

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW



2.1 Literature Review

A literature review has been conducted with the objective of developing a working framework so that themes, ideas about the conflict can be formulated. These themes or ideas are then used to facilitate data reduction of 2-months' of newspaper articles using word repetitions and keywords. The “reduced” data can then be analyzed in detail by close and meticulous text analysis.

A layered approach was taken to review contemporary literature on the issue of peace and conflict resolution:-

- (a) General review;
- (b) Country-specific approach; and
- (c) Peace Journalism as a specific pillar of peace research.

2.2 General Review

To a layman, peace implies a lack of conflict of a serious violent kind. However, Galtung and Ho-Won Jeong's concepts of peace extend beyond a lack or absence of violent conflict to include “positive” peace. “Positive” peace means the reduction or even elimination of root causes of discontent or disquiet that would ensure positive human conditions for communities to thrive thereby preventing escalations of such discontent to violence. Therefore, conflict resolution requires more

than force. It could include initiatives for the promotion of social justice, changes in societal institutions that are responsible for cultural expression, poverty or equality amongst races.

To promote “positive” peace, peace promoters or activists stress knowledge, in terms of thorough conflict analysis so that the violence can be managed and its causes “rooted” out. Root causes are generally of 2 genres : structural and cultural. Structural causes refer to political oppression, adjudicative and distributive injustices and economic discrimination. Cultural violence usually impinges on minorities’ “symbolic sphere of existence” which includes their religion, language and cultural customs. State ideology is usually used to suppress the minorities’ legitimate claims of cultural expression.

With regards to “cultural” causes, John Barton’s Human Needs Theory was reviewed for relevance to the human conditions prevalent in Southern Thailand. Barton espoused that there are certain ontological human needs that would be pursued by individuals and groups. These human needs pertain to safety, “belongingness”; self-esteem; personal fulfillment, identity, cultural security; freedom; and distributive justice. Circumstances sometimes cause deprivations or impose compliances on people and communities so that these needs cannot be met. Resistance to these imposed conditions or compliances can take the form of violence.

Once a holistic approach is used for conflict analysis, conflict resolution is manifold, extending beyond using para-military apparatus to secure peace. The results of this research will highlight the “The Nation”’s journalistic attempts to promote conflict resolution.

2.3 Country-Specific Literature Review

The review included the examination of literature available on the conflict in Southern Thailand including thesis, conference and seminar papers; and books. These included the works of Chaiwat Satha-Anand; Surin Pitsuwan; W.K. Chee Man, Ladd Thomas, Panomporn Anurugsa, Omar Farouk, and Uthai Dulyakasem. These academicians have written insightful literatures on Southern Thailand. The results of my review are given below in the form of a synopsis that will facilitate understanding of the conflict.

Narathiwat, Yala and Patani are Thailand’s 3 southern Muslim provinces. Narathiwat;Yala; Patani; Songkla and Satun of present-day Thailand and Kelantan & Trengganu in Malaysia, once formed the Sultanate of Patani. Patani was once a great centre for Islamic studies and learning during the 16th Century. From the 1700’s, Patani became a tributary state of the then Siam. Triennially, the Sultan would deliver golden and silver “trees” to the King of Siam based in Bangkok as recognition of her suzerainty over the Sultanate. However, culturally, the sultanate came under the influences from Malaysia. Royal members from the house of Patani often inter-marry with members from the Sultanates of

Kelantan and Kedah. In 1902, Siam annexed Patani and for ease of control, curved out the Sultanate into 6 provinces.

The present Thai-Malaysian frontier was not fixed until 1909 when the Thais and British signed a treaty whereby the Thais agreed to drop their claims to the Malaysian states of Perlis, Kedah, Trengganu and Kelantan in exchange for a British agreement to relinquish the right of extraterritoriality in Thailand and a soft loan to build a railway line. Hence the border was a political frontier that divided a society of people of the same royal patronage, ethnicity and religion.

Malay resistance to Thai annexation and assimilation policies caused several waves of emigration to Malaysia which can be summarized as follows :-

- (a) during Pibul Songkram's leadership between 1938 to 1944;
- (b) shortly after the second war world in 1945;
- (c) during Pibul Songkram's second period of leadership when he crushed uprising and caused around 2,000 Malays to flee to Malaysia (Che Man 1990, p. 65).

On the other hand, the Muslims of Ayuthaya has Persian and Indian Muslim connection (Andaya 1995). During the 16th century A.D., there were 3 major Muslim empires – the Safavi Dynasty in Persia (Iran); the Ottoman Dynasty in Anatolia (Turkey) and the Mughal Dynasty in India. The royal courts of the 3 Muslim dynasties sponsored Islamic expansion in all fields, one of which was

trade with South East Asia (SEA). As bearers of much desired goods of the West and as representatives of prestigious Islamic centers of civilization, the traders and scholars were very much welcomed by rulers of SEA. In the case of Ayutthaya, King Narai made Ayutthaya very attractive to them. He built mosques and gave them freedom to worship Islam. In the 17th Century A.D., the Golkonda Muslims and the Chulias of Coromandel (Tamil Nadu of India) became the principal Muslim traders in Ayuthaya.

In short, Thailand annexed the 3 southern Muslim provinces whereas Muslims from foreign lands voluntarily settled in Ayutthaya. This overarching backdrop of history has left an indelible mark on the Malay Muslims's psyche – that they were forced into submission, separation from their own kindred and sultan. This is the oldest cause of resentment and conflict in southern Thailand.

The book, "History of the Malay Kingdom of Patanni", by an unknown Muslim resident of Patani gave voices to the pained historical consciousness of Patani in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the full force of Thailand's policies of national integration began to bear upon the Malays of the region.

There had been several waves of violent resistance to Bangkok's domination of the Muslim provinces. Separatist groups such as the Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani; the Barisan Revolusi Nasional; the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) and the Sabil-illah ('the Path of Allah') have

been known to lead violent attacks on the state military and police with the stated objective of secession from Thailand. These separatist groups had even forced alliances with the Communist Party of Thailand and criminal groups to achieve their political aims. According to Che Man, tactical differences amongst the groups such as whether alliances should be struck with bandits and corrupt gangs divided the groups rather than the ideological objective of independence from Bangkok.

It is deemed that these groups hold dual Thai and Malaysian citizenships which facilitate their trans-boundary movements. Prior to the January 2004 assault on a military depot near to a southern town, much of the violence took place in the hills, mountains and border area with Malaysia. However, this scenario has changed to urban violence with drive-by roadside and restaurant shootings, bombs set off by remote control devices like mobile telephones. More strangely, no organized group has claimed responsibility for the assaults.

2.4 Peace Journalism as a Specific Pillar of Peace Research

Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist and ex-diplomat, also dubbed the 'Father of peace journalism' has written books and sponsored TRANSCEND, a web-based international network of scholars and practitioners. Researchers of TRANSCEND teach and conduct courses in several universities and the UN. However, "peace" journalism is new to Southeast Asian media.

The basis philosophy of peace journalism is to present a voice for many parties, to resist the notion that the conflict is reducible to two parties. It promotes resolution rather than event-focused reporting on violence. “Normal” journalism usually includes human interest reports. Although human interest reporting of violent conflict makes memorable pieces of journalism, it does not help to resolve conflict. Galtung called on journalists to focus on people’s concerns, discontent and root causes so that ways to resolve conflict could be discovered. He espoused the inclusion of as many peace actors as possible so that a holistic approach to conflict analysis can be undertaken. Hence, peace journalism moves away from war journalism (where the enemies are ‘demonized’ and the rhetoric is vitriolic), victim journalism (where sensationalism reigns), conflict journalism into the positive realm of peace-making by providing a forum for all voices to participate in the peace process.

2.5 Gaps in Knowledge

Much of the Thai academic research that is available in the public domain are not contemporary ones, having been published some time ago. These research pertain to the deemed ‘separatist’ movement before the Krue Se Mosque incident of April 2004 and the Tak Bai incident of October 2004. There is this suggestion that the current generation of militants are not of the same ideological genre as the earlier militants that fought for a separate Pattani state (The Nation 22 November 2004). The inspirational forces that motivate them are different. The hatred towards the Thai state seemed deeper and also broader to encompass other civil

members of their society. Prior to 2004, the perpetrators targeted military, police and state officials.

The impact of 9/11 2001 World Trade Centre and the Iraqi War on the Islamic consciousness of Muslims worldwide are still shaping up in many parts of the world. These two events have damaged in some dimensions the way some Muslims perceive infidels or unbelievers, which include Muslims deemed not leading Islamic lives in the eyes of militants. Hence even Muslims and civilians are 'fair game' in their violent pursuit of Islamic sovereignty. These two events, the second building on the first, have further 'radicalized' Islam.

It is widely acknowledged that globalization has gravely affected most societies. Globalization has many dimensions – economics, cultural, scientific etc. There is a lack of knowledge on the cultural (including religious) dimensions of globalization on the Malay Muslims. What, one might ask, has the 'migration' of Malay Muslim students to Egypt, Pakistan or advancements in the electronic media anything to do with the conflict in Southern Thailand. On all the above 3 counts, my research showed that 'The Nation' has made contributions to further our understanding of the issues underpinning the violence.