

CHAPTER IV
THE FACTOR OF SOCIAL CONFLICT EMERGING IN THREE
PROVINCES SOUTHERN OF THAILAND

The emerging of the social conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand between the Thai government and insurgent group still continuing until now even the government had been made to solve problems in the restive south as violence intensified and daily attacks on local people, policemen, soldiers, teachers and even monks continued. Measures discussed included risk payment for all state officials in the three provinces, permission for teachers to buy guns for their own protection and procurement of bullet-proof vests for monks. The suggestion that teachers should be allowed to carry guns was not materialized after it was heavily criticized by the public¹. These measures, however, reflected that violence in the three provinces southern Thailand may not end because many factor effecting to the situation in the conflict area. In this part the writer would mention three factor of emerging social conflict in three provinces and some district of Songkhla in southern Thailand. Three factors of social conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand were: First the factor of diversity in the area consists of cultures, attitude, language and religions on each, Second the factor of government management structures that consists of the policies form, laws, and economic

¹ "Thailand's Deep south smoldering imbroglio: cause and exit strategies" by Asia peacebuilding initiatives, <http://peacebuilding.asia/thailands-deep-south-smoldering-imbroglio-causes-and-exit-strategies/> (Access on 0611-2016)

system, Third the factor of opposite or individuals group that consists group of violent.

A. Discrimination in diversity

Diversity are consists of cultures, attitude, language and religions this all influence to the feeling of people and very sensitive issue when the government don't understanding in language, attitude and religions on each other it's easy for emerging to gaps and conflict. Muslims in the three provinces southern of Thailand have preserved their way of life, their attire and language which are known as Muslim-Melayu cultures. The government of Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongram, however, had made mistakes by not trying to understand these cultures and denying cultural diversity. That government instead forced the whole country to accept only the "Thai" culture and Buddhism, based on ethnic prejudice. Muslims in southern Thailand therefore, have nurtured grudges from being insulted and treated unfairly. For three provinces southern of Thailand are especially case because the most Muslim have strict on religion conflict in three provinces southern Thailand it caused from differences of religions and cultures which is brought to not understand each other and cause to partiality of attitude or thinking method between Muslim and government, the government not really accepts and cares the lifestyle of Muslim people and then tried to wipe out Malay-Patani culture but conversely the Malay-Patani people they want to maintain their culture. This thing created the Muslim people unsatisfied and increased of violence in the areas when the government don't respected. Moreover, actually

Islam has recognized the importance of justice and agreed to fight for fairness². Thus, when injustice arises by government the most Muslim protest it and increased of violence and more conflict.

The result above, the discrimination in diversity is a part of the main cause of emerging social conflict to violence. The Muslims people fell cannot live by honorable and worthily under control by Thai government. Unrealized and not give seriously and insignificant of government to the unique culture and lifestyle of the Muslims people cause to Muslims people is secondary class in Thai society relate to the history.

B. Discrimination in Politics and Economic

Politics and economic consists of the policies form, laws, and economic system or we can mention as government management structures. Discrimination deficiencies and weaknesses in structure management consists of the politico - economic system, policies form, laws, and, such as the policies inappropriate yet to the Muslim people and the Islamic approach, law enforcement is inconsistent with the rule of law and regardless of the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. That, democracy system was not maximum to the people especially, Muslims people lack of political participation, because less of political opportunities. Moreover, who had influence in society was politician, and militaries, and laws cannot be useful or solve it. So those made Muslim people

²“Muslim in Southern Thailand” by Chryssoula Katsikoudis,
<http://thedailyjournalist.com/theinvestigative/muslims-in-thailand/>, (Access on 04-11-2016)

unsatisfied and did not trust the government. Therefore, the country focused on improving the equally with neighboring countries and developed countries but neglected human resources development. Thus, it made people have negative attitude and lack of good human resources in southern border both Thai Buddhist and Thai Muslim³

The area of southern of Thailand is rich in natural resources including rubber, tin, and gold but the corrupt government officials in that time used their power to generate wealth for their cronies and most of them are Chinese businessmen, while villagers could not make ends meet and also were discriminated against with economic ways. Moreover, the Muslim-Patani is the poorest among the three groups of Thai Buddhist, Thai Chinese, and Thai Muslim. However, the performance of the deeply south's economy actually improved markedly in the past few decades. Between 1983 and 2003, the average per capita income of Pattani grew from 9,340 baht to 57,621 baht, while that of Yala and Narathiwat also increased from 14,987 baht and 10,340 baht to 52,737 baht and 38,553 baht, respectively. However, the three provinces southern of Thailand did have the lowest average income among all the southern provinces. Household income improved from 2002-2004 by 21.99%, 19.27%, and 21.28% for Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, respectively. For comparison, income growth for all of Thailand in the same period was just 9.4%. The percentage of people living below the poverty line also fell, from 40%, 36%, and 33% in 2000 to 18%, 10%, and 23% in 2004

³ "Violent situation in southern Thailand cause of violent" by Institute of public policy studies, <http://www.fpps.or.th/news.php?detail=n1149480173.news> (Access on 06-11-2016)

for Narathiwat, Yala, and Pattani, respectively. By 2004, the 3 provinces had 310,000 people living below the poverty line, compared to 610,000 in 2000. However, 45% of all poor lived in the three provinces southern of Thailand⁴. In general, Muslims in the border provinces have lower levels of educational attainment compared to their Buddhist neighbors; 69.80% of the Muslim population in the border provinces has only a primary school education, compared with 49.6% of Buddhists in the same provinces. Only 9.20% of Muslims have completed secondary education (including those who graduated from private Islamic schools), compared to 13.20% of Buddhists. Only 1.70% of the Muslim populations have a bachelor's degree, while 9.70% of Buddhists hold undergraduate degrees. However, one must keep in mind that schools are taught in Thai, and there is much resentment and even outright pulling of children out of Thai-run schools. Muslims also had reduced employment opportunities compared to their Buddhist neighbors. Government officials comprised only 2.4% of all working Muslims in the provinces, compared with 19.2% of all working Buddhists. Jobs in the Thai public sector are difficult to obtain for those Muslim students who do not ever fully accept the Thai language or the Thai education system⁵. The government was a lack of a clear understanding of the actual conditions; it has not great academic education to development of economic policy to be consistent with the true situation, some of education policy

⁴ "An Atoll Investigation, Southern Test for New Thai Leader" By Brain Mc Cartan and Shawn W Crispin, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/JL2Aeo2.html (Access on 06-11-2016)

⁵ "Solving the conflict in southern Thailand", By Colonel Patcharawat Thnapranensing Royal Thai Army, (Access on 06-11-2016)

inappropriate with Muslim condition. In 1939 the government enforced Muslim people cannot dress in form of Malay, use Malay-Arabic Name; use Malay Language, and Islamic Approach. At that time, Malay people protested and struggled for protect their tradition, until appear Insurgence Movement⁶

The result of discrimination in politics and economics from Thai government was lack of understanding to Muslim condition, it brought to inappropriate of policies determine. Moreover, the government in 1939 they were effort to destroy minorities and Muslim condition into Thai culture. Therefore, the politico - economic system in three provinces southern of Thailand there are proportion of most poor 47% and lower salary than other part and it was showed the factors of structure management were deficiencies and weaknesses. In addition, policies, laws, and politico-economics were not useful and appropriated with the Malay condition and Islamic approach. Thus, the discrimination in Politics and Economics is a part of the main cause of emerging conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand.

C. The existence of separatists and opposition groups

A strong of Nationalism policy by Plaek Phibunsongkhram government that tried to assimilate Malay-Patani ethnic and does not accept the seven demands of Haji Sulong bin Abdul kadir. It makes the separatist group were established in three provinces southern of Thailand. Separatists or opposition groups are consists

⁶ "Solving the conflict in southern Thailand" by Royal Thai Army, (Access on 06-11-2013)

by group of violent, interest group, group of interference for benefit who are unsatisfied to the Thai government and each group of them have difference incentive. Some groups have violence ideologies and want discrimination; they are duties on team work and divided several of levels in worked. The problem not only included those groups but also included the interest group, influential people and politicians. In addition, the Thai government lack of trust, equal, unfair, and non-transparent to the Muslims in the areas. Non-transparent in the duties, some of politician and influential person they are benefit group exploited people in society to finding the benefit to parties and destroy the Muslims youth by drug method.

The result above is, Opposition group is not discrimination group only but also there are group of benefit and influential person related in the areas to finding benefits to parties. The non-transparent of government made the people in the areas unsatisfied and made partiality and don't trust each other. Therefore, that thing is increases violence of the problem and a loss of public confidence more and more. National and local politicians who were selfish just took a look of benefits to partisan rather than creating benefits to public⁷.

The most local politician influential person took chance by used the areas in the way of corruption and created benefits to partisan, for example created citizen remedies policy, gave opportunity in education wider than in the past, provided scholarship to study both in country and aboard, and policy about sending militaries and frontier policeman to duties security the people in areas of

⁷ "Solving the conflict in southern Thailand" By Colonel Royal Army (Access on 06-11-2016)

southern Thailand. Those things must be use money or budged in the process and implementation. However, the individual groups had overlapping with several issues included group of discrimination who want to independent to use autonomy system in three provinces southern of Thailand, and non-transparent of government to the Muslims people such as used this areas is a way to corruption, created benefit to their parties Thus why the Thai governments not take serious to solve the violence in the areas? Because the reason is the areas in three provinces southern of Thailand is a place to take a chance in finding benefit for themselves.

The three factors mention above, the conflict problems and violence taken place in three provinces southern of Thailand, the government must consider clearly and find the solution to the point of issue. This issue is very important for the government they must analyze carefully before making decision to solve the problem. It is because in the past most government just solved the problem at the end of problem but did not solve at the main cause of problem. There is also lack of knowledge, understanding the cultures, and lifestyle of the people in the areas. It is not strange why the problem still has violence.