Bua Luang	Former lecturer and politician, NGO activist	31 October 2007	CS Pattani Hotel, Pattani	Other
Alayas Haji Salah	Manager, TCMD	16 March 2008	New World Hotel, Samsen, Bangkok (and in vehicle)	The Asia Foundation
Aminah	Teacher, local business promoter, Narathiwat town	20 May 2008	Business premises, Narathiwat Town	Other
Athikom Saengchai	Programme Officer, Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung, Thailand	12 November 2007	Thailand office, Sukhumvit Soi 61, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
AUSAID Programme Officer (name withheld)	Australian Embassy	8 November 2007	By phone	Other donor / recipient
Bakrie	Officer, Community Development Department, Narathiwat province	21 May 2008	Cafe, Narathiwat Town	Other
Barron, Patrick	Conflict Unit Manager, Indonesia Social Development Unit, World Bank	17 December 2008	School of Oriental and African Studies, London	World Bank
Beloe, Tom	Aid Effectiveness Specialist, UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre	a) 28 February 2008 b) 14 July 2009	a) UNDP staff canteen, Bangkok; b) Cafe, Thonglor, Bangkok.	UNDP
Benveniste, Luis	Human Development Unit Coordinator, World Bank East Asia Pacific Region	12 January 2008	World Bank office, Siam Discovery, Bangkok	World Bank
British Embassy Diplomat (name withheld)	British Embassy, Bangkok	20 November 2007	Cafe, Wireless Rd, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
British High Commission Officials (2), Sri Lanka (names withheld)	British High Commission, Colombo	10 October 2002	British High Commission, Colombo	Other
Chamroen Laopitak	Vocational Education Lecturer, Narathiwat	21 May 2008	Cafe, Narathiwat Town	Other

Chanintira Na Thalang	Lecturer (Thammasat University)	19 November 2007	Restaurant, Sukhumvit Soi 39	Other
Chantana Banpasirichote Wungkaew	Lecturer (Chulalongkorn University), Peace Promoter	12 February 2008	Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok	World Bank
Chatichai Ratanachai	Lecturer (Prince of Songkhla University Hat Yai campus), former consultant to IMT-GT	23 May 2008	Prince of Songkhla University Hat Yai campus	ADB / IMT-GT
Chidchanok Rahimmula	Lecturer (Prince of Songkhla University Pattani campus), peace advocate	31 October 2007	Prince of Songkhla University Pattani campus	Other
Chueng Chatariakul	Senior Adviser to NESDB & Deputy Director General SBPAC	20 November 2007	NESDB, Lan Luang, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Claypole, Andrew	Chief of Social Policy, Unicef Thailand	February 2009	By email	Unicef
Cole, William	TAF Senior Director	21 October 2009	Cafe, Victoria, London	The Asia Foundation
Communications Specialist (name withheld)	Former employee of Unicef Thailand & other agencies	a) 15 April 2008 b) 12 March 2009 c) 14 June 2009	a) & b) Cafe, Phahonyotin, Bangkok c) Cafe, Siam Square, Bangkok	Unicef
Consultant to TAF (name withheld)	TAF, Thailand	a) 17 December 2007 b) 18 July 2009	a) Cafe, Silom, Bangkok b) Restaurant, Sukhumvit Soi 24, Bangkok	The Asia Foundation
DFID Senior Adviser	DFID Southeast Asia, Bangkok	19 October 2007	British Embassy, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Dunbar, Judy	Program Specialist, Office of Conflict Management & Mitigation, USAID regional Office, Bangkok	24 May 2011	USAID office, Wireless Rd, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Eddin Khoo	Researcher, activist	25 November 2007	Cafe, Bhangsar, Kuala Lumpur	Other
Ekachai Siwilat	Director of Office for Peace and Governance, KPI	1 May 2009	JB Hotel, Hat Yai	The Asia Foundation
England, Robert	Resident Representative, UNDP Thailand & UN Resident Coordinator	23 October 2003	UN Thailand Coordinator's office, Bangkok	UNDP
European Union Official	European Union Mission, Bangkok	19 November 2007	Thailand office, Lumpini, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Fan, Lilianne	Consultant & researcher to UN and NGOs	a) 24 November 2007 b) 3 July 2009	a) Cafe, central Kuala Lumpur b) Thonglor, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Fernando, Nilan	Representative, TAF, Sri Lanka	February 2008	By email	The Asia Foundation
Field, Simon	Coordinator, UNDP, Aceh	27 June 2008	UN field office, Aceh	UNDP
Firmandes	Chair of Aceh Chamber of Commerce	July 2005	Sultan Hotel, Banda Aceh, Aceh	Other
Former NESDB Manager (name withheld)	Retired NESDB Official	February 2008	By email	ADB / IMT-GT

French Aid Programme Officer (name withheld)	Former Programme Officer, French Embassy, Bangkok	30 December 2007	Phra Sumen park, Banglamphu, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Gaemers, Johannet	2nd Secretary, Netherlands Embassy, Bangkok	18 May 2009	Netherlands Embassy, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Gordon, Carey	Regional Programme Officer, USAID regional office, Bangkok	3 April 2003	USAID office, Wireless Rd, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Gothom Arya	Lecturer (Mahidol University), Politician, Peace Activist	19 November 2007	Alliance Francaise, Sathorn, Bangkok	World Bank
Green, Paul	Specialist, International Commission of Jurists, Thailand	23 October 2007	Cafe, Soi Rangnam, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Group of Four teachers (names withheld)	Private Islamic schools, Far South of Thailand	16 March 2008	New World Hotel, Samsen, Bangkok	The Asia Foundation
GTZ Official (name withheld)	Programme Officer, GTZ Thailand	20 April 2008	Cafe, Siam Square	Other donor / recipient
Hasan, Izziah	Social Safeguards Specialist, ADB, Aceh.	28 June 2008	ADB field office, Banda Aceh	ADB / IMT-GT
Head Teacher	Government primary school, Narathiwat	16 July 2009	Narathiwat Town	Other
ILO official (name withheld)	Programme Officer, ILO Thailand	28 February 2008	ILO regional office, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
International Consultant (name withheld)	International consultant to ADB	14 December 2007	Restaurant, Siam Square, Bangkok	ADB / IMT-GT
International Human Rights NGO Manager (name withheld)	International Human Rights NGO, Thailand	12 October 2007	Restaurant, Phyathai, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
International NGO Manager (name withheld)	Regional Manager, International NGO, Thailand office	a) 10 October 2007 b) 31 October 2007 c) 3 July 2009	a) Thailand Office, Bangkok b) Hotel, Pattani Town c) Cafe, Thonglor, Bangkok (also by email, February 2009)	Other donor / recipient
IOM project manager (name withheld)	Project Manager, Aceh	16 March 2006	IOM field office, Banda Aceh	Other
JBIC Programme Officer (name withheld)	JBIC Thailand office, Bangkok	3 April 2003	JBIC office, Ratchadamri, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
JICA Education Project Manager (name withheld)	Ministry of Education, Thailand	17 April 2003	Ministry of Education, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
JICA Programme Officer (name withheld)	JICA Thailand office, Bangkok	2 April 2003	JICA Office, Petchaburi Rd, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Jon Ungpakorn	Former Senator & Chair, Thai NGO Coordinating Committee	21 November 2007	Cafe, Fortune Town, Rachadaphisek, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Kasina Limsamanthan	Senior Programme Officer, Raks Thai	7 March 2008	by phone	Other donor / recipient
Kittipong Soonprasert	Programme Manager, Internews, Thailand	10 October 2007	Internews Thailand Office, Ratchaprasong, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient

Klein, Jim	Representative, TAF, Thailand	15 November 2007	TAF Office, Bangkok	The Asia Foundation
KPI Programme Officer (name withheld)	Programme Officer, KPI	a) 15 April 2008 b) 28 August 2009	a) Cafe, Silom, Bangkok b) Cafe, Central World, Bangkok	The Asia Foundation
Local Businessman (name withheld)	Independent businessman, Narathiwat Town	20 May 2008	Business premises, Narathiwat Town	Other
Local NGO Director (name withheld)	NGO, Yala province	22 May 2008	Yala Town	Other
Local Official (name withheld)	Retired local government official, Narathiwat	20 May 2008	Home, Narathiwat Town	Other
Louis Hajisalah	Language Teacher, Narathiwat	19 May 2008	Home, Narathiwat Town	Other
Mantana Paenbamrung	Officer, victim support NGO, Pattani province	21 May 2008	NGO office, Pattani Town	Other
Morris, Andrew	Deputy Representative, Unicef Thailand	13 November 2007	Restaurant, Banglamphu, Bangkok	Unicef
Mulakala, Anthea	Representative, TAF, Malaysia (former Adviser, World Bank, Indonesia)	24 November 2007	TAF office, Kuala Lumpur	The Asia Foundation
Mulla, Nedj	Second Secretary, US Embassy, Bangkok	30 June 2009	Miracle Grand Hotel, Rangsit, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
NGO Consultant (name withheld)	International consultant, Bangkok	24 October 2009	Home, Sukhumvit, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
NGO Director 1 (name withheld)	Director, small Thai NGO	9 November 2007	NGO office, Phetchaburi Rd, Bangkok	Other
NGO Director 2 (name withheld)	NGO Director and Adviser	30 November 2007	Yala	Unicef
NGO Field Workers 1 & 2 (names withheld)	Local NGOs, Pattani province	30 October 2007	Cafe, Pattani Town	Other
NGO Outreach Workers 1,2, & 3 (names withheld)	Participatory researchers, local NGOs in Far South of Thailand	29 November 2007	Prince of Songkhla University Pattani Campus	Other
NGO Project Officer (name withheld)	Local NGO project worker, Pattani province	27 November 2007	Cafe, Pattani Town	Other
NGO Researcher (name withheld)	Local NGO, Yala province	21 May 2008	Cafe, Yala Town	Other
Nipat Thonglek	Major General, Joint Command, Royal Thai Armed Forces	17 December, 2006	Royal Thai Armed Forces headquarters, Bangkok	Other
Nualnoi Thammasathien	Program Manager, Internews, Thailand (& other affiliations)	a) 19 October 2007 b) 31 October 2007 c) 7 March 2008	a) Victory Monument, Bangkok; b) Pattani town; c) Cafe, Ratchaprasong, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient

Oranuch Jetwattana	Private Sector Economics Officer, ADB Thailand Resident Mission	14 February 2008	ADB office, Central World, Bangkok	ADB / IMT-GT
Parks, Tom	Regional Director for Governance and Conflict , TAF	a) 15 April 2008 b) February 2009 c) 12 March 2009 d) 28 August 2009	a) Cafe, Silom, Bangkok b) By email c) Cafe, SIlom, Bangkok d) TAF office, Silom, Bangkok	The Asia Foundation
Phaisan Toryib	President, Islamic Private School Association	17 July 2009	Attarkiah Al-Islamiah School, Narathiwat town	The Asia Foundation
Roykaew Nitithanprapas	External Relations Officer, ADB Thailand Resident Mission	14 February 2008	ADB Office, Central World, Bangkok	ADB / IMT-GT
Sakdina Chatrakul Na Ayudhya (joined by Plida Sirisawat)	Programme Officer, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Thailand	26 November 2007	FES Thailand Office, Phetchaburi Road, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Senior Officer	Joint Command, Royal Thai Armed Forces	17 December, 2006	Royal Thai Armed Forces headquarters, Chaeng Wattana, Bangkok	Other
Silan, Edelweiss	Regional Project Coordinator, Save the Children UK, Thailand	12 July 2009	Cafe, Ratchaprasong, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Sirisupa Kulthanan	Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Thailand	21 December 2007	UNDP Thailand Office, Bangkok	UNDP
Social Department Official (name withheld)	Social Development & Human Security Office, Pattani Provincial Administration	21 May 2008	Provincial Administration office, Pattani Town	Other
Social Sector Consultant (name withheld)	Consultant to World Bank Thailand (retired)	11 March 2008	Phone Interview	World Bank
Somchai YenSabai	Programme Manager, UNDP Thailand	21 December 2007	UNDP Thailand Office, Bangkok	UNDP
Somchit Grotkaew	Officer, Fisheries Department, Narathiwat province	20 May 2008	Cafe, Narathiwat Town	Other
Sorosi, Diana	Programme officer, Non-Violence International, Thailand	19 October 2007	Cafe, Silom, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Srisompob Jitpiromsri	Lecturer (Prince of Songkhla University Pattani Campus), peace advocate	31 October 2007	Prince of Songkhla University Pattani Campus	Other
Stievater, Michael	Program Development Officer, USAID regional office, Bangkok	9 November 2007	USAID office, Wireless Rd, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Sukri	NGO worker and researcher	29 November 2007	Cafe, Pattani Town	Other
Tadruzul	Malaysian civil activist	25 September 2007	Sukhumvit Soi 38, Bangkok	Other
TAF Adviser	TAF, Thailand	March 2009	By email	The Asia Foundation

TAF Programme Officer 1 (name withheld)	TAF Programme Officer, Thailand	28 November 2009	TAF office, Bangkok	The Asia Foundation
TAF Programme Officer 2 (name withheld)	TAF Programme Officer, Thailand	28 July 2009	TAF office, Bangkok	The Asia Foundation
Tayudin Osman	Deputy President, TCMD	16 March 2008	New World Hotel, Samsen, Bangkok (and in vehicle)	The Asia Foundation
Thant, Myo	Principal Regional Cooperation Economist, ADB	January 2008	By email	ADB / IMT-GT
Thouard, Jean-Philippe	Technical Adviser (Education) & Coordinator of French Cooperation, Thailand	5 May 2008	Home, Phahonyotin, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
TICA Official 1 (name withheld)	TICA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	a) 30 December 2007 b) 20 February 2008	a) Restaurant, Dusit, Bangkok b) TICA Office, Lan Luang, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
TICA Officials 2 & 3 (names withheld)	Director and Senior Officer, TICA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	20 February 2008	TICA office, Lan Luang, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
UN Official (name withheld)	Office of the UN Coordinator, Thailand	26 October 2007	UN Thailand Coordinator's office, Bangkok	UNDP
UNDP official 1 (name withheld)	UNDP Thailand	21 December 2007	UNDP Thailand Office, Bangkok	UNDP
UNDP official 2 (name withheld)	UNDP Thailand	21 December 2007	UNDP Thailand Office, Bangkok	UNDP
UNDP Official 3 (name withheld)	UNDP Thailand	27 February 2008	Restaurant, Silom	UNDP
UNDP Official 4 (name withheld)	UNDP Thailand	a) 15 November 2007 b) 17 July 2009	a) UNDP Thailand Office, Bangkok; b) Restaurant, Phrompong, Bangkok	UNDP
UNDP Official 5 (name withheld)	UNDP Thailand	15 November 2007	UN Canteen, Bangkok	UNDP
UNFPA Official (name withheld)	UNFPA Thailand	5 March 2008	UNFPA regional office, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Unicef Project Adviser (name withheld)	Unicef Thailand	23 December 2007	Unicef Thailand office, Bangkok	Unicef
Unicef Project Officer 1 (name withheld)	Unicef Thailand	17 December 2007	Unicef Thailand office, Bangkok	Unicef
Unicef Project Officer 2 (name withheld)	Unicef Thailand	17 December 2007	Unicef Thailand office, Bangkok	Unicef
Unicef Sector Specialist (name withheld)	Unicef Thailand	a) 6 December 2007 b) 4 February 2008	a) Unicef Thailand office, Bangkok b) Cafe, Banglamphu, Bangkok	Unicef
University Lecturer	Lecturer (Prince of Songkhla University Pattani campus), & peace advocate	a) 31 October 2007 b) 29 November 2007	a) & b) Prince of Songkhla University Pattani campus	Other

USAID Official 1 (name withheld)	Regional Conflict & Governance specialist, USAID	a) 9 November 2007 b) 16 February 2009	a) Restaurant, Sukhumvit, Bangkok b) Restaurant, SIlom, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
USAID Official 2 (name Withheld)	Officer, USAID / Office of Transition Initiatives	2 November 2009	Cafe, Wireless Rd, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Vachararutai Boontinand	Actionaid Thailand Country Manager	6 November 2007	Actionaid office, Pinklao, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Wagner, Jost	Facilitator, The Change Initiative & consultant to FES Thailand	a) 20 April 2008 b) 18 May 2009	a) & b) Restaurant, Sukhumvit Soi 25, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Walters, Paul	Senior Economic Adviser, DFID Southeast Asia	19 October 2007	British Embassy, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Ward, Keith	Independent consultant to ADB	a) 8 December 2007 b) 28 February 2008	a) Restaurant, Thonglor, Bangkok b) Cafe, Sukhumvit Soi 3, Bangkok	ADB / IMT-GT
Wichien Chatupote	Lecturer (Prince of Songkhla University Hat Yai campus) & former consultant to IMT-GT	23 May 2008	Prince of Songkhla University Hat Yai campus	ADB / IMT-GT
'Wii' (nickname, full name withheld)	Officer, Agricultural Extension Department, Narathiwat province	20 May 2008	Cafe, Narathiwat Town	Other
World Bank Official 1 (name withheld)	Decentralization Support Facility, Jakarta	16 May 2006	Decentralization Support Facility, Jakarta	World Bank
World Bank Official 2 (name withheld)	Aceh Field Office	27 June 2006	World Bank Field Office, Aceh	World Bank
World Bank Official 3 (name withheld)	World Bank Thailand	13 November 2007	World Bank office, Siam Discovery, Bangkok	World Bank
World Bank Sector Specialist 1 (name withheld)	World Bank East Asia Pacific Region, Bangkok office	21 January 2008	Cafe, Siam Square, Bangkok	World Bank
World Bank Sector Specialist 2 (name withheld)	World Bank East Asia Pacific Region, Bangkok office	a) 24 July 2010 b) 10 December 2010	a) & b) Cafe, Siam Square, Bangkok	World Bank
Wrobel, Robert	Specialist, World Bank conflict unit, Aceh	28 June 2008	World Bank field office, Aceh	World Bank
Yowalak Thiarachow	Oxfam Programme Manager for Thailand and Regional Initiatives	24 October 2007	Oxfam office, Sukhumvit Soi 4, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient
Zahid Al Yufry, Azman Tohmeena	Head & Deputy Head, Provincial Administration Office, Pattani	21 May 2008	Provincial Administration office, Pattani Town	Other
Zvinakis, Dennis	Regional Environmental Adviser, USAID regional office, Bangkok	3 April 2003	USAID office, Wireless Rd, Bangkok	Other donor / recipient

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