



universität
wien

MASTER-THESIS

Titel der Master-Thesis

„Battle on Education for Malay Muslims in Thailand’s
Southernmost Provinces: An Approach of (Newly
Devised) Multicultural Education“

Verfasserin

Nattanit Boonrungsimon

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2015

Universitätslehrgang: Master of Arts in Human Rights

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt: A992 884

Betreuer: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Wolfram Schaffar

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to my master thesis's supervisor, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Wolfram Schaffar, for his encouragement, suggestions, as well as useful comments and remarks throughout the learning process of my master thesis.

I am further thankful to Manfred Nowak, Marijana Grandits, and Vegeran Dzhić for their academic guidance, encouragement, and support throughout the periods of my postgraduate life as a student of Human Rights at the University of Vienna.

I am also very grateful for the fantastic experience as an intern at ASEAN University Network (AUN) Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand, during the period from October 2014 to January 2015. This internship inspired me to work on the issues of multicultural education and education system, policies, and conflict in the south of Thailand. During the period of this internship, I had the opportunities to attend workshops, conferences, and seminars in a multicultural setting which involve participants from ASEAN member universities. Some workshops had fruitful discussions on the issue of multicultural education, and I found them very interesting.

My gratitude also goes to AUN's intern supervisor, Naparat Phirawattanakul, and AUN's Bruneian intern mates, Rozainah Binti Haji Abd. Rahman and Nurisra Khairunnisa Binti Haji Awg. Ismali, for their sharing on the experience and ideas about Muslims with me.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family member, which includes my parents and elder brother, for their encouragement and financial support throughout the period of my postgraduate life at the University of Vienna.

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgement	ii
Table of Contents	iii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. METHODOLOGY	3
2.1. Synopsis of Methodology	3
2.1.1. <i>Preliminary Thoughts</i>	3
2.1.2. <i>Materials or Sources of Information</i>	4
2.1.3. <i>Structure and Scope or Framework of the Paper</i>	5
2.2. Research Questions	6
2.3. Hypothesis	6
3. BACKGROUND	7
3.1. Overview of the Problems and Conflict in Southern Thailand	7
3.2. Religious Demography in Thailand	13
3.3. Muslim Populations and Concentration in Thailand	14
3.4. Muslim groups in Thailand	14
3.5. Religious Freedom and Restrictions in Thailand	15
3.6. Buddhist Identity in Thailand	16
3.7. Thai-ness and Thai National Identity	17
3.8. Ethno-Religious Character of Malay Muslims in General and in Southern Thailand	21
4. EDUCATION SYSTEM AND POLICY IN SOUTHERN THAILAND	26
4.1. Education Institutions in Thailand's Southernmost Provinces	26
4.2. Traditional Islamic Education in Southern Thailand	28
4.2.1. <i>The Pondoks</i>	28
4.2.2. <i>Perceptions on Traditional Pondok Institutions from Malay</i>	

<i>Muslim Community and Thai State Officials</i>	33
4.3. Intervention by the Thai State to Malay Muslim Populations in the South Through Education Policy and Governance	36
4.4. Consequences of the Thai Government's Education Policies for the South	50
4.5. Problems and Dilemmas of the Education System and Policies in Southern Thailand	56
4.6. Brief Analyses and Recommendations for the Thai Government	59
5. AN APPROACH OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION	61
5.1. Overview of Multicultural Education	61
5.1.1. <i>Define Multicultural Education</i>	61
5.1.2. <i>Goals of Multicultural Education</i>	64
5.1.3. <i>Banks's Conceptualisation of Multicultural Education</i>	65
5.1.4. <i>Nieto and Bode's Conceptualisation of Multicultural Education</i>	69
5.1.5. <i>Perspectives of Southern Thailand's Public School Principals on Multicultural Education in Southern Thailand</i>	71
5.1.6. <i>Similar Ideas in Multicultural Education Shared by Southern Thailand's Public School Principals and Western Scholars</i>	72
5.1.7. <i>Major Approaches to Multicultural Education</i>	72
5.1.8. <i>Positive Effects and Benefits of Multicultural Education</i>	76
5.1.9. <i>Drawbacks and Critiques of Multicultural Educational Practices</i>	78
5.2. Problems and Challenges of Existing Multicultural/ Integrated Curriculum of Private Islamic Schools in Southern Thailand	79
5.3. Resolutions to Problems of Multicultural/ Integrated Curriculum of Private Islamic Schools in Southern Thailand	83
6. FINAL ANALYSIS:	
How is the (Newly Devised) Multicultural Education Important for the Context of Southern Thailand and how can it Address the Ethno-Religious Rights of Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand?	88
7. CONCLUSION	91

	Page
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY	93
Abstract	99
Abstract Deutsch	100

1. Introduction

For nearly 200 years, southern Thailand has been an outstanding example of cultural, ethnical, religious, and linguistic borderland.¹ The nature of its conflict in the three southern border provinces has made this region become the most violent place in Southeast Asia.² Since 2004, Southern Thailand has seen the longest running violent activities in the history of Thailand where the major victims who have suffered the most involve southern Thai Buddhist and Malay Muslim teachers. The insurgency was triggered and is continually intensified mainly by the conflictions related to cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic issues. These conflictions also involve the issue of education system and policy. To clarify, the main demands on education from southern Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhist government are contradictory primarily as a result of the differences in ethno-religious beliefs and practices of Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhists as well as the state concerns on national sovereignty, stability, and development. Due to the different demands, there is no wonder why the education system and policy in southern Thailand have been the main controversies between Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhist authorities and the major targets of attacks by these two groups, and that they are among the biggest problems in the region.

Considering the fact that the education system and policy in southern Thailand are one of the possible targets of attacks by the southern Malay Muslims and Thai government, education is not merely the process of conveying human experience and knowledge from one generation to another and the process of developing human intellectuality. Indeed, it is also one of the most important factors that can lead to long-term regional peace and harmony. Therefore, adopting an effective type of education that fits the local context of southern Thailand is a must. Critically, the type of education which aims at assimilating Malay Muslim population is not a right strategy. It will only intensify the conflict mainly due to the lack of concern over human rights to

¹ A. W. Jelonek, 'The Dynamics of Ethno-religious Separatism in Southern Thailand' [April 2012] *Politeia* (20-1/2012) <<http://www.cceol.com/aspx/issuedetails.aspx?issueid=e2597461-f8c5-4cc1-b67f-8951ae38ab19&articleId=7551aa0b-0a56-489c-ab21-aaadaa56b107>> accessed 20 June 2015

² S. Dorairajoo, 'Peaceful Thai, Violent Malay (Muslim)', *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.27, no.2, 2009, p.67

education (i.e ethno-religious rights to education). The conflict will be exacerbated mainly through the attacks on ethnic Thai Buddhists teachers working at government schools, ethnic Malay Muslim teachers working at government schools, as well as Muslim teachers working at Islamic schools whom are viewed as either “too pro-government” or “inadequately pro-insurgency.”³ Since southern Thailand is a multicultural and multiethnic society, human rights issues like ethno-religious rights should be taken into serious consideration. However, the way that Thai government’s education system and policies is designed and implemented violates ethno-religious rights of Malay Muslims in the south. This occurs because the state follows the paradigm of nation building and national cohesion. On the surface, respecting ethno-religious rights does not always lead to secession and undermine national integration. Among any educational approaches, multicultural curriculum can reconcile both aspects of respecting ethno-religious rights and national integration or conformity.

There are two main aims of the thesis. Firstly, it aims to make readers realize that the Thai state’s education policies and governance for Malay Muslims in the south are ineffective in a sense that they do not address ethno-religious needs and rights of southern Malay Muslims. Secondly, it aims to make readers realize the importance of (newly devised) multicultural education system as well as its potential positive effects for the context of southern Thailand.

In conjunction with the thesis’s research questions, the major topic areas of the thesis will cover the education system and policy in southern Thailand and an approach of (newly devised) multicultural education. A significant amount of discussions will be devoted to the issue of education policy and governance for Malay Muslim populations in the south by Thai government. They will justify how the Thai government’s education policies in the form of Thai-nization assimilation program ignore the ethno-religious rights of the southern Malay Muslims. The essence of the chapter of an approach of multicultural education and the chapter of final analysis will also justify how the integrated Islamic curriculum of private Islamic schools fails to address the ethno-religious rights of Malay Muslims in southern Thailand. Besides, it will clarify

³ Human Rights Watch, *Targets of Both Sides: Violence against Students, Teachers, and Schools in Thailand’s Southern Border Provinces* (United States of America 2010), p.39

how multicultural education is important in general, and in particular, how the newly devised multicultural educational practice is important for the context of southern Thailand, as well as how it can address the ethno-religious rights of southern Malay Muslims.

The content of the thesis will start off with chapter 3 which will explore the related background information. It will first give an overview of the problems and conflicts in southern Thailand. Then it will explore some important aspects of ethnic and religious background which include religious and Muslim demography in Thailand; religious freedom and restrictions in Thailand; ethno-religious character of Thai Buddhist population; and ethno-religious character of Malay Muslims in general and in southern Thailand.

Chapter 4 of the thesis will then discuss the issues of education system and policy in southern Thailand which mainly cover the topics of traditional Islamic education in southern Thailand and Thai state's education policy and governance for the southern Malay Muslims. After that, chapter 5 will give an overview of multicultural education and analyze the problems and challenges of multicultural or integrated curriculum of private Islamic schools in southern Thailand as well as the resolutions. Before the conclusion section in chapter 7, chapter 6 will provide a final analysis regarding how the (newly devised) multicultural education is important for the context of southern Thailand and how it can address the ethno-religious rights of Malay Muslims in southern Thailand.

2. Methodology

2.1.Synopsis of Methodology

2.1.1. Preliminary Thoughts

At first, the thesis was intended to be based on both primary and secondary research. The primary research would involve conducting the questionnaire regarding the theme issues of ethnic identity, language, religion, Thai state schools, traditional

pondok schools, private Islamic schools, and multicultural education system. The respondents of the questionnaire would be Thai and Malay Muslim teachers in a *pondok* school in Satun province, and the number of respondents is approximately 20 to 25 people. The main purposes of the questionnaire would include 1) to understand how Muslim teachers in Satun province perceive and prioritize their ethnic identity, language, religion, as well as their perception on Thai state schools, private Islamic schools, and traditional *pondok* schools; 2) to reflect Muslim teachers attitudes towards multicultural education system; and 3) to compare the answers of the Muslim respondents in Satun with the overall perception of the Muslims in the Malay Muslim dominated provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat.

However, after some consultations with my supervisor, the issues in the questionnaire are considered too sensitive since they cover ethnic identity, language, and religion. They can also be somehow political related as the questionnaire also involves the issues of Thai state schools and private Islamic schools, which are mainly under government control. Similarly, other primary research like conducting a Skype interview could also trigger sensitivity to interviewees.

2.1.2. Material/ Sources of Information

The thesis is based solely on qualitative secondary data. The secondary materials and literatures come from a variety of academic sources which include books, journals, reports, conference papers, policy papers, government paper, working papers, thesis papers, online newspapers, and online articles.

The secondary data is reviewed and analysed mainly from books and via internet search engines. The critical sources can be categorised into four main areas which are western academic publications, English academic sources by Thai authors, sources published by stakeholders of the conflict, and government sources.

Firstly, the western academic publications mainly include books written by scholars involving Mc Cargo Duncan, James A. Banks, Sonia Nieto, Patty Bode, and Joseph Chinyong Liow; and Copenhagen journal of Asian Studies, written by Saroja Porairajoo.

Secondly, the English academic sources by Thai authors mainly involve paper presented in the American Education Research Association 2013 (by Ekkarin Sungtong), a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arab and Islamic Studies (by Songsiri Putthongchai), and working papers regarding Muslims in Thailand (by Thanet Aphornsuvan).

Thirdly, the sources published by stakeholders of the conflict mainly involve 2010 Human Rights Watch Report and UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office) Report. Human Rights Watch, as “an international, nongovernmental organization that monitors the compliance of countries with their obligations under international human rights law”, is currently conducting research on the issue of education in Thailand’s southern border provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat.⁴ This involves the issues such as access to education and curriculum, academic outcomes, and the effects in terms of the security situation on both teachers and students. When it comes to UNICEF, this development and humanitarian agency works collaboratively with the Thai government, education and other civil society actors.⁵ The roles of UNICEF in the southern Thailand’s conflict include “to advocate with the government to remove the military presence in schools” and to “work with the SBPAC, local stakeholders and United Nations actors, including UNDP, to advocate for and support the process of decentralisation of education management and devolution of authority to the local level.”⁶

Lastly, the government sources mainly include only Thai government paper from Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

2.1.3. Structure and Scope or Framework of the Paper

The content of the paper will be divided into six main chapters which are introduction, background, education system and policy in southern Thailand, an approach of multicultural education, final analysis, and conclusion. Each chapter will

⁴ Human Rights Watch, p.99

⁵ UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), ‘*Thailand Case Study in Education, Conflict, and Social Cohesion*’(2014), p.28

⁶ *ibid.*, p.30-31

contain the reviews and analyses solely from a policy framework, which involves the dimensions of 1) Thai government educational policies for Malay Muslims in southern Thailand, and 2) multicultural educational policy. The discussions will not be based on other perspectives or frameworks (i.e. legal perspective). In order to answer the thesis's two research questions, they will focus on the issues of ethno-religious rights and ethno-religious rights to education of Malay Muslims in the south of Thailand.

2.2. Research Questions

1. What is the nature of the violent conflict? In how far can we characterise the conflict as a conflict over ethno-religious rights and education?
2. In how far can the (newly devised) multicultural education paradigm address the problem of ethno-religious rights and education of Malay Muslims in southern Thailand?

2.3. Hypothesis

The ethno-religious rights to education of Malay Muslims in the south of Thailand has long been one of the crucial debates in the region. Malay Muslims are considered the most ethnicised Muslim community which asserts to preserve their religion, language, and culture. Therefore, Thai government's education policies in the form of Thai-nization assimilation program are viewed as a tool which threatens Islamic religion, culture, and heritage. The policies greatly ignore the ethno-religious rights to education of the southern Malay Muslims. The thesis will elaborate in what ways and to what extent that these ethno-religious rights to education are ignored, and justify that the Thai government's education policies are simply ineffective.

Multicultural education has become a major controversial issue in the 21st century. Despite several arguments concerning the drawbacks of multicultural education, this type of education system can bring about several potential benefits to all students. In particular, a dynamic and comprehensive approach adopted in multicultural education system addresses the ethno-religious rights to education of all students. It is

thus considered one of the suitable and effective types of education system for the southern region of Thailand where the majority of population is Malay Muslims.

3. Background

3.1. Overview of the Problems and Conflict in Southern Thailand

For more than a century, Thailand's southern border provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and four districts along the border with Malaysia (Saba Yoi, Thepha, Chana and Na Thawi) have been plagued by a series of separatist activity embedded in distinctive ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and historical identities as well as practices of the region.^{7 8 9} Although the insurgency is active mainly in Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala provinces, some violence is also evidenced in parts of Songkla, particularly in the districts with predominant Muslims and in Hat Yai, the southern biggest city and a regional commercial centre.¹⁰ Satun province is comparatively calm despite a large Malay Muslim population.

These subnational conflict areas of Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala, and parts of Songkla along with bordering areas of Malaysia are also previously known as Patani region or Patani Darussalam, and were recognised across the Malay world both as a Malay kingdom and an Islamic polity, in which 80% of the population are Malay Muslim.¹¹ The kingdom was once ruled over by the Patani sultanate; the name of Patani comes from the former Patani sultanate and the region was established in 1390.¹² Patani had also emerged as a main centre for Islamic learning in Southeast Asia as well

⁷ J. Funston, *Conflict in Southern Thailand: Causes, Agents and Trajectory* (Islam, Syari'ah and governance background paper series / ARC Federation Fellowship, University of Melbourne, Melbourne 2008) p.3

⁸ N. J. Melvin, 'Conflict in Southern Thailand: Islamism, Violence and the State in the Patani Insurgency' (SIPRI Policy Papers No.20, CM Gruppen, Bromma, Sweden 2007), p. v

⁹ Human Rights Watch, p.28

¹⁰ Melvin, p.v

¹¹ Funston, p.3

¹² Melvin, p.v

as a thriving centre of commerce and trade in the region.¹³ Before the time of the annexation of Patani by Siam (Thailand's historical name), Patani was under the intense influence of Bangkok since the late eighteenth century.^{14 15} The area was sacked by Siamese forces in 1786 and was eventually brought under the direct rule of Bangkok in 1902. Since then, conflicts have intensified and worsened the conditions in the far south. Also, while 'Patani' is the Malay spelling which refers to the area currently plagued by the insurgency, 'Pattani' is the Thai spelling which is used to denote the modern-day Thai province of Pattani.¹⁶

The total population of Pattani, Yala, and Narthiwat provinces is approximately 1.8 million, and the region makes up more than 65 percent of Thailand's Muslim population.¹⁷ A majority of people in this region speak the Patani Malay dialect, or known in Thai as Yawi. Although social conditions tend to be arranged along ethnic boundaries, the Thai Buddhist and Malay Muslim cultures have been somehow mutually accommodating until now.

Despite foreign aid to southern Thailand which emphasized on economic development and 'nation-building', the main problems of persistent inequalities between ethnic groups have not been adequately and seriously addressed.¹⁸ Among the major inequalities are economic, social, and cultural inequalities which have caused deep-seated grievances in the south, making it difficult for the full regional peace and development.

Economic inequalities and disparity is one aspect that should be recognised in the broader context of marginalization and injustice.¹⁹ Although Malay Muslims have received some shared economic benefits from Thailand's modernization and rapid

¹³J. Ch. Liow, *Islam, Education, and Reform in Southern Thailand* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore 2009) p.18

¹⁴ Melvin, p.v

¹⁵ Funston, p.3

¹⁶ Melvin, p.v

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.v

¹⁸ A. Burke, P. Tweedie, O. Poocharoen, *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance: The Case of Southern Thailand* (The Asia Foundaion, The United States of America 2013) p.18

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.18

development, on average they remain worse off when compared to Thai Buddhist populations in the south, inhabitants of neighboring provinces and of Bangkok, as well as those in Malaysia. The economic inequalities in the Deep South have exacerbated over time, with all of the three southern border provinces receive significantly less share of the national GDP, when compared to a predominantly Thai-Buddhist province of Songkla as well as the rest of the country. Besides, since the majority of Malay Muslims live in rural areas, poverty remains the key problem in the Deep South.^{20 21} The income gap between Buddhists and Muslims in the south is also another prime concern. According to a survey finding in 2010, most Malay Muslims are generally in lower-income groups: in urban areas, 21% of Muslims households received income of less than 8,000 baht (US \$250) per month, as compared to merely 11% of Buddhist households.²²

Social inequalities between ethnic groups is another prime concern, taking into account the southern region's history and its harsh relationship with the Thai state.²³ Since education is the issue lying at the heart of this paper, it is the only aspect that will be briefly discussed here. As would also be elaborated in the next chapter, the assimilative educational efforts made by the Thai government reflect a sense of inequality and discrimination. These efforts have not only been resisted by Malay Muslims, but they have also made several private Islamic school students unable to graduate successfully from university or unable to get jobs easily, considering the low standards of the secular curriculum in private Islamic schools (particularly in the Thai language). This problem is mainly caused by neglect and discrimination on the part of the Thai government, which assigns lower budgets to education (and other sectors) in the three southern border provinces, as compared to other provinces in the south.²⁴ The government's educational budget in this conflict area was 31.8% higher than the national average over the period of 2003 to 2008. However, the students in this area still have a poor academic performance, and education remains a central issue of conflict.

²⁰ Melvin, p.vi

²¹ Burke, Tweedie, Poocharoen, p.20

²² *ibid.*, p.21

²³ *ibid.*, p.21

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.22

Therefore, it clearly shows that the education system reveals some fundamental flaws in this very area.

Cultural inequalities is the last main problem in the far south of Thailand.²⁵ Language is an example of main cultural inequality that will be discussed here. Since the Patani Malay dialect is the main language spoken by a majority of people in this subnational conflict area, language barriers have played a dominant role in making Malay Muslims feel uncomfortable interacting with state officials or civil servants. Although many younger Malay Muslims can speak Thai more fluently than the older people, a concern on preserving Malay dialect remains important, thus leading to a wide rejection on using Thai language and language continues to be a barrier as a result.

Considering the current conflict in southern Thailand, the conflict has primarily arisen from ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, and historical tensions between Malay Muslims and predominantly Thai Buddhist populations in the country, as well as the monopolization of power in the state and the contradiction between it.^{26 27} While the central government has long attempted to assimilate the distinctive ethno-religious identities of Malay Muslims with measures such as adopting centralized system for Islamic education, they have also greatly neglected the rule of law and justice, the economy, and the standard of living in the southern region. Thus, this has triggered Malay Muslims context for resistance and insurgency based on three main pillars—“belief in the traditional virtues and greatness of the *Patani Darulsalam* (Islamic land of Patani), Malay ethnic identification, and religious orientation based on Islam.”^{28 29}

The current ongoing hostilities are usually traced to 4 January 2004, when more than 100 armed men raided the weapon depot in Narathiwat, seizing a large cache of weapons, killing four Buddhist soldiers, burning 20 public schools, as well as planting

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.23

²⁶ Human Rights Watch, p.28

²⁷ Dorairajoo, p.70

²⁸ Human Rights Watch, p.28

²⁹ P. Chalk, *The Malay-Muslim Insurgency in Southern Thailand Understanding the Conflict's Evolving Dynamic* (RAND Corporation, CA 2008) p.2

fake explosives in a neighboring Yala province.^{30 31} Later on, Buddhist monks became a main target and three of them were killed in the same month.³²

It is important to note that before 2004, southern Thailand had seen some kind of equilibrium among different groups despite the corrupting atmosphere. However, since 2004, the insurgency has intensified and emerged in different forms and the main separatist militant groups include *the Barisan Nasional Pombebasan Patani* (BNPP), the BRN-Coordinate (*Barisan Revolusi Nasional-koordinas*, or National Revolution Front-Coordinate, and Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO)).^{33 34} Among their key targets of attack are Thai government officials, ethnic Thai Buddhist civilians, monks, teachers, as well as ethnic Muslims suspected of cooperating with state authorities.^{35 36} Beatings, beheading, hanging, and bombing at crowded civilian centres such as department stores, banks, or hotels are the common methods of violence. From January 2004 to August 2010, more than 4,100 people had been killed and more than 7,100 people injured.³⁷ Civilian casualties make up the vast majority of these figures. These militant attacks on civilians mainly aim to discredit and pressure the Thai central government; create fear among both Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims; revenge the assaults by Thai government officials and security forces; prevent Malay Muslims from collaborating with the Thai authorities, hinder the delivery of public services, as well as arouse an oppressive government response, which in turn helps increasing the number of militant insurgents from the recruitment efforts.

In terms of the state's response to the Muslim insurgency, the government has usually responded with force, with little concern on safety of civilians or their basic rights being protected.³⁸ Since September 2006 when the Thaksin government was removed from power, the security forces had developed more effective

³⁰ Funston, p.5

³¹ Human Rights Watch, p.28

³² Funston, p.5

³³ Human Rights Watch, p.29-30

³⁴ Funston, p.4

³⁵ Human Rights Watch, p.30

³⁶ Funston, p.6

³⁷ Human Rights Watch, p.30

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.31

counterinsurgency strategies, with enhanced intelligence gathering and analysis, which in turn disrupted the insurgent operations and swept the insurgent strongholds. The security forces have arrested and killed many insurgent leaders, members of village-level cells, as well as their supporters. The culture of ongoing abuses, impunity, and lack of accountability on the part of the Thai government are commonplace.³⁹ As such, separatist militants have tried to justify their violent attacks as a punishment for the perceived government abuses and actions with impunity.

The southern border provinces of Thailand are also considered one of the most dangerous sites for a teacher to live in.⁴⁰ Between January 2004 and the first week of September 2010, the suspected insurgent attacks had claimed at least 108 lives of government teachers and 27 lives of education personnel. The daily insurgency has created fear and made several teachers request for transfers from the government to work outside of the southern region; some can accept the financial risk of not finding a secure permanent position in order to escape the violence.

It is noteworthy to mention that among the major target groups of teachers killed by the insurgents are ethnic Thai Buddhists teachers working at government schools, ethnic Malay Muslim teachers working at government schools, as well as Muslim teachers working at Islamic schools whom are viewed as either “too pro-government” or “inadequately pro-insurgency”.⁴¹ This is what makes the Thai situation so interesting and different from other forms of civil war in other countries. The insurgents have also attacked teachers primarily because they are the state employees of perceived oppressive educational system; because they seek to revenge for perceived abuses by Thai security forces; because they want to weaken the government’s authority; and because they want to pressure the function of the government education system.⁴² For the Muslim insurgents, teachers are considered a “soft target” that is much easier to attack than the military or police.⁴³ In terms of the methods of attacks, the insurgents typically attack individual teachers or fire on groups of school personnel who are on

³⁹ Melvin, p.6

⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch, p.39

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.39

⁴² *ibid.*, p.43,45

⁴³ *ibid.*, p.47

their way to or from schools, according to the cases investigated by Human Rights Watch.⁴⁴ Usually, handguns and military rifles have been the main weapons.

In response to the risky situations of teachers in the Deep South, the Thai government has frequently provided the teachers with armed escorts or security convoys and Paramilitary Rangers along their travel to and from schools.⁴⁵ While many teachers choose to go with the armed escorts as they feel safer, other prefer to take care of their own security arrangements, believing that going with the security forces indeed endangers them. Several other teachers also said that if the security convoys are required, they would choose the more efficient or better trained soldiers, rather than the Paramilitary Rangers.⁴⁶

3.2. Religious Demography in Thailand

Thailand is a multireligious and multiethnic Southeast Asian country, made up by a Buddhist majority of 94% (of which 85 to 95 percent is Theravada Buddhist), a Muslim population of about 5 to 10 percent, and Christians and other groups of less than 5 percent of the total population.⁴⁷ ⁴⁸ The other groups include Confucian, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, and Taoist populations.⁴⁹ Among all of the religious groups in Thailand, five officially recognized religious groups are Buddhists, Muslims, Brahmin-Hindu, Sikhs, and Christians.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.40

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.47

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.49

⁴⁷ Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 'Thailand', (2011), p. 1 <<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/192879.pdf>> accessed 8 May 2015

⁴⁸ I. Yusuf, 'Faces of Islam in Southern Thailand' (March 2007) East-West Center Washington Working Papers No.7. p. 4 <http://www.muslimpopulation.com/pdf/Thailand_Southern_Imtiyaz%20Yusuf.pdf> accessed 12 June 2015

⁴⁹ Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 'Thailand', p.1

3.3. Muslim Population and Concentration in Thailand

According to new research by the US-based Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, the Muslim population in Thailand in 2010 is approximately 3,952,000.⁵⁰ The distribution of Muslim settlements is densest in the southernmost border provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun, where Muslims constitute around 65 to 85 percent of the local population.⁵¹ Most Muslims in these southern provinces are ethnic Malay, yet the Muslim population nationally also embraces descendants of immigrants from China, Cambodia, Indonesia, South Asia, and others who perceive themselves as ethnic Thais.⁵² The southern region or historical Patani region has also been recognized in popular parlance as the “far south”, “deep south”, or “deepestmost south”---terminology that implicitly stresses the notion of marginality to Thailand.⁵³

3.4. Muslim groups in Thailand

Ethnically, Muslim population in Thailand can be divided into two broad categories, the Malays and non-Malays⁵⁴. The Malays make up 80% of the Muslim population, while the Thai, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, and others of Muslim faith are the minority at 20%.

Linguistically, two broadly defined categories of Muslims in Thailand are also known as the unassimilated, mono-ethnic, Malay-speaking Muslims and the assimilated, multi-ethnic, Thai-speaking Muslims.^{55 56} The former, which makes up more than 70 percent of the total Muslim population in Thailand, resides primarily in the southern

⁵⁰ S. Rogers, ‘Muslim populations by country: how big will each Muslim population be by 2030?’ *Guardian* (28 January 2011) <<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/jan/28/muslim-population-country-projection-2030>> accessed 19 June 2015

⁵¹ Liow, 2009, p.12

⁵² Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, ‘Thailand’, p.2

⁵³ Liow, 2009, p.12

⁵⁴ Th. Aphornsuvan, ‘History and Politics of the Muslims in Thailand’ (12 February 2003), p.5 <<https://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/sites/seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/files/MuslimThailand.pdf>> accessed 19 June 2015

⁵⁵ Dorairajoo, p.63-64

⁵⁶ I. Yusuf, ‘Ethnoreligious and Political Dimensions of the Southern Thailand Conflict’ in Amit Pandya and Ellen Laipson (eds), *Islam and Politics: Renewal and Resistance in the Muslim World* (The Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, DC 2009), p.43

border provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun, while the latter resides in the Central, North, and Northeast Thailand. The unassimilated Malay-speaking Muslims are those who have hostile relations with the state and frequently mobilize separatist movements in the south, whereas the assimilated group has been integrated into wider Thai society and has developed peaceful relations with the Thai state. In addition, while the Malay-speaking Muslims perceive Islam as integral to their ethno-linguistic identity in the south which was yet forcibly integrated into Thailand, the Thai-speaking Muslims view themselves as part of predominantly Buddhist and multi-religious Thailand where Islam is accepted as a minority religion. Another important fact is that in Bangkok, for instance, there is a very high number of Muslim inhabitants, yet there have been no attacks related to these Muslim groups so far. It is also important to highlight that the conflict in the south is not solely a religious conflict. Islam is merely one contributing factor of the conflict in the southern region.

3.5. Religious Freedom and Restrictions in Thailand

From the legal and policy framework, the constitution, laws, and other policies in Thailand protect religious liberty within the country.⁵⁷ To illustrate, the 2007 Constitution of Thailand protects religious freedom (Constitution Section 37) and prohibits “unjust discrimination against a person on the grounds of differences in religious belief” (Constitution Section 30).⁵⁸ However, in reality, although Thai state has accorded some level of religious liberty to the Muslims, they have never accepted a plurality and autonomous culture of Muslims.⁵⁹ Since the authorities have pushed for the creation of assimilated individual Muslims, they are satisfied only with the produced assimilated Muslims and not the Malay Muslims in the south who identify themselves with a non-Thai culture. Conflict between the Thai state and southern Malay Muslims becomes inevitable as a result. From the official perspective, only Thai citizens are accepted to be Islamic.

⁵⁷Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 'Thailand', p.2

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.2

⁵⁹Aphornsuvan, p.27

According to McCargo, a liberal Western academic, the Thai authorities have placed religious restrictions on some minority religious sects during the 1990s: namely Santi Asoke and Dhammakaya.⁶⁰ Thus, this means that religious liberty does not really exist among Thailand's Buddhist subjects, despite the continuing ability of such religious sects to operate. McCargo also points out that the Thai state has granted itself the right to decide what makes up a proper religion—as reflected in the official perceptions on religions like Islam and Christianity as well as their persistent attempts to regulate these religions. On the surface, it is normal for restrictions to be placed on religious freedom in any liberal states including Thailand. It is also not wrong that the state has the right to decide what is 'right' or 'proper' as well as the rights to protect and punish their citizens, and that human rights in the country relies on the state authorities having such rights.

3.6. Buddhist Identity in Thailand

In Thailand, there is no official state religion; however, Theravada Buddhist identity of the Thai state is very prominent although it is not declared as the official religion of the country.^{61 62 63} Theravada Buddhism is the majority religion and is not considered an exclusive belief system; most Buddhists integrate Brahmin-Hindu and animist practices.⁶⁴ The Buddhist clergy (or Sangha) comprises two major schools: Mahanikaya and Dhammayuttikan. Both schools are governed by the same ecclesiastical hierarchy. The former one is older and tends to be found more within monastic boundaries than the latter. Theravada Buddhism received a great level of government support as reflected in the 2007 constitution, which requires that the monarch be Buddhist.^{65 66} According to the constitution, the state shall “patronize and

⁶⁰S. Putthongchai, 'What is it like to be Muslim in Thailand?: A case study of Thailand through Muslim professionals' perspectives' (A thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter January 2013), p.49

⁶¹ Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 'Thailand', p.2

⁶² Liow, 2009, p.14

⁶³ Putthongchai, p.48

⁶⁴ Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 'Thailand', p.1

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p.2

⁶⁶ Liow, 2009, p.14

protect Buddhism as the religion observed by most Thais for a long period of time and other religions, and shall also promote a good understanding and harmony among the followers of all religions as well as encourage the application of religious principles to create virtue and develop the quality of life.”⁶⁷ In addition, although the Thai king is the official patron of all religions in the country, Thai society perceives his stature and position as very emblematic to Buddhism and thus recognizes that “Buddhism commands in the country.”⁶⁸

The primacy of Buddhism in Thai society is also explicit in the notion of modern Thai national identity of “Chat (Nation), Sassana (Religion), Pramahakasat (Monarchy)”, which reflects the central role of Buddhism as expected by Thailand’s modernizers in the early twentieth century.⁶⁹ The prominence of Buddhism in Thai society is further featured in the public calendar wherein the only Thai official holidays are Buddhist holy days.⁷⁰ Besides, the links between Buddhism and the monarchy are emphasized in the royal news as illustrated by the reports of royal involvement in Buddhist offerings and prayers. Moreover, the concept of Buddhist nationalism developed during the periods of modernization and nation-building has exerted a level of influence in the society. Certain groups of the public find it offensive if other religions are receiving popularity or preference over Buddhism in Thai society. To illustrate, the 2006 coup has a Muslim as the head of the coup, thus leading to a strong anti-Muslim sentiment among Buddhist extremists.

3.7. Thai-ness and Thai National Identity

Considering the ethno-religious terrain in Southeast Asia, one of the main fault lines in cultural landscape of this region lies at the boundary between Thailand’s upper southern provinces and its lower southern border provinces or the so-called “Deep South.”⁷¹ This fault line is the junction where “Thai” ends and “Malay” begins. In

⁶⁷ Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, ‘Thailand’, p.2

⁶⁸ Liow, 2009, p.14

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.14

⁷⁰ Putthongchai, p.58

⁷¹ Liow, 2009, p.16

discussing any crucial issues related to Thai and Malay communities, it is noteworthy to examine their identity distinctiveness. This section will discuss the notion of ‘Thai-ness’ and Thai national identity.

Defining Thai-ness is considered the most crucial aspect of identification with the Thai nation.⁷² According to a book *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation* (1994) written by Thai historian Thongchai Winichakul, the formation of national identity is usually done by defining what it is not. For the modern nation-state, its construction of national identity is usually described by a two-way identification: positive by some common nature, identity or interests; negatively by differences with other nations. Thai-ness can be defined and identified positively by referring to the monarchy and Theravada Buddhism as the most important aspect of the Thai nation, love of freedom from colonization (national independence), tolerance, and integration to civilized Thai culture.^{73 74}

Since Thai-ness never has a clear definition, Thais find it easier to identify what is un-Thai, hence defining the sphere of Thai-ness by referring to what it is not.⁷⁵ This is often done by constructing an Other which included the term *Khaek*. The word *Khaek* means “a stranger or an outsider and a visitor or a guest.”⁷⁶ The term includes the peoples and countries of the East Indies, Malay Peninsula, South Asian and the Middle East.⁷⁷ Malay Muslims in southern Thailand are also recognized as *Khaek* or ‘dark-skinned visitors’, thus suggesting a feeling of un-Thai.⁷⁸ In the ongoing insurgency in southern Thailand, these Muslims have become even more un-Thai by defying the integrity of Thailand’s territorial borders and posing a threat to national security.⁷⁹ Moreover, the term *Khaek* creates not only a sense of un-Thai but also a sense of social distance and contempt among different ethnic groups and religious beliefs. The

⁷² Dorairajoo, p.69

⁷³ K. T. Conlon, ‘Ethnic Violence in Southern Thailand: The Anomaly of Satun’ (A Thesis for Master of Arts in Security Studies (Far East, Southeast Asia, Pacific), Naval Postgraduate School June 2012), p. 79

⁷⁴ Dorairajoo, p.69

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p.70

⁷⁶ Aphornsuvan, p.5

⁷⁷ Dorairajoo, p.70

⁷⁸ Liow, 2009, p.12

⁷⁹ Aphornsuvan, p.5

identification of Malay Muslims in southern Thailand as *Khaek* further underscores the narrative of marginalization which could also mean to suggest that the Muslim local communities are excluded from having the same rights as other Thai citizens.^{80 81}

The construction of Thai national identity can be traced to the process of nation-building in Thailand.⁸² Since Thailand has never been colonised, the geo-body or political territorial borders of the country were established as a consequence of the forced treaty enactments with the United States and European governments (especially British and French). Different ethnic groups including Mon, Karen, Burmese, Khmer (Cambodian), Vietnamese, Lao, and Malay had migrated and resettled within Thai borders as a result of anti-colonial struggles in their countries. The Thai state then sought to integrate these ethnic groups into Thai society, aiming to give a common Thai identity to all citizens. Due to the connection between Thai identity and national pride and loyalty, the state has made several attempts to convert the diverse ethnic groups in Thailand into holding a common Thai identity through the processes of Thai-identity making and modernisation which were demonstrated during the twentieth century. Besides, although McCargo argues that “Thai nationalism is based on ethnicity and religion” and that it is not considered a civic and liberal form of nationalism, Reynolds claims that the present “Thai race” and Thai Buddhism have become civil through such processes of “Thaification” and modernisation.⁸³

The central Thai government has sought to implant a distinct Thai national identity in all citizens in Thailand through several policies ranging from austere assimilationist policies to less drastic approaches on integration, aiming primarily to dilute ethnic identities and loyalties, even if they foster the primacy of Buddhism.^{84 85} In particular, the whole Islamic identity from the school level down to the mosque is sought to be integrated.⁸⁶ This phenomenon of integration and modernisation was first

⁸⁰ Liow, 2009, p.12

⁸¹ Jelonek, p.136

⁸² Dorairajoo, p.69

⁸³ Putthongchai, p.49

⁸⁴ Dorairajoo, p.63

⁸⁵ Liow, 2009, p.20

⁸⁶ Dorairajoo, p.71

demonstrated during the period of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1881-1925).⁸⁷ Followed by King Chulalongkorn, he promulgated new policies aimed at forming a Thai national identity on the basis of three institutions, namely, Nation (*Chaat*), Religion (*Sassana*), and Monarchy (*Phra Mahaa Kasat*). Exploring what lies behind this formation of identity, Raymond Scupin, a Professor of Anthropology and International Studies at Lindenwood University, presupposed: “this Thai political and cultural code constituted an iconic representation of the structure of Thai society that was formulated to mediate actual ethnic ambiguities and contradictions within the country.”

Other examples of government policies which sought to implant Thai national identity include the austere assimilationist and modernization policies during the administration periods of Prime Minister Phibun Songkram (1938-44; 1948-57) and Sarit Thanarat. (1958-63)^{88 89} During the administration of Phibun, Islamic law was abolished and replaced with the imposition of civil law. Several attempts were made to break down backward customs, promote uniformity in language and social behavior, as well as convert Muslims to Buddhism. In the early 1940s, the term ‘Thai Islam’ and ‘Thai Muslim’ had been established as an official state reference to Islam and Muslims in Thailand.⁹⁰ The two terms were used as part of a nationalist movement aiming at building Thai nationalism and encouraging the integration and assimilation of minority groups during those periods. These terms have gained popularity within the government bureaucracy, journalism, and among central-Thai speaking Muslim academics, despite the revolts against Phibun’s modernization policies in cultural affairs. In the case of Prime Minister Sarit, the imposition of assimilationist policies was aimed at fostering a new “development’ ideology (or ‘*patanakarn*’ in Thai) which sought to promote integration and assimilation through socio-economic development projects.⁹¹ This new

⁸⁷Liow, 2009, p.20

⁸⁸Liow, 2009, p.21

⁸⁹Dorairajoo, p.71

⁹⁰Aphornsuvan, p.5

⁹¹Liow, 2009, p.21

nationalist ideology and other similar policies, needless to say, had evoked strong Malay nationalist reactions.^{92 93}

3.8. Ethno-religious Character of Malay Muslims in General and in Southern Thailand

As mentioned earlier, ethnic Malay Muslims constitute the majority of the local population in Thailand's four southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun.⁹⁴ Islam is therefore the dominant religion in these provinces or this Patani region.⁹⁵ Despite the evidenced reputation of the Patani region as "one of the cradles of Islam in Southeast Asia", the facts concerning the date for the Islamization of Patani as well as how and from where Islam came to this region are unclear.⁹⁶ However, considering the facts on the establishment of Islam in northern Malaysia by the late 1300s, Islam was assumed to be established in Patani by that period as well. Although the facts on the region's conversion to Islam are not clear, what became clear is that Muslims traders first arrived at the Patani's port since the sixteenth century.

In Patani region or southern Thailand, the phenomenon of ethno-religious nationalism is the outcome of the bonding of Malay ethnic identity, local Malay Islam, the traditional Shafiite version of Islam, and the puritan Wahabbi received through study at educational institutions in the Middle East and South Asia.⁹⁷ After graduating from *pondok* schools, thousands of Thai Muslim students continue further religious education at Muslim universities in India, Cairo, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, and Malaysia. During their educational stay abroad, the religio-theological trends or Islamic resurgence have influenced Thai students to come back and support Islamic reform as well as the growth of local Thai Muslim communities along sectarian and puritan lines.

⁹² J. Ch. Liow, *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines: Religion, Ideology, and Politics* (Policy Studies 24, East-West Center Washington, Washington, D.C. 2006) p.26

⁹³ Liow, 2009, p.21

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p.12

⁹⁵ Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 'Thailand', p.2

⁹⁶ Dorairajoo, p.64-65

⁹⁷ Yusuf, 2009, p.47

Malay Islamic identity is the result of the merging between the Shafii school of Islamic law and Malay ethnic identity, where *Madhab*, or school of Islamic law and *Kaum*, or ethnic community reinforce one another.⁹⁸ Although Malay Islam has developed a hostile and militant posture to Thai Buddhism, it was not originally radical. Malay Muslims call themselves ‘*orae nayu*’, meaning Malay Muslim, who speak local Malay or *kecek nayu*, and view themselves as distinct from ethnic Thai Buddhists (or *orae siye*, who are the minority in southern Thailand) as well as the larger Thai Muslim community.⁹⁹ In fact, the Malay Muslims can be considered “the most ethnicized community within the worldwide Muslim community.”¹⁰⁰ They recoil from outsiders and do not trust even other Muslims and those who do not come from the same ethnic group or speak the Melayu language. From their point of view, mere conversion to Islam is inadequate to be a Muslim.^{101 102} Rather, one is required to “*Masuk Melayu*”—become a Malay—to be fully accepted as a Muslim. This process is strengthened through loyalty to the historical memory and the pious role played by *tok gurus* or *ulama* implanting and maintaining the ethno-religious character of the Malay Muslim community.¹⁰³

As a matter of fact, the Malay Muslims strongly focus on the ethnic aspect of their adherence to Islam.¹⁰⁴ They place foremost emphasis on their ethnic identity and perceive their life experience through the lens of the agama (religion) of Islam. Hence, the ritual, social, material, mythic/narrative, ethical and legal, experiential/emotional, and political domains of life are all perceived and expounded through the prism of ethnic identity. In this sense, ethnicity and religion are intermingled, leading to the construction of an ethnicised view of Islam.

Culturally and politically, the local Malay population in the Patani region has for a long time struggled for separatist identity and autonomy from the majority Thai

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p.43

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p.43&45

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.48

¹⁰¹ Yusuf, 2007, p.9

¹⁰² Yusuf, 2009, p.48

¹⁰³ Yusuf, 2007, p.8

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p.8

Buddhist population whose identity starts from Thailand's upper southern provinces upward.¹⁰⁵ The peoples of Patani have also shown strong cultural bonds with the peoples in the neighboring Malaysia. Patani peoples and the Malays share a lot in common, including religion, language, and a similar historical heritage. As classified by several historians and authors, the criterion which made Patani a Malay kingdom is the Malay language, which is regarded as an exclusive marker of Thai Malay identity.¹⁰⁶ In other words, Patani has become a Malay kingdom only linguistically and not just by being part of the Malay cultural world.

Malay-Muslims in southern Thailand speak a local dialect of Malay or Patani Malay or known in Thai as "Jawi" or "Yawi" and most of them know little Thai due to the lack of interest in studying Thai language.^{107 108} Local Malay Muslims refer to Patani Malay dialect as "*Bahasa Tempatan*" or "the local language" and it is similar to the Kelantanese Malay spoken in the northern Malaysian state of Kelantan. Since the past, Pattani Malay has been the language of conservative, traditional, Islamic learning, as well as the language of education for the Malay Muslims in southern Thailand. Its importance also reflects the significance of Malay and the religion of Islam, as observed by Omar Farouk that:

"It is only in recent times that the Thai language has been elevated as the language of Islam in Thailand. Consequently, there is a growing corpus of Islamic religious literature in Thai. There have already been a few versions of translations of the Qur'an. Collections of *hadiths* too have been translated into Thai. The expanding role of the Thai language within Thailand's Muslim public sphere, however, has not dislodged the entrenched position of Malay as the traditional language of Islam, especially among the Malay Muslims of Thailand."¹⁰⁹

The concept of Thai national identity, which centres on the notion of "*Chat, Sassana, Pramahakasat*"—Nation, Religion (Buddhism), and the Monarchy, has been contested by the unassimilated Malay Muslims in southern Thailand who argue on the

¹⁰⁵ Jelonek, p.135

¹⁰⁶ Dorairajoo, p.65

¹⁰⁷ Yusuf, 2009, p.47

¹⁰⁸ Liow, 2009, p.17

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p.17

difference of ethnicity, language, and religion.¹¹⁰ They point out that ethnicity, language, and religion have traditionally served as chief determinants of identity, by which being a Malay refers to Muslim only and that being a Thai refers to Buddhist only. Although in modern periods there have been the religiously pluralistic identifications of Malays and Thais as citizens of modern states of Malaysia and Thailand, the traditional determinants of identity of the past have not faded away but form the cultural foundation of being a Malay Muslim or Thai Buddhist.

As far as Thailand's southern provinces are concerned, local Malay Muslims have traditionally placed strong emphasis on both religion and their ethnic identity.¹¹¹ Islam is perceived as an important ethno-cultural marker which shapes local identity of southern Malay Muslims.¹¹² It is continually integrated into ethnical dogmas and gives support to the separatist groups in the south.¹¹³

Due to the salience of Malay ethnic identity in southern Thailand into which their loyalty to Islam is emphasized, in their conceptions of self, southern Malay Muslims feel offended where referred to as "Thai Muslims" or "Thai Islam", the official terms for Muslims in Thailand emerging as a product of the Patronage of Islam Act proclaimed in 1945 by the post-war democratic government.^{114 115} For them, the terminology was considered a narrative of perpetual hegemony and subjugation on Malay Muslim culture by the Thai state. In other words, "Thai Islam" is viewed as another simple means of forced assimilation through which the state attempts to dilute Malay culture and identity in the south. While this nomenclature is widely rejected by Malay Muslims in southern Thailand, it is generally accepted by other Muslims living outside of the southern provinces including those in the upper southern, central, northern, and northeastern provinces of Thailand.

The role of Malay *Ulama* as custodians of religious and ethnic tradition, have made them become chief players in the conflict of southern Thailand as custodians of

¹¹⁰ Yusuf, 2007, p.4

¹¹¹ Liow, 2009, p.15

¹¹² Liow, 2006, p.25

¹¹³ Jelonek, p.152

¹¹⁴ Liow, 2009, p.15

¹¹⁵ Yusuf, 2009, p.45

Malay culture and local Islam.^{116 117} For instance, the role of the Islamic cleric Haji Sulong, who is the first person that introduced Malay Muslim nationalist ideas to the south of Thailand, is important and influential to the region. Haji Sulong was a political activist and reformist who had studied in Mecca. He was considered the father of the Pattani independence movement, and when he returned to Patani in 1930, he observed that the local practices were not correct and that Islamic faith still blended with local Thai animism.^{118 119} He therefore made a reformist agenda for the Malay Muslim community and in 1947 he made seven ethno-religious demands to the Thai government, aiming at seeking greater political autonomy for the Malays and the preservation of Malay Muslim culture and language.^{120 121} His main religious demand is the recognition and enforcement of Islamic law.¹²² He viewed that a true Muslim community must link justice, humanity, religiosity, divinity, as well as their manifestation in the Muslim community.¹²³ Under his tutelage, Islam became *Addeen* (comprehensive way of life) which governs both private and public life of Malay Muslims.¹²⁴ He had pushed Islam as a tool to mobilize Malay Muslims toward the eradication of religious neglect and poverty, as well as to fight against the oppressive policies of the Thai central government.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.48

¹¹⁷ Yusuf, 2007, p.9

¹¹⁸ Liow, 2006, p.28

¹¹⁹ Th. Aphornsuvan, 'Origins of Malay Muslim "Separatism" in Southern Thailand', (October 2004), p.17, ARI Working Paper No.31 <http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps04_032.pdf> accessed 20 June 2015

¹²⁰ Liow, 2006, p.28

¹²¹ Yusuf, 2009, p.48

¹²² *ibid.*, p.48

¹²³ Aphornsuvan, 2004, p.18

¹²⁴ Liow, 2006, p.29

4. Education System and Policy in Southernmost Thailand

4.1. Education Institutions in Thailand's Southernmost Provinces

The structure, content, and delivery of education system for Malay Muslim populations in the Deep South have long been a critical debate for Thai and Muslim communities.¹²⁵ Through the educational reforms such as the National Education Act of 1999 and its 2002 amendments, the current education system was adopted under multicultural resolution, aiming to impart Thai secular education, create sufficient awareness on Thai nationality, as well as accommodate the distinct cultural needs of Malay Muslims in the south. Thus, this makes up a unique picture of education in the region. Under the current system of education, there are four main types of institutions, namely government schools, traditional Islamic *pondok* schools, private Islamic schools, and *tadikas*.^{126 127}

The first type of institution is government schools, which provide the national curriculum and standard in conjunction with religious education for two hours per week, which students can choose either Buddhist or Islamic studies.^{128 129 130} The schools use Thai as a language of instruction.¹³¹ They are recognized and supported financially by the central government, and graduating students can continue their studies in the higher educational institutions within the country. A majority of Muslim parents prefer to send their children to government schools primarily because of their teaching quality, resources, and strong teaching curriculum.^{132 133} Yet some Muslims view two hours of religious study as insufficient. Other reasons of not choosing government schools include parental preference, and lack and distance of transportation.

¹²⁵UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.11

¹²⁶ Human Rights Watch, p.35-36

¹²⁷Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, p.6

¹²⁸UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.11

¹²⁹Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, p.6

¹³⁰ Human Rights Watch, p.35

¹³¹Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, p.6

¹³²UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.11

¹³³ Human Rights Watch, p.35

The second type is traditional Islamic *pondok* schools.^{134 135 136} *Pondoks* have long played an important role in Islamic religious identity and culture of the south. Primarily residential schools for students of all ages and privately owned by a *tok guru* (school master), they use Malay as a language of instruction and provide only religious studies related to Islamic law and the interpretation of Quran. The education system of *pondoks* and the way the Thai government have attempted to regulate it will be further elaborated in the following sections.

The third institution is private Islamic schools.^{137 138 139} As the formerly *pondoks*, these schools are widely registered with the government and allowed to remain under private ownership. Graduating students thus receive government certification and can continue to higher education. The schools offer only secondary level education with both government education and Islamic religious coursework, with the Thai secular curriculum taught in the mornings and religious studies in the afternoons. Since they provide at least 10 hours more on coursework per week than those in government schools, many Muslim parents prefer Private Islamic schools. Despite having received government subsidies, the facilities of private Islamic schools tend to be of lower quality than those of state schools. Besides, according to the Asia Foundation, which supports a project financially to improve the private Islamic educational system in Thailand, most private Islamic schools are technically limited to create standardized lesson plans as a result of financial constraints, and as such limiting the teachers' ability to use the Thai state curriculum.

The last main type of institution is *tadikas*, or private elementary schools.^{140 141 142} Usually held in a mosque, these schools provide early religious studies for young pupils in Grades 1 to 6 under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. *Tadikas* have no standard curriculum and usually provide classes during

¹³⁴UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.11

¹³⁵Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, p.6

¹³⁶ Human Rights Watch, p.35

¹³⁷UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.11

¹³⁸Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, p.6

¹³⁹ Human Rights Watch, p.35

¹⁴⁰ UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.12

¹⁴¹Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, p.7

¹⁴² Human Rights Watch, p.36

evenings or during weekends.¹⁴³ Since a number of teachers at these Tadikas are religious leaders or former students of *pondoks*, the school curriculum revolves around the basis of Quran and Hadith.

4.2. Traditional Islamic Education in Southern Thailand

In general, two overarching objectives of Islamic education are to provide Muslim pupils with “a basic foundation in Islam” through authentic Islamic knowledge, heritage and values, as well as to transmit “the spiritual, moral, and ethical transformation and advancement of Muslim societies.”^{144 145} These would serve as a religious guidance for their living at any certain periods and places. This is why every Muslim community, especially Muslim minority groups, around the world regards Islamic education of its members as essential basis for solving their problems in accordance with certain needs of a Muslim community, needs which are different from those of the non-Muslim population.¹⁴⁶

4.2.1. The Pondoks

The first Islamic centre ever established by the Muslim scholars or *ulama* is the so-called “*Pondok*” institution.¹⁴⁷ It is the trademark institution which long formed a basis of Malay Muslim identity, culture, and history, “the centre of gravity of everyday Malay social life”, and by far, it is the most popular symbol of traditional Islamic education in the deep south of Thailand.^{148 149} In Thailand, *Pondoks* are scattered in several parts of the country including the suburbs of Ayutthaya, Pechburi, Nontaburi,

¹⁴³ D. Sarkar, ‘Religious Minoritty, Education and Separatism in South Thailand’ (International Conference on Thai Studies 22-24 April 2014), p.7 <<http://sydney.edu.au/southeast-asia-centre/documents/pdf/sarkar-diptendu.pdf>> accessed 9 May 2015

¹⁴⁴ Sarkar, p.4

¹⁴⁵ H. Madmarn, ‘The Strategy of Islamic Education in Southern Thailand: *The Kitab Jawi* and Islamic Heritage’, *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies*, no.27, 2009, p. 37

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.37

¹⁴⁷ Madmarn, p.39

¹⁴⁸ D. McCargo, *Tearing Apart the Land: Islam and Legitimacy in Southern Thailand* (Cornell University Press, United States of America 2008) p.37

¹⁴⁹ Liow, 2009, p.23

central Bangkok, Nakhon Sri Thammaraj, Trang, Phuket, Songkla, as well as other provinces in the south.¹⁵⁰

Prior to the *pondok* institution in the Malay world, Malay educational system comprised of instruction in writing (Malay/Arabic), reading (Malay/Arabic) and Islamic religion, which requires memorisation of the Quran.¹⁵¹ However, apart from Malay language as a medium of instruction in *pondoks*, “Jwai” or “Bhasa Tempatan” as the local language of Thai Malay dominated provinces in southern Thailand became the language of instruction for Islamic studies from the elementary level of the *pondok* schools.¹⁵² ¹⁵³ Arabic is also another language of instruction for the secondary level of the institution.

Concerning how the *pondoks* first came into existence in Southeast Asia, this traces back to the period when some countries in Southeast Asia converted to hold Islamic religion and the traditional Buddhist and Hindu institutions known as “Ashram” was not under any influence.¹⁵⁴ Ashram institutions, in turn, had to go through a transformation process and adopt Islamic characters, in consistent with the Middle East, the motherland of Islam. They were given the Arabic name of “Fondok”, which means hotel, motel or lodging. Since the Malays worldwide pronounced the Arabic alphabet “Fa” as “p”, the institutions are then called “Pondok”. The *pondok* institution was usually set up by Muslim scholars who came back from the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) and spent their time studying in the Middle Eastern institutions. Because of the “elective affinity” between Islam and ancient culture of Southeast Asia in all aspects, both hostels and earlier ashram type institutions can be widely viewed as a foundation of the “Pondok system”. In the Indic culture, the Muslim missionaries gave the Arabic titles to the sage (kijaji) and their conclaves of the ashram as well as adopted them as their own. As such, the sage then became the ‘alim’ and the ashram became ‘Pondok’.

¹⁵⁰ Madmarn, p. 39-40

¹⁵¹ Sarkar, p.4

¹⁵² UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), ‘Thailand Case Study’(2014), p.1

¹⁵³ Sarkar, p.4

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.7

The key task of *pondok* schools is to provide traditional religious instruction for the Muslim community.¹⁵⁵ In the early period, *pondoks* had mainly served as a part-time religious school for Malay rubber-tappers.¹⁵⁶ Due to their informal character, it is not uncommon to find *pondoks* operating in any *kampong* (village) with the number of student enrollment as few as three.¹⁵⁷ Typical *pondoks* are established as Islamic boarding schools, similar to the *pesantren* of Indonesia, where mainly male students aging from thirteen to around twenty lived in simple accommodation either built by themselves or inherited from graduating seniors.¹⁵⁸

Prior to 2004, *pondoks* were originally funded through *waaf* (Islamic endowments) and *zakat* (tithes) of local Muslims, and the proceeds from some local commercial activities like the sale of agricultural produce harvested in the school area.¹⁵⁹ From 2000 AD onwards, most of the *pondoks* in Thailand have also looked for various alternative resources such as funding from foreign Muslim charities and communities.¹⁶⁰ These *pondoks* and Islamic boarding schools in the south received funds from, for instance, the Saudi Arabia-based Islamic International Relief Organisation (IIRO), which is partially belonged to the Muslim World League and is the biggest financial provider to the Thai Muslim communities.¹⁶¹ In terms of the structure of *pondok* education, it revolves around one schoolmaster, a religiously admired *babor* (or known as *tok-guru* in Malay), who assumes his social responsibility of teaching and purifying Islamic beliefs and practices, other than his personal obligation to understand the Islamic precepts.^{162 163} He is a main overseer of all the core instruction in the *pondok* .

¹⁵⁵Liow, 2009, p.23

¹⁵⁶McCargo, p.37

¹⁵⁷Liow, 2009, p.33

¹⁵⁸McCargo, p.37

¹⁵⁹Liow, 2009, p.35

¹⁶⁰ Sarkar, p.19

¹⁶¹ K. Chongkittavorn, 'Time to acknowledge that 'jihadism' is at work in South' (20 May 2004) <<http://www.islamdaily.org/en/world-issues/asia-pacific/1203.time-to-acknowledge-that-jihadism-is-at-work-in-so.htm>> accessed 30 July 2015

¹⁶²McCargo, p. 39

¹⁶³Liow, 2009, p.33

In *Pondoks*, there is no proper accreditation system which meets the requirements of national standards established by the Ministry of Education or the requirements established by Middle Eastern institutions of learning.^{164 165} Pondoks students are also disqualified for entry into higher educational institutions. The school assessment is based merely on the judgment of the *tok guru*, who grants an *ijazah* (certification) to his students after they have gained sufficient knowledge on a particular subject or text. The determination of quality or popularity of a *pondok* is usually based in the reputation of a *tok guru*. Often, Muslim students will move from one *pondok* to another to study under a particular *tok guru* in specific fields, creating a close relationship between master and his disciple.

Generally, most *pondoks* are conservative and disciplined in a way that they exclude females and pet animals from entering their institutions, and adopt a curfew system, typically of 10 P.M.¹⁶⁶ It is also interesting to be noted that from a human rights perspective, excluding females from getting access to education means gender discrimination, reflecting a biased system of *pondok* institution. The philosophy of *pondok* education, as explained by one babor, stresses on moral training and self-reliance: “This is an exemplary *pondok*....It’s not only about studying...they know how to do things themselves...and they know how to help people...it’s a school that produces students who know how to do good.” In this sense, *pondok* graduates are highly equipped with excellent morals rather than vocational skills. They are rather offered with a direct preparation to become an ustadz or imam. In the 19th century, a majority of *pondok* graduates, after gaining sufficient knowledge of Islam went to continue their studies in Mekka at the institution of Masjid al Haram.¹⁶⁷ They spent their time in Mekka for around ten to fifteen years, studying with teachers of either Middle Eastern countries or of their own country.

To reinforce the system of *pondok* education which reflects the close bond between the Prophet and his companions, *pondok* graduates also tend to become

¹⁶⁴ Sarkar, p.8

¹⁶⁵ Liow, 2009, p.34

¹⁶⁶ McCargo, p. 38

¹⁶⁷ Madmarn, p. 48

assistant teachers to a respected *tok guru*.¹⁶⁸ For those graduates with excellent knowledge and standing, they usually establish their own *pondok* schools and become *tok guru* themselves, spreading Islamic education and religion in Malay-Muslim community. Several graduates who have mastered in law subjects also give advice on legal issues on the basis of Sharia and Quaranic injunctions. In many cases, once *tok guru* is retired, he often passes his *pondok* to his favored students as well as handing over his collection of literature and scholarship to those students deemed to master in his *ilmu* (knowledge). Since the main language of instruction in *Pondok* is Pattani Malay, it is usually the case that *pondok* graduates are not functional in Thai language skills, and thus they are highly excluded from entering into a wider job market in Thai society.¹⁶⁹

Pondok schools do not adopt formal curriculum, and the hours of study were not properly set up.¹⁷⁰ *Pondok* students are also simply divided into three groups: small, medium-sized, and big pupils. In their devoutly pure character, *pondoks* equipped students in a way that older pupils supervised younger ones. The curriculum of *pondok* schools focuses on religious education—academic and vocational subjects are not included in the syllabus.^{171 172} Islamic studies conducted at *pondoks* can be mainly divided into three categories: *taubid* (oneness of God; divinity), *sharia* (Islamic way of life including Islamic law), and *akhlk* (ethics). *Taubid* embraces *usul-addin* (principles of Islam) and *aqidah* (belief in the articles of faith); while *shari'a* includes *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *fara'id* (Islamic law on succession/inheritance); and *akhlak* focuses on *tasswuf* (spirituality), a discipline which uniquely describes Sufi movements. Apart from these topics, the curriculum also comprises Tarikh (which includes Islamic history and local history), Nahwi and Sarf (Arabic language, grammar, and conjugation), Tasauwuf (mysticism), and “Falak” (astronomy). In a traditional form, *pondoks* offer

¹⁶⁸ Liow, 2009, p.34

¹⁶⁹ McCargo, p. 38

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p.38

¹⁷¹ Sarkar, p.8

¹⁷² Liow, 2009, p.33

religious studies called *kitab* on a “lifelong learning” principle.¹⁷³ It is also through the literature of *Kitab Jawi* that traditional Muslim students learn and understand Islamic precepts (*ahkam al-Islam*) as well as Arabic language and texts.¹⁷⁴

With regard to *pondok* pedagogy, Hasan Madmarn, a director at the college of Islamic Studies of Prince of Songkla University in Patani has pointed out that “the methodology of *pondok* education in southern Thailand was and is...similar to the widely recognized system of the intellectual learning process among the institutions in medieval Islam.”¹⁷⁵ ¹⁷⁶ The methodology of *pondok* schools, in other words, focuses on recitation, rote learning, and memory. In comparison to the traditional Siamese education system, the instructional methods and organisation of *pondok* school system is quite similar to that of the Siamese, thus implying the urgent need to reform the pedagogy of both institutions. The differences between these two systems are their medium of instruction and content. Thus, this indicates that the *pondok* schools are not so different from traditional Siamese schools. What makes these two institutions different is that the system of Siamese schools has been implemented through a national building project, whereas the *pondoks*’ system has not.

4.2.2. Perceptions on Traditional Pondok Institution from Malay Muslim Community and Thai State Officials

It is noteworthy to recognise that in the Malay-Muslim community in southernmost Thailand, the institution of *pondok* has developed a close relationship with their society at large.¹⁷⁷ *Pondok* students, or known as “Dek Pondok”, serve both religious and social functions while receiving sustenance from the public. Their integral relationship with society has symbolized *pondoks* as a special, sacred institution in the eyes of Malay Muslims. For Malay Muslims, *pondoks* are perceived as “a vital symbol

¹⁷³ McCargo, p. 38

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, p.38

¹⁷⁴ Madmarn, p. 44

¹⁷⁵ Liow, 2009, p.33

¹⁷⁶ Sarkar, p.7

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p.15

of religious and educational heritage in their society.”¹⁷⁸ They are “something *more* than schools, serving as beacons of religion and morality.”¹⁷⁹ The close tie between *pondoks* and society has made Malay Muslims in southernmost Thailand want to maintain their traditional *pondok* institution as a symbolic struggle for the fundamental educational and cultural rights of Muslims in a Buddhist-dominated nation.¹⁸⁰ The religious leaders, when convinced of the necessity of following modern education system, also prefer the introduction of modern secular subjects alongside religious studies in *pondoks*. In this sense, they want to ensure that Malay Muslim parents send their children to *pondoks* rather than government schools.

For *tok guru*, he prioritises religious studies offered at *pondoks* which could lead to intense spiritual and religious development on the part of the students.¹⁸¹ Several *tok gurus* also show concern on the survival of the *pondok* as it influences the preservation of southern Thailand’s reputation as an Islamic learning centre in Southeast Asia. For the owners of *pondoks* or descendants of a *tok guru*, their attitudes towards *pondok* schools are highly conservative and protective.¹⁸² Instead of spending money on long-term development of *pondoks*, they rather stick with preserving Islamic tradition as well as stick with the old “ways of doing things” as the essential elements of *pondok* institution.

For the separatist group, their perception on traditional *pondok* schools can be summed up through the following excerpt of separatist propaganda material:

“*Pondok* schools are the only institutions of the Malay people which teach Malay language to serve the community’s needs. *Pondok* schools are not a disguised organization for political purposes. Nor are they educationally and economically wasteful.”¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.14

¹⁷⁹ McCargo, p.40

¹⁸⁰ Sarkar, p.15

¹⁸¹ Liow, 2009, p.36

¹⁸² Murray Hunter, ‘Islamic education’s desperate plight’, 26 February 2013

<<http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2013/02/26/desperate-plight-of-islamic-education-in-southern-thailand/>> accessed 9 May 2015

¹⁸³ Liow, 2009, p. 28

Prior to the government initiatives to restructure *pondok* based education system, *pondoks* were widely perceived by mainstream Thai Buddhist society as religious institutions and not as educational ones.¹⁸⁴ Most of *pondok* graduates have mastered only in religious knowledge, without any knowledge in Thai national history, Thai language, as well as technical skills which could be useful for their potential occupations in Thai society. For Thai state officials, *pondoks* are “something less than schools” since they do not offer academic courses and focus exclusively on non-Thai values, thus contributing nothing positive to national development.^{185 186} What the central government is mainly concerned about the *pondoks* in the southern provinces is the fact that *pondoks* fail to produce a kind of persons “considered to have the knowledge which a Siamese citizen should have ... he is a citizen who is able to earn his living by having an occupation; he knows the right and duties of the citizen, he will prove himself to be useful for his country by means of his occupation.”¹⁸⁷ In Thai-Buddhist terms, the rights and duties of the citizens are greatly embedded through Thai national education. Such kind of persons should serve his country in a way that is consistent with the principle of the so-called Thai national identity’s motto “Chat, Sassana, Pramahakasat” (Nation, Religion, King).

Besides, since *pondoks* are the stronghold of Malay religious, linguistic, and cultural identity which do not inculcate Thai language, Thai nationalism, and Thai values, Thai officials have generally viewed the *pondoks* as “an archaic and reactionary institution” which disrupts the government objectives of fostering national cohesion and identity through the implementation of an assimilation policy.^{188 189 190} In other words, Thai state authorities consider these *pondoks* “a barrier to the expansion of the national educational system.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁴ibid., p. 27

¹⁸⁵ibid., p.24

¹⁸⁶ Madmarn, p. 47

¹⁸⁷Liow, 2009, p. 24

¹⁸⁸ Madmarn, p. 47

¹⁸⁹Liow, 2009, p. 25

¹⁹⁰McCargo, p.38

¹⁹¹ Sarkar, p.14

The central government and most of Thai bureaucrats also suspect that a number of *pondoks* are likely to perpetuate the existing violence, foster Muslim radicalism and political activism, as well as spawn militants.^{192 193} Other criticisms on *pondoks* by Thai Buddhists and the government include the issues of low quality, overcrowded classrooms as a result of government subsidies, nepotism in recruiting teachers related to the *pondoks*' owners, and inadequacy of proper monitoring of student learning.¹⁹⁴ Some *pondok* owners are also suspected of doing alleged corruption in a way that they pocket some amount of teachers' salaries or over-report student enrolment numbers in order to receive extra funding from the government. The following section will elaborate more on the issues of the Thai government education policy and funding for *pondok* schools.

4.3. Intervention by the Thai State to Malay Muslim Populations in the South through Education Policy and Governance

The ethno-religious encounter between the Thai Buddhist and Malay Muslim communities in Southern Thailand makes it difficult for the central government to efficiently regulate the education system for this region, taking into account the concerns over national stability, sovereignty, and development as well as specific cultural needs of Malay Muslim population. Under the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) from 1868 to 1910, the Siamese government had attempted to develop the country into a modernised nation state with westernised bureaucracy.^{195 196} The Ministry of Education was established along with the introduction of modern education system, which was centralised in order to foster a sense of Thai national identity in all students, irrespective of their ethnicity. Under the new process of modernisation, the government had adopted and focused on new educational programs, of which the role on the instructions and the provision of educational facilities in Malay-Muslim

¹⁹² Joseph Liow, 'The Pondok Schools of Southern Thailand: Bastion of Islamic Education or Hotbed of Militancy?' (25 August 2004) <<http://hdl.handle.net/10220/4074>>accessed May 10 May 2015

¹⁹³ Sarkar, p.14

¹⁹⁴ UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.11

¹⁹⁵ Sarkar, p.8

¹⁹⁶ UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.12

dominated provinces were played and made exclusively by the Buddhist monks and not Muslim scholars and religious leaders.¹⁹⁷ In this sense, it totally ignored Islamic religion based educational system and the sacred position of *pondoks* in Malay society.

Under the reign of King Wachiravut (Rama VI) from 1910 to 1925, the King had introduced a Thai national identity symbol of “Nation, Religion, and King” on the basis of an English patriotic notion of “God, King & Country.”¹⁹⁸ Driven by his patriotic sentiment, he proposed “one language education system” with the introduction of compulsory Thai education all over the country. With the fear of being treated as second class citizens, the religious and ethnic minorities, especially those in Malay-Muslim dominated southern provinces, showed widespread resistance, both actively and passively, to such education system in the reign of Rama VI. In the eyes of southern Malay Muslims, the dominated Buddhist Thais, whom are viewed as “Katif” or non-believers, were greatly attacking Islamic language, religion, and other cultural values. Malay ethnic leaders regard the government education system as “a process of political and cultural incorporation” or “invasion procedure” of the Thai Buddhist authorities, who have long attempted to eradicate Malay language and transform the upcoming generation of Malays to Siamese.

From the period of early 1920s onwards, the central government had made tremendous effort to systematically integrate Muslim education system of southern Thailand into Thai state secular system.¹⁹⁹ Early education policies, starting from the 1921 Compulsory Education Act, the 1978 National Education Scheme, and National Education Plan of 1932 and 1936 respectively, required all Malay Muslim students to study in state primary schools and learn a Thai language.^{200 201} Considering the 1921 Compulsory Education Act, this policy forced all Malay children to attend four years of compulsory primary education in Siamese Buddhist schools.^{202 203} Any forms of Malay

¹⁹⁷ Sarkar, p.8

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p.19

¹⁹⁹ Liow, 2009, p.25

²⁰⁰ UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.12

²⁰¹ Liow, 2009, p.25

²⁰² D. P. Walker, ‘Conflict between the Thai and Islamic cultures in Southern Thailand (Patani) 1948-2005’, *Islamiyat* 27 (1), 81-117, p.86

education institutions, even the mosques, were not allowed to operate for religious learning.²⁰⁴ The objective of this policy is to slowly “Siamitize” Patani region and to eradicate the Mohammedan Malay faith. Toward achieving this goal, the Thai government, under King Wachiravut, had forcefully introduced Thai language based secular education with the spreading of Siamese history and Thai language for the local Malay Muslim people in the southern border province schools.

Despite the provision of two hours of religious education (either Buddhism or Islam) per week in state schools, Malay Muslim people were still greatly suspicious of the school education system.²⁰⁵ Many Malay Muslim parents viewed state schools as Buddhist institutions, whose underlying goals are to stamp out the practice of Islam, weaken Islamic faith, and eventually convert southern Malay Muslims to Buddhists. The policy of compelling Muslim children to study in Thai state schools where secular subjects and Buddhism were taught was not only greeted with Muslims’ resentment against the government’s ignorance on their religion, local language, and history, but also with consternation by the southern Islamic elite, since it attacked their leadership position within Malay community and jeopardized long-standing Islamic cultural identities. As shunned by Malay Muslim parents, Thai national schools were eventually attended merely by a small number of Malay civil servants and aristocrats’ children.

Under the periods of military dictatorship with a political system of constitutional monarchy in place, the different military administrations had launched a number of education policies, mainly including the National Education Plan of 1932 and 1936 respectively, which aimed to strictly regulate Islamic schools while prioritizing the spread of national language, culture, and history throughout the country.²⁰⁶

With regard to the National Education Plan of 1932, the government of Phraya Manopakorn attempted to integrate all religious and ethnic groups in the country into

²⁰³Liow, 2009, p.25

²⁰⁴ Walker, p.86

²⁰⁵Liow, 2009, p.25

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p.25

the new political system.²⁰⁷ This education policy, which was also under the military administration of Phibun Songkram, aimed to streamline the languages, identities, and cultures of Thailand's heterogeneous ethnic groups into one unified notion of a Thai national identity.²⁰⁸ Through this educational transformation in favor of national uniformity, all Malay textbooks and study materials were replaced with Thai vernacular study materials. Besides, all schools were forced to adopt only Buddhist ethics, thus excluding other religions, languages, and historical narratives being covered in the curriculum. Once again, these education initiatives were met with further resentment on the part of Malay Muslim population, who saw the domination of imposed Thai values as an attack on Islamic religion, Malay culture, and heritage. In this sense, the education policy of 1932 was not totally successful.²⁰⁹

Therefore, the next prime minister, Colonel Phraya Phahon Phonphayuhasena proclaimed another National Education Plan in 1936.²¹⁰ According to this plan, it stated: "The Government has the authority to control the institutions to administer examinations to the teachers and award them diplomas, to administer examinations to students on the completion of Primary General Education, Junior Secondary Education and Senior Secondary Education."²¹¹

Critically, this new Plan showed a higher degree of political incorporation in terms of education and its organization than the previous plan.²¹² In response, the Muslim population compelled the central government to modify the policy. Despite the government's primary objective of building a unified Thai national identity among different ethnic groups of the nation, they then allowed Muslims studying in Islamic private schools to attend extra classes in *pondoks* in the evenings or over the weekend. The government also tried to promote Malay education, improve the education process,

²⁰⁷ Sarkar, p.10

²⁰⁸ Liow, 2009, p.26

²⁰⁹ Sarkar, p.10

²¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.10

²¹¹ *ibid.*, p.10

²¹² *ibid.*, p.10

while teaching Siamese orthography to Malay children through the use of Siamese characters for Malay language.²¹³

Besides, considering the school enrolment in southern Thailand, some government official reports stated that the percentage of school enrolment of children in the south was much lower than in other regions of the country. For instance, in 1937, only about 40 percent of the total Muslim population of southern Thailand was enrolled.

By and large, the government-school integration policies of 1921, 1932, and 1936 were not completely successful.²¹⁴ In response, Thai political leaders introduced a more cautious approach of providing Thai language education into *pondoks* taught by Thai Bangkok teachers dispatched to the south. However, Bangkok authorities have always taken the blanket closure of the *pondok* into consideration.

By 1948, several Malay Muslims had argued that the state-imposed Thai language and culture was indeed linked to their economic and political subordination.²¹⁵ Yet, Jawi-script²¹⁶ original sources of this period needed to be examined to explore “the points at which the roles of languages and cultures conjoined with state power and politics in the crystallization of nationalism in Patani.”²¹⁷ On the surface, Muslim rejection of Thai national identity and culture was widely expressed in the forms of “sporadic banditry waged against society by men who had been pushed to its margin” and “political Muslim nationalist insurgency aimed at overthrowing that society from its foundation and replacing it with an independent Muslim State.”²¹⁸

Another important education policy, as part of the government “Thai-nization” assimilation program, is the “Private School Act of 1949.”^{219 220} This Act required all private Islamic schools in Thailand to register with the education ministry and to make

²¹³ *ibid.*, p.11

²¹⁴ Liow, 2009, p.25

²¹⁵ Walker, p.88

²¹⁶ Jawi is now written in Arabic letters. In Thailand, certain *Jawi* books (or *kitab Jawi*) are taught to both groups of Malay and Thai-speaking students. It is through these *Jawi* books that Muslim students learn the structure of Arabic language and certain parts of Arabic texts. It is also important to note that the function of the *kitab Jawi* is unlikely to fade away from the Muslim community in the future.

²¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.88

²¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.88

²¹⁹ Sarkar, p.13

²²⁰ Liow, 2009, p.28

their curricula in compliance with government guidelines. However, since *pondoks* were categorized as religious institutions and not as private schools, they were not under government control until the third edition of the Act in 1960.

In 1958, the Ministry of Education argued that the initiative of *pondok* registration was two-fold: on the one hand, the registration means that *pondok* graduates are integrated into mainstream Thai society and economy; and on the other, it means the monitoring and management of the Muslim threat deriving from the belief that *pondok* education prolonged the narratives of Malay-Muslim resistance and separatism.²²¹ By and large, “the practice in the 1950s, was a strict control of the *pondok* under the local administrative officials and the police.”, according to the memoir of Pattani’s governor.²²² Since the 1950s, there has also been a policy of enforcing Thai national curriculum at secondary school level, compelling private Islamic schools all over the country to adopt Thai secular education system.²²³

By 1960, the policy of *pondok* registration has been made compulsory and refined with the following main objectives: the improvement of *pondok* school infrastructure and facilities, the enhancement of pedagogy and curriculum of Islamic education, and the establishment of a proper system of evaluation and assessment which would conform to national standards.²²⁴ In this registration procedure, *pondoks* were required to unveil information about their institutions, their pedagogies and curriculum, and to operate under the instructions of education ministry.²²⁵ ²²⁶ In return, these schools would receive some government funds for developing their school infrastructure.

From the 1960s, the Thai central government has tried to stamp out the role of *pondoks* as a sacred Islamic institution from Thai culture by urging all traditional *pondoks* to convert into “private Islamic schools”, of which they are required to follow

²²¹ *ibid.*, p.26

²²² *ibid.*, p.26

²²³ UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.12

²²⁴ Liow, 2009, p.27

²²⁵ Sarkar, p.14

²²⁶ Liow, 2009, p.27

Thai secular education system.^{227 228 229} Four southern border provinces were grouped together as one administrative unit known as the Educational Region.²³⁰ The ultimate goal of the central government is to encourage those *pondoks* to gradually accept necessary changes. The efforts were made to include several hours of Thai standard curriculum subjects and Thai language based instruction per day in these schools, and to close down those *pondoks* which rejected such conversion. In this type of “private Islamic schools”, non-Muslim Thai teachers were dispatched to teach secular subjects.²³¹ The teaching of the Malay language was not allowed, and even the teaching of “Islamic religion” was derived only from Thai-language textbooks dispatched from Bangkok. As such, we can simply assume that any different tradition of education was being greatly discriminated against in Thai Buddhist society. Nonetheless, substantial incentives for those *pondoks* which converted to private Islamic schools were that these schools were provided with both government capital allowances and per capita subsidies based on the numbers of students.²³²

In 1961, the government also made official effort to register *pondoks* under the Pondok Educational Improvement Programme, in exchange for financial support and to offer academic and vocational subjects with Thai language instruction.^{233 234} Within this year, 197 *pondok* schools registered, and in 1965, the government had proclaimed that *pondoks* that registered and received state subsidies would be re-categorized as private religious schools. By 1971, more than 400 *pondoks* had registered, although this was not compulsory. However, *pondoks* have been allowed to register with the Thai government during the 1960s (and mostly persuaded to register between 1961 to 1966), but between 1971 and 2004, they were no longer permitted for the registrations.²³⁵

²²⁷ Walker, p.89

²²⁸ Sarkar, p.14

²²⁹ UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.12

²³⁰ Sarkar, p.14

²³¹ Walker, p.89

²³² McCargo, p.40

²³³ Liow, 2009, p.27

²³⁴ *ibid.*, p.39

²³⁵ McCargo, p.39

Anyhow, the establishment of new *pondoks* and unregistered *pondoks* had instead proliferated.

Usually, most *pondoks* complied with the registration requirements, yet they kept all interactions with the Thai government to a minimum extent.²³⁶ Registrations could also comprise of various forms: as *pondoks*, or as private Islamic schools under diverse categories.²³⁷ Fully functional private Islamic schools which provided both systems of education were usually registered as Category 15(1) of the 1982 Private School Act. Some other schools were registered under Category 15(2) as potentially “aspiring private Islamic schools,” which still failed to meet all the requirements for Category 15(1) status, in terms of lacking requisite facilities like a science laboratory or a school clinic. “15(2)” schools, in practice, were usually greeted with suspicion by the Thai Buddhist authorities, who saw them as having chosen “15(2)” status as a “flag of convenience” without truly intending to fulfill the requirements. While this suspicion was proven true for some schools, other really sought to upgrade themselves to “15(1)” status. Such “15(2)” schools also included schools that functioned as *pondoks* and were allowed to provide a secular program. During the periods of 1969 to 2003 when no registration was permitted, several “15(2)” schools were registered in this category under state threat. Besides, while “15(1)” schools were granted 500,000 baht in annual capital funds, those “15(2)” schools were granted only 50,000 baht.

Despite Muslim parents’ dissatisfaction with their education system under the control Thai Buddhist government, they still valued the importance of modern secular learning and mastery in Thai language, of which their children needed for greater job opportunities in wider Thai society.²³⁸ The transformation of *pondoks* into private Islamic schools means that their children could get access to and benefit from modern education, without any concessions involved in sending them to a government school.

However, considering the Muslim separatist propaganda material, the following excerpt could summarise Muslim separatists’ perception on the conversion of *pondoks* to private Islamic schools:

²³⁶ *ibid.*, p.43

²³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 40

²³⁸ *ibid.*, p.41

“The conversion of the *pondok* schools to the private Islamic schools is to introduce an undesirable culture to the people. The use of Siamese language as a medium of instruction, the teaching of Siamese history, the teaching of Buddhist principles in the schools mean the obstruction of learning Islam and Malay language. These subjects are not only irrelevant to our needs but they will also destroy the intent and aim of the *pondok* schools, and hence Islam will disappear from Siam.”²³⁹

A central element underlying the resistance was their perception that the government’s enforcement of Thai national curriculum was indeed an implicit implantation of Buddhist philosophy and ideology, imposed by the concern on national unity and pluralism.²⁴⁰

For babors or *Tok guru*, a policy of converting pondoks into private Islamic schools had put them under increasing pressures and incentives from the Thai Buddhist state.²⁴¹ While many were overwhelmed by the temptations to offer a secular curriculum and mainstream their educational activities, some others sought to resist such initiative. Basically, babors obtain their status, prestige, and identity from their sacred unworldliness, their detachment from Thai Buddhist community, and their intimate connection with the local community.²⁴² Once a babor becomes the owner of a private Islamic school, this means his status in the local surrounding gradually declines. In other words, once babors’ schools were regulated in a modernised way, the real identity of their baboriness had irreversibly changed, and the faith people had placed in babors had also consequently declined.

In 1969, Thai state authorities drafted a new education plan for Muslim population which “aims to establish kindergartens connected with all primary schools in the Muslim provinces within a six-year period. The program is designed to lay a solid foundation in Thai language, which is not obtained through three or four years of primary schooling.”²⁴³

²³⁹ Liow, 2009, p.28

²⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.29

²⁴¹ McCargo, p.41

²⁴² *ibid.*, p.43

²⁴³ Walker, ‘p.89

Later in 1970, the Ministry of Education in Thailand launched the policy of improving private Islamic schools with their primary objectives of upgrading the education system of *pondoks* to the levels of national standard education as well as to make the government and people understand and respect on another more.²⁴⁴ Again, this policy helped to implant the Malay Muslims in the southern region with the full consciousness of Thai identity, with the Thai language taking over and replacing Malay and Arabic in everyday life. As such, the education ministry decided to take the initiative by persuading the *pondoks* to officially register as “legally recognized *pondoks*”; persuading the registered *pondoks* to convert to private Islamic schools; and giving no permission for the establishment of new *pondoks* outside the regional school system.

The outcome of this policy is that there were now 487 registered *pondoks*, with 426 of them become private Islamic schools and 61 have terminated their operation.²⁴⁵ Also, there have been substantial changes both in Islamic education system and the attitudes towards it among the Muslim people in southern Thailand.

In addition, in 1970, the Ministry of Education created the Education Promotion Project to enhance a stream of education for the registered *pondoks*, the ones which offered the teaching of academic, vocational, and religious courses.²⁴⁶ The objectives of this policy were placed under the auspices of the Private Islamic Schools Improvement Committee, established by the education ministry in 1973, whose duty was to give advices to the ministry on issues related to Islamic education and to bring the curriculum of Islamic schools in line with those of national schools.

Importantly, in 1971, the Thai Buddhist government had made the voluntary conversion of *pondoks* to private Islamic schools compulsory.²⁴⁷ The use of Malay language was strictly replaced with Thai language and traditional religious curriculum was lessened to accommodate Thai secular curriculum. Besides, the Ministry of Education proclaimed that “Head Masters of Private Schools must have at least six

²⁴⁴ Madmarn, p.46

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.46

²⁴⁶ Liow, 2009, p.39

²⁴⁷ Sarkar, p.15

years of secondary education or M.S-3—equivalent to Grade -10 in the American public school system.”²⁴⁸

Not surprisingly, such policy had triggered widespread resistance among the Malay Muslim population in southern Thailand.²⁴⁹ According to the report of the Ministry of Education in 1971, 109 *pondoks* in southern region had been closed in order to protest against the Thai central government’s intervention in their operations.

During the 1980s, the regulation in Islamic education had been driven in earnest under the Private School Ac of 1982.²⁵⁰ This Act was created to regulate not only Islamic schools but also private schools in general, with the primary objectives of enhancing the administration and management of private Islamic schools. Under the Act, the government intended to improve private Islamic schools by upgrading standards of curriculum, enhancing administration and improving school facilities such as teaching materials. Under the auspices of different government directives, the curriculum of Islamic education had been constantly re-calibrated and improved, leading to adjustments to the number of hours per week devoted both to academic and religious subjects. Yet, the content of religious knowledge had not seen any great improvement.

In 1982, the private Islamic school was officially established as an educational institution and regulated under the supervisory authority of the Private Education Committee at the Ministry of education.²⁵¹ Interestingly, education authorities had also lately considered a change in the terminology of private Islamic schools to Institute of Learning—*Pondokin* order to point out the fact that the private Islamic school is indeed an offshoot of the sacred *pondok* tradition.

In 1997, under Chuan Leekpai government, Muslim community had blamed the central government that the existing education system had not made Malay Muslim students have a good grasp of Thai or Jwai language in government schools.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p.15

²⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p.17

²⁵⁰ Liow, 2009, p.29

²⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.39

²⁵² Sarkar, p.18

In 1999, the government in turn proclaimed the National Educational Act, which was held responsible for the provision of “nine years’ compulsory education and twelve years of free education”, which was different from the previous six years’ system.²⁵³

However, this new education system had again invoked criticisms from Malay Muslims since the Muslims claimed that the new system had forced Malay Muslim students to spend more time in Thai state schools than earlier and as such invoked antagonism among the Muslim students. Under this Act, the administrative responsibilities were also decentralized to local level and education planning was consolidated at the central level.²⁵⁴ Besides, there was the creation of 175 Education Service Areas [ESA] in 2003 which increased to 185 in 2008. These ESAs offer a connection between the national curriculum and the preparation of local curricula to accommodate local learning contexts. Education institutions are also permitted to improve and implement their curricula as well as prepare regulations for monitoring and assessment. At the provincial levels, operational plans, education development plans, and five-year plans are developed and implemented, and local authorities are being in charge of formulating local education policies, plans, and management.

Several different Thai governments had also done every possible way to obstruct *pondoks* from having access to system of higher education as well as modern jobs in wider Thai society.²⁵⁵ Schools which operated outside the government education system in 2001 were only offered nine items from the Ministry of Education: “a football, two sets of badminton racquets, a dozen shuttlecocks, a rubber hoop, a picture of the King, a world map, a map of Thailand and 25 religious books.”²⁵⁶

Once again, with the upsurge of insurgency in 2004, the Thaksin Shinnawatra government has revived attempts to carefully regulate Islamic education system alongside Thai national system by way of making unregistered *pondoks* to register with the Ministry of Education and become private Islamic schools.²⁵⁷ ²⁵⁸ Registered

²⁵³ *ibid.*, p.18

²⁵⁴ UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.13

²⁵⁵ Walker, p.102

²⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p.102

²⁵⁷ UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.12

pondoks were officially entitled as *sathaban pondoks*, or “pondok institutes”, implying bureaucratization and “Thai-ization”, yet supporting the idea that “*pondoks* were something other than ‘schools.’”²⁵⁹ The registered schools were required to offer secular state curricula alongside religious studies in exchange of government subsidies. Several Islamic school owners also found themselves benefited from such government assimilation policies, becoming wealthy and influential yet increasingly alienated from their local grassroots communities at the same time.

However, due to arbitrary manner of *pondok* establishment, this *pondok* registration policy was not easily implemented.²⁶⁰ A number of *pondoks* remained unregistered for fear that if they were to adopt state curriculum, the emphasis on Islamic religion would be diminished.²⁶¹ The *tok guru* from these schools say that they recognised their primary responsibility of preserving Islamic tradition of *pondok* schools, which remains significant to the culture, identity, and history of southern Malay Muslims provinces. In addition, several *pondoks* have gone underground as they were afraid that the registration will stimulate further government attack on Muslim education and Malay-Muslim community.²⁶² Considering government aid for registered *pondoks*, on 4th January 2004, Thai parliament had adopted a legislation ensuring that every registered *pondok* would be provided with 5 million baht in an academic year for 500 pupils.²⁶³ Since May 2004, some 321 *pondoks* have come to register with the central government.²⁶⁴ However, that money would be transferred to the foundation which regulated that *pondok*.²⁶⁵ Thus, since 2004, a *pondok* was compelled to operate under the umbrella of foundation in order to receive government fund.

Through the educational reforms which included the National Education Act of 1999 and its 2002 amendments, the current education system was adopted to develop

²⁵⁸ Liow, 2004, p.2

²⁵⁹ McCargo, p.40

²⁶⁰ Liow, 2004, p.2

²⁶¹ Liow, 2009, p.35

²⁶² Liow, 2004, p.2

²⁶³ Sarkar, p.19

²⁶⁴ Liow, 2009, p.40

²⁶⁵ Sarkar, p.19

new decentralised organizational structures and call for student-centered teaching practices with the primary objectives of 1) providing nine years' compulsory education to all learners; 2) providing 12 years of free basic education, both formal and informal, to all Thai citizens; 3) encouraging inclusive education through integration of formerly vulnerable and marginalised groups; 4) supporting the decentralisation of authority to local administrations and institutions and educational service areas; and 5) cooperating with all related stakeholders to make sure that the curriculum content is relevant for diverse learning groups and that the delivery mechanisms are flexible.²⁶⁶

The primary education curriculum comprises five main competencies: “1) communication capacity, 2) thinking capacity, 3) problem-solving capacity, 4) capacity for applying life skills, and 5) capacity for technological application.”²⁶⁷ The eight ideal characteristics include “1) love of nation, religion and king, 2) honesty and integrity, 3) self-discipline, 4) avidity for learning, 5) observance of principles of sufficiency economy philosophy in one's way of life, 6) dedication and commitment to work, 7) cherishing Thai-ness, and 8) public-mindedness.”²⁶⁸

In 2008, a new Basic Core Curriculum was developed, comprising eight core subjects: Thai language, science, social studies, religion and culture, mathematics, health and physical education, arts, careers and technology, and foreign languages.²⁶⁹ The curriculum fosters the principle of “embracing diversity” and encourages efforts “at integrating local wisdom and culture into the national curriculum, underpinned by policies to use mother tongue languages at kindergarten level.”²⁷⁰ At the heart of the Thai National Curriculum lies the promotion of self-learning strategies, thinking skills, and moral development—the capacities which match with the educational principles of learning to adjust oneself in multicultural communities. Nevertheless, these capacities lack the emphasis on knowledge of other cultures, understanding of discrimination, empathy, trust, leadership, teamwork, community involvement, and political

²⁶⁶ UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), p.12-13

²⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.13

²⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.13

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p.13

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.13

participation. Moreover, although some attempts have been made to alter the local curriculum of schools in southern border provinces to integrate local narratives and history, these have not been widely implemented.

In 2009, the Key Education Policy in the Southern Border Provinces was outlined by the Ministry of Education, with the objectives of regulating private education and increasing funds for private institutions.²⁷¹ The central government provided financial support on tuition fees, textbooks, school uniforms and learning materials for private institutions in the south, which make up 70 percent of all educational institutions in the region. Around 60 to 70 percent of the state educational budget was granted to private education (from kindergarten to secondary level). In addition, the Ministry of Education has set up the Partner Schools as pairing state schools with *pondoks* and *tadika* schools to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

As already discussed, the government “Thai-nization” assimilation program in the field of education was met with stiff opposition from Malay Muslim population, who saw such initiative as internal colonialism practiced by the Thai Buddhist state against Malay Muslim people. This is why, under the current education system, a majority of Muslim parents rather choose private Islamic schools for their children. This has led to a dual education system and a sense of segregation between Malay Muslim and Thai Buddhist a community which obstructs children in the south from experiencing multiculturalism or multicultural education in the classroom.²⁷²

4.4. Consequences of the Thai Government’s Education Policies for the South

To a great extent, successive Thai government’s forced assimilation policies in the realm of education have failed to create a peaceful assimilated national identity and have tremendously worsened centre-periphery relationship in the form of intensification of ethnic conflict between Muslim Malays and the Thai central government.²⁷³

²⁷¹ *ibid.*, p.13

²⁷² *ibid.*, p.13-14

²⁷³ Walker, p.90

It is also noteworthy to consider the fact that a monolingual system of education does not really work. In order to make a child learn how to write and read, one should teach the child in his native language first. In this way, it will lead to much better results from the child in the learning in his second and/or third languages. This is how the bilingual education system should be.

Throughout the periods of the second half of the 20th century, Thailand's southern region has witnessed a high drop-out rate of Muslim children studying in government schools.²⁷⁴ For instance, during 1970s in the last year of primary school and the first year of secondary school, Thai Muslims have made up only 30 percent of the total students. One main reason for this drop-out rate among the Thai Muslims is that the Muslims' parents were reluctant to maintain their children in Thai state schools because of its confliction with religious studies. Many of them, therefore, preferred to send their children to *pondok* schools, which prioritise the study of Malay, Koran, and Jawi languages. Also, once returning to the village *pondok*, these Muslim students would naturally lost their gained competencies in Thai language.

Since 1960, the Thai government policy which required *pondoks* to register with the Ministry of Education had only cultivated the hostile attitudes and widespread resistance from Malay Muslims, with the closing down of 150 *pondoks* in the south.²⁷⁵ One main reason for this is that the government penetration into the *pondok* structure of religious education had disordered "the process by which the Malay-Muslim community used to produce its intellectuals," by forcing them to adopt Thai secular based education and aspects of Thai culture (including Buddhism), thus affecting Patani's status as "a centre for Islamic education."²⁷⁶ The critical effect of this was the abrasion of "the tradition of excellence in the standards of Islamic education", since *pondoks* now became the institutions and instruments for the Malay-Muslims' expression of wider resistance to Thai state colonialism in the southern border provinces. In this process, Islamic education was criticised as being the front line of the contestation for identity between the southern provinces and Bangkok.

²⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p.89

²⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p.90

²⁷⁶ Liow, 2009, p.29

More crucially, the consequences of the Thai government's policy on *pondok* registration are that the relationship between *pondoks* and Islamic schools has become increasingly divisive and that several traditional *pondoks* experienced looming collapse, since a number of Muslim children switched to private Islamic schools (or registered *pondoks*).²⁷⁷ The traditional *pondoks* which could ensure continuing student enrollments were those supervised by babors who commanded Islamic popular faith, while the *pondoks* which stick to their traditional status were confronted with suspicion and close scrutiny from Thai security forces, who usually regarded them as "holding out" against the Thai state authority. Once traditional *pondoks* were deserted by the religious and political elite, they could only recruit poor, rural students and faced a decline. This somehow made some babors sought means of negotiating their identity, which would make them obtain their respected status in the community while forming accommodation with the state for the sake of their survival in Thai society. One option was to accept the offer of vocational training from either the Non-formal Education Department or the government's Vocational Training Department at their *pondoks*. Also, from 1980s onwards, the key beneficiaries of the government's policies toward Islamic education in the south were those babors who become the owners of successful private Islamic schools.²⁷⁸

Another critical consequence of the government's forced assimilation policies is that it urged several potential *pondok* students to go overseas for religious study, primarily in the Middle Eastern and South Asian countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, and Malaysia.²⁷⁹ ²⁸⁰ Interestingly, up to 85% of Muslim students from southern Thailand studying abroad are said to be financially supported by their host institutions. Several returning students also tried to sustain the *pondok* system by establishing their own *pondoks*, with some having as few as three to four students attending.

²⁷⁷ McCargo, p.43-44

²⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.45

²⁷⁹ Liow, 2004, p.2

²⁸⁰ Liow, 2009, p.29

Considering the *Pondok* Educational Improvement Programme (PEIP) in 1961, which is perceived as a state political machination of controlling over the *pondok*, this Programme has modernised the structure of Muslim education to some extent.²⁸¹ Yet it also implied that education could now become a medium of integration under Thai state control. As political considerations lie at the heart of the government's policy on *pondok*, this evoked a highly political resistance from the Malay Muslim community, whether in the forms of the closing down of *pondoks* or *pondok* protest against the policy by going underground. In 2001, such political resistance could be seen in the form of the emergence of such secessionist movements' organisations as the BNPP (National Front for the Liberation of Patani: proclaimed in 1969) and the BRN (National Revolutionary Front).²⁸²

In terms of the government policy of improving private Islamic schools in 1970, which aimed to implant the full consciousness of Thai identity for the Malay Muslims, the Malay language has not yet died away as the central government had hoped.²⁸³ Instead, it became more standardised and adjusted itself to the situation under the new methods of modern education led by the young Malay Muslim graduates. In fact, due to the influence of returning young graduates from neighboring countries, the Malay language has grown in accordance with its use in both the *pondok* and *madrasah*²⁸⁴ systems. In this sense, "Ethnic boundaries as symbolized by the centrality of the *pondok* and Malay language have not been markedly weakened, despite the government's very considerable investment in Thai public education."²⁸⁵

After the implementation of the Thai education system in most of government controlled *pondoks*, Thailand has also yielded a new group of Malay Muslim *pondok* graduates who had cultivated loyalty to the nation as well as accepted Thai national

²⁸¹Liow, 2009, p.28

²⁸² Walker, p.90

²⁸³ Madmarn, p.46

²⁸⁴ Like private Islamic schools, *madrasahs* in Thailand were established by Muslims' initiative to reform Islamic education with the offering of an academic curriculum. Yet, while the academic/vocational subjects in private Islamic schools are very much taken at the state initiative, the academic curriculum in the *madrasah* is regulated solely under the initiative of Malay Muslim leaders and the school's committee. There is no state involvement in the *madrasah* system, neither is the requirement on formal endorsement on the part of Thai state.

²⁸⁵ Madmarn, p.46

identity.²⁸⁶ However, these *pondok* graduates were not very well prepared for pursuing higher education as a result of their distinct socio-cultural background. Consequently, they did not do well in the nationwide annual university entrance examination, leading to the government's decision on March 10, 1976, that a quota should be established to help bringing about the easy entrance of the Malay Muslim students in all higher educational institutions throughout the country. Moreover, 16 scholarships worth 3000 Baht had been awarded to 4 qualified students from each of the four southern border provinces after they got admitted in the higher educational institutions. Such initiative was put forward in order to promote those Malay students as potential "agents of change" who could slowly encourage the national integration process by bringing their own minority group into the mainstream of Thai state

With regard to Bangkok's policy of registration-for-aid proclaimed in May 2004, one major consequence is that the number of *pondoks* has increased over the past few years.²⁸⁷ According to Nida'e Waba, President of the Islamic Private School Association, despite the government's initiatives which included their commitment to provide full subsidy to all *pondoks* that converted to private Islamic school status by registering with the education ministry and offering academic and vocational subjects, the number of traditional *pondoks* in Thailand's southern border provinces have evidently increased from around 270 at the end of 2004 to almost 330 in early 2006. One main reason which can explain this increase is that while the government had previously funded only registered private Islamic schools, in 2004 they had changed to provide 60 percent of the budget for funding *pondok* schools that chose to maintain their traditional status after registration. Other main reasons are that many *tok guru* were reluctant to convert their *pondoks* into private Islamic schools due to their concern on government encroachment into education system in southern Thailand; and that several *tok guru* pointed out on the importance of the survival of the *pondoks* in southern Thailand, which was renowned as a historic centre of Islamic learning in Southeast Asia.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Sarkar, p.16

²⁸⁷ Liow, 2009, p.35

²⁸⁸ Liow, 2009, p.36

When it comes to the private Islamic schools whose status was transferred from *pondoks*, the issue of academic success is also worth discussing as one of crucial consequences of the government's policies.²⁸⁹ Due to some Muslim educators, approximately 80 percent of Muslim students who passed the government university entrance examinations have studied in private Islamic schools. However, elsewhere it has been argued that only 60-70 percent of Malay Muslim students have completed elementary education, and only 25-30 percent of them continue to complete secondary school. Also, less than 10 percent of the Malay Muslim students could enter university, and only fewer were granted with post-graduate qualifications. Anyhow, the more impressive figures could only reflect the fact that the large number of Muslim students have studied in private Islamic schools in the first place.

In terms of the state subsidies for those private Islamic schools, one key consequence is that the government educational budget for these schools had been utilised by the schools for business purpose.²⁹⁰ In many cases, the schools utilised the government money through investments in transportation in order to attract more potential enrollees. The money was used to buy buses for transporting students to schools. Because of this convenience, this is why a vast majority of Muslim students opted for private Islamic schools. Another critical issue is that in several cases, the principals of heavily enrolled schools have argued that the money from the government was inefficient, and it was impossible to develop the schools using the limited government budget.²⁹¹ As such, this made them do direct fundraising from parents for the purpose of school development. In many cases, this fundraising enabled the schools to improve and sustain program delivery as well as purchase studying materials such as computers or science equipments, or promote student activities like academic and athletic competitions.

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p.40

²⁹⁰ B. Maxcy & E. Sungtong & Th. S. Th. Nhuyen, 'Legitimizing Leadership in Southern Thai Schools: Considering Local Responses to Neoliberal Reforms' (2010), p.120, 24 (1) 110-136

²⁹¹ *ibid.*, p.122

4.5. Problems and Dilemmas of the Education System and Policy in Southern Thailand

On the surface, the current major problem with both southern Thailand in general and Islamic based education system in particular are often addressed in line with the state concern on national security.²⁹² For several times, Islamic religious education was regulated and became a primary concern only when the Muslim resistance movements break out and plague the region or when the movements cement radical ties with the Middle East. Islamic schools are generally viewed not only as the place where Muslim ethnic identity and ethos are very much embedded in Islamic education in southern Thailand, but also the locus of military recruitment, radicalization, as well as the breeding grounds of the insurgency as the ideas that support the movement have been aroused for generations in the beliefs of teachers and taught students.²⁹³

The cooperation between Buddhists and Muslims in the field of education is usually precluded by the ethno-political disputes.²⁹⁴ It is the issues of “identity politics and the politics of demonization” that have jeopardised the Thai Buddhist and Malay Muslim communities.²⁹⁵ For a vast majority of the Buddhists, they seem to view the southern Muslims as backward and unfaithful due to their economic deprivation and secessionist movements. For the Muslims, many regard the Buddhists as “immoral, contaminated colonizers” due to their encroachment on Muslim cultural autonomy and their supremacy in the secular realm.²⁹⁶ Also, Malay Muslim scholars argue that the inherent immorality of Thai government has precluded them from truly understanding Islamic religious education. They contend that while the government sees education merely as “a way to prosperity”, the Muslims view it as “a source of morality and

²⁹² P. Parameswaran, ‘Utilizing Islamic Religious Education as a Peacebuilding Tool: A Case Study of Southern Thailand’, (n.d.) <<http://www.global-politics.co.uk/Issue%204/Thai%20schools.htm>> accessed May 13 2015

²⁹³ International Crisis Group, ‘Recruiting Militants in Southern Thailand’ (Asia report N°170-22 June 2009), p.20 <[http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/170_recruiting_militants_in_southern_thailand.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/170_recruiting_militants_in_southern_thailand.pdf)> accessed May 15 2015

²⁹⁴ Parameswaran, p.2

²⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p.2

²⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p.2

guidance.”²⁹⁷ Unsurprisingly, some Buddhist teachers and scholars say that Muslims have an irrational inclination to criticise all government educational handouts as tools of colonialism, in spite of the government’s generous intentions. The ethno-political dilemmas between the Buddhists and Muslims can also be reflected in the report of Barbara Whittingham-Jones, the first foreigner who travelled from Siam to Malaya after the Second World War²⁹⁸ The following is one excerpt of her report in 1947:

“As the Malayas refuse to send their children to Siamese schools and have so stubbornly refused to acquire even a rudimentary knowledge of the Siamese language (during the whole of my visit I found only one hajji, a former district officer, able to read and write Siamese), this educational starvation is retarding their entire social and economic development. As a result, the gulf between the native Malays and their Siamese conquerors steadily widens and the Siamese colonists openly scorn their subjects as illiterate and degenerate peasants.”²⁹⁹

Another critical problem is that related to the issue of resources and representation.³⁰⁰ For example, although Malay Muslims make up the majority in the three southern border provinces, only one Muslim representative for all three provinces is present in the Thai education ministry, and Muslims merely make up 30 percent of education subcommittees. Moreover, there is no particular body within the Office of Education to monitor private Islamic schools as no resources have been provided for official training on Islamic affairs. These reflect the religious bias and negligence on the part of the Thai Buddhist government.

In addition, the issues of participation in the nation’s political process and entry into the country’s modern job market represent one of the big dilemmas for Malay Muslims in southern Thailand.³⁰¹ If these Muslims wished to take part in the nation’s political process and get better modern jobs in wider Thai society, they would have to study in the government secular schools. This is primarily because studying in different

²⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p.2

²⁹⁸ Walker, p.87

²⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p.88

³⁰⁰ Parameswaran, p.2

³⁰¹ International Crisis Group, p.21

education systems other than government secular system would not easily allow Muslims for the political participation, and that *pondoks* and Islamic schools do not adequately prepare the students to either gain entrance into Thai universities, or competing in the country's modern job markets.^{302 303} Nationwide, the test scores of students from private Islamic schools are evidently below those from the government schools.³⁰⁴ Critically, if the Muslims accepted the new Buddhist government-imposed educational system, they would eventually undermine the Islamic based religious education in *pondoks* through the Jawai language, which is considered one of their most important pillars of Malay-Muslim ethno-religious identity.³⁰⁵ Before further government initiation of new modernisation measures for prevailing Islamic education system, such dilemma has been resolved through an increased rational understanding of many Malay Muslims, especially the younger generation. To some extent, the perception of young Malay Muslims on their language is not as orthodox as those of the older generation. Several young Malay Muslims have already recognised the importance of the Thai language as the language of higher or vocational studies which would pave way for their entry into any government job in Thailand. For this reason, they now learn Thai alongside the Jawai language.

Another major problem is that related to the initiative of Thai government funding for private Islamic schools.^{306 307} Firstly, most private Islamic schools which teach Thai national curriculum merely receive a limited amount of government subsidy, thus complicating the creation and development of standardised lesson plans as well as the teachers' ability to engage with the Thai government-imposed curriculum. These consequently affect the quality of instruction as a result. The second main point is that the financial incentives for transferring into the status of private Islamic schools have

³⁰² I. Chenu, 'Challenges of Integrated Curriculum: Experiences of Islamic Schools in Thailand' (n.d.), p.13 <http://www.academia.edu/10065039/challenges_in_Islamic_private_education_in_Thailand> accessed May 17 2015

³⁰³ Sarkar, p.21

³⁰⁴ Chenu, p.13

³⁰⁵ International Crisis Group, p.21

³⁰⁶ Chenu, p.13

³⁰⁷ McCargo, p.41

triggered a system of double accounting operated by most private Islamic schools.³⁰⁸ Many schools overstated the number of students enrolled, in order to request for additional per capita funding from the Thai government. They also use the government money to pay for the teachers who teach both religious and secular subjects, without taking into account the intention of government subsidies which aims to support only the teaching of the secular curriculum.

Apart from all of those major problems, there is also a main problem related to the integrated curriculum of private Islamic schools, which will be further elaborated and discussed in the sub-section of “Problems and Challenges of Existing Multicultural/Integrated Curriculum of Private Islamic Schools in Southern Thailand” of chapter 5.

4.6. Brief Analyses and Recommendations for the Thai Government

For a long time, the “national security” and “national development” mindsets of the Thai government and the security forces have made the government emphasise on the conflicting aspects of Islamic religious education and view them as a major national threat as well as the obstruction to national development.³⁰⁹ For the government, Islamic religious education is a threat to the country as it has a serious link with the secessionist movements, radical Islam and terrorism, or the global jihadic “Islam” from the Middle East.

Rather than having an effective cooperation with Islamic religious-educational institutions like *pondoks*, the Thai government instead focuses on transforming these institutions into semi-secular institutions where the modern national curriculum is offered alongside religious studies, and that religious devotional practices and mysticism are replaced with vocational training.³¹⁰ This initiative was implemented as a result of the concern from Thai law makers, who believed that those Islamic religious

³⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p.41

³⁰⁹ Parameswaran, p.1

³¹⁰ Sarkar, p.8

schools do not teach academic subjects, thus contributing nothing positive to national development.

However, if the government really wanted to reform the education system in the south in line with the development of the country, they should have established a cadre of educated officials to form “an efficient bureaucratic service upon which the modern state was to be built.”³¹¹ Also, the Muslim leaders in southern Thailand viewed that if the Thai Buddhist government really wanted to integrate Malay-Muslim population of Patani region into the Thai state, they should have recognised the sacred position of the *pondoks* in Malay society as well as treated these *pondoks* and their “Tok Gurus” with care from the beginning period of the modernisation process. In order to better facilitate the integration of ethnic minorities into a wider coherent Thai national identity, the government should also restructure the contents of the existing education in accordance with the ethno-religious demands or needs of the Malay-Muslim population. Besides, most local government officials, education experts, and teachers in the southern border provinces point out that the Thai central government should base their development paradigm on academic achievement or perfect assistance instead of basing assistance on levels of violence. Indeed, the government should enhance the quality of educational facilities of private Islamic schools as well as address the inferior opportunities and academic outcomes of graduates of private Islamic schools as compared to the graduates of Thai state schools.³¹²

Importantly, the government should monitor and control insurgent activities inside Islamic schools by addressing the wider causes of the conflict.³¹³ The government should also be aware that the existing educational policies for the southern border provinces are ineffectual, and that real changes should be done. Considering the fact that most *pondoks* are actually less threatening and have opted to emphasise mainly on fostering deeper Islamic knowledge among their students while acquiring modern secular skills, the government should realise that their approach on regulating *pondoks* through the “one-size-fits-all” policies, or the attempts to implant a counter-ideology of

³¹¹ *ibid.*, p.8

³¹² Human Rights Watch, p.33

³¹³ International Crisis Group, p.20

semi-religious Thai nationalism to Malay Muslims, are indeed ineffective for the southern region.^{314 315} As already discussed, such government policies, to the great extent, ignore the ethnic identity of Malay Muslims in the south and only serve for further alienation of the Malay-Muslim community as well as the intensification of Islamic radicalism and separatism among the Muslim teachers and leaders in the south. Therefore, one of the important solutions is that the government should reform the existing policies into the ones that genuinely respect Islamic religion, language, and culture. Such reform should guarantee a space for Malay Muslim identity in schools and secular education curriculum.

5. An Approach of Multicultural Education

5.1. Overview of Multicultural Education

5.1.1. Define Multicultural Education

The term “Multicultural Education” can be defined in several different ways.^{316 317} Its definition and conceptualisation, which are greatly different from the French notion of secular citizenship education³¹⁸, encompass an emphasis on the cultural characteristics of different groups of people and an initiative of school reform in

³¹⁴ Liow, 2004, p.3

³¹⁵ International Crisis Group, p.20

³¹⁶ A. Cumming-Mc Cann, “Multicultural Education Connecting Theory to Practice” (27 July 2007) <<http://www.ncsall.net/index.html?id=208.html>> accessed 10 June 2015

³¹⁷ G. Gay, “A Synthesis of Scholarship in Multicultural Education” (Monograph published by NCREL's Urban Education Program as part of its Urban Education Monograph Series 1994) <<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadrshp/le0gay.htm>> accessed 10 June 2015

³¹⁸ In the French paradigm of secular citizenship education, the picture of cultural community, which involves culture and religion, is excluded from the picture of citizenship. Culture and religion are viewed as private issues. The core curriculum of this education system covers secular ideas of, for instance, human rights and political participation in the state institutions. However, it also provides religious education, despite the fact that this model is being questioned for its potential opposition to Islamic religion. Anyhow, this French model of education might serve as another alternative for the context of southern Thailand, too. If the entire education system of southern Thailand is secularised, there might be fewer problems.

all settings irrespective of their characteristics.³¹⁹ Such school reform can be implemented by adding different perspectives and materials to existing school curricula as well as adopting appropriate teaching methods which accommodate the needs of marginalised or underrepresented groups.³²⁰ However, some people only think of characteristics of local schools when talking about multicultural education. While some also emphasise merely on people of color, others embrace all major groups whom are viewed as different from mainstream people. Some other people perceive multicultural education as an approach which can deconstruct a larger, oppressive education system, as well as an approach to deal with social problems (especially those related to oppression), redistribution of economic resources, and political power.^{321 322}

Among the various definitions of multicultural education, the most frequently used ones include:

- “Multicultural education is at least three things: an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process. Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students—regardless of their gender, social class, and ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics—should have an equal opportunity to learn in school.”^{323 324}

- “Multicultural education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect.”^{325 326}

- “Multicultural education is an education free of inherited biases, with freedom to explore other perspectives and cultures, inspired by the goal of making children

³¹⁹ Gay

³²⁰ Cumming-Mc Cann

³²¹ Gay

³²² Cumming-Mc Cann

³²³ Gay

³²⁴ J. A. Banks, ‘Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals’ in J.A. Banks and Ch. A. McGee Banks (eds), *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* (RRD Crawfordsville, The United States of America 2010) p. 3

³²⁵ S. Nieto and P. Bode, *Language, Culture, and Teaching: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge, New York and UK 2010) p.68

³²⁶ Gay

sensitive to the plurality of the ways of life, different modes of analyzing experiences and ideas, and ways of looking at history found throughout the world.”³²⁷

- “Multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning based upon democratic values that foster cultural pluralism; in its most comprehensive form, it is a commitment to achieving educational equality, developing curricula that build understanding about ethnic groups, and combating oppressive practices.”³²⁸

These diverse definitions of multicultural education comprise several aspects in common.³²⁹ Advocates of multicultural education similarly point out that the content of multicultural education curricula should embrace ethnic identities, cultural pluralism affirmed by democratic values, unequal allocation of resources and opportunities, as well as other social and political problems associated with oppression.^{330 331} They perceive that multicultural education is, at best, a philosophy, an approach to educational reform, and an educational system representing particular content areas within its instructional program.³³² Multicultural education is all about encouraging, learning about, and preparing for cultural diversity. Fundamental changes in school policies, programs, and practices are required as a result.

Multiculturalists apparently stress on the issue of diversity and share a common idea that the specific structures, practices, and content used for multicultural education programs will differ from one setting to another.³³³ Researchers of multicultural education also emphasise on the issue of critical analysis of power within educational reform, arguing that multicultural education has to be established within its history and causes in the civil rights movement.³³⁴ Therefore, multicultural education should be

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Gay

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ G. M. Ameny-Dixon, ‘Why Multicultural Education is More Important in Higher Education now Than Ever: A Global Perspective’ [2012], p.1

<<http://www.nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/Ameny-Dixon,%20Gloria%20M.%20Why%20Multicultural%20Education%20is%20More%20Important%20in%20Higher%20Education%20Now%20than%20Ever.pdf>> accessed 12 June 2015

³³¹ Gay

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ P. Bode, “Multicultural Education” (2009)

defined as a matrix of specific concepts and practices which fit specific needs of educators and students rather than a universal static concept.^{335 336}

5.1.2. Goals of Multicultural Education

The desirable outcomes of multicultural education are rooted in its definitions, assumptions, and justification.³³⁷ Among numerous goals of multicultural education, the primary ones include to restructure schools on many levels in order to make all students acquire attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to function in a multi-ethnic and multi-racial society and the world; to function against prejudices and discrimination by encouraging academic achievement of all students (especially those of colour, the traditionally under-reserved and dismissed in educational system) and preserving students' local languages and cultures; as well as to promote improved intergroup relations among students and teachers in schools.^{338 339 340 341}

Although specific goals of multicultural education are diverse according to contextual factors which include school settings, perspectives, purposes, audiences, and timing, they fall under seven general goal clusters, which cover three major areas of learning (cognitive, affective, and action) and combine both the intrinsic (ends) and its instrumental (means) values of multicultural education.³⁴² These seven goal clusters are “ethnic and cultural literacy, personal development, attitude and values clarification,

<<http://www.education.com/reference/article/multicultural-education/>> accessed 13 June 2015

³³⁵ Gay

³³⁶ Bode

³³⁷ Gay

³³⁸ J.A. Banks, “Multicultural Education: Development, Dimensions, and Challenges” (n.d.)

<http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/virtual_disk_library/index.cgi/4273355/FID840/EQTYRES/erg/111511/1511.htm> accessed 13 June 2015

³³⁹ Cumming-McCann

³⁴⁰ R. Francisco and S. Markus, “Multicultural Education as a Human Right: Framing Multicultural Education for Citizenship in a Global Age” [2011], p.21, Woodring College of Education. Paper11.

<http://cedar.wvu.edu/education_facpubs/11> accessed 13 June 2015

³⁴¹ S. Zirkel, ‘The Influence of Multicultural Educational Practices on Student Outcomes and Intergroup Relations’ *Teachers College Record*, vol.10, no.6, 2008, p.1168, Available from ERIC (accessed 13 June 2015)

³⁴² Gay

multicultural social competence, basic skills proficiency, educational equity and excellence, and empowerment for societal reform.”³⁴³

Besides, according to J.A. Banks, the father of multicultural education, since educational equality is an ideal from which human beings can never fully attain, the aims of multicultural education can never be fully fulfilled either.³⁴⁴ Multicultural education is not something that can be applied to solve the educational problems which are the aims of multicultural educational reform. Instead, it must be perceived as an ongoing process.

5.1.3. Banks's Conceptualisation of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education can be better understood by exploring a widely used and comprehensive conceptualisation of its five core dimensions articulated by James A. Banks, the founder of multicultural education and one of the most influential scholars of multicultural education in the United States.^{345 346} According to Banks, multicultural education is characterised by its five core dimensions, namely, (1) *content integration*; (2) *knowledge construction*; (3) *prejudice reduction*; (4) *equity pedagogy*; and (5) *empowering school culture*.^{347 348 349 350 351}

Firstly, *content integration* refers to the inclusion of new, diverse cultures, ethnicities, and identities into the existing curriculum.^{352 353} According to Banks, “it deals with the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of

³⁴³ *ibid.*

³⁴⁴ Banks, 2010, p.4

³⁴⁵ Zirkel, p.1149

³⁴⁶ L. Blum, ‘Multicultural Education as Values Education’ (Working papers, 1997), p.24
<http://www.faculty.umb.edu/lawrence_blum/publications/publications/A23.pdf> accessed 15 June 2015

³⁴⁷ Zirkel, p.1149

³⁴⁸ J.A. Banks and M. Tucker, “Multiculturalism’s Five Dimensions” (Interview for NEA Today Online)
<<http://www.learner.org/workshops/socialstudies/pdf/session3/3.Multiculturalism.pdf>> accessed 14 June 2015

³⁴⁹ Banks, 2010, p.23

³⁵⁰ Bode

³⁵¹ Banks, n.d.

³⁵² Bode

³⁵³ Zirkel, p.1150

cultures in their teaching.”³⁵⁴ One example is to include authors of color and/or women authors in the literature which students read.³⁵⁵ This dimension of multicultural education can also be applied more by social studies and language arts teachers than math and physics teachers since the activities such as using biographies of mathematicians and physicists of color and examples from diverse cultural groups might not be the most significant multicultural tasks which can be undertaken by math and physics teachers.^{356 357} In addition, content integration refers to educational efforts which give freedom to students to describe the content of a research project, thus enabling students to integrate materials that are personally relevant to them.³⁵⁸ In several school districts and popular writing, multicultural education is considered almost exclusively as content integration.^{359 360} It is perhaps the most widely implemented yet least investigated dimension of multicultural education.³⁶¹ With regard to the outcomes, the integration of such material results in the higher levels of student participation, leads to positive racial and ethnic identities among students of color, and leads to improved intergroup relations between students. Yet, such effects are documented by little systematic empirical research.

Secondly, *knowledge construction* refers to the process which asks educators to first deeply explore their analysis of the curriculum and carefully examine the way they decide what is knowledge and how they frame or organize that knowledge.³⁶² According to Banks, “teachers need to help students understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed.”^{363 364 365} In other words, educators help students to understand or

³⁵⁴ Banks, 2010, p.23

³⁵⁵ Zirkel, p. 1150

³⁵⁶ Banks, n.d.

³⁵⁷ Tucker and Banks

³⁵⁸ Zirkel, p.1150

³⁵⁹ Banks,n.d.

³⁶⁰ Zirkel, p.1150

³⁶¹ *ibid.*, p.1150

³⁶² *ibid.*, p.1154

³⁶³ Banks, 2010, p.23

examine how knowledge or the discipline they are teaching is created and influenced by factors of ethnicity, race, social class, and gender.³⁶⁶ Knowledge construction procedure also involves students critique on the social positioning of groups through the means that knowledge is constructed and presented.³⁶⁷ Examples of knowledge construction process are to help students find out and understand “how do historians or scientists construct knowledge?” and in history curriculum, “from whose perspective is history told and why?”^{368 369} In terms of the effects, the discussions of factors of race, ethnicity, gender, and social class most likely contribute to students’ intellectual development since they expand students’ notions of how knowledge is constructed and the ways in which knowledge is shaped by that perspective.³⁷⁰

Thirdly, *prejudice reduction*, viewed as probably the most comprehensively studied component of multicultural education practice, emphasises on prejudice between and among students and its detrimental role playing in the daily educational experience of students.³⁷¹ According to Banks, “this dimension focuses on the characteristics of students’ racial attitudes and how they can be modified by teaching methods and materials.”³⁷² In other words, this dimension suggests that teachers should adopt teaching methods which help students develop more positive attitudes toward diverse racial and ethnic groups.³⁷³ Examples of such methods are to involve students of different ethnic and racial groups in cooperative learning activities so as to help them learn and develop positive attitudes and behavior toward each other; and to implement lessons and activities which assert realistic, positive images of ethnic and racial groups so as to enhance intergroup relations.^{374 375}

³⁶⁴ Tucker and Banks

³⁶⁵ Banks, n.d.

³⁶⁶ *ibid.*

³⁶⁷ Bode

³⁶⁸ Tucker and Banks

³⁶⁹ Zirkel, p.1154

³⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p.1154

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.1154-1155

³⁷² Banks, 2010, p.23

³⁷³ Tucker and Banks

³⁷⁴ Bode

Equity pedagogy, the fourth component of multicultural education formulated by J.A. Banks, specifically addresses the problems of educational inequity and approaches to contribute to educational equity.³⁷⁶ According to Banks, “an equity pedagogy exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, culture, gender, and social class groups.”^{377 378 379 380} Lower performing students are also targeted to develop educational achievements.³⁸¹ Teachers should change and develop teaching methods and techniques which can address diverse learning and cultural styles of different groups.^{382 383 384} One example is that “the physics teacher changing the way she teaches physics, for example, so that girls and African Americans can learn physics,” as said by Banks.³⁸⁵ Such teaching methods include cooperative learning, role-playing, simulations, and discovery.^{386 387} Moreover, equity pedagogy refers to a model of teaching and learning which expects students to actively engage in the construction of knowledge, and in which education is viewed as a tool which help students re-perceive their worlds and opportunities and to rethink about their future potential roles for issues of democracy and social change.³⁸⁸

Empowering school culture is the last and the most far-reaching component of multicultural education practices articulated by J.A. Banks.³⁸⁹ According to Banks, “grouping and labeling practices, sports participation, disproportionality in achievement, and the interaction of the staff and the students across ethnic and racial lines must be

³⁷⁵ Banks, n.d.

³⁷⁶ Zirkel, p.1157

³⁷⁷ Banks, 2010, p.23

³⁷⁸ Banks, n.d.

³⁷⁹ Tucker and Banks

³⁸⁰ Bode

³⁸¹ Zirkel, p.1157

³⁸² *ibid.*, p.1157

³⁸³ Banks, n.d.

³⁸⁴ Tucker and Banks

³⁸⁵ *ibid.*

³⁸⁶ Banks, n.d.

³⁸⁷ Tucker and Banks

³⁸⁸ Zirkel, p.1157

³⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p.1160

examined to create a school culture that empowers students from diverse racial, ethnic, and gender groups.”³⁹⁰ This dimension involves perceiving the school as the unit of structured changes; it addresses the various ways that aspects of racism are encoded in school practices and policies, from special education assessment and disciplinary procedures to relationships between teachers and students in the classroom.^{391 392} The schools should, for instance, use assessment techniques deemed fair to all groups of students and create a belief of “all students can learn” within school environment.³⁹³ Racism is specifically focused because of the ongoing issues of racial tension and racial stigma in the school which result in an educational achievement gap between different ethnic groups.³⁹⁴ Empowering school culture generally comprises two components: schools which emphasise on fostering strong relationships between teachers and students and among students, and schools which emphasise on changing institutional and pedagogical practice in the ways that address educational inequality and institutionalised racism.³⁹⁵

5.1.4. Nieto and Bode’s Conceptualisation of Multicultural Education

Sonia Nieto and Patty Bode, also the leading scholars in the field of multicultural education, advanced a definition of multicultural education in 1992 which continues to have impacts on discourse in the field.³⁹⁶ What they believe is crucial is a focus on the sociopolitical context of education and a denial of multicultural education as either a slight integration of content to the curriculum, or as the magical medicine which will eliminate all educational problems.³⁹⁷ Nieto’s conceptualisation of “multicultural education in a sociopolitical context” suggests the process of education as an elastic form rather than a fixed and static one, as well as addresses the context of

³⁹⁰ Banks, 2010, p.23

³⁹¹ Banks, n.d.

³⁹² Zirkel, p.1160

³⁹³ Banks, n.d.

³⁹⁴ Zirkel, p.1160

³⁹⁵ Ibid., p.1161

³⁹⁶ Bode

³⁹⁷ Nieto and Bode, p.68

communities.³⁹⁸ Nieto and Bode's definition of multicultural education also mirrors one way of understanding the issues, and their conceptualisation is based on their long experience as researchers, students, teachers, and teacher educators.³⁹⁹ Their conceptualisation of multicultural education arises from the reality of ongoing problems in nation's schools, particularly the lack of academic achievement among students of different backgrounds.

Nieto and Bode emphasise on seven characteristics of multicultural education which are "*antiracist education, basic education, important for all students, pervasive, education for social justice, a process and critical pedagogy.*"^{400 401} These characteristics stress the role of multicultural education in terms of restructuring schools and offering or ensuring educational equality and excellence for all students.⁴⁰² According to Nieto and Bode, multicultural education, as defined in a sociopolitical context, can be briefly conceptualised as follows:

"Multicultural education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. Multicultural education permeates the schools' curriculum and instructional strategies, as well as the interactions among teachers, students, and families, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (*praxis*) as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice."⁴⁰³

³⁹⁸ Bode

³⁹⁹ Nieto and Bode, p.67

⁴⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.68

⁴⁰¹ Bode

⁴⁰² Nieto and Bode, p.67

⁴⁰³ *ibid.*, p.68

5.1.5. Perspectives of Southern Thailand's Public School Principals on Multicultural Education in Southern Thailand

Public principals in southern Thailand have varied perspectives on the concept of multicultural education as a result of different perceptions, points of views, and experience.⁴⁰⁴ However, they agree to conceptualise the term as “educational management process” which is practiced in accordance with six dimensions, namely, “people’s needs, ways of life, educational goals, opportunities, regional contexts, and educational processes.”⁴⁰⁵ Their perspectives on multicultural education primarily focus on accommodating local students’ demands and preserving local cultural identities. To illustrate, a principal from Narathiwat mentioned that “contexts of school and community are an essential part for multicultural education. If we understand very well about their contexts, we can provide appropriate education.”⁴⁰⁶ The principals’ perspectives on multicultural education are less likely address globalisation or making students become global citizens.⁴⁰⁷ This lack of global awareness might in turn obstruct the students’ learning about diverse cultures or even the students’ positive racial and ethnic attitudes.⁴⁰⁸

One interesting perspective on multicultural education is shared by a Thai Buddhist principal from Yala who said as follows:

“Multicultural education can be compared as two cycles; inside and outside one. The inside one is about their multicultural knowledge, skills and positive attitude including modern perspectives. The outside cycle is their traditions...I mean both Thai and Muslim people. When we teach our students, we must integrate the inside and

⁴⁰⁴E. Sungtong, ‘Perspectives, Dilemmas and Multicultural Leadership of Public School Principals in the Three Southern Border Provinces of Thailand’ (Paper presented in the American Educational Research Association 2013, 28 April 2013), p.14

<http://eduit.pn.psu.ac.th/research/pdf/meeting_academic/5-2556.pdf> accessed 5 June 2015

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.14

⁴⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p.8

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 14

⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p.14-15

outside cycle. If we can do this, our children can peacefully live together. I think this is a good process of multicultural education.”⁴⁰⁹

5.1.6. Similar Ideas on Multicultural Education Shared by Southern Thailand’s Public School Principals and Western Scholars

When examining the perspectives on multicultural education from southern Thailand’s public school principals and western scholars like J.A. Banks, there are similar ideas on the major goals of multicultural education, which are to encourage positive ethnic and racial attitudes toward different cultural groups; reduce prejudices; promote respect, unity, and love; and promote reconciliation and understanding within multicultural society.⁴¹⁰ The principals and western scholars also agree on supporting students’ educational equity, opportunity, and learning access, regardless of their personal background, socio-economic status, and religious beliefs. Although Banks also mentions that multicultural education should embrace a concern on sexual and gender orientation, these issues are not seriously addressed in southernmost Thailand because of different cultural beliefs.⁴¹¹ In southern Thailand, gender roles in society are overlapped, yet the prejudice on gender is common. To some extent, males are likely to be accepted in particular careers (i.e. principals) much more than females.

5.1.7. Major Approaches to Multicultural Education

Several scholars in the field of multicultural education such as James A. Banks, Christine Bennett, Sonia Nieto, Ricardo Garcia, Christine Sleeter, and Carl Grant have offered different suggestions and models for implementing multicultural education practice in schools.⁴¹² These models are usually viewed as developmental, cumulative, and historical in character. They embark with the simplest methods and develop into more complicated ones. According to J.A. Banks, there are four major approaches to

⁴⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p.8

⁴¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.14

⁴¹¹ *ibid.*, p.15

⁴¹² Gay

multicultural education, each becoming more important and comprehensive. These four approaches are (1) *a contribution approach*, in which teachers teach and emphasise on the cultures and everything of culturally and ethnically different groups and individuals; (2) *an additive approach*, where teachers add ethnic content, multicultural lessons and units of study into the curricula as supplements to the existing curricula; (3) *a transformative approach*, in which the characteristics of curriculum and instruction are modified to reflect the experience and perspectives of different social, cultural, ethnic, and racial groups; and (4) *a decision making and social action approach*, which teaches students how to illuminate their cultural and ethnic values, as well as to take part in socio political action for enhanced freedom, justice, and equality for everyone.

In addition, J.A. Banks further elaborates that in order to implement multicultural education practice successfully, the school must be conceptualised as a social system where all of its key variables are closely interconnected. The notion of school as a social system means that a change strategy must be formulated with the aim to reform the total school environment and thus implement multicultural education.⁴¹³

The key school variables or factors which lie at the heart of initial school reform include school policy and politics; school staff: attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and actions; teaching styles and strategies; formalised curriculum and courses of study; instructional materials; assessment and testing procedures; school culture and hidden curriculum; learning styles of the school; languages and dialects of the school; community participation and input; and counseling program.⁴¹⁴ Changes must be created in each of these variables in order to bring about and maintain an effective multicultural school environment. It is necessary but insufficient to reform any one of those variables such as the formalised curriculum or curricula materials.⁴¹⁵ Multicultural materials are not effective when used by teachers who have negative racial and ethnic attitudes toward diverse groups. Such teachers hardly use multicultural or sensitive teaching materials or else use them in harmful ways. Therefore, imparting knowledge about diverse groups as well as democratic values and attitudes to teachers

⁴¹³ Banks, 2010, p.22

⁴¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.24

⁴¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.22

and other school staffs is deemed essential for implementing multicultural education programs.⁴¹⁶

Moreover, to implement multicultural education practice in a school, changes must take place in the verbal interaction between teachers and students, its power relationships, culture, curriculum, extracurricular activities, grouping practices, testing program, and attitudes toward minority languages.⁴¹⁷ The school's social structures, institutional norms, values, cause-belief statements, and goals must be modified and redesigned.

What should be emphasised on is the school's hidden curriculum and its values and norms.⁴¹⁸ A school generally adopts both a manifest (or overt) and hidden (or latent) curriculum. The former comprises such factors as textbooks, guides, bulletin boards, and lesson plans. These factors are crucial for the school environment and must be reformed to build a school culture which encourages positive cultural attitudes toward diverse groups and helps students from different groups become academically successful. However, more importance is placed on the school's hidden curriculum, which is described as the one which does not involve explicit teaching from teachers but involve what Jackson (1992) calls the "untaught lessons." Such untaught lessons are considered a powerful part of school culture which conveys the school's attitudes to students, including how the school perceives them as males, females, and students from diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

The approaches to multicultural education can also be further explored by Sleeter and Grant's five main approaches after their review and analysis of the literature on multicultural education.⁴¹⁹ ⁴²⁰ These five approaches are briefly elaborated as follows.

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.23

⁴¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.23

⁴¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.24

⁴¹⁹ Gay

⁴²⁰ Bode

(1) *Teaching the exceptional and the culturally different*, which aims at implanting students with the academic skills, concepts, and cultural values so that they can function in mainstream society.^{421 422}

(2) *A human relations approach*, which comprises developing positive relationships among culturally and ethnically diverse groups and individuals to combat stereotyping, encourage harmony, as well as to reduce prejudice and animosity.^{423 424}

(3) *Single group studies approach*, which focuses on fostering awareness, acceptance, and respect of one specific group at a time. The admirable goals are to engage in an thoroughly in-depth study which removes the marginalisation of specific groups by giving information about the group's history (i.e. experience with oppression and opposition to that oppression); as well as to create higher access to power and reduce stratification.⁴²⁵

(4) *Self-reflexively dubbed multicultural education approach*, from which Sleeter and Grant cite Gollnick (1980) to clarify that multicultural education approach encourages numerous goals including the value of cultural diversity, respect for differences, human rights, social justice, equal opportunity, equitable distribution of power, and alternative life choices.^{426 427}

(5) *Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist*, which refers to a complete reconstruction of an educational program. The idea of reconstructionism derives from Brameld's framework to criticize the issue of modern culture.⁴²⁸ Such a reconstruction particularly involves addressing the issues that have impacts on students of diverse groups as well as supporting students to become actively critical and analytical thinkers and social reformers who challenge the status quo and create change by joining other diverse groups in exploring related concerns.^{429 430}

⁴²¹ Gay

⁴²² Bode

⁴²³ Gay

⁴²⁴ Bode

⁴²⁵ *ibid.*

⁴²⁶ Gay

⁴²⁷ Bode

⁴²⁸ *ibid.*

⁴²⁹ Gay

5.1.8. Positive Effects and Benefits of Multicultural Education

For decades, scholars in the field of multicultural education have affirmed the need for implementing multicultural education, for such practices would lead to several positive outcomes such as improved academic outcomes among students of color and improved intergroup relations within schools and in wider society.⁴³¹ Reviews of research on multicultural education compiled by J.A. Banks and Gay provide summaries for understanding the emerging trends and directions about the effects of multicultural education.⁴³² The Banks reviews stress that racial attitudes among diverse groups are modified through the adoption of curriculum courses and units, teaching methods, instructional materials, and reinforcements. Several of such research studies and other studies clarified major positive effects of multicultural education as follows.

Firstly, the adoption of multicultural curriculum and instructional interventions leads to positive ethnic, racial, and gender attitudes among students.^{433 434} The effects of instructional interventions on ethnic, racial, and gender attitudes among students are based on the direction, structure, and nature of the interventions as well as the characteristics of teachers, students, school settings, and local community.⁴³⁵

Secondly, multicultural materials, teachers and students' experience, as well as teaching techniques like simulations and role playing help contribute to more positive racial perceptions and attitudes among students, thus diminishing segregation among diverse groups of students.^{436 437}

Thirdly, multicultural curriculum, social activities, staff training, and administrative support for multicultural education contribute to reduction of fear,

⁴³⁰ Bode

⁴³¹ Zirkel, p.1166

⁴³² Gay

⁴³³ *ibid.*

⁴³⁴ K. Wilson, "Multicultural Education" (n.d.) <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/papers/keith.html>> accessed 10 June 2015

⁴³⁵ Gay

⁴³⁶ Wilson

⁴³⁷ Gay

personal detachment, and ignorance, as well as eliminate the problems of prejudice, racism, stereotyping, and bigotry.⁴³⁸

Fourthly, cooperative, cross-racial learning contributes to more positive ethnic and racial attitudes for all groups of students, leads to improved interracial relationship, and leads to higher academic achievements for students of color (particularly African Americans and Hispanics).⁴³⁹ Yet, it does not apparently affect on the academic gain of Anglo students because of their similar academic performance in competitive and cooperative learning environments. Cooperative, cross-racial learning also leads to higher levels of students' self-esteem, instruction, and ability to empathise others.

Lastly, culturally sensitive teaching methods which are found effective with diverse students also work well across gender, age, school settings, and subjects.⁴⁴⁰

A consistent empirical finding on multicultural educational practices clarifies that multicultural educational practices such as adding content from diverse ethnic and racial people, deforming status hierarchies between students, and empowering school cultures through a re-perception on academic gain of students all contribute to higher levels of engagement, learning, and achievement of students of color.⁴⁴¹

However, the empirical findings also demonstrate that multicultural educational practices also increase the engagement, learning, and achievement of all students—students of color and white students, higher and lower performing students, higher and lower SES students.⁴⁴² Such findings highlight multicultural educational practices as good teaching practices which are not suitable or necessary only for certain subgroups of students.⁴⁴³

According to J.A. Banks, a founder of multicultural education, the argument of multicultural education as a good educational practice for all students can be supported by rephrasing the five components of multicultural education: (1) Increase students' access to diverse kinds of materials; (2) Help students explore and learn to question how

⁴³⁸ Wilson

⁴³⁹ Gay

⁴⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴⁴¹ Zirkel, p.1166-1167

⁴⁴² *ibid.*, p.1167

⁴⁴³ *ibid.*, p.1150

knowledge is created and who is creating the knowledge as they examine curricular content; (3) Learn about other different groups and examine similarities and differences between these groups in an open, reflexive manner; (4) Teach students in the ways that make them become explorers and constructors of knowledge while accommodating diverse learning styles; and (5) Create schools and classrooms where students feel empowered to attain the learning at their best, where all students get access to the highest level of curricular content, and where the most effective educational policies and practices are adopted in equitable and impartial ways that address the needs of individual students.⁴⁴⁴ When elaborated in this way, the assumption of multicultural educational practices for the academic outcomes of all students become explicit, and the argument that “multicultural educational practice is divisive” is weakened.⁴⁴⁵ Those rephrasing of the five components also clarifies the centrality, rather than periphery, of multicultural educational practices to teachers and administrators of education programs.

5.1.9. Drawbacks and Critiques of Multicultural Educational Practices

Although multicultural educational practices evidently bring about several positive outcomes, there are also some critiques or arguments concerning the drawbacks of multicultural education. As pointed out by Bennett (1995), “to dwell on cultural differences is foster negative prejudices and stereotypes and that is human nature to view those who are different as inferior.”⁴⁴⁶ Hence, multicultural education will foster feelings of being atypical as well as negative prejudices and stereotypes since it focuses on differences and issues of race, gender, and class instead of similarities.^{447 448} Here, the argument is that “we are more alike than different,” and thus we should emphasise

⁴⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.1167

⁴⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.1167

⁴⁴⁶ Wilson

⁴⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁴⁸ Understanding Multicultural Curriculum, “Understanding Multicultural Curriculum Transformation: A Q & A with Paul C. Gorski” <<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/curriculum/concept.html>> accessed 1 June 2015

on the similarities rather than the differences to attain greater harmony among diverse races.⁴⁴⁹

Another main argument concerning the drawbacks of multicultural educational practices is that the focus on multiculturalism and race might cause a further divisiveness among races.⁴⁵⁰ Over time, multicultural educational practices might bring about unpleasant and unplanned outcomes. For instance, multicultural education does not accept the historic American goals of integration and assimilation of ethnic cultures into the mainstream culture. Therefore, the potential result is that America is perceived as a country of distinctly diverse ethnic groups, as contradicted to a more conservative view of the country which involves individuals taking actions for the good and order.

The last major argument or critique is that multicultural education might foster resentment among students and teachers who feel that reforms in school curriculum, academic standards, and traditions are not necessary to respect, get along, or live with students from diverse ethnic minorities.⁴⁵¹ As several institutions oppose change of any kind, this triggers passive resistance on the part of school administration toward multicultural education programs.

5.2. Problems and Challenges of Existing Multicultural/Integrated Islamic Curriculum of Private Islamic Schools in Southern Thailand

Due to different perspectives on multicultural education, Thai people especially those in southern Thailand may find this term as a new approach and lack understanding or have misconceptions about multicultural education as well as lack support from related stakeholders in implementing multicultural educational practices in schools.⁴⁵² In fact, Thailand has already used the term “multicultural education” only recently despite the fact that several ethnic groups have been residing in the country for a long period of time.⁴⁵³ The Thai government has recognised and adopted multicultural

⁴⁴⁹ Wilson

⁴⁵⁰ Wilson

⁴⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁴⁵² Sungtong, p.4 &14

⁴⁵³ *ibid.*, p.4

educational practices as the concept and practicality of multicultural education are deemed effective in dealing with problems in the southern region. Thus, this might lead to limitations, gaps in practices, and other potential dilemmas if educators are new or lack appropriate understanding about multicultural education. These dilemmas and gaps might in turn obstruct school principals' leadership in response to multicultural education.

The project of implementing multicultural curriculum in private Islamic schools in southern Thailand has been widely discussed among active Muslim educators and curriculum developers.⁴⁵⁴ However, there are diverse perceptions about integrated Islamic curriculum which signify the ambiguity, complexity, and diversity of the concept and system of integrated curriculum of private Islamic schools, and this implies different translations among Muslim academicians who recognised the curriculum as the one that accommodates their own needs and fulfills their aspirations.⁴⁵⁵ For instance, in the Wittiyakarn School in Hadyai, the school claims that it focuses on the formulation of an integrated Islamised curriculum which aims at avoiding the overloading of credit hours, and the curriculum asserts Islamic teachings and values across all subject areas.⁴⁵⁶ However, when examining the curriculum structure, it only emphasises on Islamisation in science branches. Students will only choose one program of these: Science-Math; Computer-Math; Tahfiz-Science; Medical Science; IT Science; and Thanawi-Science.⁴⁵⁷ This implicitly does not meet the main goal of Islamic education as “a holistic development of individuals”⁴⁵⁸

Another example is Santichon Islamic School, which claims that by integrating religious subjects as supplement to Thai national curriculum and inserting Islamic contents into basic education, the curriculum will completely integrate the lifestyles of students in a distinct educational setting with the objectives of improvement of behavior,

⁴⁵⁴I. Chenu, 'Challenges of Integrated Curriculum: Experiences of Islamic Schools in Thailand' (n.d.), p.16 <http://www.academia.edu/10065039/challenges_in_Islamic_private_education_in_Thailand> accessed May 17 2015

⁴⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p.17

⁴⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p.16

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.16-17

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.17

character, spirituality, and academic performance.⁴⁵⁹ However, this does not seem to be the way that integrated Islamic curriculum should be practiced. The integrated curriculum should be practiced in ways that mainly accommodate ethno-religious and cultural needs of students through the inclusion of religious subjects. In other words, multicultural curriculum, based on multiculturalism perspectives, should be developed in ways that responds to “the demands, needs, and aspirations of the various groups.”⁴⁶⁰

There are three main aspects of integrated curriculum that are evidently problematic in private Islamic schools in southern Thailand; namely, content, pedagogy, and implementation.⁴⁶¹

Firstly, private Islamic schools in southern Thailand have faced the problems of overlapping contents, excessive credit hours, and non-Islamic contents included in secular curriculum such as Buddhism doctrine in sociology, Boy Scout, and Art and music.⁴⁶² Teachers are required to teach solely according to the government secular curriculum without stressing their teaching from Islamic perspective. In other words, the inclusion of both national and religious curriculum is not fully and truly integrated in practice.⁴⁶³ As such, some contemporary Islamic schools are of no difference from other national schools as their curriculum are actually the same.⁴⁶⁴ Furthermore, adopting both national and religious curriculum could mean a burden for both students and teachers to work on both curricula effectively, compared to government schools system.

Secondly, the teaching methods adopted by most Islamic or public schools to convey the Islamic knowledge are either traditional or westernised, and as such stagnating the process of Islamic teaching and learning as well as preventing the

⁴⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.17

⁴⁶⁰ Sungtong, p.4

⁴⁶¹ Chenu, p.17

⁴⁶² *ibid.*, p.17

⁴⁶³ S. Bt. Hj. Yaacob, ‘The Concept of An Integrated Islamic Curriculum and Its Implications for Contemporary Islamic Schools’ (The paper awarded in the International Conference in Islamic Republic of Iran, 2008), p.12 <http://irep.iium.edu.my/2470/1/Islamic_School_Curriculum.pdf> accessed 15 June 2015

⁴⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p.11

learners from achieving true Islamic understanding.⁴⁶⁵ When referring to J.A. Banks's theory of multicultural education, this reflects that teachers fail to employ equity pedagogy as they do not use the teaching methods which promote educational equity for Muslim students in terms of access to true Islamic understanding. There is also a problem about the stereotype style of teaching religious studies which should be addressed effectively. For instance, the teaching of Islamic religious sciences does not promote critical and creative thinking, and the pedagogy itself is ineffective and insufficient. This also reflects that teachers fail to modify their teaching styles in the ways that will contribute to the academic achievement of Muslim students.

Lastly, despite the abundant evidence of the positive effects of multicultural educational practice, there are still problems of effective implementation of integrated Islamic curriculum.^{466 467} Many private Islamic schools have faced the main problems of difficult transition from theory to practical techniques; unavailability of textbooks, and lack of teachers who acquired holistic knowledge. To clarify, the components of multicultural education such as equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, or empowering school culture theoretically make demands on educators to make dramatic changes in many aspects including pedagogical practices.⁴⁶⁸ However, the educators find it difficult to make these theorised demands come true in practice. Indeed, it is not an easy task to effectively implement integrated Islamic curriculum or to harmonise secular and Islamic knowledge in the schools primarily because of ethno-religious confliction.⁴⁶⁹ Also, students from these Islamic schools cannot deal with two separate curricula, and eventually this results in stress and school withdrawal.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁵ Chenu, p.18

⁴⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p.18

⁴⁶⁷ Zirkel, p.1169

⁴⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.1169

⁴⁶⁹ Chenu, p.18

⁴⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p.16

5.3. Resolutions to Problems of Multicultural/Integrated Curriculum of Private Islamic Schools in Southern Thailand

Due to the lack of understanding or misconceptions about multicultural education as well as lack of support from related stakeholders in implementing such system, the public school principles or school leaders in southern Thailand should, first of all, recognise the importance of multicultural education, develop a real understanding about the concept and practice of multicultural education, have an adequate support on promoting multicultural education system, as well as support related stakeholders to engage in fostering interactive communication and build a sharing community that is always able to adjust to changes in globalisation.⁴⁷¹

Since there is an absence of a clear-cut conceptualisation of “integrated Islamic curriculum” as well as the complexity and diversity of the concept, there is a need for the crystallisation of this concept and other related concepts including the notion of “Islamic” itself.⁴⁷² These concepts must be examined both from Islamic theoretical perspective and historical ground, so that it could help Muslim educators and academicians to have better understanding in coping with educational matters and problems.⁴⁷³ The parents will also recognise the importance and necessity of sending their children to private Islamic schools once they have better understanding about the concept of integrated curriculum.

Aside from the need to crystallise the concept of “integrated Islamic curriculum,” the contributing elements in implementing integrated Islamic curriculum and achieving the goals of Islamic education must also be taken into consideration.⁴⁷⁴ Basically, the term “Islamic” refers to “submission to God” which is related to individual’s belief and faith, and it is thus an important element in Islamic education. The ultimate objective of Islamic education is closely linked to character building including building integrated Islamic personality which adopts Islamic values as its prerequisite foundation.

⁴⁷¹ Sungtong, p.4

⁴⁷² Yaacob, p.12-13

⁴⁷³ *ibid.*, p.13

⁴⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p.13

Therefore, beliefs and values should be regarded as two major elements for the implementation of integrated Islamic curriculum.

Since the children are influenced by their surroundings such as peers, parents, teachers, or audio-visual media, it is essential to instill them with pure Islamic beliefs and values from the beginning in a very conducive environment in order to make them realise how to be a Muslim as well as how to perform their roles as “the servants of God and His vicegerents.”⁴⁷⁵

As already discussed in the earlier sub-section, one main goal of multicultural education is to restructure schools on many levels so that all students acquire attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to function in a multi-ethnic and multi-racial society and the world. Towards achieving this goal, the content and curriculum of private Islamic schools in southern Thailand is one major aspect that must be modified. It is noteworthy that before any real integration of national and Islamic curriculum can occur, the Muslim school leaders, leaders of Islamic Organization (Mufti), and the Thai government should realise the importance of Islamic curriculum in Islamic education in Muslim countries in a sense that it is not merely a matter of acquiring and sharpening knowledge for earning a living and for economic pursuits, but the most crucial aspect is for purifying wisdom and personality as well as for the perfection of soul.⁴⁷⁶

Once they realise the importance or value of Islamic curriculum, they should adopt the practice of “inclusion” which is viewed as a fundamental value of multicultural education.⁴⁷⁷ Inclusion refers to “the extent to which different voices and perspectives are heard” in a particular classroom. It consists of two levels: *representational inclusion* and *critical inclusion*.⁴⁷⁸

Representational inclusion is the inclusion of information or sources, prepared by teachers or students, which matches or shows diversity within a multicultural classroom.⁴⁷⁹ This type of inclusion is indeed the essence of the component of content

⁴⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p.13

⁴⁷⁶ Chenu, p.19

⁴⁷⁷ Understanding Multicultural Curriculum Transformation

⁴⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁷⁹ *ibid.*

integration outlined by J.A. Banks. Again, according to Banks, content integration refers to the inclusion of new, diverse cultures, ethnicities, and identities into the existing curriculum, and that “it deals with the extent to which teachers use examples and content from a variety of cultures in their teaching.”⁴⁸⁰ For the context of private Islamic schools in southern Thailand, the schools should integrate the information and contents from both national and Islamic curriculum in a truly comprehensive and equitable way so as to represent the diversity and perspectives of the mainstream Thais and (Malay) Muslims. One example is to include both Buddhist and Islamic doctrines in sociology subject so that students can learn and have a better understanding of both cultures.

Critical inclusion refers to student-centered learning process, or the inclusion of perspectives and voices of the students on all subjects.⁴⁸¹ As also explained by J.A. Banks, the component of content integration also refers to educational efforts which give freedom to students to describe the content of a research project, and thus allowing students to integrate materials that are personally relevant to them.⁴⁸² Since students can be considered “the most under-utilized educational resources” in most traditional Thai and private Islamic schools’ classrooms in southern Thailand, teachers in the private Islamic schools should adopt a student-centered learning process in which the students are encouraged to share their perspectives, voice their opinions, or describe the content of any subjects so as to exchange their ideas, knowledge, and experience between teachers and students as well as among the students themselves.⁴⁸³ Although the practices of both representational inclusion and critical inclusion may lead to disputes and antagonism between teachers and students or among students, these practices are more likely to help students learn, understand, and eventually respect both Thai Buddhist and (Malay) Muslim cultures. Therefore, such practices can be considered the essence of any multicultural or integrated curriculum.

⁴⁸⁰ Banks, p.23

⁴⁸¹ Understanding Multicultural Curriculum Transformation

⁴⁸² Zirkel, p.1150

⁴⁸³ Understanding Multicultural Curriculum Transformation

With regard to the teaching methods employed by most private Islamic schools in southern Thailand or public schools to convey Islamic knowledge, the school principals and teachers should realise that integrated curriculum for Islamic education must encourage multiple intelligences as well as critical and creative thinking.^{484 485} Hence, religious teaching should be presented through integrated methodologies and approaches including equity pedagogy. In particular, the teachers in private Islamic schools in southern Thailand must employ equity pedagogy effectively in ways that enable Muslim students get access to true Islamic understanding. The stereotype style of teaching religious studies should also be modified. In fact, all of the people involved in the teaching and learning process and school setting including teachers, students, administrators, and parents should recognise cultural prejudices in education so as to defy the basis of power and the status quo.⁴⁸⁶ The teachers should also adopt creative teaching styles in ways that will contribute to academic achievement of Muslim students. To illustrate, the teachers should adopt cooperative learning on both secular subject and Islamic subject and make religious learners learn to connect the contemporary issues and reality with religious doctrine and religious understanding.^{487 488} Besides, the idea that “Islamic Education is a Cause of Terrorism” should be eliminated.⁴⁸⁹ The misconception that Islamic schools are only for the memorisation of Quran and imparting religious subjects such as Tawhid, or Hadith should also be corrected.

For the successful implementation of such equity pedagogies, this requires a strong commitment from teachers and administrators across the entire private Islamic schools.⁴⁹⁰ The success of implementing these pedagogies is also more likely to come from educating the parents of high-achieving students about the benefits of these pedagogies for all students, as well as involving the parents in the planning process.

⁴⁸⁴ Chenu, p.18

⁴⁸⁵ Yaacob, p.14

⁴⁸⁶ W. Gray, ‘Rethinking Multicultural Education: Teaching for Racial and Cultural Justice’ (Education Review Paper, 2011), p.2 <<http://www.edrev.info/reviews/rev1078/pdf>> accessed 17 June 2015

⁴⁸⁷ Chenu, p.18

⁴⁸⁸ Yaacob, p.14

⁴⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p.20

⁴⁹⁰ Zirkel, p.1169

On the surface, the harmonisation of secular and Islamic knowledge has been facing a lot of difficulties and challenges, thus making the process of implementing integrated Islamic curriculum very difficult.^{491 492} However, it is noteworthy that the ultimate aim of an integrated Islamic curriculum is to produce integrated Islamic personality as well as the balanced growth.⁴⁹³ Hence, a practical, idealistic integrated Islamic curriculum should be carefully designed in order to meet the major goals of Islamic education.

One main aspect that would lead to the implementation of integrated Islamic curriculum is teachers, particularly those who teach Islamic studies.⁴⁹⁴ In order to implement the newly devised religious curricula in all Islamic schools, there should be, first of all, pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes, and the transformation of teachers' perceptions and attitudes from didactic to constructivism. Besides, teachers should make concerted efforts to prepare suitable curricula and relevant published textbooks at every level of educational system. They should also be skilled at employing teaching methods like small group learning as well as using authentic assessment strategies such as performance exams, portfolios, and rubrics to report on student development. Lastly, they should be part of learning communities and provide the instruction based on their experience.

⁴⁹¹ Yaacob, p.14-15

⁴⁹² Chenu, p.18

⁴⁹³ Yaacob, p.15

⁴⁹⁴ Chenu, p.20

6. Final Analysis

How is the (Newly Devised) Multicultural Education Important for the Context of Southern Thailand and how can it Address the Ethno-Religious Rights of Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand?

Multicultural education system and policy can be considered one of the best alternatives to other education systems for the context of southern Thailand. It is better than “monocultural education” from which, according to Nieto and Bode (2008), leaves out perspectives of many others and that it “deprives all students of the diversity that is part of our world.”⁴⁹⁵ Therefore, the education systems of *pondoks*, Thai government schools, and *Tadikas* are not as good as multicultural education system since they do not provide multicultural perspectives and knowledge, which help encourage more understanding and respect of the distinct cultures of Thai Buddhism and Malay Islam. Even worse, those education systems are more likely to lead to further alienation of Malay Muslim community, segregation between Malay Muslim and Thai Buddhist communities, as well as intensification of Islamic radicalism.

Although many components of multicultural educational practices can lead to disputes or antagonism because of contradictions on certain issues between Thai Buddhists and Malay Muslims in southern Thailand, such practices are more likely to bring about several benefits to all students.

Since multicultural education can be viewed as anti-racist education, one of its major benefits is that it helps students develop sensitivities to cope with racist attitudes and actions and develop positive ethnic, racial, and gender attitudes towards each other.⁴⁹⁶ Learning in a multicultural environment tends to help both students and teachers learn, understand, and respect different cultures which can lead to diminished segregation between Thai Buddhist and Malay Muslim communities in southern Thailand. It can also be one of the main factors that might eventually lead to long-term cultural peace and harmony within the region.

⁴⁹⁵ Rios and Markus, p.23

⁴⁹⁶ Blum, p.5

Besides, according to Stavenhagen (2008), learning *about* others may help students “attain intercultural citizenship [which] takes us beyond cultural diversity to creative interculturality.”⁴⁹⁷ By “interculturality,” UNESCO defines it as “the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect.”⁴⁹⁸ Multicultural education also supports the sharing of learning *from* one another, which should be carried out in ways that involve all people such as teachers, students, and the community in “the process of share power over education,” where the experience of learning is all shared equally through participating, questioning, and reflecting; and in turn, this process will lead to the enforcement of diverse human potentials.⁴⁹⁹ Learning about and from multiple perspectives is indeed another human rights which helps enhance insight and contributes to “better decision making for self and others” as well.⁵⁰⁰

Another major benefit is that the integrated Islamic curriculum of private Islamic schools in southern Thailand provides Islamic religious studies, which implies that the ethno-religious demands of southern Malay Muslims are at least met to some extent. The last main benefit is that such integrated curriculum provides modern secular subjects and Thai language which help students exposed to modern secular knowledge and become aware of secular issues; helps students to be functional in Thai; as well as increases job opportunities for students in wider Thai society.

As already discussed in chapter 2, Malay Muslims in southern Thailand always opposed “Thai-nization” assimilation program in the realm of education and fought for their ethno-religious rights, identity, and opportunities, whether in the forms of *pondoks*’ protest against the policy by going underground or closing down of *pondoks*, for instance. This reflects that their ethno-religious rights are always looked over by the Thai government. Since 2004, the multicultural atmosphere has been implicitly emerged in the private Islamic schools, which offer secular state curricula alongside religious

⁴⁹⁷ Rios and Markus, p.22

⁴⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p.23

⁵⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.24

studies in exchange of state subsidies. However, despite this sense of multiculturalism, there are still several problems and challenges of the multicultural or integrated Islamic curriculum of those private Islamic schools. This reflects that the education system of those schools is not effectively managed in ways that is suitable for the context of southern Thailand, and that the ethno-religious rights of southern Malay Muslims are not *fully* addressed.

In order to *fully* address the ethno-religious rights of Malay Muslims in southern Thailand, the existing integrated Islamic curriculum of private Islamic schools should be devised urgently by using a more dynamic and comprehensive approach to education. The curriculum should be modified by applying the essence or theory of multicultural education appropriately for the context of southern Thailand. What should be mainly considered for the implementation of newly devised integrated Islamic curriculum includes the major components and values of multicultural education (by referring to J.A. Banks's theory, for example); the ultimate aims of Islamic education and integrated Islamic curriculum; the ethno-religious educational needs or demands of Malay Muslims in southern Thailand; as well as the essence of Thai secular subjects. It is also noteworthy to point out again that the main ethno-religious educational demands of many southern Malay Muslim parents do not revolve only around the importance of Islamic education but also the importance of modern secular learning and mastery in Thai language. All of those factors for the implementation of newly devised integrated Islamic curriculum should also ensure the linkage of the gap between the policy and real practices.

By using this newly dynamic and comprehensive approach for the integrated Islamic curriculum, the ethno-religious rights of Malay Muslims in southern Thailand are thus *fully* addressed. One of the major ethno-religious rights which is *fully* addressed is the rights of Malay Muslims to preserve Malay Islamic identity and solidarity through Islamic education. By preserving their Malay Islamic identity, this will make them value the importance of being a Malay Muslim. The second main rights is the rights of Malay Muslims to get access to and learn Islamic knowledge and perspective in a comprehensive and equitable way. This will make them truly understand Islamic knowledge and perspective as well as realise the ultimate aim of Islamic education.

Another major rights is the rights of Malay Muslims to learn and practice their Pattani Malay or Yawi language, and this will make them realise the importance of the language of their ethnicity, which is viewed as an exclusive marker of Malay identity. The last main rights is the rights of Malay Muslims to be free from racial and cultural prejudices and discrimination—the factors which primarily explain educational inequalities within school settings.

7. Conclusion

It is important to note again that the scope of this thesis is limited to the analysis from policy framework which covers the dimensions of Thai government education policies for southern Thailand and multicultural education policy. Also, the analyses focus on the issues of ethno-religious rights of Malay Muslims in southern Thailand.

As the crucial targets of attacks by southern Malay Muslims and Thai government, education system and policy in southern Thailand are considered the very crucial, contributing aspects for the region in a sense that they can pave way for long-term regional peace and harmony. Taking into account the major concerns of national sovereignty, stability, and development, the Thai Buddhist authorities have not regulated the education system and policy for Malay Muslims in southern Thailand appropriately to fit the local context of the region. In the eyes of Malay Muslims in southern Thailand, the “Thai-nization” assimilation program in the field of education is simply a means of internal colonialism and domination practiced by the Thai Buddhist state against southern Malay Muslims. They view the enforcement of Thai language instruction and the domination of Thai imposed values in the modified assimilative curriculum as the attack on Islamic religion, Islamic culture, and heritage. In response, the southern Malay Muslims fought for their religious and cultural rights and identities through the means of, for example, *pondoks*’ protest against the policy by going underground or closing down of *pondoks*.

Therefore, this type of Thai state’s education policy and governance and the resistance by the southern Malay Muslims reflect that the ethno-religious rights of

southern Malay Muslims are not *fully* addressed, and that their ethno-religious rights to education are looked over by Thai Buddhist authorities. Even worse, such assimilation program will only intensify the conflict and worsen the conditions of schools in the south mainly through the attacks on Thai Buddhist and Malay Muslim teachers in government schools as well as Muslim teachers in Islamic schools whom are viewed as either “too-progovernment” or “inadequately pro-insurgency.” In a nutshell, this type of educational initiative is considered ineffective, insensitive, and not a right approach for the multicultural context of southern Thailand. It was simply carried out in ways that only meet the demands of Thai government which mainly involve the creation of Thai national and cultural uniformity.

Throughout the discussions on the major components and values of multicultural education, multicultural education can be regarded as one of the effective educational approaches which bring about several potential positive benefits to all students. For a multicultural society like southern Thailand, multicultural education is deemed very effective and suitable for the region in a sense that it serves to address ethno-religious rights of southern Malay Muslims. National sovereignty, stability, and development are also not jeopardised by such system.

However, although Thai state had launched a new educational policy in the form of integrated Islamic curriculum in private Islamic schools, there are several problems and challenges in this kind of multicultural curriculum. Therefore, the urgent reform of this curriculum through a comprehensive and dynamic approach to education is a must, taking into account the importance of ethno-religious rights of Malay Muslims in the south. This newly reformed multicultural education system will in turn serve to ensure that the ethno-religious rights of southern Malay Muslims are *fully* addressed, and that a higher level of emphasis is placed on the ethno-religious rights to education. Within such system of education, both southern Malay Muslim and Thai Buddhist students would be guaranteed their space for their identities in schools. They would mutually learn, understand, and respect the uniqueness of (Malay) Muslim and Thai Buddhist cultures. This kind of learning, understanding, and respect could in turn serve as a basis for long-term regional peace and harmony as such.

8. Bibliography

1. Ameny-Dixon, G. M., 'Why Multicultural Education is More Important in Higher Education now Than Ever: A Global Perspective' [2012], p.1
<<http://www.nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/Ameny-Dixon,%20Gloria%20M.%20Why%20Multicultural%20Education%20is%20More%20Important%20in%20Higher%20Education%20Now%20than%20Ever.pdf>> accessed 12 June 2015
2. Aphornsuvan, Th., 'History and Politics of the Muslims in Thailand' (12 February 2003), p.5-6, 27
<<https://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/sites/seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/files/MuslimThailand.pdf>> accessed 19 June 2015
3. Aphornsuvan, Th., 'Origins of Malay Muslim "Separatism" in Southern Thailand', (October 2004), p.17, ARI Working Paper No.31
<http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps04_032.pdf> accessed 20 June 2015
4. Banks, J.A. and Tucker, M., "Multiculturalism's Five Dimensions" (Interview for NEA Today Online)
<<http://www.learner.org/workshops/socialstudies/pdf/session3/3.Multiculturalism.pdf>> accessed 14 June 2015
5. Banks, J.A., "Multicultural Education: Development, Dimensions, and Challenges" (n.d.)
<http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/virtual_disk_library/index.cgi/4273355/FID840/EQTYRES/erg/111511/1511.htm> accessed 13 June 2015
6. Banks, J. A., 'Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals' in J.A. Banks and Ch. A. McGee Banks (eds), *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* (RRD Crawfordsville, The United States of America 2010) p. 3-4, 22-24

7. Blum, L., 'Multicultural Education as Values Education' (Working papers, 1997), p.24
<http://www.faculty.umb.edu/lawrence_blum/publications/publications/A23.pdf> accessed 15 June 2015
8. Bode, P., "Multicultural Education" (2009)
<<http://www.education.com/reference/article/multicultural-education/>> accessed 13 June 2015
9. Burke, A., Tweedie, P., and Poocharoen, O., *The Contested Corners of Asia* (The Asia Foundaion, The United States of America 2013), p.18, 20-23
10. Chalk, P., *The Malay-Muslim Insurgency in Southern Thailand: Understanding the Conflict's Evolving Dynamic* (RAND Corporation, CA 2008), p.2
11. Chenu, I., 'Challenges of Integrated Curriculum: Experiences of Islamic Schools in Thailand' (n.d.), p.1,12-13, 16-21
<http://www.academia.edu/10065039/challenges_in_Islamic_private_education_in_Thailand> accessed May 17 2015
12. Chongkittavorn, K., 'Time to acknowledge that 'jihadism' is at work in South' (20 May 2004) < <http://www.islamdaily.org/en/world-issues/asia-pacific/1203.time-to-acknowledge-that-jihadism-is-at-work-in-so.htm>> accessed 30 July 2015
13. Conlon, K. T., 'Ethnic Violence in Southern Thailand: The Anomaly of Satun' (Thesis for Master of Arts in Security Studies (Far East, Southeast Asia, Pacific)), Naval Postgraduate School June 2012, p.79
14. Cumming-Mc Cann, A., "Multicultural Education Connecting Theory to Practice"(27 July 2007)
<<http://www.ncsall.net/index.html?id=208.html>> accessed 15 June 2015
15. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 'Thailand', (2011), p. 1-3, 6-7 <<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/192879.pdf>> accessed 8 May 2015

16. Dorairajoo, S., 'Peaceful Thai, Violent Malay (Muslim): A Case Study of the 'Problematic' Muslim Citizens of Southern Thailand', *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.27, no.2, 2009, p.63-65, 67, 69-71
17. Francisco, R. and Markus, S., "Multicultural Education as a Human Right: Framing Multicultural Education for Citizenship in a Global Age" [2011], p.21, Woodring College of Education. Paper11. <http://cedar.wvu.edu/education_facpubs/11> accessed 13 June 2015
18. Funston, J., *Conflict in Southern Thailand: Causes, Agents and Trajectory* (Islam, Syari'ah and governance background paper series / ARC Federation Fellowship, University of Melbourne, Melbourne 2008), p.3-6
19. Gay, G., "A Synthesis of Scholarship in Multicultural Education" (Monograph published by NCREL's Urban Education Program as part of its Urban Education Monograph Series 1994) <<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadrsdp/le0gay.htm>> accessed 10 June 2015
20. Gray, W., 'Rethinking Multicultural Education: Teaching for Racial and Cultural Justice' (Education Review Paper, 2011), p.2 <<http://www.edrev.info/reviews/rev1078/pdf>> accessed 17 June 2015
21. Human Rights Watch, *Targets of Both Sides: Violence against Students, Teachers, and Schools in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces* (United States of America 2010), p.28-36, 39-40, 43, 47-49
22. Hunter, M., 'Islamic education's desperate plight', 26 February 2013 <<http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2013/02/26/desperate-plight-of-islamic-education-in-southern-thailand/>> accessed 9 May 2015
23. International Crisis Group, 'Recruiting Militants in Southern Thailand' (Asia report N°170-22 June 2009), p.20-21 <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south->

east-asia/thailand/170_recruiting_militants_in_southern_thailand.pdf> accessed May 15 2015

24. Jelonek, A. W., 'The Dynamics of Ethno-religious Separatism in Southern Thailand' [April 2012] *Politeia* (20-1/2012), p.135-136
<<http://www.cceol.com/aspx/issuedetails.aspx?issueid=e2597461-f8c5-4cc1-b67f-8951ae38ab19&articleId=7551aa0b-0a56-489c-ab21-aaadaa56b107>> accessed 20 June 2015
25. Liow, J. Ch., *Islam, Education, and Reform in Southern Thailand: Tradition & Transformation* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore 2009), p.12-29, 33-41
26. Liow, J. Ch., *Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines: Religion, Ideology, and Politics* (Policy Studies 24, East-West Center Washington, Washington, D.C. 2006) , p.25-26, 28-29
27. Liow, J. Ch., 'The Pondok Schools of Southern Thailand: Bastion of Islamic Education or Hotbed of Militancy?' (25 August 2004), p.1-3
<<http://hdl.handle.net/10220/4074>> accessed May 10 May 2015
28. Madmarn, H., 'The Strategy of Islamic Education in Southern Thailand: *The Kitab Jawi and Islamic Heritage*', *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies*, no.27, 2009, p.37, 39-40, 44-48
29. Maxcy, B., Sungtong, E., and Nguyen, T., 'Legitimizing Leadership in Southern Thai Schools: Considering Local Responses to Neoliberal Reforms' (2010), p.120, 24 (1) 110-136
30. McCargo, D., *Tearing Apart the Land: Islam and Legitimacy in Southern Thailand* (Cornell University Press, United States of America 2008), p.37-45

31. Melvin, N. J., 'Conflict in Southern Thailand Islamism, Violence and the State in the Patani Insurgency' (SIPRI Policy Papers No.20, CM Gruppen, Bromma, Sweden 2007), p.1, 3-4, 6
32. Nieto, S. and Bode, P., *Language, Culture, and Teaching: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge, New York and UK 2010) p.67-68
33. Parameswaran, P., 'Utilizing Islamic Religious Education as a Peacebuilding Tool: A Case Study of Southern Thailand', (n.d.) <<http://www.global-politics.co.uk/Issue%204/Thai%20schools.htm#>> accessed May 13 2015
34. Putthongchai, S., 'What is it like to be Muslim in Thailand?: A case study of Thailand through Muslim professionals' perspectives' (A thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter January 2013), p.48-49, 58
35. Rogers, S., 'Muslim populations by country: how big will each Muslim population be by 2030?' *Guardian* (28 January 2011)
<<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/jan/28/muslim-population-country-projection-2030>> accessed 19 June 2015
36. Sarkar, D. 'Religious Minority, Education and Separatism in South Thailand' (International Conference on Thai Studies 22-24 April 2014), p.2-21<<http://sydney.edu.au/southeast-asia-centre/documents/pdf/sarkar-diptendu.pdf>> accessed 9 May 2015
37. Sungtong, E., 'Perspectives, Dilemmas and Multicultural Leadership of Public School Principals in the Three Southern Border Provinces of Thailand' (Paper presented in the American Educational Research Association 2013, 28 April 2013), p.4, 8, 14-15 <http://eduit.pn.psu.ac.th/research/pdf/meeting_academic/5-2556.pdf> accessed 5 June 2015

38. Understanding Multicultural Curriculum, “Understanding Multicultural Curriculum Transformation: A Q & A with Paul C. Gorski”
<<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/curriculum/concept.html>> accessed 1 June 2015
39. UNICEF (East Asia and Pacific Regional Office), ‘*Thailand Case Study in Education, Conflict, and Social Cohesion*’ (2014), p.6, 11-13
40. Walker, D. P. ‘Conflict between the Thai and Islamic cultures in Southern Thailand (Patani) 1948-2005’, *Islamiyat* 27 (1), 86-90, 102
41. Wilson, K., “Multicultural Education” (n.d.)
<<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/papers/keith.html>> accessed 10 June 2015
42. Yaacob, S. Bt. Hj., ‘The Concept of An Integrated Islamic Curriculum and Its Implications for Contemporary Islamic Schools’ (The paper awarded in the International Conference in Islamic Republic of Iran, 2008), p.11-15
<http://irep.iium.edu.my/2470/1/Islamic_School_Curriculum.pdf> accessed 15 June 2015
43. Yusuf, I., ‘Ethnoreligious and Political Dimensions of the Southern Thailand Conflict’ in Amit Pandya and Ellen Laipson (eds), *Islam and Politics: Renewal and Resistance in the Muslim World* (The Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, DC 2009), p.43-45, 47-48
44. Yusuf, I., ‘Faces of Islam in Southern Thailand’ (March 2007), p.1-2, 4-6, 8-9 East-West Center Washington Working Papers No.7
<http://www.muslimpopulation.com/pdf/Thailand_Southern_Imtiyaz%20Yusuf.pdf> accessed 12 June 2015
45. Zirkel, S., ‘The Influence of Multicultural Educational Practices on Student Outcomes and Intergroup Relations’ *Teachers College Record*, vol.10, no.6, 2008, p.1149-1150, 1154-1155, 1157, 1160-1161, 1166-1169 Available from ERIC (accessed 13 June 2015)

Abstract

Education system and policy in southern Thailand have been the main controversy and major targets of attack by southern Malay Muslim insurgents and Thai Buddhist authorities. For the Malay Muslims, the foremost aspect of their education is Islamic religious learning due to their primary desire to instil and maintain their Islamic culture and identity. However, the Thai government have long attempted to assimilate distinctive ethno-religious identities of the southern Malay Muslims by compelling them to study in Thai national curriculum in order to ensure national sovereignty, stability, and development. The Muslims view such education system as a means of Thai state's internal colonialism and oppression which directly attacks their religion, culture, and heritage. This reflects that the ethno-religious rights to education of these Malay Muslims are ignored. This also led to stiff opposition and attack by southern Malay Muslim insurgents on teachers and schools. Nonetheless, despite the government's adoption of multicultural or integrated Islamic curriculum in private Islamic schools, several problems and challenges exist. By using the thesis main methodology of analyzing secondary sources of information, the thesis primarily aims to point out that the Thai state's assimilative educational policies and its implementation of integrated Islamic curriculum fail to address ethno-religious rights of the southern Malay Muslims. In order to fully address their ethno-religious rights to education, the state should implement newly devised multicultural education system. This would serve as a foundation for "genuine unity in diversity" as well as cultural peace and development within the region.

Key terms: Internal colonialism and oppression, integrated Islamic curriculum, Thai state's assimilative educational policies, ethno-religious rights to education, newly devised multicultural education

Abstract Deutsch

Das Bildungswesen und die Bildungspolitik im Süden Thailands waren die Hauptkontroverse und ein bedeutendes Ziel der Angriffe von südmalaiisch muslimischen Aufständischen und thailändischen buddhistischen Behörden. Für malaiische Muslime ist die islamische Religionslehre der wichtigste Aspekt in ihrer Bildung, aufgrund ihres Grundbedürfnisses, die Islamische Kultur und Identität anzuerziehen und zu bewahren. Die thailändische Regierung versuchte jedoch für lange Zeit die unverwechselbare ethnisch-religiöse Identität der südlichen Malay Muslimen zu assimilieren, indem sie sie zwangen, sich an den thailändisch nationalen Lehrplan zu richten, um nationale Souveränität, Stabilität und Entwicklung zu gewährleisten. Die Muslime betrachten ein solches Bildungssystem als ein thailändisch inländisches Kolonialisierungs- und Unterdrückungsmittel, welches ihre Religion, Kultur und Kulturerbe direkt angreift. Dies zeigt, dass die ethnisch-religiösen Bildungsrechte der malaiischen Muslime ignoriert werden. Zudem führte dies zu einer harten Opposition und Angriff der südlichen malaiisch muslimischen Aufständischen auf Lehrer und Schulen. Trotz der von der Regierung ausgehenden Einführung von multikulturellen oder integrierten islamischen Lehrplänen in privaten islamischen Schulen, bestehen verschiedene Probleme und Herausforderungen. Unter Verwendung der Hauptmethodik der Masterarbeit, der Auswertung von Sekundärquellen von Informationen, beabsichtigt die Arbeit vor allem aufzuzeigen, dass die assimilative Bildungspolitik Thailands und die Durchführung von einem eingegliederten islamischen Lehrplan daran scheitert, ausreichend die ethnisch-religiösen Rechte der malaiischen Muslime zu schützen. Um die ethnisch-religiösen Bildungsrechte vollständig zu realisieren, sollte der Staat ein neuentworfenen multikulturelles Bildungssystem einführen. Dies würde sowohl als Grundlage für "echte Einheit in der Vielfalt" als auch für kulturellen Frieden und Entwicklung innerhalb der Region dienen.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Inländische Kolonialisierung und Unterdrückung, Integrierter islamischer Lehrplan, thailändische bildungspolitische Assimilierung, ethnisch-religiöse Bildungsrechte, neuentworfenen multikulturelles Bildungswesen