

THE PERCEPTIONS OF NARATHIWAT PEOPLE  
TOWARDS THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF THE  
DEEP SOUTH PROVINCES OF THAILAND

BY

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for  
the degree of Master of Human Sciences in Political Science

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## ABSTRACT

The insurgent unrest in Thailand's Deep South provinces, particularly in Narathiwat, has originated in 1948, and the secessionist movement remained low-level until 2001, marking the year of contemporary insurgent re-escalation. The reasons for the violence are multifaceted, ranging from economic deprivation, political problems, historical grievances, and cultural and religious differences. This study aimed to answer three main objectives: (1) the perceptions of Narathiwat people on the Autonomous Region, (2) their trust in the insurgent organisations, (3) their satisfaction with the government's performance in counterinsurgency management. This study was conducted using quantitative methodology. A questionnaire survey with a non-probability quota sampling technique was used to proportionally include Buddhists, a religious minority, and Muslims: a religious majority in Narathiwat, into the study's sample of 400 respondents, comprising 328 Muslims and 72 Buddhists, in accordance with the religious demography of the province. A Likert scale-based questionnaire was utilised, and the collected data was analysed statistically. The findings discovered a significant correlation between the respondents' religious background, perceptions of Autonomous Region, and trust in the insurgent organisations. Overall, Muslim respondents exhibited more positive support for establishing the Autonomous Region and demonstrated greater trust in the insurgent organisations than their Buddhist counterparts. However, no significant correlation was found between the respondents' religious background and their satisfaction with the government's performance in counterinsurgency management. Both religious groups expressed dissatisfaction with the government's efforts in the Deep South counterinsurgency.

## خلاصة البحث

نشأت اضطرابات المتمردين في مقاطعات الجنوب العميق في تايلاند، لا سيما في ناراتيوات، في عام 1948، وظلت الحركة الانفصالية منخفضة المستوى حتى عام 2001، إيدانا بعام التصعيد المعاصر للمتمردين. إن أسباب العنف متعددة الأوجه وهي تتراوح بين الحرمان الاقتصادي، والمشاكل السياسية، والمظالم التاريخية، والاختلافات الثقافية والدينية. هدفت هذه الدراسة والوصول إلى ثلاثة أهداف رئيسية: (1) تصورات سكان ناراتيوات في منطقة الحكم الذاتي، (2) ثقتهم في المنظمات المتمردة، (3) ورضاهم عن أداء الحكومة في إدارة مكافحة التمرد. أجريت هذه الدراسة باستخدام المنهج الكمي. تم استخدام الاستبيان عن طريق تقنية أخذ العينات غير الاحتمالية لتضمين البوذيين: أقلية دينية، والمسلمين: أغلبية دينية في ناراتيوات، في عينة الدراسة المكونة من 400 مستجيبين (328 مسلمًا و 72 بوذيًا) وفقًا لديموغرافيا الدينية للمحافظة. تم استخدام استبيان قائم على مقياس لايكرت، وتم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها تحليلًا إحصائيًا. اكتشفت النتائج وجود علاقة كبيرة بين الخلفية الدينية للمستجيبين، وتصوراتهم عن منطقة الحكم الذاتي وثقتهم في المنظمات المتمردة. بشكل عام، أظهر المستجيبون المسلمون دعمًا أكثر إيجابية لتأسيس منطقة الحكم الذاتي وأظهروا ثقة أكبر في المنظمات المتمردة مقارنة بنظرائهم البوذيين. ومع ذلك، لم يتم العثور على ارتباط كبير بين الخلفية الدينية للمستجيبين ورضاهم عن أداء الحكومة في إدارة مكافحة التمرد. أعربت كلتا المجموعتين الدينيتين عن استيائهما من جهود الحكومة في مكافحة التمرد في أعماق الجنوب.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences in Political Science.

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## DECLARATION

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS

AHRC	Asian Human Rights Commission
AR	Autonomous Region
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BERSATU	United Front for Independence of Pattani
BRN	Barisan Revolusi Nasional
BRN-Congress	National Revolutionary Front – Congress
BRN-Coordinate	National Revolutionary Front – Coordinate
BRN-Ulama	National Revolutionary Front – Ulama
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CPM 43	Civil Police, Military 43
CrCF	Cross Cultural Foundation
CSCD	Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity
DSW	Deep South Watch
GMIP	Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Pattani
GPP	Gross Provincial Product
GRP	Gross Regional Product
HSG	Hearty Support Group
IEDs	Improvised Explosive Devices
InOrs	Insurgent Organisations
ISOC	Internal Security Command
MHSLG	Master of Human Sciences (English Language Studies)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NESDC	National Economic and Social Development Council
NGOs	Non-governmental organisation
NRC	National Reconciliation Commission
NSC	National Security Council
NSO	National Statistical Office
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
PHRN	Pattani Human Rights Network
PULO	Pattani United Liberation Organisation
RKK	Runa Kumpulan Kecil
SBPAC	Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre
SPSS	Statistic Package of Social Science
SWV	South Warriors of Valaya
UN	United Nations

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Thailand is a unitary state which comprises 77 provinces. The country is geographically divided into six regions: Northern, Northeastern, Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Thailand. The Southern region constitutes 14 provinces, and Songkhla, Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala are the Deep South provinces. The total population of the four provinces, as recorded in January 2021, was 3,513,091 people (National Statistical Office, 2021a). The majority population of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala consisted of roughly 85.9, 84.4, and 76.6 per cent, respectively. In contrast, Songkhla has the lowest percentage of the Muslim population among the Deep South provinces, at 25.3 per cent, and the remaining percentage of the Deep South population is Buddhists (Pattani Economy, 2019).

The Deep South has been known for its ongoing insurgent turbulences. The situation has been regarded as one of the deadliest insurgencies in Asia (McCargo, 2014). The violence has drawn widespread attention regionally and internationally since early 2004, marking the escalation of contemporary insurgency. The repercussion has been beyond one's imagination. The Deep South Watch (2021) revealed that between January 2004 and March 2022, the total number of violent incidents had reached 21,485 cases, deprived more than 7,344 lives, and injured 13,641 more. Among the Deep South provinces, Narathiwat maintained the highest number of violent occurrences with 7,769 cases, followed by Pattani and Yala with 7,015 and 5,909 cases, respectively. Songkhla seemed to be relatively more peaceful and less affected in comparison to the three Deep South provinces: only four of its districts, i.e., Chana, Na Thawi, Thepha, and Saba Yoi districts, have been recorded to experience the incidents with 792 insurgent occurrences in total between the last nineteen years (January 2004 and March 2022).

The conflict has resulted in countless casualties, categorically both groups: hard-target group, i.e., state defence forces and insurgents, and soft-target group, i.e., civilian collateral damage. The total actualities consisted of both religious groups in the region:

Buddhists and Muslims, with 51.7 and 45.27 per cent, respectively, while the remaining casualties were identified (The Deep South Watch, 2021).

Additionally, several public and crowded areas have been targeted for violent attacks. Schools, police stations, busy streets, places of worship, hospitals and markets have often been attacked with fire, detonating bombs, and planting Improvised Explosive devices (IEDs) by the assailants. The pattern of non-discriminatory attacks has resulted in enormous casualties for the residents in the Deep South (Rupprecht, 2014; Tuansiri & Pathan, 2017; Buranajaroenkij, 2019).

Until the present, it remains uncertain behind the violence in the Deep South of Thailand as no group has publicly declared to take responsibility for those atrocious occurrences. The security forces are baffled to pinpoint which groups among the insurgents are actors behind the attacks. Many insurgent organisations have emerged since the beginning of the resistant movements as early as the 1960s. Organisations like the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), the United Front for Independence of Pattani (BERSATU), the Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Pattani (GMIP), the Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO), Runa Kumpulan Kecil (RKK) and South Warriors of Valaya (SWV) have been operating independently and distinctively from one another in their operation methods, agendas, and missions (Kumar, 2014). The common characteristics of the organisations were the silent policy in their organisational leadership and membership and the decentralisation of operations. Most of the top leaders of these organisations have been in exile (Askew, 2010a; Pathan, 2012; Wheeler & Chambers, 2019). The leaders seemed to be active politically but often less militarily. The leaders admittedly have feeble influence over the ground fighters. Small groups have undertaken the operations independently and clandestinely (Chalermripinyorat, 2020). Therefore, the act of the surreptitious violent actors inevitably confused as it increased the risk of the local people becoming suspects in the eyes of the state security forces and the frustration of the Thai government to identify the rightfully responsible groups for the insurgency and motivate them to peace building process (Dunthara, 2010).

It has been assumed that some of the insurgent groups have an underground connection with some Islamic boarding schools in the Deep South. The state security forces have discovered some of those school teachers to be the primary recruiting force in persuading and indoctrinating students into joining the movement. It has been

revealed that roughly eighteen schools in the Deep South operated as incubators of the insurgency. Teachers at these schools have been apprehended, along with evidence of weapons, bomb-making materials, and bomb-making instructional videos (Abuza, 2006; Funston, 2008).

The contemporary insurgency campaign began with the 2004 incident of raiding the 4th military development unit of Narathiwat Ratchanakharin military camp in Narathiwat's Cho Ai Rong district by a group of insurgents. The raid resulted in four deaths of sentry soldiers and the robbery of 413 weaponry items (Matichon Online, 2021), 4,000 rounds of ammunition (Fredrickson, 2011; Thai PBS, 2013), and followed by the simultaneous torching of 18 schools in ten districts in Narathiwat Province instantly after the raiding (Suwansiri, 2005). The hijacked weaponry equipment has been used to carry on countless attacks in the following years. To dwindle the insurgency movement and its intensity, the government have introduced a series of legal implementations, such as the 2004 and 2008 Martial Law, the 2005 Emergency Decree and the 2008 Internal Security Act in the Deep South provinces. These laws empowered the security forces with broad executive authorities with the right to arrest, search and seize properties, and oversee the public (International Amnesty, 2011; Duncan, 2015; Engvall & Rospers, 2020). The Martial Law conferred enormous power on the hand of state security forces to detain suspects to be interrogated for a maximum of seven days without a court warrant, judicial review, and access to a lawyer (or others) before bringing charges against them. Furthermore, the Emergency Decree only required a court warrant to detain suspects with three days of pre-charge detention, then the judicial request approval to extend the initial period up to 30 days without the detainees being presented before a judge (Amnesty International, 2011; CrCF, HSG & PHRN, 2017).

As a result of the law empowerment, many suspects have been arrested and brought into military camps for interrogation for their involvement. However, implementing the security measures has caused an awful moment for the government and security forces because these investigations have proved to lack professionalism and carried out unlawful operations. Many cases have been reported of detainees being tortured, hospitalised, and even found dead during custody (Funston, 2008; Cross-Cultural Foundation [CrCF], Hearty Support Group [HSG] & Patani Human Rights Network [PHRN], 2017).

Furthermore, outside the custody, several cases of the state army's mistaken executions of innocent local citizens have often been heard in the local news. For instance, three villages were shot by a troop of the Special Task Force of the 11th Ranger Regiment in the mountain range of Ta-wae, Ra-nea district of Narathiwat, on December 16, 2019 (Khaosod Online, 2019, Neawna, 2019). Reports from the news mentioned that three dead villagers were local lumberjacks (Prachatai, 2019). The medical report stated that the bullets went to the victims' heads and bodies, and the dead bodies were found in a state of sitting on knees or surrender position before they were executed. The investigators found logs of wood and chainsaws at the scene and no sign of the victims' guns (Post Today, 2021). After the investigation, the army commander of the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) expressed condolences to the victims' families, admitted the operational misconduct and guaranteed to provide compensation to the families (Thai PBS, 2019; Khaosod Online, 2019; Isranews, 2019).

Similarly, the case of a volunteer ranger shot a school bus on September 10, 2020, as reported by local news, that the bus was fired multiple times in front of the 4216th ranger outpost in the Yaring district of Pattani. Luckily, the bus was empty, and the driver was not injured. The investigation stated that the incident was a personal issue and had no association with the insurgency (Workpoint Today, 2020). Hence, the operational misconducts and errors resulted in a hostile perception and lack of trust among the local population towards the security forces, the security institution, and these special laws: the 2004 and 2006 Martial Law, the 2005 Emergency Decree and the 2008 Internal Security Act (Liow, 2006B; Chalk, 2007; Buranajaroenkij, 2019).

Since the outbreak of violence in 2004, the government has seriously taken the matter into the national security priority. The state launched security operation strategies and heavily patronised security forces to maintain order and control over the Deep South region (Buranajaroenkij, 2019; Chambers & Waitoolkai, 2019). The country has invested massive resources in the military, police and paramilitary (Von Feigenblatt, 2011). Between 2004 and 2018, the government allocated more than 290,900 million Baths for various development projects in the southern border provinces (Isranews Agency, 2017; Buranajaroenkij, 2019).

Under Thaksin Shinawatra's administration (2001-2006), several calls were made for adopting an Autonomous Region in the Deep South. The first vocal call was made in 2004 by Tun Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, a former Malaysian Prime Minister,



and later acknowledged by Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, a former Thailand Prime Minister. The National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), an independent organisation comprised of several individuals from security practitioners, politicians, civil society, and religious leaders to study a peaceful resolution to the Deep South insurgency crisis and deliver suggestion reports to the government, had proposed a proposal advocated a new form of decentralisation that would operate within the framework of Thailand's unitary state. The decentralisation was named Monthon Pattani (in Thai, the 'region of Pattani'). The proposal suggested an autonomous administrative unity that was legitimately allowed by the Central Government to have authoritative power over the Deep South's social, economic, educational and cultural affairs. Later, Dr Srimsompob Jitpiromsri, the director at the Deep South Watch (DSW) and a leading member of the Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD) Institute for Peace Studies reconstructed the proposal of the Monthon Pattani to an institution of a new ministry under the central government. The ministry would be allowed to have power overseeing the administration of socioeconomic and cultural affairs, excluding matters related to security (McCargo, 2010a).

Some analysts, such as Engvall and Andersson (2014), were convinced that the Autonomous Region of the south could provide an opportunity for the local people to pursue their local identity within the bounds of the Thai state and, therefore, would undermine their support for the armed uprising. Likewise, Von Feigenblatt (2011) also believed that an autonomous economic and administrative region in southern Thailand could create greater self-government with a robust economic development achievement. It would also lower the incidence of crime and violence, relieve fear among the people of losing their socio-cultural heritage, improve tourist destinations and promote employment in the region, such as the unique administrative regions of Hong Kong, Macau, and Ache.

Moreover, apart from the hardline policy, a more conciliative approach, such as peace dialogue, has been implemented to achieve peace in the Deep South. Under the past government administrations, several peace negotiations have been held between the Thai government and the insurgent representatives to find a solution to the Deep South insurgency. Most of the dialogues have been conducted abroad between the two parties. Since early 2020, a series has been held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The earliest meeting was held on January 20, 2020, between delegations from the Thai government

led by retired General Wanlop Rugsanaoh, a former National Security Council chief, and the insurgent team led by Anas Abdulrahman, the former head of political affairs of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN). The meeting was attended by Malaysian facilitator Abdul Rahim Noor and two specialists as observers. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the second meeting session was held virtually on March 4, 2020. Then, the third and the fourth sessions were face-to-face meetings resumed on January 11-12, 2022, and March 31 to April 1, 2022 (International Crisis Group, 2022; Bangkok Post, 2022a; Bangkok Post, 2022b).

Although the meetings between the two parties, government representative and the insurgent delegations, have been held on several occasions, however, all of them were bilateral meetings that excluded the local people and civil society from participating in those dialogues and being parts of the decision-making in the Deep South insurgency solution finding. The insurgent representatives have been demanding the Deep South Autonomous Region and political legitimacy from the government. However, whether the Autonomous Region is, without doubt, the demand of the Deep South people is yet to be imperially studied. In that case, the Autonomous Region can be the demand of the Deep South people or simply a political ambition of the insurgent groups to obtain power in the region.

Therefore, this study aimed to comparatively study the perceptions of the Narathiwat population from the two main religious communities, Buddhists and Muslims, on their views towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand. This study also aimed to serve as a voice channel for the people to express their views of trust towards the insurgent organisations and satisfaction with the government's past performance in dealing with the Deep South insurgency.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Several studies have been dedicated to explaining the causes of insurgency and the historical development of the Deep South Insurgency. However, the study on the local people's perceptions towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South needed a greater focus and discovery, especially with the methodology of field study that involved the local people on the ground in the data collection. Therefore, this research

acknowledged the dire need for social field research to provide the people's genuine perceptions of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South.

This study aimed to focus on Narathiwat people as the unit of analysis. There were various justifications for selecting Narathiwat as the only geographical location in research. Firstly, Narathiwat scored the highest number of violent casualties among the Deep South provinces. The Deep South Watch (2021) revealed that between January 2004 and March 2022, Narathiwat scored the highest number of violent occurrences with 7,769 cases, followed by Pattani (7,015 cases), Yala (5,909 cases) and Songkhla (792 cases) between the period. Therefore, this could insinuate the Narathiwat experienced the utmost damage from the insurgency crisis.

Then, statistical data published by the National Statistical Office (NSO) revealed that Narathiwat was ranked as the lowest monthly income per household in 2021 among all the Deep South provinces, with 17,512.02 Baths, while the average monthly income per household in Thailand was 27,352 Baths, and the Southern provinces' average were 26,621 Bath (NSO, 2022b).

Next, Narathiwat experienced the highest unemployment rate in 2021 among the Deep South provinces. Of Narathiwat's total labour force of 309,507 people, 28,643 were unemployed, equivalent to 9.25 per cent of the unemployment rate. The rate was relatively higher compared to the other Deep South provinces: Yala (1.52), Pattani (3.92) and Songkhla (3.31) per cent (NSO, 2022c).

After that, Narathiwat had 18.69 per cent of its population living below the poverty line, and the percentage was almost double the average percentage of people living below the poverty line in the Southern region (10.94 per cent) (NSO, 2022d).

Finally, the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) revealed that the Gross Provincial Product (GPP) of the top three provinces in 2020 were Rayong, Bangkok Metropolis and Prachinburi, with 813,734, 585,689 and 510,887 Bath per capita. Meanwhile, the GPP of Songkhla ranked at the 26<sup>th</sup> (140,562 Bath), Yala's at the 44<sup>th</sup> (102,821 Bath), and Pattani's at the 65<sup>th</sup> (75,779 Bath). However, Narathiwat's GPP performance was the lowest in the country and ranked 77<sup>th</sup> with only 55,417 Baths. The number was less than half of the Gross Regional Product (GRP) of the South region, which was 132,857 Baths per capita (NESDC, 2022)

Hence, these statistical data would have indicated that Narathiwat experienced more economic problems than the other Deep South provinces. Therefore, Benbourenane (2021) agreed that the insurgency had undermined the economic development of the three Far South provinces. The unresolved ethnic conflict has contributed little to the region's economic prospects.

Most importantly, this study aimed to focus solely on Narathiwat people because of constraints in time and staffing resources available for this study. The population size of Narathiwat (808,758 people, recorded in August 2021) was considerably large. With all limitations, the researcher focused solely on the Narathiwat population as a case study unit.

Additionally, this study examined the people's overall views towards the insurgent groups, as well as their trust and support for the organisations. Since the insurgent organisations maintained their profile silent and the members were operating secretly from the government, obtaining more findings about the insurgent groups from the Deep South people has been an excellent opportunity. Lastly, the findings had also provided insightful data to the researcher to assess the people's opinions towards the government's overall performance in the Deep South insurgency crisis, including their satisfaction and trust in the government.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- i. What are the differences in perceptions between the local Muslims and Buddhists towards the Autonomous Regions in Deep South provinces?
- ii. What are the levels of trust among local Muslims and Buddhists towards the insurgent organisations?
- iii. What are the levels of satisfaction among local Muslims and Buddhists towards the government's overall performance in handling the Deep South insurgency?

#### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The study aims at achieving the following objectives.

- i. To evaluate the differences in perceptions towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces between the local Muslims and Buddhists
- ii. To analyse the level of trust among the Deep South people towards the insurgent organisations
- iii. To explore the level of satisfaction among the Deep South people towards the government's overall performance in handling the Deep South insurgency.

#### **1.5 HYPOTHESES AND VARIABLE OF THE STUDY**

From the above research objectives, the underlying objective of this research was to study the influence of 'Religion' as a variable on the Deep South people's perceptions. The Deep South religious community was divided into two affiliations: Buddhism and Islam. In each research objective, this study aimed to investigate the differences in points of view between Buddhists and Muslims in Narathiwat on the establishment of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces and the differences in the level of trust in the insurgent organisations, as well as the level of satisfaction in the government towards its overall performance in the Deep South counterinsurgency management. The following were the hypotheses of this study.

- i. Muslim population in the Deep South provinces of Thailand showed more support for establishing the Autonomous Region than the Buddhist population did.
- ii. The insurgent organisations received more trust among the Muslim population in the Deep South of Thailand and less among the Buddhist population.
- iii. Buddhist population in the Deep South provinces of Thailand showed a higher level of satisfaction than the Muslim population with the government's performance in the Deep South counterinsurgency management.

Furthermore, this study hypothesised that religion was the Independent Variable, and the Deep South people's perceptions were the Dependent Variables. In other words, these perceptions were influenced by differences in religious beliefs, affiliations, and backgrounds, and these differences shaped these perceptions of the people differently.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to understand better the Narathiwat people's views towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand. This study's overall objective was to provide academic literature without intending to provoke the people's sentiment to struggle for the Autonomous Region or destabilise national security.

There were at least four reasons why this study was critical: firstly, there has been a proposal to establish the Pattani Metropolis: an Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand. Hence, this study focused on the Deep South people's perceptions and support for forming the Autonomous Region. The finding has contributed significant literature on the form of Governance of the Deep South region of Thailand through a systematic research field to derive the Deep South people's genuine political demand.

Secondly, a series of peace negotiations between the Thai government and the insurgent representatives were held in a pattern of private discussions that excluded the Deep South people and civil society from participating in the peace process. Therefore, this study looked forward to serving as another voice channel for the people to express their points of view on the proposal for the Deep South Autonomous Region.

Thirdly, the findings from this study have been expected to reflect on the Deep South public satisfaction with the government's performance in counterinsurgency management and their trust in the insurgent organisations. The finding of the former has provided an insightful evaluation of the Deep South public satisfaction with the government's performance. The government could benefit from the findings as input for future policy formulation. Moreover, the latter's finding has provided significant work in the literature on the Deep South public trust in the insurgent groups and the insightful examination of the public support and perceptions towards the insurgent movement.

Lastly, the study has provided literature on theoretical perspectives of the political Socialisation study. The research objectives, which aim to study the differences in the Buddhists' and Muslims' responses, would allow the researcher to examine the influence of religion as a variable on the respondents' answers.

## **1.7 CHAPTERISATION**

This study was divided into five main chapters. The first chapter has been designed to provide a comprehensive insight into this research. It started by introducing the conflict in the southern provinces of Thailand and the problem statement, followed by the research questions and objectives. The chapter also explained the hypothesis and variables of this research significance, ending with the dissertation chapters' outline.

The second chapter consisted of a literature review of the proposed study. The chapter is inaugurated with the literature on the proposal of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South Provinces of Thailand, followed by the Thai government's counterinsurgency approaches and the insurgent originations, i.e., their origins, aims and tactics. The chapter ended with a review of this research's theoretical framework and hypothesis.

The third chapter highlighted the methodology of this research. The chapter described the research design, unit of analysis, and population and sampling. The chapter described the data collection of this research, which consisted of the primary data, the primary available data, and the secondary data. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the data analysis and reliability of the survey questionnaire.

The fourth chapter primarily focused on this study's analysis and findings. The chapter presented results from data collection and statistical analysis and the findings. It began with the illustration of demographic data of the survey respondents and reliability analysis of the questionnaire items. It examined the result and provided a discussion of the findings to answer each research question, including the perceptions of the Narathiwat people towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces, their trust towards the insurgent organisations, and their satisfaction towards the government in managing the insurgency crisis. Finally, the chapter presented the hypothesis examination result of this research.

Lastly, the fifth chapter provides the conclusion of this research findings. The chapter recaptured the discussion of each research question. It also included critical analysis, reflections, and recommendations for future studies.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed to evaluate the perceptions of the Narathiwat people towards the Autonomous Region, their trust in the insurgent organisations and their satisfaction with the government's performance in counterinsurgency management. It was essential to review the literature that discussed the proposal for the Deep South's Autonomous Region of Thailand, the nature of the Deep South insurgent organisations, and the government's counterinsurgency approaches. This chapter also included reviews on a theoretical framework that helped the researcher to study the role of religion on the differences in perceptions between religious communities, Muslims, and Buddhists in the Deep South. To understand the differences in perception and how religion shaped their perceptions, a framework of Political Socialisation has been reviewed in this chapter.

#### **2.2 THE PROPOSAL FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF THE DEEP SOUTH PROVINCES OF THAILAND**

The Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD) (2011), an institute for Peace Studies, proposed a draft of the Pattani Metropolis: a special local administration for the Deep South provinces. The proposal's objectives were: to suggest a local form of governance that would be acceptable for the parties: mainly the government and the local Deep South people, to propose a form of governing system that would be able to integrate the governance with the unique cultural aspect of people in the Deep South region, and to ensure socio-economic fairness in the region. Before framing the proposal, the CSCD held 49 public forum meetings that were participated by 1,427 individuals, including Muslims and Buddhists from various career backgrounds, e.g., police, army, religious leaders, politicians, scholars, teachers, students, and former members of resistant groups. The CSCD also conducted personal interviews that took place between January 2010 and June 2011 as the essential inputs. The draft report cited

the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 2011 (Office of the Council of State, n.d.), as quoted below:

Section 1. Thailand is one and indivisible Kingdom (p, 2).

Section 281. Subject to section 1, the State shall give independence to local government organisations under the principle of self-government according to the will of the people in a locality and shall encourage local government organisations to become the principal public services provider and to participate in rendering solutions to any problem occurs within its area (p,103).

Any locality exhibiting a competence to self-govern shall have the right to be formed as a local government organisation as provided by law (p,103).

Section 283. Local government organisations have the powers and duties to maintain and provide, in general, public services for the benefit of the people in localities and shall enjoy autonomy in laying down policies, administration, provision of public services, personnel administration, and finance and shall have powers and duties, particularly on their own part with regard to the compliance with the development of Changwon and the country as a whole (p,103).

The CSCD viewed that the above-quoted constitution intended that the central government should support the people's political participation and encourage them to exercise their freedom to form a local governmental organisation independently from the central and provincial administrative organisations' intervention within the bound of indivisible territorial integrity. In other words, the central government should delegate its responsibilities and powers in decision-making and administration to the local administration, except in matters related to security, trial and adjudication, foreign affairs, and national finance. The Deep South local administration would reflect the minority identity that processes unique ethnic and cultural traits from the rest of Thailand. The CSCD proposal also brought the contemporary issues of the current administrative system that was inconsistent with the local people's culture and their way of life mentioned by the respondents, such as overlapping of jurisdictions and power among the current provincial, municipal and subdistrict administrations, absence of accommodation of the use the local language (Malayu) along with the Thai language as recognised official languages, inconsistent school curriculums to the need of the local people and few more (CSCD) (2011).

The CSCD proposal suggested a political structure of the Pattani Metropolis: a special local administration. The Metropolitan region shall consist of the three southmost provinces and the four districts of Songkhla. The proposed structure comprised several administrative bodies, including an executive branch under the leadership of an elected Governor, a legislative branch under the leadership of an elected council president, local administrative subdivisions, and a supervisory department consisting of representatives from the ministries. The proposal designed a participatory mechanism for the public to provide suggestions and feedback and keep the administration under inspection. Moreover, the proposal also outlined other administrative systems in detail, including the election system, sources of income, the jurisdiction of central, provincial and local administrations and its relationship with the central government (CSCD) (2011).

The proposal received feedback and criticisms from countrywide and foreign political analysts. McDermott (2013) critically viewed that the proposal received little support from the Central Government and the political elite in Bangkok. The proposal was considered perilous to the Deep South's stability and ideally perceived as a primary step toward outright independence of the region. The argument of those who were against the proposal was that the resistant groups would benefit from the autonomous power and use it to strengthen their groups and gain public support, fearing that this which would eventually further accelerate the instability of the deep South region. The scholar also admitted that if the Thai authorities had considered conceding a genuine Autonomous Region, perhaps akin to Aceh, the insurgents would pursue nothing less than full independence of the region. The decline to the proposal was to preserve the constitution's principle of being an "indivisible kingdom" and to protect its sovereignty and the Deep South's security. Therefore, the proposal failed to obtain the confidence and support of the majority of the Central Government, eventually leading to the notion of Pattani Metropolis being halted. However, in practice, Bangkok and Pattaya have already been granted the legitimacy to form autonomous administrative governments. Hence, granting autonomous power to any part of the country was not a political decision the Central Government had never made.

On the other hand, few scholars expressed a positive outlook towards the proposal. For instance, Engvall and Andersson (2014) were convinced that the Autonomous Region could allow the local people to pursue their local identity within

the bounds of the Thai state, and the proposal would undermine the locals' support for the armed uprising groups. The scholars were convinced that the core justification of the insurgent movement was nothing more than the sentiments of being marginalised, and unfairly treated by the state, resulting in socio-economic inequalities. Likewise, Von Feigenblatt (2011) believed that an autonomous economic and administrative region in Southern Thailand could create greater self-government with a robust economic development achievement. It would also lower the incidence of crime and violence, relieve fear among the people of losing their socio-cultural heritage, improve tourist destinations and promote employment in the region, such as the special administrative regions of Hong Kong, Macau, and Ache.

The central power has yet to approve the proposition of the Autonomous Region as a solution to the Deep South insurgency. However, the government preferred to rely on security as a primary measure to counterinsurgency and simmer down the crisis. Chambers, Jitpiromsri and Waitoolkiat (2019) complimented the government's success in maintaining the overall insurgency situation and the declining number of insurgent-violent casualties. However, the violence has remained enduring, and the movement has yet entirely been uprooted. The continuation of the armed conflict meant an increase in the number of casualties, more financial costs for security initiatives, and continuous foreign criticism for ineffective conflict management.

## **2.3 THAI GOVERNMENT'S WAY OF COUNTERINSURGENCY**

### **2.3.1 Insurgency**

Insurgency refers to a strategy employed by groups that could not achieve their political goals through conventional methods or a swift seizure of power. The insurgency has normally been adopted by those lacking the strength to pursue otherwise. Insurgency could be characterised by prolonged and uneven violence, uncertainty, the utilisation of complex environments like jungles, mountains, and urban areas, psychological warfare, and political mobilisation. These tactics were intended to safeguard the insurgents and ultimately shifted the balance of power in their favor. Insurgents might seek to overthrow the current government, which has at least some degree of legitimacy and support, and aimed to replace the existing one (revolutionary insurgency), or they might

have more specific objectives such as separation, autonomy, or the modification of specific policies (Metz, 2004).

Insurgencies exhibited variations across different periods and geographical locations but typically followed a similar life cycle. In the phase of organisation and consolidation, insurgent movements often lacked strength and underwent disorganisation. The primary focus at this stage was on survival. In some cases, there may be multiple competing insurgent groups within a nation, and in such instances, it became crucial for them to establish a reputation or "brand identity." This led to certain proto-insurgencies undertaking bold and sometimes reckless actions. Alternatively, some insurgents might choose an underground approach, remaining concealed for as long as possible while organising, recruiting, training, honing their skills, and amassing resources. Both mobilisation methods—through attention-grabbing actions or by building a clandestine organisation—have proven successful, particularly when the ruling regime failed to recognise the seriousness of the threat in its early stages (Metz, 2004).

### **2.3.2 Counterinsurgency**

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation [NATO] (2017) defined counterinsurgency as combined civilian and military endeavours undertaken to defeat an insurgency and address its underlying grievances. Counterinsurgents were tasked with not only implementing immediate measures to ensure the safety of the affected population and modify disruptive behaviours but also identifying the root causes of the unrest and dissatisfaction that fueled the insurgency. To eliminate these underlying sources of unrest, counterinsurgents engaged in long-term operations. This might involve enhancing governance, fostering economic development, or reinstating essential services. Accomplishing these objectives necessitated the involvement of several domestic and international institutions.

There were several literatures addressing the principles and approaches to counterinsurgency. NATO (2017) has explained different modules of principles that could be applied to counterinsurgency, for instance, Population-centric and Enemy-centric Counterinsurgency (COIN), NATO Principle of COIN, and paradoxes of COIN.

NATO also described the operational environment, operation design and planning of COIN, comprehensive implementation of COIN and assessment of COIN.

On the other hand, Wolf (1965) viewed that countering an ongoing insurgency required a detailed understanding of how the insurgent system operated in specific contexts, such as how inputs were converted into outputs? Who exercised command over personnel, equipment, funds and logistics? The scholar suggested several approaches of countermeasures that might be practical and some of them based on the experience and strategies employed by President Magsaysay in undertaking effective counterinsurgency against the Hukbalahap in the Philippines in the early 1950s: (1) reducing the availability of food supply to the insurgency, (2) reducing supply for recruits and making recruitment less attractive by rewarding for effective military actions against insurgents, (3), supplying information to the government and interfering with the supply of information to the insurgents, (4) closing contagious border (5) military discipline to avoid misbehaviour and abuse of power by the government military forces, and (6) economic and social improvement programs.

Although scholars would suggest several approaches to counterinsurgency, ultimately, states must understand the fundamental characteristics of each insurgency that took place in their territory and decide what approaches were the most practical to implement on the ground. Thailand also has its approach to counterinsurgency, which has been explained in the following section.

### **2.3.3 Thai Government's Way of Counterinsurgency**

Moore (2010) has studied the approaches of the Thai government's counterinsurgency (COIN) towards the Deep South insurgency. He identified three major pillars of COIN against the southern insurgents: i) security COIN measures, ii) Political COIN measures, and iii) economic COIN programs.

The Thai security COIN measures have successfully led more than a thousand insurgents to be arrested and/or executed and pressured hundreds more to request amnesty. The scholar discussed the roles of security bodies that carried out the operations, including the Royal Thai Army, police, Thahan Phran - local force unit to out-guerrilla, and Chor Ror Bor - village defence volunteers. Also, the roles of the

Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC) are to provide political and cultural intelligence, keep the government informed of public attitudes, and publish reports on peace progress, corruption, and ineffective civil servants to the government.

Next, political COIN measures covered the political inclusion and encouragement for Thai Melayu Muslims to step forward in national politics. The Thai government empowered the political integration through the education system through the Master Plan on Education for the Melayu Muslims (1977-1982), including revising the curriculum at public schools and using the Thai language in Islamic school institutions. Additionally, the government established diplomatic relations with rebel leaders to halt the insurgency. It built foreign governments, particularly Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, and requested their collaboration and mediation in the peace process.

Finally, the economic COIN programs aimed to lift the population out of poverty and improve their living standard through various projects, such as improving the education system, road-building projects, expanding electricity to rural areas, agricultural projects, job creation, and a few more in Thailand.

On the other hand, among the three mentioned COIN approaches, there was no doubt that security measures have been the primary hardline policies the government relied on. A plethora of literature on government COIN measures has and analysed the security operations and discussed the aftermath of the operations associated with human rights violation concerns.

Buranajoenkij (2019) has illustrated that a militarism paradigm primarily drove the government's peacebuilding agenda. These policies and security operations have shown menaces and abuses of human rights. The scholar has cited a report of the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in 2009, revealing that the government's "sweeping operations" into suspected villages for harbouring insurgents have resulted in hundreds of local men being detained for four months in re-education camps operated by the military. The detention period was extended far beyond what was permitted in the Emergency Decree. Moreover, the scholar cited a report published by the 2009 Amnesty International, which disclosed detainee physical abuse cases while interrogating suspects. Since the escalation of the insurgency, the government has introduced a series of special security laws to counter the situation.

Moreover, counterinsurgency management has diverted a large amount of the national budget in mobilising a large number of security personnel and weaponry. Between 2004 and 2018, the total allocation to the unrest southern border provinces was 290,901.6 million Bath through the Internal Security Operation Command (ISOC) and the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC). Similarly, the unrest has been used as an excuse to increase the military budget, as viewed by Von Feigenblatt (2011). For instance, the budget allocated in 2011 to the southern security projects had soared by more than 300 per cent from its early five years.

McCargo (2006a) and (2006b) similarly discussed the Deep South policies during the Thaksin administration (2001-2006) and the conflict re-escalation in 2004. The scholar argued that Thaksin's hardline approaches had intensified the crisis. His hawkish approaches were used to mobilise hatred among the majority of Buddhist chauvinism and to gain electoral popularity for his leadership style, especially in the Northern region. The imposition of Martial Law, initially aimed at controlling the situation, has opened further tragedies, such as the Tak Bai massacre and Krue Se Mosque in 2004 alone. King Bhumibol was concerned about the situation, and Thaksin was eventually summoned to the palace by his majesty for advice. The King encouraged the government to use the principles of Accessibility, Understanding, and Development.

Likewise, Marks (2018) criticised the conduct of security forces engaged in COIN, which appeared to have operational shortcomings and created long-term strategic vulnerability: the absence of a moving forward solution as the state prioritised the military approach above others. Since the state wanted to keep the insurgency as a domestic conflict, minimal external intervention was allowed for third parties in the peace-building.

Chalermripinyorat (2020) characterised Thailand's conflict management mode as "illiberal peace-building" between 2004 and 2012. The scholar illustrated a few associated features of the management style, such as prioritising security and stability over human rights, accountability, and social inclusion. The military has largely controlled the direction of conflict management. The residents in the Deep South region have lived for many years under a 'state of exception', whereby the Martial Law and Emergency Decree have curtailed their rights and liberties. The Emergency Law allowed the military to search and arrest suspects without a warrant.



Moreover, the limitation of international mediation in the peace-building process has been listed as another feature of Thai illiberal peace-building. The authorities (particularly the foreign ministry and the military) wanted the conflict to be seen as an ‘internal affair’ to forestall international intervention, as they feared the escalation of the issue to the international arena would pave the way for secession. The military has often exemplified the United Nations (UN) intervention opened the door to the secession of East Timor from Indonesia.

Yingluck administration (2011-2014) showed that the Southern peace process was significantly more liberal under the elected government. First, it was the first time the government showed a willingness to discuss political solutions with the conflict party through formalised peace negotiations. Second, it significantly reduced the number of violent incidences in the conflict region. Since 2014, the casualty has shown a downward trend. The positive change has more to do with the BRN’s political attempt to win legitimacy in the eyes of various international communities. Last, the government had encouraged the clandestine BRN to send representatives to reveal itself publicly for the first time. Also, the National Security Council (NSC), Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC), the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) and the foreign minister collectively collaborated to ensure the talks could move forward.

Wheeler and Chambers (2019), McCrgo (2014) and Chalernsripinyorat (2020) critically studied the three meeting rounds in 2013 peace dialogues held in March, April, and June between representatives from the Thai government (Team A represented by Lt.Gen. Paradorn Pattanatabut) and the BRN (Team B represented by Hassan Taib). The dialogues were facilitated by an appointed Malaysian facilitator, Ahmad Zamzamin bin Hashim, a former chief of the Malaysian Prime Minister’s Office’s Research Department – the Malaysian government’s intelligence unit. The scholars viewed the initiatives as not capturing seriousness from both sides, particularly the lack of long-term planning and strategy. Team A comprised generals and police without high-ranking figures, e.g., the minister, permanent secretary, or top army commander, attended. The team primarily focused on military tactics as the primary conflict management approach. The group appeared to be reactive rather than leading the dialogue. Therefore, the scholar suggested that the team needed to broaden their

perspectives, and the crisis required a whole range of actors in the country to sit at the meeting table to find solutions.

Moreover, Team B largely consisted of the National Revolutionary Front (BRN) representatives, only one representative from the National Revolutionary Front - Ulama (BRN-Ulama), and the Patani United Liberation Organisation (PULO). The team admitted that they were 'not prepared' for the meeting. After the meetings, the BRN made its five demands from the Thai government and posted the video via YouTube. The group requested the following:

- i. Recognition of BRN as representatives of the Patani people
- ii. Appointment of Malaysia as a mediator rather than a facilitator
- iii. Involvement of international actors, such as ASEAN countries, OIC and NGOs, in the peace-finding process
- iv. Acknowledgement of the existence of the Patani Melayu nation and its sovereignty
- v. Release all imprisoned separatists.

A written clarification of the five demands was later delivered to the Thai dialogue team through the facilitator in September 2013 after being requested by Team A, particularly the demand for the acknowledgement of Pattani sovereignty. The document stated that the BRN would not demand territorial secession from Thailand but call for cultural and territorial autonomy.

Zamzamin, the Malaysian facilitator, told the scholars that the willingness of the insurgent preventatives to collaborate with the Thai team caused outrage and disagreement among the hardline BRN members and its supporters for abandoning the independence. The agreement has shifted their demand for independence from Thailand to the Autonomous Region within the state territory. Among the BRN members, one-third of the members supported the dialogues, others strongly disagreed, and the remaining remained neutral to this new initiative. Other insurgent groups also made their stands on this major shift in political objectives and peace dialogues. Hence, the circumstances of uniformity among the different insurgent groups did not attract trust from the Government Team as they were afraid that future negotiation deals would not receive acknowledgement and respect among them, and that would not bring any

differences. In the meantime, the BRN team was only willing to pursue dialogue if the state endorsed its five demands. Unfortunately, the rising political turmoil in Bangkok forced the Yingluck government to dissolve the parliament in December 2013, which halted the upcoming peace dialogue.

#### **2.4 THE NATURE OF THE DEEP SOUTH INSURGENT ORGANISATIONS**

A plethora of the existing literature has been dedicated to studying the characters of the insurgent groups, including their origins, aims and operational tactics. For instance, Arismunnandar, Afriantoni, and Asmuni (2019) have provided an insightful illustration of the rise of the resistance movement against the Thai central government in the historical narrative. The scholars' historical discussion showed that the Patani Kingdom, which Melayu Muslims predominantly inhabited (currently located in Yala, Pattani Narathiwat and part of Songkhla), was forcefully taken over by the Siam Kingdom in November 1786. After the conquest, the local Patani population was compelled to undergo a cultural assimilation policy of the Thai government called the Thaification Program, advocated by King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V, reigned 1868–1910) to bring integration and an effective administrative system. The program was enforced with mandatory use of the Thai language, prohibition of the use of the Melayu language, nationalisation of Thai culture, prohibition of storing Pattani history books, and forced registration of Islamic schools under the government to regulate their curriculum. The scholars explained that the program had caused the emergence of insurgent movements in the Southern region. The program had contributed a little significant positive impact on integration and ethnic reconciliation between minority Melayu Muslims and majority Thai Buddhists. The Melayu Muslims regarded their relationship with the Thai government as oppressive (invaders) and their status as the oppressed (colonised) rather than citizens of the state.

The existence of history was the core justifiable reason for the separatism and the opposition to the Thai central government. The history would have proved that the loss of Patani independence to Siam through force led to the abuse and exploitation of religious autonomy, ethnic identity, and human rights. The Thai authority saw the violence as a separatist threat to national stability and sovereignty, while the Melayu Muslims justified the resistance as a response to cultural and ethnic survival (McCargo,

2010). Several armed and non-armed groups in the region emerged roughly during World War II, calling for independence and carrying out various levels of activities over decades.

After the rise of the resistance movement, security reform in the southern region transpired between 1980 and 1988 under the administration of Prime Minister Gen. Prem Tinsulanonda. The reforms were inspired by the United States COIN doctrine, which called for eliminating military abuse, uprooting the underlying causes of the insurgency, giving primacy to a political solution, and offering humanitarian assistance (Chambers & Waitoolkiat, 2019). Prem better understood the local grievances and policy identity than his predecessors. He sought to improve security institutions and build trust with moderate local leaders. His new strategy, the so-called “Tai Rom Yen” (peace for the South), was introduced to emphasise political participation and integration of local Muslims, as well as initiatives to promote socio-economic quality through various economic development and infrastructure (Sukrakaj & Khasem, 2019). Prem believed that to build trust, the Thai government needed to highlight the issue of local grievances in the form of disparities, such as economic opportunity and infrastructure developments between the rural areas in the South and the other parts of the country. To improve the efficiency of the southern region’s security, he established the joint participation of representatives from the military, civil and police sectors – the so-called “Pullaruen Tamruad Thahan 43” (Civil Police, Military 43, or called Task Force CPM 43) and the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC) (Chambers & Waitoolkiat, 2019). As a result, Prem’s policy positively impacted the overall Deep South crisis and decelerated the insurgency violence.

During the administration of Chavalit Yongchaiyudh (1996-1997), his policy toward the Deep South, named “Harapan Baru” (New Hope), emphasised the elevating life standard of the people, building trust, unity and harmony in local community and national levels, accommodating the cultural values of the people and encouraging them to participate in solving the conflict (Chaijarernwattana, Kajonbun, Siammai & Jongrungronth, 2006). Hence, overall, this accommodating style of the policy of the Deep South had led to substantial calm between the 1980s and 1990s. However, the period of Thaksin Shinawatra's government between 2001 and 2006 marked a new dynamic wave and rapid escalation of the South insurgency.

Fathurachmi (2014), Engvall and Andersson (2014) and Chambers, Jitpiromsir and Waitoolkiat (2019) have also explained that the contemporary insurgency has been shaped by many complex factors, transforming it into becoming more sophisticated than the old version of the separatist movement during the 1940s. The old insurgency era was merely a response to the assimilation policy enforced by the Thai authorities and the struggle for independence to ensure Malayu's ethnoreligious survival. However, the contemporary factors were multi-faceted: a concoction of local discontent over human rights violations and intimidations by the state security forces, discrimination and corruption of Thai bureaucrats, ethnoreligious differences, socio-economic grievances, political factors, criminality and growing Muslim militarism in the region, all these can potentially contribute to the complexity of the contemporary militarism.

The term “fighting with ghost” has a common metaphor used to describe the struggle of the Thai military and police against the insurgents’ guerrilla tactics with a confidential organisational basis. In this regard, Askew (2010a) used the term in his article to delineate the problematic, elusive, and multifaceted issues of the ongoing violent southern crisis faced by Thai security institutions. The perpetrators and their objectives were often unclear in most violent incidents. The scholar argued that the term “insurgency” was inadequate to define the totality of violence's motive. He believed that other opportunistic violent factors must be incorporated into the current movement of the insurgent events, such as the agglomeration of local political rivalries and criminals, that stimulated the insurgent aggression and, exploited the chaotic situation and weakened the enforcement structure of the region.

The insurgent groups were known for inter and intra-fractionalisation. The National Revolutionary Front (Barisan Revolusi Nasional, BRN) was established in 1960 as a reactionary movement to the *Thaisification*, which included the “Educational Improvement Program” of the government, a reform known as an effort to assimilate the Melayu locals through compulsory registration of Islamic schools under the state supervision and integration of a secular curriculum into the schools. The organisation's founder was Ustaz Abdul Karim Hassan, who founded it in March 1960 (Liow, 2006).

Nevertheless, the largest insurgent organisation known for having a broad military base both locally and overseas during the 1970s and the 1980s was the Bertubuhan Pembebasan Pattani Bersatu (Patani United Liberation Organisation or

PULO). The group was established in 1968 by Kabir Abdul Rahman (Alias Tengku Bira Kotanila) (Liow, 2006).

Gilguin (2002) viewed comparing the political positions of the PULO and BRN was difficult. The objectives and methods of operations varied at different times according to the leadership of that period. Moreover, in the 1980s, the BRN and PULO fractured into new sub-organisations. The former split into three factors: BRN-Ulama: renounced violent tactics and focused on religious activities, BRN-Congress: solely focused on military operations, and BRN-Coordinate: comprehensively engaged in both political activities and military operations (Duntara, 2010). The PULO emphasised large attacks using indiscriminate methods of violence, while the New PULO specialised in low-level attacks on military targets. In 1997, the PULO, New PULO and BRN-Coordinate formed a tactics alliance known as United Front for the Independence of Pattani (Bersatu) and undertook a campaign targeting State officials (Zawacki, 2013). It was widely believed that the BRN-Coordinate was responsible for most violence, while the PULO was also behind some attacks (McDermott, 2013).

The BRN-Coordinate was built by mobilising Youth (Permuda) with a loose network of cadres, mostly religious teachers, with no overall leadership. The schoolteachers were the main recruiting forces in persuading and indoctrinating students into joining the movement. It has been discovered that roughly eighteen schools were incubators of the insurgency. Teachers at the schools have been apprehended along with evidence, such as weapons, bomb-making materials and instructional videos (Abuza, 2006; Funston, 2008). During an interview, a former separatist leader characterised the BRN-Coordinate as a ‘franchise’ and a ‘loose coalition of men’ without a clear hierarchy and leader. Hence, it was more likely that the BRN-Coordinate structured itself over the past decade into a decentralised and independent network from a well-structured PULO organisation. From the experience that happened to Haji Sulong<sup>1</sup>, being open and publicly announcing the organisation's leadership and operations might lead them to be targeted by the government. The government has not shown goodwill towards the resistant movement since its early period. Hence, they would be more secure in operating clandestinely from the

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<sup>1</sup> Haji Sulong Abdulkadir al-Fatani, the symbol of the Deep South reformist and separatist movement, the chairman of Pattani Provincial Islamic Council and the founder of the Pattani People's Movement (PPM). He was jailed in 1948 along with his collages for treason and released in 1952. He was reported missing on August 1954.

government radar. Egharevba and Iruonagbe (2015) described that the fundamental survival tactic of the insurgents was that they must be able to hide from the government. If the government forces have intelligence on their names and locations, they would be easily destroyed or captured.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, the PULO and BRN-Coordinate essentially conducted insurgency in rural areas, where armed wings located in the jungles primarily carried out hit-and-run guerilla tactics against the Thai security forces. They stationed and conducted training in dense hillside jungles, which often located their camps out of reach of the Thai security forces. Nevertheless, the insurgent outposts were only partially isolated from the community for their convenience in receiving logistical support from the community. Moreover, the funding was assumed to come from the diasporas living abroad and was channelled through their representatives and offices in northern Malaysia (Pathan & Liow, 2010).

By the late 1990s, the BRN and PULO were seen as the ‘old guard’ or ‘elders’ who formed the backbone of the new generation of insurgents. None can ascertain their role and influence over the current generation. Old-guard insurgents themselves admitted that the scale of the recent civil conflict exceeded their control (McDermott, 2013).

Many old guards have passed down their knowledge and provided operational and tactical guidelines to the younger generation. The younger inherited knowledge about weapon handling, bomb-making, and tactic manoeuvres. Hence, there was no doubt that the contemporary insurgents have improved their military knowledge. The operations were noticeably more well-planned, and the attacks were more daring and audacious (Pathan & Liow, 2010; Askew, 2010a).

## **2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

One of the main objectives of this research was to evaluate people’s perceptions towards the autonomous region of the Deep South provinces. The contemporary southern insurgency has evolved from the old version in the 1960s. The traditional insurgency’s root cause was straightforward and less complicated compared to this contemporary. In the early time of the insurgency, the resistant movement emerged as a response to the

assimilation policy under the process called Thaisification introduced by Thai authorities (Kanchanawan, 2011; Bianco, 2019). The BRN was founded in 1963 following the forced registration of traditional religious boarding schools (Pondok) and the imposition of a secular curriculum education (Zawacki, 2013). The essence of the assimilation policy was to undermine the Melayu people's ethno-religious recognition through various means, such as the mandatory use of the Thai language, prohibition of the use of the Melayu language, abolition of Islamic social and legal structure, and nationalisation of Thai culture in the region.

However, in this contemporary age, Chambers, Jitpiromsir and Waitoolkiat (2019) believed that there were a large number of contributing factors playing a role in perpetuating the insurgency and transforming the insurgency into a more multifaceted situation, such as the presence of ethno-religious differences, socio-economic grievances, political factors, criminality and growing Muslim militarism in the region. Similarly, Boonpunth (2014) has addressed several causes of the modern insurgency, including ethnoreligious diversities, economic marginalisation, and political and social issues.

Noticeably, the ethnoreligious factor was a significant variable in the rise of the insurgency and its continuation to the present day. A similar factor of the insurgency from the early days to the present was to pursue some level of independent/autonomous power and aim to replace the existing government authority that would accommodate their ethnic-religious identities.

Since this research was a perceptual study, the theoretical framework has guided this research to understand the role of ethno-religious factors on the local people's perceptions towards the Autonomous Region, the levels of trust towards the insurgent organisations and the satisfaction towards the government in handling the Deep South insurgency.

### **2.5.1 Political Socialisation**

In this research, the Political Socialisation theory framework has been applied to understand the influence of ethno-religious factors on Narathiwat people's perceptions of the Autonomous Region. As Niemi and Sobieszek (1997) have socialisation



discussed, political socialisation work's birth can be traced in several directions. Some intellectual origins can be found in education research, particularly studies in the 1920s and early 1930s about formal aspects of civic training by Merriam. Between the 1930s and 1950s, several studies were concerned with political attitudes, such as children's perceptions of social class and race by Hollingshead in 1949 and Stevenson and Stuart in 1958. Later, more studies were undertaken during World War II and after, such as those attempting to specify inter-nation personality differences and understand people's developmental origins by Inkeles and Levinson in 1969.

The theory reached its golden era in the 1970s. During the period, several empirical studies have investigated how people learnt about government and developed their political orientations, including a heavy focus on developing partisan identification, trust in government institutions and actors, and voting. There was a significant shift in the focus of political science research to political behaviour and learning that occurred among preadults (Niemi & Sobieszek, 1997). The studies in this early period were driven by two assumptions: 1) what was learned earliest in life served as a valuable basis for future attitudes and behaviours, and 2) attitudes and behaviours acquired during childhood remained unchanged in later life (Neundorf & Smets, 2015).

However, the field had declined by the end of the 1970s due to the heavy reliance on survey methodologies to study complicated relationships and produced constrained results. The increasing popularity of new statistical methods and models developed during the 1980s allowed political socialisation researchers to analyse change over time in innovative approaches (Kudrnac, 2015). However, the field of political socialisation has recently gained more popularity. One primary factor for this renewed interest was the research's focus on civic and political participation (Petrovic, Stekelenburh & Klandermans (2014).

Hong and Ling (2017) defined Political socialisation as the learning process in which individuals absorb various political attitudes, values, and actions from their surroundings. It is "... a lifelong process... (of) attitudes, beliefs, values, norms, and behaviours we learn in childhood persist and influence later views and behaviour" (Kudrnac, 2015, p. 605). Olasupo (2015, p.78) defined "Political socialisation as the process by which political culture is transmitted in a given society. It occurs at both the individual and community level, and it extends beyond acquiring political culture to encompass learning more sophisticated political ideas and orientations". Hence,

political socialisation is what one acquires at an early age and carries over and significantly shapes his/her adult political orientations and participation later in life (Somit & Peterson, 1987). Moreover, Schwarzer (2011, p. 2) added that political socialisation is “a learning process through which the individual learns political attitudes and behaviours from generation to generation influenced by political socialisation agents”. Hence, a set of political attitudes and behaviours can be inherited and passed down from one generation to the next.

Since individuals’ early childhood, though communication with parents and peers and school engagement, have shaped their perceptions about the government and their political orientations. The period between the age of fourteen and the mid-twenties has received more attention from political researchers who find an interest in the process of political socialisation due to two premises: the period is the time during which youths’ psychological and social change, and the years society traditionally attempts to educate youth for citizen participation (Niemi, 1995). Those groups and institutions contributing to political socialisation are known as the agents of socialisation (Olasupo, 2015). These sources affect the development of individuals’ political values and attitudes differently, but they all contribute to their understanding of and orientations of politics. Political attitudes and behaviour might change throughout individuals’ lives, and possibly much of early learning in childhood tends to be relatively consistent throughout life, as Hyman (1959) believed that individuals’ political attitudes are already formed in their pre-adolescent years.

### **2.5.2 Types of Political Socialisation**

Onkarappa (2021) states that political Socialisation can be classified into two following types:

- i. Direct or Manifest political Socialisation- it is the process in which the content of directly transmitted information, value and feelings is political in nature. An individual, under the influence of agents of political socialisation, learns explicitly about the patterns and functions of the government and the ideology of political parties. As children grow, school becomes an influential agent in transmitting political values, for instance, thought civic curriculums about the

political system, civil rights and duties, and state policy all impact the direct political Socialisation of school children.

- ii. Latent or indirect political socialisation- is the process through which information, value, and feeling are not transmitted directly in a political nature. The process begins with non-political objects and orientations and eventually internalises into political orientation, such as interpersonal communication of information and participation in school politics, strengthening the ground for future political roles.

### **2.5.3 Data Design in Political Socialisation Research**

Political socialisation studies aimed to discover an answer to the research questions primarily: when do people acquire a set of knowledge, opinions, attitudes, skills and political behaviours, and how to do those acquisitions impact, influence and have a relationship with political organisations and political system of their own country and others (Dekker, 1991).

Kudrnac (2015) viewed that there were three ways to undertake political socialisation research: 1) (quasi) experiments, 2) panel survey, and 3) cross-sectional approaches. The following part briefly summarises the strengths and weaknesses of each data design method.

#### ***2.5.3.1 (Quasi) Experiments***

(Quasi) experiments are potentially powerful tools to study causality. Researchers apply this approach to identify independent and independent variables and manipulate the independent variables to see the effects under the controlled settings. The approach allows the researchers to declare a causal relationship between the two types of variables. However, the approaches have a number of features that make them a less attractive option for political socialisation researchers. As political socialisation is naturally a lifelong process of learning, therefore, the major drawback of applying (quasi) experiments is their short-term orientation; they usually help analyse short-term effects, and it is virtually impractical to undertake an experiment to study individuals in the long-term matters under the controlled conditions over a long period.

### ***2.5.3.2 Panel Survey Approaches***

Among the three approaches viewed by Kudrnac, panel studies are commonly employed and most suited for political socialisation research. The core characteristic of the panel survey approach is that a group of surveyed respondents were measured repeatedly in at least two waves. The rationale is to observe and analyse the development trajectories of individuals over their lifetime. The approach allows the researchers to study the patterns of casual relationships over a more extended period and compare the development of respondents' answers in the previous waves. For instance, in a study of political party participation, during the first wave survey, respondents can be asked if they are planning to join a party membership in the next year.

Consequently, in the next wave of the survey, the researchers could measure if the respondents actually joined a political party and study the reasons why the respondents have (not) become party members. Hence, the interviewer can study the development of respondents' political behaviours and factors that influence them. Moreover, Neundorf and Smets (2015) also viewed the multi-wave panel studies that study the same individuals over time as a more appropriate approach to answer attitudinal and behavioural dynamics questions than the cross-sectional method.

### ***2.5.3.3 Cross-Sectional***

Cross-sectional data is relatively easy to gather and sufficient for most political behaviour analyses. However, the approach is not suitable to reflect the research questions that are longitudinal in nature. The cross-sectional design constrains the studies that focus on the development of political attitudes in different stages or the influence of agents of political socialisation on children. The approach offers no means of analyzing the progress of individuals' political socialisation and thwarts the researchers from disentangling the effect of age, cohort, and time. For instance, studies on political trust, party attachment, or preferences could have been influenced by political situations and/or social circumstances at different times of an individual's lifetime.

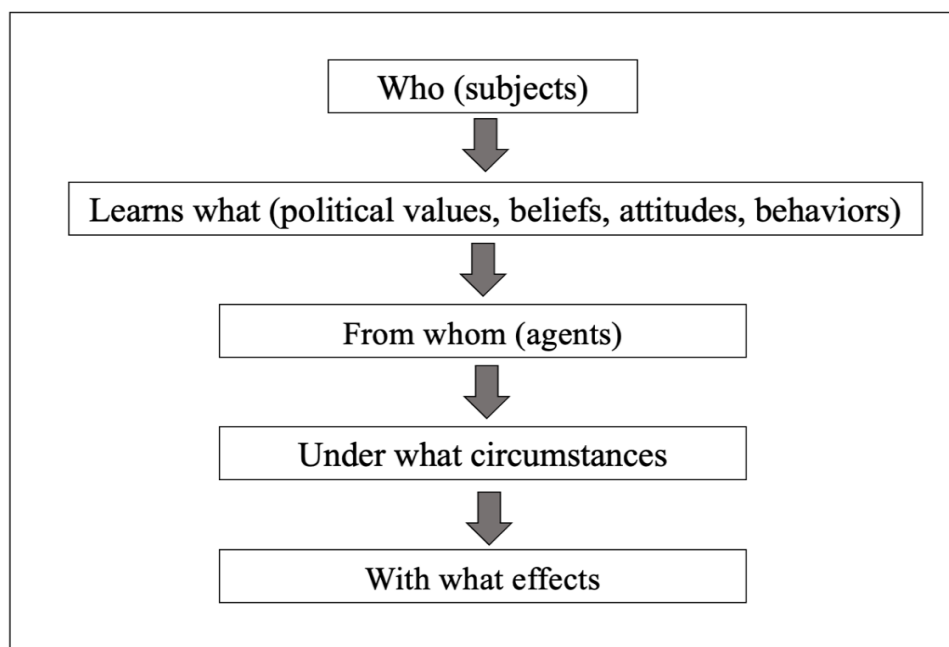
The cross-sectional approach has been applied in this research methodology due to its dominant core characteristics, which require fewer financial costs and are time-consuming. Dekker (1991) acknowledged that the questionnaire is the most often used to obtain data in political socialisation research. The method has the strengths of being relatively cheap, and the data collected can be processed relatively quickly. Additionally, the suggestion directed towards the political socialisation research to rely on the questionnaire technique as the data collection can be strengthened with additional methods: a questionnaire with open-ended questions, in-depth interviews, systematic observation, experimental research and/or autobiographical storytelling.

#### **2.5.4 Agents of Political Socialisation**

Various scholars suggested numerous agents of political socialisation. Most of them have listed comparable agencies, for instance: i) school, family, organisations, peer groups and media (Domonko, 2014): ii) education, family, media/computer technology, gender, region, religious orientations, and generations (German, Dekker, Sünker & Song, 2014): iii) laws, media, religion, education, their gender (Olasupo, 2015): iv) family, educational system; school, Church (viewed as a religious institution), Mass communication media, peers; friends, employment system, and political system (Dekker (1991): v) educational opportunities, socio-economic development, sex, age, religion and media exposure (Onkarappa, 2021): and vi) religious institutions, military, workplace, entertainment organisations, interest groups, political organisations, social clubs, sports, and online communities (Owen, 2008). Noticeably, religion (or a religious institution, by some scholars) has been seen as a commonly listed political socialisation agent by many scholars. The agent appeared to be a critical and standard variable in discussing political socialisation. Therefore, it was intriguing for this research to study the influence of religion on Narathiwat people's perceptions in the Autonomous Region, their trust in the insurgent organisations, and their satisfaction with the government counterinsurgency management.

The following is the model representing the process of political socialisation as suggested by Greenstein (1969).

Figure 2.1 Greenstein Model of Political Socialisation



Greenstein explained that socialisation is a one-way process in which youths understand values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours about politics through communication with adults under different circumstances, which later affects youths' political words.

### **2.5.5 Religion as Agents of Political Socialisation**

This section discussed existing literature on the study of religion as an agent of political socialisation on individuals. Pearson-Merkowitz and Gimpel (2009) viewed that several political socialisation research has been undertaken on youths' religious beliefs, affiliations, and behaviour between the late 1970s and 1980s: for instance, studies by Wuthnow (1976), Nelson and Privin (1980), Cornwall (1988). Moreover, in the early 2000s, research on the role of religion in teenagers' political behaviours captured more attention, such as Regnerus, Smith and Fritsch (2003), Smith (2003), and Bartkowski (2007). This research has found several essential and relatively consistent findings and

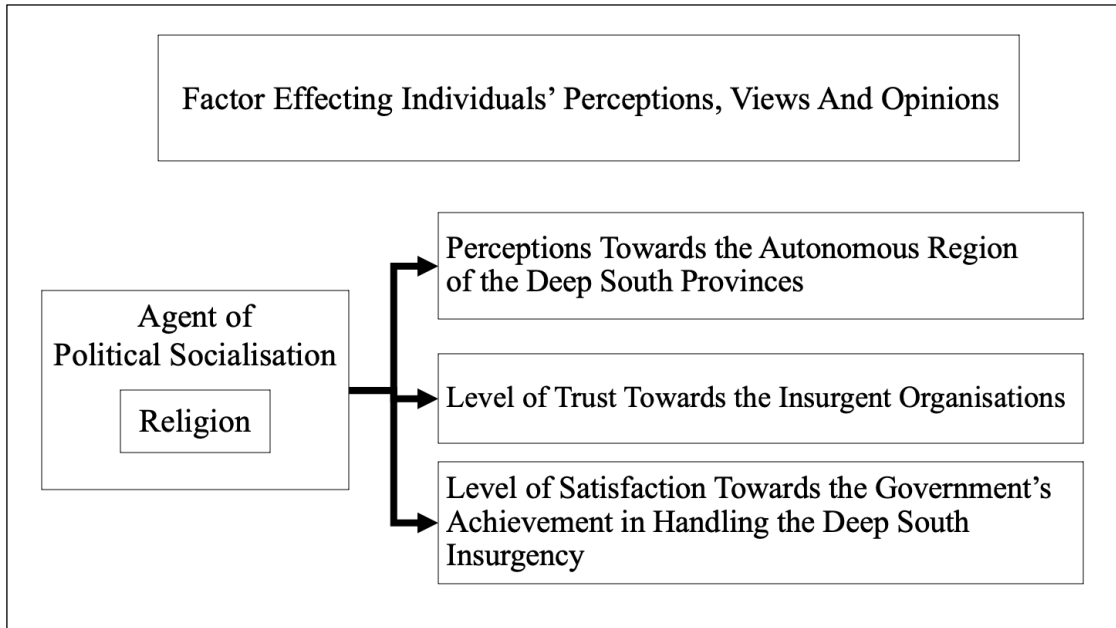
some contrasting the assumptions of increasing secularisation among contemporary youth.

Smith and Delton (2005) cited findings from the National Survey of Youth and Religion of 2002-2003 conducted on American youth (13-17 years old). The findings showed that religiously active youths tended to express moral compassion, participate in community organisations, and commit to justice than the surveyed participants who were identified as nonreligious youths. Moreover, Pearson-Merkowitz and Gimpel (2009) stated that teens who attended Church services every week were more tolerant than those who never attended or attended only occasionally. The scholars reviewed several works of literature on religion's role in individuals' opinion formation and political participation. For instance, in recent years, religious beliefs have been cited as a critical foundation for economic values (Baker & Carman, 2000; Wald & Calhoun-Brown, 2007), foreign policy perceptions (Mayer, 2004; Guth, Green, Kellstedt & Smidh, 2005), opinions about “social” issues such as abortion, women’s rights, prayer in school, homosexual unions and sex education (Wuthnow, 1988; Hunter, 1991; Davis & Robinson, 1996; Dimaggio, Evans, & Bryson, 1996; Layman, 2001; Wilcox & Norrander, 2002; Weisberg, 2005).

Religious orientations also created some level of uniformity in people's political opinions and behaviours. De Landtsheer et al. (2014) revealed that more liberal religious orientations produced more liberal political thought, while more conservative religious teachings had more conservative political thought. Hence, these existing works of literature implied that religious institutions shaped individuals’ behaviours and perceptions about politics and social issues.

The following Figure 2.2 displays the research's theoretical framework, illustrating the relationship between ‘religion’ and individuals’ perceptions.

Figure 2.2 Theoretical Framework of the Research



In the above figure, the independent variable was 'Religion'; which acted as an agent of political socialisation meanwhile "Perceptions Towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South Provinces", 'Level of Trust Towards the Insurgent Organisations', and "Level of Satisfaction Towards the Government's Achievement in Handling the Deep South Insurgency" were hypothesised as the dependent variables. Therefore, the perceptions, level of trust and satisfaction were dependent, shaped and affected by the individuals' childhood experience and exposure to their religions through various means, such as communication with adults and religious institutions. The respondents' differences in religious background, Islam and Buddhism, were hypothesised to shape and affect their perceptions of the three variables differently.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The research methodology applied to this study has been elaborated in this chapter. This research was a perceptual study of Narathiwat people towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand, their trust in the insurgent organisations, and their satisfaction with the government's counterinsurgency management. Hence, the chapter has been divided into six sections: Research Design, Unit of Analysis, Population and Sampling, Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Reliability.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research was a questionnaire survey type; hence, a quantitative data analysis technique in assessing the participants' perceptions has been implemented through objective measures and numerical analysis of the collected data. Hence, this research was an opinion-based survey to evaluate Narathiwat people's perceptions towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand, the level of trust in the insurgent organisations, and the level of satisfaction with the government's counterinsurgency management.

#### **3.3 UNIT OF ANALYSIS**

In this study, the unit of analysis was the individuals living in Narathiwat province from all its districts. The individuals came from demographically different categories of age, gender, religion, and academic background. Moreover, the independent variable this study aimed to measure in each research question was 'Religion' as an agent of political socialisation. The Deep South people's religious division has only two religious communities: Buddhism and Islam. This study intended to focus on Narathiwat people as the unit of analysis and particularly examined their religious affiliations to see how

'Religion' influenced their perceptions. From the responses of the unit analysis, this study was able to analyse the effect of 'religion' on differences in their responses.

### **3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

As a part of the research's data collection methodology, the researcher has employed a convenient quota sampling technique, which has been assumed to be the most suitable technique to produce a comparative study between Muslims' and Buddhists' perceptions. According to Mark and Janina (2001), the quota sampling technique in selecting the sample was designed to make the researcher's convenience sample more representative and guarantee that the sample matched the population. The quota sampling technique was known for being a low-cost and less time-consuming process than random sampling. Moreover, Sekaran and Bougie (2015) viewed the quota sampling technique as highly appropriate and practical to be applied in the population where minority participation in a study was critical to be included. However, the data derived from this technique could not be generalisable to the population.

The total population of Narathiwat province, as recorded by the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center in August 2021, was 808,758 people. The population comprised 82 per cent Muslims, 17 per cent Buddhists, and 1 per cent of other religious followers (Narathiwat Provincial Cultural Office, 2020). The province was divided into thirteen districts, namely Narathiwat, Tak Bai, Bacho, Yi-ngo, Ra-ngea, Rueso, Si Sakhon, Waeng, Sukhirin, Su-ngai Kolok, Su-ngai Padi, Chanea, and Cho-airong.

The survey questionnaire used a quota sampling technique to select the respondents based on two religious affiliations: Islam and Buddhism, and disregarded the small remaining percentage of other religious groups. In determining the sample size of this questionnaire, the study applied the sample size formula acknowledged by Sekaran & Bougie (2016) as the total number of populations between 75,000 and 1,000,000 has been suggested to include at least 384 sample sizes, as shown in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Sample Size

Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population					
N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	180	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	1000000	384

*N* is population size  
*S* is sample size

Source: (Uma Sekaren and Roger Bougie, 2016)

However, this research has targeted to include 400 respondents. Hence, the number of 400 respondents was expected to include 85 per cent of Muslim respondents and 15 per cent of Buddhist respondents, as mentioned by Narathiwat Provincial Cultural Office (2020) in the demographic data of the Narathiwat population. Hence, the division was equivalent to 328 Muslims and 72 Buddhists in the questionnaire sample. The primary justification for selecting the sample based on the religious group was to obtain answers from both Muslims and Buddhists and study the differences in their responses to the research questions about perceptions towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand, as well as their trust in the insurgent organisations and

their satisfaction with the government's performance in counterinsurgency management.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION**

The sources of data collection in this research were divided into three sections: Primary Data, Primary Available Data and Secondary Data. The combination of techniques was intended to ensure a greater validity of the findings.

#### **3.5.1 Primary Data**

To study the perceptions of Narathiwat people, a set of self-constructed questionnaires was distributed to 400 non-randomly selected respondents. The survey consisted of 22 items in total with four separate constructs. The first was the demographic construct, which consisted of five closed-ended questions about the respondent's demographic data: ages, genders, levels of education, districts and religious affiliations. The subsequent three constructs were questionnaire items that had been formulated in the form of a Likert Scale (rating scale) of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), measuring the extent or intensity of the respondents' answers. Next, the second construct after the demography was a set of items related to the perceptions towards the Autonomous Region of Thailand's Deep South provinces, constituting eight (8) items. Then, the third and the fourth constructs consisted of five (5) items for each; the early was related to their trust in the insurgent organisations, and the latter was about their satisfaction with the government's performance in counterinsurgency management.

Applying the questionnaire technique as a research instrument has the advantages of being scientific, objective, and quantifiable. The questionnaire survey was also convenient for the researcher to disseminate in several ways, such as by handing it out on paper or sending it out online via email. The technique was cost-effective and less time-consuming. The questionnaire distribution of this research has been undertaken through two means: printed paper handouts by the researcher and online posting of the questionnaire on the official Narathiwat Facebook page. From the paper-handout method, the questionnaires were answered by 247 respondents.

Moreover, the online questionnaire was created using Google Forms: a survey administration software, and the questionnaire link was attached to the Facebook Post uploaded to the official Narathiwat Facebook page. The post requested that page followers who are demographically located in Narathiwat participate in the survey. This method a broader reach for Narathiwat people who wish to participate in the research. The software stored the respondent's answers and allowed the researcher to retrieve the raw data to proceed with the data analysis. Of the 400 respondents, 153 responded to the online questionnaires.

### **3.5.2 Primary Available Data**

Some of the data sources of this research were derived from Primary Data from the existing available literature. According to Hamilton (2005), the primary source was the firsthand knowledge of a topic. This research's primary source materials included the government reports on the Deep South-related documents, the organisation's publications, such as CSCD, AHRC, SBPAC, the Deep South Database: Deep South Watch, and research.

### **3.5.3 Secondary Data**

Hamilton (2005) defined this data as interpreting and evaluating primary sources. The secondary sources were also included in this research. The research has relied on several secondary sources, including journal articles, online newspaper articles, encyclopedias, and books.

## **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

This research was primarily a perceptual study: the data collected from the questionnaires can be quantified and projected in numerical form, e.g., mean, median, mode, frequency and percentages. The researcher applied the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse the data collected from the questionnaires. The computed data has been displayed in tabular and graphical illustrations, such as tables, bar charts, and scatterplots.

### **3.7 RELIABILITY OF THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES**

In assessing the reliability of the questionnaire data, the questionnaires have been analysed using Cronbach's alpha value: a widely used estimator for evaluating the internal consistency or reliability of a psychometric instrument. In simpler terms, Cronbach's alpha was a measure employed to determine how reliable or consistent a set of scale or test items was. The reliability of a measurement refers to its consistency in measuring a particular concept, and Cronbach's alpha provides a means to quantify this consistency. In computing Cronbach's coefficient, the scores for each scale item were correlated with the total score for each observation (usually individual survey respondents or test takers), and this was compared to the variance across all individual item scores (Goforth, 2016).

The resulting ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient of reliability ranged between 0 and 1. A value of  $\alpha = 0$  indicated absolute independence or no correlation between the scale items. At the same time, a coefficient approaching 1 suggested a higher degree of shared covariance and a similar underlying concept among the items (Goforth, 2016). According to Hinton, McMurray, and Brownlow (2004), an alpha score above 0.75 indicated a highly reliable scale, whereas a score between 0.5 and 0.75 was considered acceptable for moderate reliability.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provided the results of the data analysis of this study. In computing the surveyed data distributed to the 400 respondents, the SPSS (Statistic Package of Social Science) statistics software was utilised to analyse the collected survey data. The findings of the study have been presented in four segments: merely:

1. Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents
2. Reliability Analysis of Questionnaire Items
3. Results Based on Research Questions
4. Data Discussion and Hypotheses Testing

#### **4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

A survey questionnaire has been conducted to understand the perceptions of Narathiwat people towards the independence of the Three Deep South Provinces of Thailand. The total population in Narathiwat province was 808,758 people, as published by Narathiwat Provincial Cultural Office in August 2021. The sample size of this questionnaire survey was 400 respondents, intended to include participants from the province's thirteen (13) districts. The sample has been selected through a non-probability convenient sampling method using a quota sampling technique to include respondents from Buddhist and Muslim religious demographic traits. The quota technique has been designed to provide comparative data between the two groups' perceptions of the established research questions.

Furthermore, the socio-demographic background construct has included age, educational level, gender, district, and religion. All variables have been summarised by computing the frequencies and percentages. The details of the demographic background have been presented in Table 4.1 and described in the following sections.

Table 4.1 Demographic Background of the Respondents

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20 Years Old	51	12.8
20 – 30	198	49.5
31 – 40	90	22.5
41 – 50	46	11.5
Above 50 Years Old	15	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Highest Level of Education</b>		
No Formal Schooling	9	2.3
Elementary School	46	11.5
Secondary School	221	55.3
Diploma	43	10.8
Bachelor's Degree	75	18.8
Master's Degree and Above	6	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	221	55.3
Female	179	44.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>District</b>		
Mueang	54	13.5
Tak Bai	27	6.8



Bacho	39	9.8
Yi-ngo	33	8.3
Ra-ngea	27	6.8
Rueso	34	8.5
Si Sakhon	23	5.8
Waeng	20	5.0
Sukhirin	16	4.0
Chanea	25	6.3
Su-ngai Kolok	35	8.8
Su-ngai Padi	39	9.8
Cho-airong	28	7.0
<b>Total</b>	100	100.0

**Religion**

Buddhism	72	18.0
Islam	328	82.0
<b>Total</b>	100	100.0

*Total Number of Respondents (N) = 400*

As the results show (Table 4.1) above, from the total of 400 respondents, 12.8% (51 respondents) of them belonged to the age below 20 years old group. The majority, 49.5% (198 respondents), fell within the age range of 20-30. Moreover, those aged between 31-40 comprised 22.5% (90 respondents), and those between 41-50 comprised 11.5% (46 respondents). The most senior group, above 50 years old, constituted 3.8% (15 respondents) of the total respondents.

In the level of education, the results indicated that 2.3% (9 respondents) had no formal education, and 11.5% (46 respondents) belonged to an Elementary school qualification. Moreover, most respondents, with more than half of them, 55.3% (221 respondents), obtained a Secondary school qualification, followed by Bachelor's Degrees 18.8% (75 respondents). The respondents with Diploma qualifications were 10.8% (43 respondents), while those with Master's Degrees and above qualifications were 1.5% (6 respondents) of the total respondents.

The respondents in the survey constituted 55.8% (221 respondents) of males, and 44.3% (179 respondents) were females. The respondents were from thirteen (13) different districts of Narathiwat. The district compositions were Mueang (13.5%, 54 respondents), Tak Bai (6.8%, 27 respondents), Bacho (9.8%, 39 respondents), 33 Yingo (8.3%, 33 respondents), Ra-ngea (6.8%, 27 respondents), Rueso (8.5%, 34 respondents), Si Sakhon (5.8%, 23 respondents), Waeng (5.0%, 20 respondents), Sukhirin (4.0%, 16 respondents), Chanea (6.3%, 25 respondents), Su-ngai Kolok (8.8%, 35 respondents), Su-ngai Padi (9.8%, 39 respondents) and Cho-airong (7.0%, 28 respondents).

The total number of Buddhists participants in this survey was 18% (72 respondents), while 82% (238 respondents) of the respondents were Muslims. The quota sampling technique ensured the inclusion of the fixed portion based on the provincial demographic data of the religious groups.

#### **4.3 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS**

Cronbach's alpha is the most widely applied reliable estimator for measuring a psychometric instrument's internal consistency or reliability. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) affirmed that Cronbach's alpha could be used as a measure of reliability that assesses the extent to which items in a set were positively correlated with each other. Cronbach's alpha is calculated based on the average correlations between the items that measure a specific concept. A higher value of Cronbach's alpha, closer to 1, indicates more substantial internal consistency reliability.

Similarly, Goforth (2016) viewed Cronbach's alpha as a metric to evaluate the reliability or internal consistency of a collection of items in a scale or test. It measures

how consistently these items assess a particular concept. By correlating each item's score with the total score of each observation and comparing it to the variance of individual's (respondents or test takers) item scores, Cronbach's alpha measures the strength of this consistency. The resulting ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient of reliability ranges between 0 and 1. If  $\alpha = 0$ , it implies absolute independence or no correlation of the whole scale items from one another, and if the coefficient is approaching 1 means the higher shared covariance and similar underlying concepts among the items.

According to Hinton et al. (2004), an alpha score above 0.75 is considered a highly reliable scale, while an alpha score of 0.5 to 0.75 is acceptable as a moderately reliable scale.

Table 4.2 Cronbach's Alpha Value of the Questionnaire Items

<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>N of Items</b>
0.896	18

Table 4.3 Cronbach's Alpha Value of Each Construct

<b>Number of Construct</b>	<b>Construct</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
1	Perceptions Of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South Provinces of Thailand	8	0.891
2	Trust In the Insurgent Organisations	5	0.888
3	Satisfaction with the government's performance in handling the Deep South insurgency	5	0.915

As presented in Table 4.2, the average value of Cronbach's Alpha score for all constructs is 0.896. To breakdown each construct's Cronbach's alpha value, the first construct under 'the perceptions of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South Provinces of Thailand' scores 0.891, followed by the second construct under 'the trust in the insurgent organisations' scores 0.888, and the final construct under 'the satisfaction with the government performance in handling the Deep South insurgency' scores 0.915. Noticeably, all constructs score more than 0.75. Hence, it can be estimated that the questionnaire is highly reliable, as viewed by Hinton et al. (2004).

#### **4.4 RESULTS BASED ON RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Since the research aims to comparatively study the perceptions of Buddhists and Muslims through the survey questionnaire, the results of the data collection have been represented under three (3) primary constructs:

- i. Perceptions towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South Provinces of Thailand
- ii. Trust in the insurgent organisations
- iii. Satisfaction with the government's performance in the counterinsurgency crisis

The survey was designed to measure the respondents' answers using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree [SD]), 2 (Disagree [D]), 3 (Neutral [N]), 4 (Agree [A]), and 5 (Strongly Agree [SA]). Moreover, the table of each construct has been statistically analysed to present the frequency, percentage, mode, mean and standard deviation (STD). Moreover, the discussion of the analysed data has been discussed between Muslims' and Buddhists' responses, and each group's results have been comparatively discussed to produce discussions in a comparative approach between the two groups of respondents.

**Construct 1: Muslims and Buddhists’ Perceptions of The Autonomous Region of the Deep South Provinces of Thailand**

Table 4.4 Construct 1Result: Muslims’ Perceptions of the Autonomous Region

<b>Construct 1: Muslims ‘Perceptions of The Autonomous Region of The Deep South Provinces of Thailand</b>									
No	Items	Mean	STD	Mode	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Support for the Autonomous Region (AR)	3.66	1.616	5	72 22%	15 4.6%	25 7.6%	57 17.4%	159 48.5%
2	Unsatisfaction with the current administrative system	3.65	1.613	5	56 17.1%	52 15.9%	12 3.7%	40 12.2%	168 51.2%
3	Feeling more secure with the AR	4.26	1.089	5	21 6.4%	10 3%	6 1.8%	116 35.4%	175 53.4%
4	Being hopeful that the AR will be achieved on day	4.47	0.992	5	14 4.3%	10 3%	6 1.8%	77 23.5%	221 67.4%
5	The AR solves insurgent violence.	4.17	0.857	4	10 3%	9 2.7%	10 3%	185 56.4%	114 34.8%

6	The AR would not harm religious harmony between Buddhists and Muslims	4.10	1.409	5	40 12.2%	16 4.9%	22 6.7%	44 13.4%	206 62.8%
7	The AR would improve the economy	4.66	0.860	5	9 2.7%	7 2.1%	9 2.7%	37 11.3%	266 81.1%
8	The AR would not harm the stability	4.59	0.960	5	14 4.3%	7 2.1%	6 1.8%	44 13.4%	257 78.4%
N=328									

Table 4.5 Construct 1 Result: Buddhists' Perceptions of the Autonomous Region

<b>Construct 1: Buddhists 'Perceptions of The Autonomous Region of The Deep South Provinces of Thailand</b>									
No	Items	Mean	STD	Mode	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Support for the Autonomous Region (AR)	1.64	1.154	1	50 69.4%	9 12.5%	6 8.3%	3 4.2%	4 5.6%
2	Unsatisfaction with the current	1.29	0.759	1	60 83.3%	6 8.3%	4 5.6%	1 1.4%	1 1.4%

	administrative system								
3	Feeling more secure with the AR	1.10	0.479	1	69 95.8%	- -	2 2.8%	1 1.4%	- -
4	Being hopeful that the AR will be achieved on day	1.88	1.310	1	43 59.7%	12 16.7%	6 8.3%	5 6.9%	6 8.3%
5	The AR solves insurgent violence	1.78	1.292	1	45 62.5%	15 20.8%	2 2.8%	3 4.2%	7 9.7
6	The AR would not harm religious harmony between Buddhists and Muslims	1.82	0.969	1	33 45.8%	25 34.7%	10 13.9%	2 2.8%	2 2.8%
7	The AR would improve the economy	2.33	1.482	1	32 44.4%	12 16.7%	10 13.9%	8 11.1%	10 13.9%
8	The AR would not harm the stability	2.13	1.491	1	37 51.4%	16 22.2%	3 4.2%	5 6.9%	11 15.3%
N=72									

Figure 4.1 Construct 1: Muslims' Perceptions of the Autonomous Region in Bar Chart

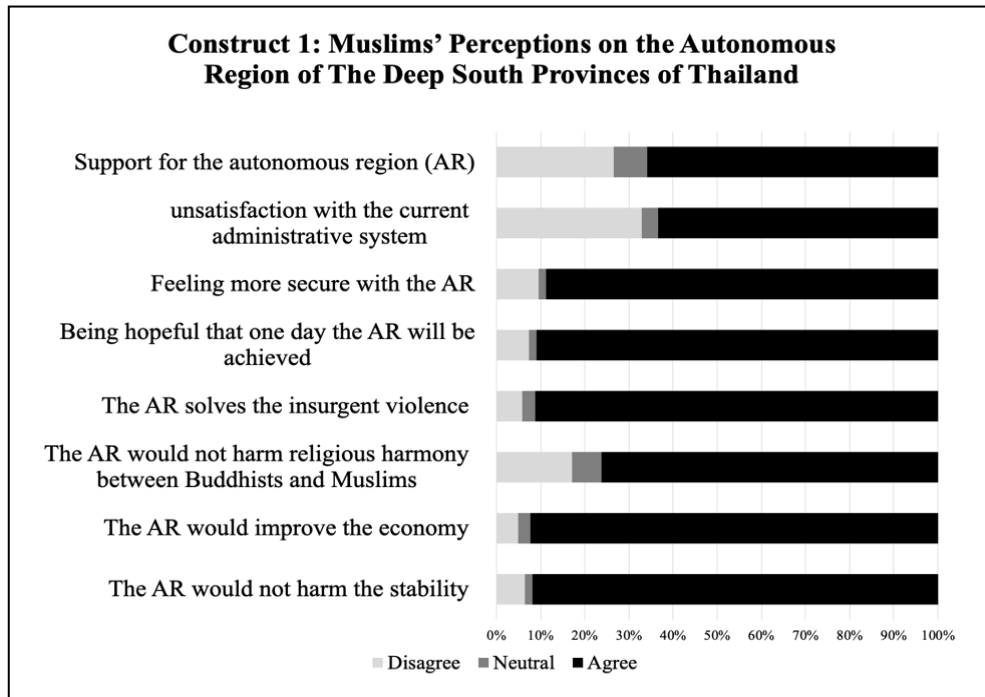
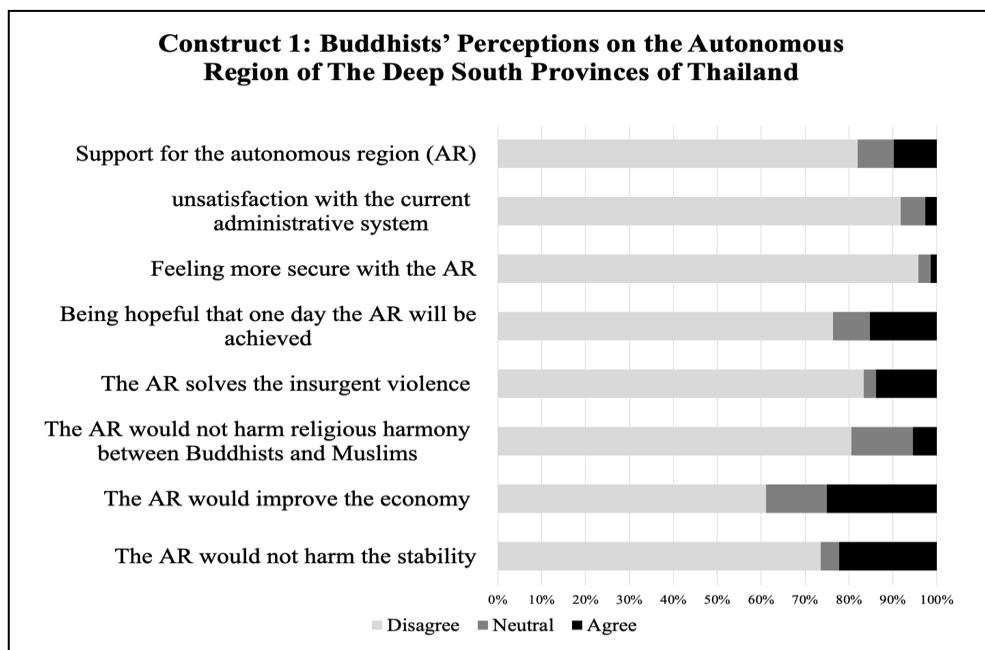


Figure 4.2 Construct 1: Buddhists' Perceptions of the Autonomous Region in Bar Chart





The first item was, “I support for the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand.” The questionnaire results revealed a significant difference in the level of support for forming an Autonomous Region in the Deep South provinces of Thailand between Muslim and Buddhist respondents. Among the 238 Muslim respondents, a majority of 48.5%, strongly agreed, and 17.4% agreed, indicating that they expressed positive support for forming an Autonomous Region. Meanwhile, a significant portion of 22% of them strongly disagreed and, 4.6% disagreed with supporting the establishment, and 7.6% of them were neutral. In contrast, among the 72 Buddhist respondents, only 2.7% strongly agreed and 2.1% agreed, showing positive support for the Autonomous Region, and 4.1% were neutral. The majority of the Buddhist respondents, 69.4% , strongly disagreed, and 12.5% disagreed, indicating no support for forming autonomy.

Next, the second item was, “I am unsatisfied with the current administrative system of the Deep South provinces.” The item aimed to investigate the satisfaction levels of the current administrative system at the provincial level among Narathiwat people. The questionnaire's results suggested a significant difference in opinion between Muslim and Buddhist respondents regarding their satisfaction with the current administrative system. Of the 238 Muslim respondents, only 17.1% strongly disagreed, and 15.9% disagreed, indicating positive satisfaction with the current administrative system, while the majority of 51.2% strongly agreed and 12.2% agreed (208 respondents), showing that they were unsatisfied with the current Deep South administration system. In comparison, 83.3% of the Buddhist respondents strongly disagreed, and 8.3% disagreed, indicating that they were satisfied with the current administrative system, with only 1.4% of them strongly agreeing and agreed, expressing dissatisfaction with the system, and 5.6% being neutral. Overall, it can be said that Buddhist respondents had a higher level of satisfaction with the current provincial administrative system than the surveyed Muslim population.

The third item was, “I feel more secure if the Deep South provinces become the Autonomous Region.” Of the 238 surveyed Muslims, 53.4% of the respondent group strongly agreed, and 35.4% agreed that the Autonomous Region would make them feel more secure. Meanwhile, 6.4% strongly disagreed, and 3% disagreed, as they were not convinced that the formation would bring a sense of security. On the other hand, among the 72 Buddhist respondents, the vast majority of 95.8% disagreed that the formation of

the Autonomous Region would enhance security in the Deep South of Thailand and make them feel safer. In contrast, only 1.4% agreed, and 2.8% were neutral. Hence, by looking at the overall and majority side of responses to the statement, it was evident that there was a contrasting opinion between the surveyed Muslim and Buddhist populations regarding the potential benefits of an Autonomous Region to the security of the Deep South provinces. It suggested that the Muslim community viewed the formation as a way to address the security concerns they faced, while the Buddhist community was more sceptical about its potential benefits for security improvement.

The fourth item was, “I am hopeful that the Deep South autonomy will be achieved one day.” The statement asked the respondents about their level of hope in achieving autonomy in the Deep South provinces. The responses varied significantly among Muslim and Buddhist groups. Of most Muslim respondents, 67.4% strongly agreed, and 23.5% agreed, indicating they were hopeful that Deep South autonomy would be achieved in the future. Only 4.3% strongly disagreed 3% disagreed with the statement, and 1.8% expressed neutrality.

On the other hand, a significant proportion of surveyed Buddhists, 59.7%, strongly disagreed, and 16.7% disagreed with the statement, indicating a lack of hope for achieving autonomy. Only 8.3% of the Buddhists strongly agreed, and 6.9% agreed with the statement, while 8.3% were neutral. The data suggested a significant difference in hope and optimism among Muslims and Buddhists regarding achieving autonomy in the Deep South provinces. The Muslim respondents had positive optimism towards achieving the Deep South Autonomous Region.

The fifth item was, “I believe that the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces would solve insurgent violence in my community.” The item aimed to understand the respondents' beliefs and optimism toward the effectiveness of the Autonomous Region in resolving insurgent violence in their community. According to the survey results, the responses differed significantly between Muslims and Buddhists. The data showed that a majority of Muslim respondents, 56.4%, agreed and 34.8% strongly agreed, expressing an optimistic perception that establishing an Autonomous Region would help solve the issue of insurgent violence in their community. Only a small proportion of 3% strongly disagreed, 2.7% disagreed, and 3% remained neutral. On the other hand, a majority of Buddhists, 62.5%, strongly disagreed, and 20.8% disagreed with the statement, indicating a lack of faith in the Autonomous Region's

effectiveness in resolving the insurgent violence issue. Only 9.7% of the Buddhist respondents strongly agreed, 4.2% agreed with the statement, while 2.8% remained neutral.

The sixth item was, “I do not believe that the Autonomous Region would harm religious harmony between Buddhists and Muslims in the Deep South provinces.” The item aimed to examine the respondents' beliefs about the potential impact of the Autonomous Region on religious harmony between Buddhists and Muslims in the Deep South provinces. The data showed notable differences in the responses of Muslims and Buddhists to this question. The survey revealed that 62.8% of the Muslim respondents strongly agreed, and 13.4% agreed that the establishment would break religious harmony in the Deep South provinces, 6.7% remained neutral to the statement, 12.2% strongly disagreed, and 4.9% disagreed with the statement. The data indicated that the majority of Muslims believed the autonomous region would not pose potential harm to religious harmony in the region.

In comparison, a majority of the Buddhist respondents, 45.8%, strongly disagreed, and 34.7% disagreed, indicating their belief that establishing the Autonomous Region would harm religious harmony in the Deep South provinces. Only 2.8% of the Buddhists strongly agreed and agreed, while 13.9% remained neutral on the question. Overall, a greater percentage of the Buddhists were concerned over the blowbacks of the Autonomous Region formation on the peace and co-existence between two religious communities in the Deep South provinces.

The seventh item was “I believe that the autonomy would improve the economy of the Deep South provinces.” The item concerned the economic benefits of the Autonomous Region in the Deep South provinces. The responses to this question revealed a stark contrast between the Muslim and Buddhist communities. While the overwhelming majority of Muslims, 81.1% strongly agreed and 11.3% agreed that the autonomy would improve the region's economy, only 2.7% of the Muslims strongly agreed and 2.1% agreed with this statement. On the other hand, 44.4% of the surveyed Buddhist respondents strongly disagreed, and 16.7% disagreed that autonomy would significantly improve the economy, while 13.9% strongly agreed and 11.1% agreed to the statement. The percentage of Buddhists who were neutral on this statement was 13.9%, while 2.7% of the Muslims were neutral. These results suggested that the Muslim community placed a higher level of trust and held a more optimistic view of

the potential economic benefits of the Autonomous Region than the Buddhist community.

The last item of the first construct was, “I do not think that the establishment of the Autonomous Region would harm the stability of the Deep South provinces.” The item asked about the potential impact of the Autonomous Region on the stability of the Deep South provinces. The responses to this statement showed a clear difference in opinion between the Muslim and Buddhist communities. A significant majority of Muslims, 78.4%, strongly agreed, and 13.4% agreed that establishing the Autonomous Region would not harm the region's stability, and only 4.3% strongly disagreed, and 2.1% disagreed. In contrast, only 15.3% of the Buddhist respondents strongly agreed, and 6.9% agreed with this statement, while the majority of 51.4% strongly disagreed and 22.2% disagreed that the autonomy would not harm the stability. These results suggested that the Muslim community was more optimistic about the Autonomous Region's potential impact on the region's stability than the Buddhist community.

### **Construct 2: Muslims and Buddhists’ Trust in the Insurgent Organisations**

Table 4.6 Construct 2 Result: Muslims’ Perceptions of the Insurgent Organisations

<b>Construct 2: Muslims ‘Perceptions og the Insurgent Organisations</b>									
No	Items	Mean	SD	Mode	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I trust the insurgent organisations.	3.33	1.758	5	88 26.8%	47 14.3%	21 6.4%	14 4.3%	158 48.2%
2	The Thai government is less trustworthy than the insurgent organisations.	4.01	1.471	5	41 12.5%	28 8.5%	22 6.7%	32 9.8%	205 62.5%

3	Feeling more afraid of the security forces than the insurgent organisations.	3.51	1.627	5	74 22.6%	33 10.1%	10 3%	74 22.6%	137 41.8%
4	The insurgent organisations are representing the voices of the Deep South people to the government.	2.91	1.717	1	111 33.8%	61 18.6%	9 2.7%	42 12.8%	105 32%
5	It is justifiable for insurgent organisations to use violence against the state forces.	3.77	1.704	5	79 24.1%	12 3.7%	10 3%	31 9.5%	195 59.5
N=328									

Table 4.7 Construct 2 Result: Buddhists' Perceptions of the Insurgent Organisations

<b>Construct 2: Buddhists 'Perceptions of the Insurgent Organisations</b>									
No	Items	Mean	SD	Mode	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I trust the insurgent organisations (InOrs).	1.22	0.510	1	88 26.8%	47 14.3%	21 6.4%	14 4.3%	158 48.2%
2	The Thai government is less trustworthy than the insurgent organisations.	1.06	0.231	1	41 12.5%	28 8.5%	22 6.7%	32 9.8%	205 62.5%
3	Feeling more afraid of the security forces than the insurgent organisations.	1.04	0.201	1	74 22.6%	33 10.1%	10 3%	74 22.6%	137 41.8%
4	The insurgent organisations are representing the voices of the Deep South people to the government.	1.21	0.649	1	111 33.8%	61 18.6%	9 2.7%	42 12.8%	105 32%

5	It is justifiable for insurgent organisations to use violence against the state forces.	1.03	0.165	1	79 24.1%	12 3.7%	10 3%	31 9.5%	195 59.5
N=72									

Figure 4.3 Construct 2: Muslims' Perceptions of the Autonomous Region in Bar Chart

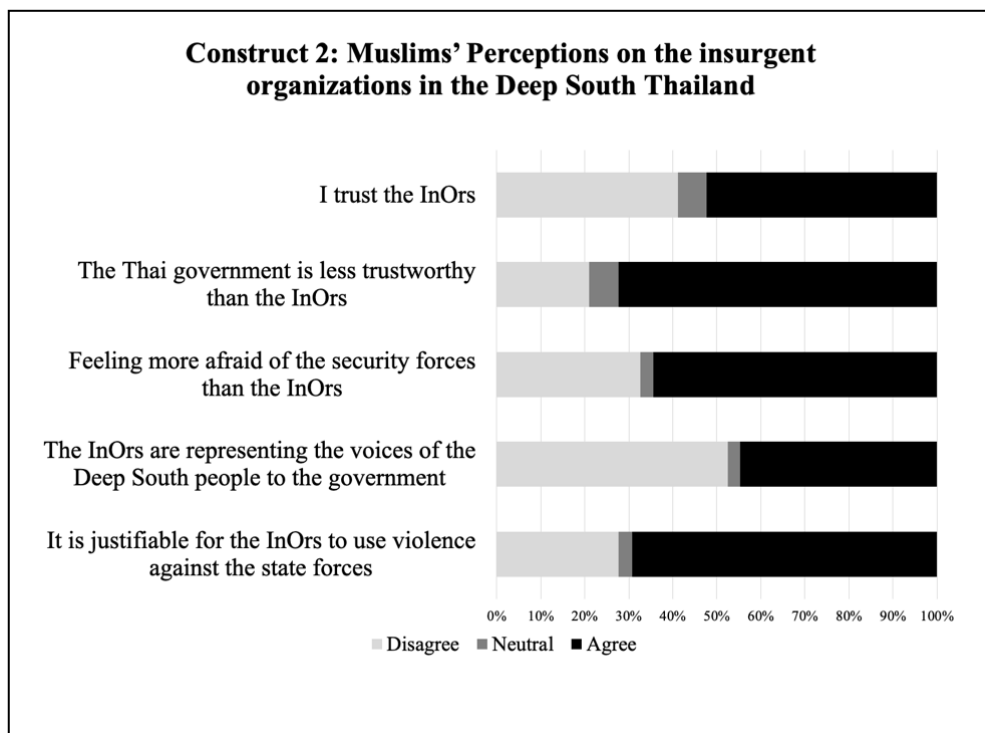
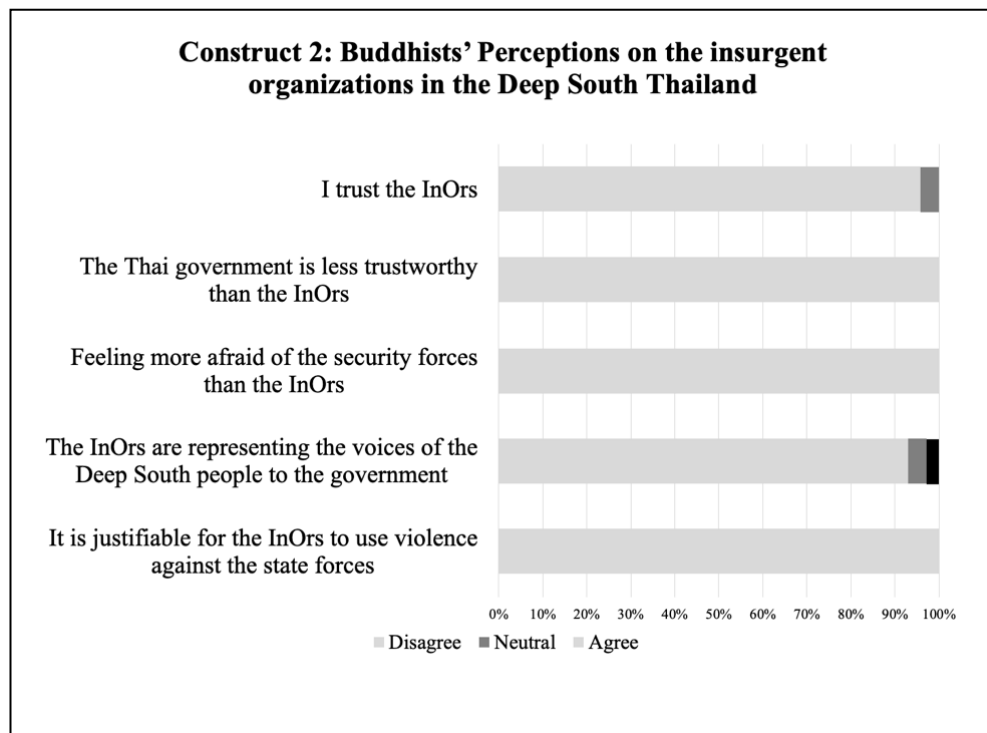


Figure 4.4 Construct 2: Buddhists' Perceptions of the Autonomous Region in Bar Chart



The first item was, “I trust the insurgent organisations.” The item aimed to explore the respondents' trust in the insurgent organisations in the Deep South provinces. Of 328 Muslim respondents, 48.2% strongly agreed and 4.3% agreed with the statement, indicating that the insurgent organisations were trustworthy. In the meantime, 26.8% strongly disagreed 14.3% disagreed, and the remaining 6.4% remained neutral. It can be said that the insurgent organisations did not receive a vast majority of trust among the surveyed population as opinions were divided on this matter.

In contrast, the Buddhist respondents showed an even stronger distrust towards the insurgent organisations, with 81.8% of 72 respondents in total strongly agreeing and 13.9 disagreeing that it was difficult for them to trust the insurgent groups, as they seemed untrustworthy. The higher percentage of Buddhist respondents who expressed distrust towards the insurgent organisations could be due to their status as a minority group in the region, making them more vulnerable to violence and attacks by the insurgent groups. Overall, the responses to the first item suggested a significant lack of



trust towards the insurgent organisations among Buddhist populations in the Deep South provinces, and it seemed that only half of the Muslims trusted the insurgent groups.

The second item was, “I feel the Thai government is less trustworthy than the insurgent organisations.” The results of this item suggested a clear divide between Muslim and Buddhist respondents' perceptions of the trustworthiness of the Thai government versus insurgent organisations. Among the Muslim respondents, the majority of 62.5% strongly agreed, and 9.8% agreed that the government was less trustworthy than the insurgent organisations, while 12.5% strongly disagreed and 8.5% disagreed, indicating they viewed otherwise. On the other hand, all (100%, 72 respondents) of the Buddhist respondents totally viewed that the Thai government was less trustworthy than the insurgent organisations, as 94.4% totally disagree and 5.6% disagree.

The third item was, “I feel more afraid of the security forces than the insurgent organisations.” This item indicated the respondents' fear of the insurgent organisations compared to the security forces. Among the Muslim respondents, 41.8% totally agreed, and 22.6% agreed that they felt more afraid of the security forces than the insurgent organisations. In comparison, 22.6% totally disagreed, 10.1% disagreed with this statement, and 3% were neutral. On the other hand, among the Buddhist respondents, all (100, 72 respondents) disagreed, as 95.8% totally disagreed and 4.2% disagreed, indicating they felt more afraid of the insurgent organisations than the security forces. It can be suggested that Buddhists living in the Deep South perceived the insurgent organisations as a more significant threat than the security forces, while among the Muslim population, opinions were divided on this matter.

The fourth item was, “I feel the insurgent organisations are representing the voices of the Deep South people to the government.” This item aimed to reflect the respondents' perception regarding the representation of the insurgent organisations in the Deep South. It was interesting to note that most Muslim and Buddhist respondents disagreed with the statement. However, the level of disagreement was much higher among the Buddhists, with 95.8% totally disagreeing and 4.2% disagreeing, compared to 33.8% totally disagreeing and 18.6% disagreeing among the Muslims. Only 2.8% of the Buddhist group agreed with the statement. It can be implied that Buddhists were less likely to view the insurgent organisations as legitimate representatives of the Deep

South people. On the other hand, 32% of the surveyed Muslims totally agreed and 12.8% agreed that the insurgent organisations represented the voices of the Deep South people to the government.

The fifth item was, “I think it is justifiable for the insurgents to use violence against the state forces.” The results showed a clear contrast between the two groups in their opinions towards the use of violence by insurgent groups against the state forces. All (100%, 72 respondents): 97.2% totally disagreed, and 2.8% disagreed, the Buddhist respondents objected to the statement, indicating a complete rejection of violence as a means of conflict resolution. In contrast, the Muslim respondents were more divided, with 59.5% totally agreeing and 9.5% agreeing that it was justifiable for the insurgent groups to use violence against the state forces. It can be indicated that a significant proportion of the Muslim community in the Deep South of Thailand might view violence as a legitimate response to what they perceived as systemic oppression by the state. The neutral response was that 3% of the Muslim respondents indicated a level of uncertainty, while the considerate percentage of the respondents, with 24.1% who totally disagreed and 3.7% who disagree, suggested that some of the surveyed Muslims were vehemently opposed to the use of violence.

### **Construct 3: Muslims and Buddhists’ Satisfaction with the Government’s Performance in Counterinsurgency Crisis**

Table 4.8 Construct 3 Result: Muslims’ Satisfaction with the Government’s Performance in Counterinsurgency Crisis

<b>Construct 3: Muslims’ ‘Perceptions of the Government’s Performance in Counterinsurgency Crisis</b>									
<b>No</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
1	Satisfaction with the govt’s performance	1.66	1.21	1	226 68.9%	47 14.3%	20 6.1%	9 2.7%	26 7.9%

	in solving the insurgency.								
2	The govt is doing its best to find ways to solve the insurgency.	1.71	1.208	1	224 68.3%	34 10.4	28 8.5%	25 7.6%	17 5.2%
3	The govt understands the needs of people in the DSP.	1.45	1.042	1	259 79%	31 9.5%	14 4.3%	7 2.1%	17 5.2%
4	The govt provides adequate safety to people in the Deep South provinces.	1.40	0.84	1	243 74.1%	59 18%	13 4%	5 1.5%	8 2.4%
5	Satisfaction with the govt's transparency in security operations.	1.48	1.025	1	246 75%	46 14%	14 4.3%	5 1.5%	17 5.2%
N=328									

Table 4.9 Construct 3 Result: Buddhists' Perceptions of the Government's Performance in Counterinsurgency Crisis

<b>Construct 3: Buddhists 'Perceptions of the Government's Performance in Counterinsurgency Crisis</b>									
No	Items	Mean	SD	Mode	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Satisfaction with the govt's performance in solving the insurgency.	1.38	0.813	1	55 76.4%	11 15.3%	3 4.2%	2 2.8%	1 1.4%
2	The govt is doing its best in finding ways to solve the insurgency.	1.79	1.100	1	39 54.2%	19 26.4%	7 9.7%	4 5.6%	3 4.2%
3	The govt understands the needs of people in the DSP.	1.72	1.189	1	48 66.7%	8 11.1%	7 9.7%	6 8.3%	3 4.2%
4	The govt provides adequate safety to people in the	1.56	0.886	1	46 63.9%	16 22.2%	7 9.7%	2 2.8%	1 1.4%

	Deep South provinces.								
5	Satisfaction with the govt's transparency in security operations.	1.58	1.045	1	50 69.4%	10 13.9%	6 8.3%	4 5.6%	2 2.8%
N=72									

Figure 4.5 Construct 3: Muslims' Perceptions of the Government's Performance in Counterinsurgency Crisis in Bar Chart

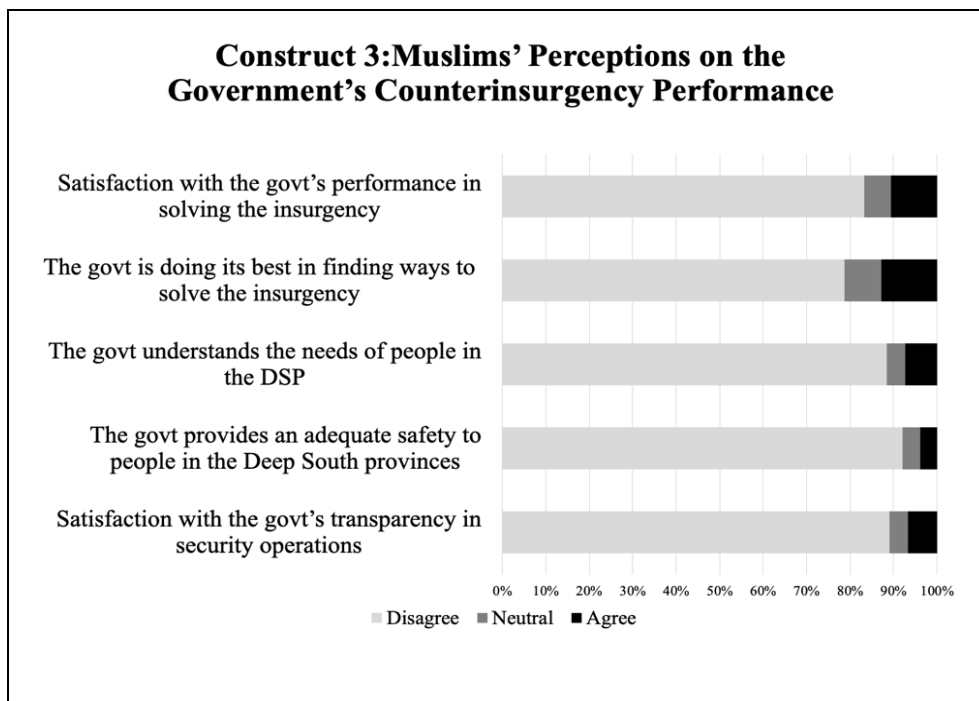
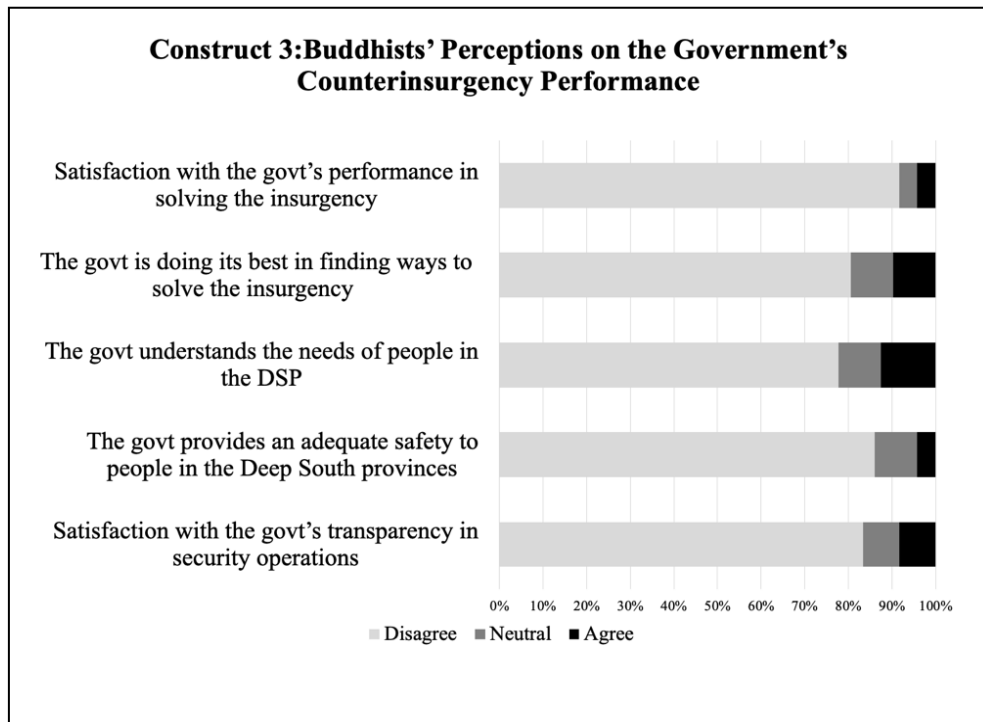


Figure 4.6 Construct 3: Buddhists' Perceptions of the Government's Performance in Counterinsurgency Crisis in Bar Chart



The first item under the third construct was, “I am satisfied with the current government’s overall performance in solving the Deep South insurgency.” It was clear from the responses that the vast majority of both Muslim and Buddhist respondents were not satisfied with the government's overall performance in solving the insurgency in the Deep South of Thailand. However, the percentage of Buddhists who opposed the statement was higher than that of Muslims, with 76.4% totally disagreeing and 15.3% disagreeing, compared to 68.9% totally disagreeing and 14.3% disagreeing of the Muslim respondents. Additionally, the percentage of Muslims supporting the statement was slightly higher than that of Buddhists, with 7.9% agreeing and 2.7% agreeing, compared to 1.4% agreeing and 2.8% agreeing of the Buddhist respondents. These results suggested that Muslim and Buddhist respondents in the Deep South were primarily dissatisfied with the government's efforts to solve the insurgency. However, surveyed Buddhists may be slightly more strongly opposed to the government's performance.

The second item was, "I think the government is doing its best to find ways to solve the insurgency crisis." There seemed to be a significant level of disagreement among both Muslim and Buddhist respondents regarding the government's efforts to solve the insurgency crisis. However, the percentage of the Buddhist respondents who objected to the statement was higher than that of the Muslims, with 54.2% totally disagreeing and 26.4% disagreeing compared to 68.3% totally disagreeing and 10.4% disagreeing with the Muslims. The percentage of neutral responses was also higher among the Buddhists, with 9.7% compared to 8.5% of the Muslim respondents. Regarding those who agreed with the statement, the percentage was almost similar for both groups, with 7.6% totally agreeing and 5.2% agreeing with the Muslims 4.2% totally agreeing and 5.6% agreeing with the Buddhists. Generally, Muslim and Buddhist respondents were not satisfied with the government's efforts to solve the insurgency crisis, although the Buddhist respondents were more dissatisfied than the Muslims.

The third item was, "I believe that the government understands the needs of people in Deep South provinces." The results showed that a majority of the Muslim and Buddhist respondents disagreed with the statement, with 79% totally disagreeing and 9.5% disagreeing with the Muslims, 66.7% totally disagreeing, and 11.1% disagreeing with Buddhists. Only a tiny percentage of both surveyed groups: 5.2% and 2.1% of the Muslims and 4.2% and 8.3% of the Buddhists totally agreed and agreed, respectively, with the statement indicating that there was a lack of trust and confidence in the government's ability to understand the needs of people in the Deep South provinces among both groups. Overall, the results of this item indicated a significant perception gap between the government's understanding and the local population's needs, which could potentially contribute to ongoing tensions and conflicts in the region.

The fourth item: "I feel the government provides adequate safety to people in the Deep South provinces," received a high percentage of negative responses from both Muslims and Buddhists, indicating that the respondents felt that the government was not providing adequate safety to people in the region. Of the 328 surveyed Muslim respondents, 74.1% totally disagreed, and 18% disagreed with the statement, which was a very high percentage, and only 2.4% totally agreed and 1.5% agreed, indicating an intense dissatisfaction with the government's performance in providing safety to people in the region. Similarly, out of the 72 surveyed Buddhist respondents, 63.9% totally disagreed, and 22.2% disagreed with the statement, which was also a high percentage,

and only 1.4% totally agreed, and 2.8% agreed. The responses exhibited that Buddhists, like Muslims, were dissatisfied with the government's performance in providing safety to people in the region. Meanwhile, 9.7% of Buddhists and 4% of neutral Muslims might indicate a lack of information or uncertainty on the matter. However, these results revealed a common perception among Muslims and Buddhists in the Deep South provinces that the government was not providing adequate safety. This dissatisfaction with the government's performance in providing safety could contribute to feelings of insecurity and mistrust towards the government.

The fifth and final item was, "I am satisfied with the government's transparency in security operations." The results for this item suggested that a majority of both Muslims and Buddhists in the Deep South provinces were dissatisfied with the government's transparency in security operations. Specifically, 75% and 14% of the Muslims totally disagreed and disagreed, respectively, and 69.4% and 13.9% of the Buddhists totally disagreed and disagreed, respectively, with the statement, indicating a lack of confidence in the government's transparency. This sentiment was further emphasised by the relatively low percentages of respondents who were neutral or agreed with the statement, which suggested that few people had a positive view of the government's transparency in security operations.

#### **4.5 THE COMPARISON OF COMPUTED VARIABLES BETWEEN MUSLIM AND BUDDHIST RESPONDENTS**

Table 4.10 The Comparison of Computed Variables of Muslims' Perceptions

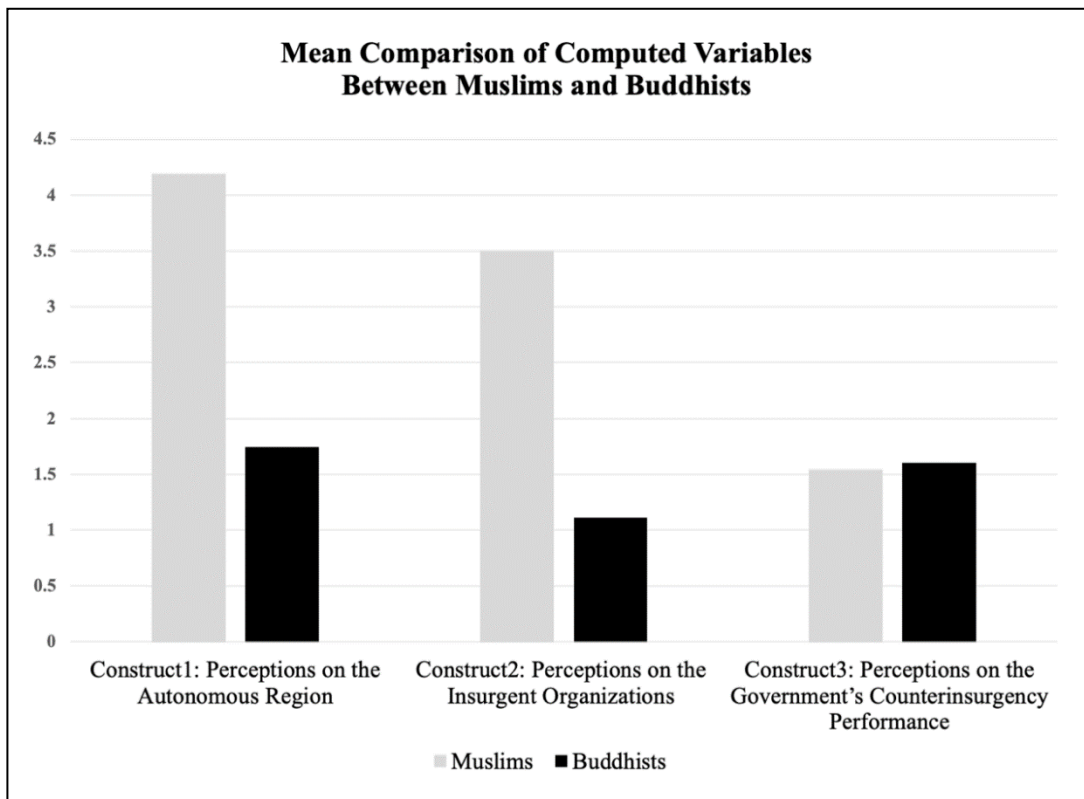
	<b>Perceptions of the Autonomous Region</b>	<b>Perceptions of the Insurgent Organisations</b>	<b>Perceptions of the Government's Counterinsurgency Performance</b>
Mean	4.1944	3.5047	1.5415
Median	4.375	3.4	1
Mode	4.5	5	1
Std. Deviation	0.64011	1.27553	0.92057



Table 4.11 The Comparison of Computed Variables of Buddhists' Perceptions

	<b>Perceptions of the Autonomous Region</b>	<b>Perceptions of the Insurgent Organisations</b>	<b>Perceptions of the Government's Counterinsurgency Performance</b>
Mean	1.7448	1.1111	1.6056
Median	1.5	1	1.1
Mode	1	1	1
Std. Deviation	0.77438	0.18042	0.92598

Figure 4.7 Mean Comparison of Computed Variables Between Muslims and Buddhists in Bar Chart



The data in the computed variables provided insights into Muslims' and Buddhists' perceptions of the three constructs: perceptions of the Autonomous Region, trust in the insurgent organisations, and satisfaction with the government's counterinsurgency performance. The Likert scale used in the survey ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The mean value, mode value, and standard deviation for each construct were computed for the Muslims and Buddhists.

Under the computed variable of the first construct, the Mean, Median, and Mode values for the surveyed Muslim respondents' perceptions of the Autonomous Region were 4.1944, 4.375, and 4.5, respectively. Meanwhile, the mean, median, and mode values for the surveyed Buddhist respondents were 1.7448, 1.5, and 1, respectively. These statistics suggested that Muslim respondents had a more positive perception of the Autonomous Region than Buddhists, as surveyed Muslims' answers were 'strongly agree' and Buddhists' were 'strongly disagree' (as indicated in Mode value) with the questionnaire items of the first construct. Moreover, the Standard Deviation (Std. Deviation) values for both groups were relatively low, which indicated that respondents had similar perceptions of the Autonomous Region within their respective groups. Although the surveyed Muslims' Std. The deviation was (0.64011), slightly lower than the surveyed Buddhists Std. Deviation (0.77438) indicates the Muslims' responses were less varied than other groups. Overall, the responses of the two groups were equally dispersed in relation to the mean value.

Similarly, under the computed variable of the second construct, the Mean, Median, and Mode values of the surveyed Muslims were 3.5047, 3.5, and 5, while the surveyed Buddhists were 1.111, 1, and 1, respectively. The average value of Muslims' survey responses was higher than that of Buddhists, indicating that Muslims selected answers with higher values in the Likert Scale options (as shown in the Mode value). Therefore, Muslims had more positive perceptions of the insurgent organisations than the Buddhist respondents. Additionally, the Std. The deviation value of Muslims was 1.27553 and Buddhists' 0.18042, indicating that Muslim response had diverse and dispersed in a wider distribution within their respective groups than the Buddhists'.

On the other hand, the last computed variable was satisfaction with the Government's Counterinsurgency Performance. The Muslim respondents' Mean, Median, and Mode values were 1.5415, 1, and 1, while the Buddhists' values were 1.6065, 1.1, and 1, respectively. As can be noticed, the average value of Muslims was

lower than Buddhists', indicating that the latter group had a slightly more positive perception of the government's counterinsurgency performance compared to the earlier. However, their overall satisfaction with the government's performance fell to an unsatisfactory level, as Std. The deviation value for Muslims was 0.92057, and for Buddhists, it was 0.92598. The values were relatively low, which indicated that respondents had similar perceptions of the government's counterinsurgency performance and showed little dispersion within their respective groups.

In a broad scope, the computed variables provided insights into the differences in perceptions between Muslims and Buddhists in the context of all three constructs. The results suggested that Muslims generally had more positive perceptions of the Autonomous Region and showed more trust in the insurgent organisations, while Buddhists had more satisfaction with the government's counterinsurgency performance between the two groups.

#### **4.6 DATA DISCUSSION AND HYPOTHESES TESTING**

For the purpose of the hypothesis testing and analyzing the correlation between independent variables (religion: [Islam and Buddhism]) and other three dependent variables in each construct ('perceptions' of the Autonomous Region, 'trust' in the insurgent organisations, and 'satisfaction' in the government performance), the Point-Biserial Correlation (a special case of the Pearson Correlation) had been applied to measure the relationship. The Point-Biserial Correlation has often been used to study the relationship between the dichotomous variable (or one that has two values, in this study: Religion [Islam and Buddhism], and a continuous variable (responses of the three constructs answered in the form of Likert Scale). However, the Likert Scale is a subject of much debate, whether it is an ordinal or an interval scale. However, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the Likert Scale is generally treated as an interval scale to test the hypothesis.

The Point-Biserial Correlation matrix indicates the direction, strength, and significance of the relationship between measured variables. The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) can be between -1.0 and 1.0, which means it cannot be higher than 1.0 or lower than -1.0. A correlation coefficient of -1.0 represents a perfect negative correlation, while a value of 1.0 represents a perfect positive correlation. A positive relationship exists if

the correlation coefficient is greater than zero, while a negative relationship exists if the value is less than zero. If the correlation coefficient is zero, it indicates no relationship between the two variables (Sekaran, Bougie, 2016). The correlation coefficient needs to be interpreted by categorizing  $r$  values in a labelling system as follows.

Table 4.12 The Magnitude of Correlation Coefficient

<b>The magnitude of Correlation Coefficient</b>	<b>The Strength of Relationship</b>
0.00 – 0.09	Negligible Correlation (Almost No Correlation)
0.10 – 0.39	Weak or Low Correlation
0.40 – 0.69	Modest or moderate correlation
0.70 – 0.89	Strong or High Correlation
0.90 – 1.00	Very Strong or Very High Correlation

Source: (Schober, Boer & Schwarte, 2018)

In the following section, tables and bar charts represent the Person correlation between the independent and dependent variables in each survey's construct.

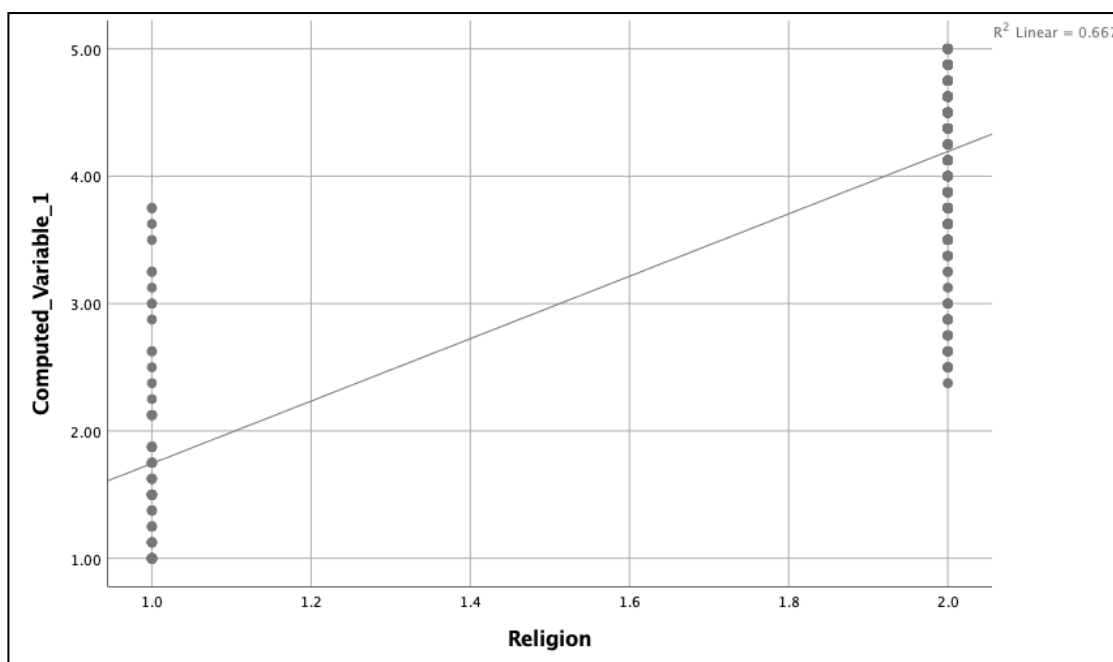
### **I. Religion vs Perception of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand**

- H0** Muslim respondents show the same level of support for establishing the Autonomous Region as Buddhist respondents do.
- H1** Muslim respondents support establishing the Autonomous Region more than Buddhist respondents.

Table 4.13 The Correlation Efficiency between the Religion and the Perceptions of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South Provinces of Thailand

		The Perceptions of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South Provinces of Thailand
Religion	Pearson Correlation	0.817
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	400

Figure 4.8 The Scatterplot of the Correlation between 'Religion' and 'the Perceptions of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South Thailand'



Based on the Pearson correlation values provided, there was a strong positive correlation between 'Religion' and 'Perceptions in the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand' as the correlation efficiency value was 0.817. The positivity of the relation between the two variables: as 'Religion' increased from 1 to 2, so did 'Perceptions of the Autonomous Region' to a higher value in the Likert scales. In

other words, religion has positively correlated with the perception of the Autonomous Region. The Muslims surveyed tended to support autonomous regions more positively than the Buddhist group (see scatterplot 4.1). Moreover, the correlation between the two variables was significant as the two-tailed p-value was less than 0.001. The significance value of 0.0 indicated that this correlation was highly significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance (the relationship between the two variables and the probability of this not being true was zero).

Hence, the null hypothesis shall be rejected, and the hypothesis testing shall conclude that there was a strong positive correlation between religion and the respondents' perception of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand. Muslim respondents indeed showed more support for the Autonomous Region than Buddhist respondents.

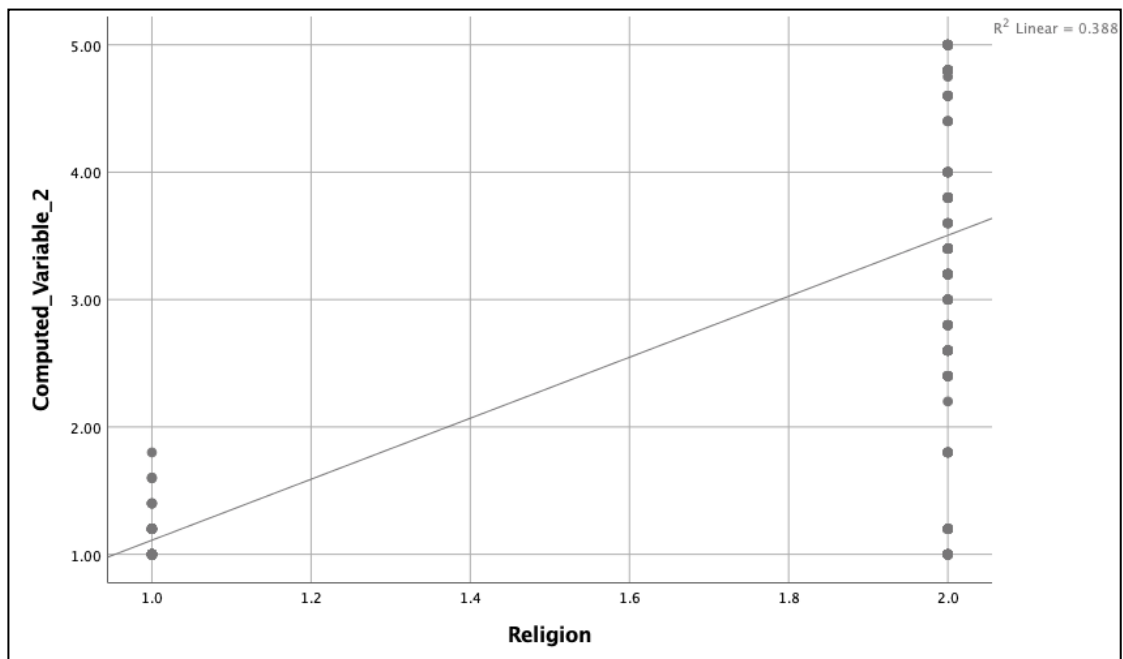
## II. Religion vs Trust in the Insurgent Organisations

- H0** The insurgent organisations receive the same level of trust among Muslim and Buddhist respondents.
- H1** The insurgent organisations receive more trust among the Muslim respondents than the Buddhist respondents.

		The Trust in the Insurgent Organisations
Religion	Pearson Correlation	0.623
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	400

Table 4.14 The Correlation Efficiency Between the Trust in the Insurgent Organisations

Figure 4.9 The Scatterplot of the Correlation between 'Religion' and the 'Trust in the Insurgent Organisations'



From the above data, the correlation efficiency illustrated a moderate positive correlation between "Religion" and "Trust in the insurgent organisations" as the correlation efficiency value was 0.623. The positive relation between the two variables suggested that as religion increased from 1 to 2, the insurgent organisations also raised to a higher value. The phenomena of this relation can be explained by the fact that religion was positively correlated to trust in the insurgent organisations. The surveyed Muslims expressed more trust in the insurgent organisations than the Buddhist group (see scatterplot 4.2). Moreover, the correlation between the two variables was significant as the two-tailed p-value was less than 0.001. The significance value of 0.0 indicated that this correlation was highly significant. Moreover, the relationship between the two variables and the probability of this not being true was zero.

Therefore, the null hypothesis shall be rejected, and the hypothesis testing shall conclude that there was a moderate positive correlation between religion and the respondents' trust in the insurgent organisations. The organisations received more trust among the Muslim respondents than the Buddhist group.

### III. Religion vs Satisfaction in the Government's Performance in Counterinsurgency Crisis

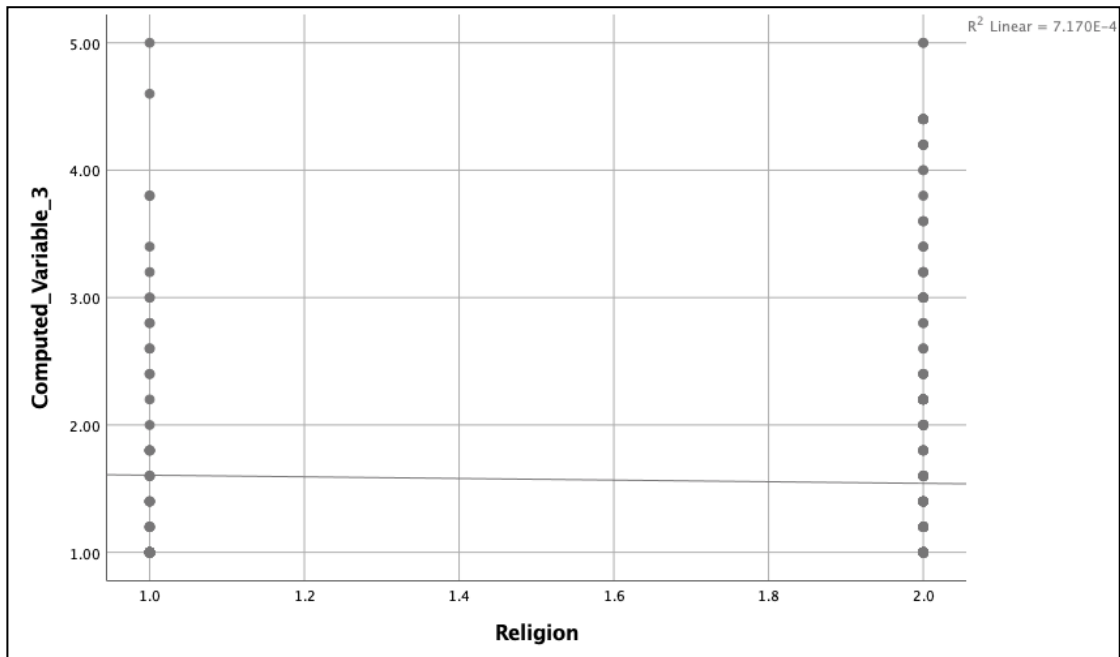
- H0** Buddhist and Muslim respondents show the same level of satisfaction with the government's performance in the Deep South counterinsurgency management.
- H1** Buddhist respondents are more satisfied than Muslim respondents with the government's performance in the Deep South counterinsurgency management.

Table 4.15 The Correlation Efficiency between the Satisfactions in the Government's Counterinsurgency Performance

		The Satisfactions in the Government's Counterinsurgency Performance
Religion	Pearson Correlation	-0.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.593
	N	400



Figure 4.10 The Scatterplot of the Correlation between 'Religion' and 'the Satisfaction in the Government Performance in Deep South Counterinsurgency'



From the above table and graph illustrations, the correlation efficiency revealed an extremely weak negative correlation or almost no relation between 'Religion' and 'Satisfaction in the government's counterinsurgency performance' as the correlation efficiency value was -0.027. The ecoefficiency value indicated that as religion increased from 1 to 2, satisfaction with the government's counterinsurgency performance decreased to lower values on the Likert scale. In other words, religion was negatively correlated or had no relation with satisfaction levels with the government's counterinsurgency performance. The surveyed Buddhists were slightly more satisfied with the government's performance than the Muslim group (see Scatterplot 4.3). However, the strength of the relationship was extremely low or to the point where the relationship did not exist. Moreover, the significance value of 0.593 suggested that this correlation could have occurred by chance, and the weak correlation coefficient suggests that this relationship may not be practically significant.

Consequently, the null hypothesis shall not be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis cannot be supported. The hypothesis testing shall conclude that there was an extremely low negative or no correlation between religion and the respondents'

satisfaction with the government's performance in counterinsurgency management. This study could not conclude that the Buddhist respondents were more satisfied with the government's overall counterinsurgency performance in Thailand's Deep South provinces.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This final chapter elucidated the discussion of the major findings and the study analysis with regard to the research objectives. It also focused on the research limitations, recommendations, and directions for future research.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The study has been embarked to understand the role of religion and how differences in religious communities influenced Narathiwat people's perceptions towards the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces, their trust in the insurgent organisations, and their satisfaction with the government's performance in counterinsurgency management. The findings of this research have concluded that the religious background of the respondents had different influences and correlations with the intended research objectives. The findings could be summarised as follows:

Religious affiliation played a significant role in shaping the perceptions of the surveyed individuals in Narathiwat regarding establishing an Autonomous Region in the Deep South provinces. The study's findings indicated that the surveyed Muslim groups exhibited more favourable perceptions and greater support for establishing the Autonomous Region than their Buddhist counterparts. These findings confirmed the research hypothesis, positing that a higher percentage of Muslims would favour establishing the political administration than Buddhists.

The positive support of the surveyed Muslims in creating the Autonomous Region can be attributed to the fact that they constituted the majority population in the region. With the establishment of the autonomous power, the local Muslims believed they would benefit from the establishment in several aspects, such as increased political power to the local Muslim people in the region, economic advantages resulting in financial resources and opportunities, an autonomous power to create a community that

would facilitate their ethnoreligious needs. Conversely, the surveyed Buddhists might be concerned that the establishment could diminish their status and interests while living under the autonomous government. They might perceive the need to adapt to new socio-ethnic changes. These changes may raise apprehensions among the Buddhist participants and contribute to their less support for the Autonomous Region.

The survey findings indicated that the surveyed Buddhists were generally satisfied with the current government system and felt less secure about living in the autonomous government. Moreover, the group expressed their lack of optimism regarding the potential achievement of autonomy. Many believed the establishment would not improve the Deep South's economy or resolve the insurgent violence issue. The underlying tensions between the Thai government and the insurgent organisations over regional sovereignty would further exacerbate the violence. The insurgent groups might continue to resist the government's authority, aiming for complete independence of the region. Such a scenario would intensify regional instability and strain the ethnoreligious fabric between Muslims and Buddhists.

In summary, the study highlighted the substantial influence of religious affiliation on Narathiwat people's perceptions and support for establishing an Autonomous Region in the Deep South provinces. The Muslim participants, as the majority, exhibited more positive attitudes and support, expecting political and economic benefits. In contrast, Buddhists expressed less support and concern about potential challenges derived from the establishment.

### **Religion and the Trust of Narathiwat Respondents on the Insurgent Organisations**

Another significant finding of this study pertained to the level of trust expressed by the surveyed participants in Narathiwat towards insurgent organisations. Overall, the surveyed Muslims showed greater trust in the insurgent groups than the surveyed Buddhists. However, the Muslim population can be divided into two main groups: more than half of those who trusted the armed organisations and a significant proportion of those who viewed otherwise.

Although the insurgent organisations did not receive majority trust among the surveyed Muslims, the groups gained more trust than the state security forces. A

significant majority of the group respondents perceived the security forces as less trustworthy, and they felt fear of the security forces more than the rebel groups. The finding aligned with existing literature highlighting the government's heavy reliance on security operations in handling the insurgency and human rights violations committed by the state throughout the security operations. Such dependence on the hardline policy had contributed to the erosion of trust among the Muslim population toward the security forces. The extensive powers granted by the judicial institutions to the security forces in managing the southern insurgency have perpetuated a cycle of animosity and fear between local Muslims and the security forces.

The resentment and grievances towards the security forces have led many of the respondents to believe that the operations carried out by the insurgent organisations can be justifiable, perhaps as a form of retaliation against the security forces. Given the government's overemphasis on a hardline approach and the increasing number of people affected by the actions of the security forces, it is likely that more locals will be compelled to join the insurgent movement against the security forces and the state.

On the other hand, almost all surveyed Buddhists displayed no trust towards the insurgent organisations and higher levels of trust towards the security forces. The group did not perceive the activities of the insurgent movement as justifiable and felt more apprehensive about the insurgent organisations than the security forces. As the minority in the region, the group did not perceive the insurgent organisations as representing their voices to the government.

In summary, the study highlighted the varying levels of trust exhibited by the surveyed participants from Narathiwat towards insurgent organisations and the security forces. The Muslims, more than half, demonstrated greater trust in the insurgent organisations, primarily due to deep-rooted distrust and fear towards the security forces resulting from past experiences of violence and human rights abuses, and a significant remaining of them showed distrust. On the other hand, Buddhists, generally all, displayed greater trust in the security forces and viewed the insurgent organisations with untrustworthiness and apprehension.

## **Religion and the Satisfactions of Narathiwat Respondents with the Government's Performance in Handling the Deep South Insurgency**

The last significant findings of this study revealed no correlation between the religious background of the respondents and their satisfaction with the government's performance in addressing the Deep South insurgency. These findings contradicted the initial hypothesis that the surveyed Buddhists would be more satisfied with the government's achievements than Muslims. When examining the overall responses regarding satisfaction with the government, it became evident that most religious groups expressed dissatisfaction with the government's achievements. The government's efforts in resolving the violent crisis were perceived as inadequate and not performing its best. The Deep South insurgency has persisted for over two decades, and the continuation of the violence implied that the number of casualties would likely increase over time.

Additionally, both groups believed that the government failed to provide sufficient safety to the people in the region. Innocent civilians have become insurgent groups' targets, leaving them unprotected. Furthermore, the government was seen as lacking an understanding of the needs of the local population. This may be attributed to the little encouragement for active participation and expressing opinions in the search for solutions and peacebuilding processes. Peace dialogues have often taken place abroad without proper publicity, and they have been conducted bilaterally, involving only two parties: the insurgent groups and government representatives. Civil society organisations and local civilians have not been invited to participate in these initiatives. Despite the numerous dialogues that have been conducted, no significant outcomes have been achieved. The negotiations have failed to produce major decisions that could improve the situation.

Moreover, the government has persistently relied on security operations as the primary method of addressing the crisis. However, these operations have not been perceived as transparent by either group. The lack of transparency and clarity surrounding the government's security measures has further contributed to the dissatisfaction and distrust among the respondents.

In summary, the research findings demonstrated that the respondents' religious backgrounds did not significantly influence their satisfaction with the government's performance in handling the Deep South insurgency. Both Muslims and Buddhists

expressed dissatisfaction with the government's efforts and perceived shortcomings in ensuring the local population's safety. The lack of understanding of local needs and the limited involvement of civil society and local civilians in peacebuilding processes have hindered progress in resolving the crisis. The government's overreliance on security operations without transparency has also contributed to the prevailing sense of discontent among the respondents.

### **5.3 LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATION, AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Throughout the data collection process, one of the significant limitations encountered in this study was the concern over the sensitivity and controversial nature of the scope of research. It was crucial to emphasise that this research was conducted solely for academic purposes, with no intention to incite or disrupt regional security. Given the delicate nature of the subject matter, employing a probability sampling method, which allowed for random participant selection, proved to be highly challenging. Throughout the data sampling selection, the research's respondents primarily consisted of individuals known to and closely associated with the researcher. This approach aimed to minimise potential misunderstandings or paranoia among the participants regarding the research's objectives and data collection process.

In fact, opting for known individuals as research participants carried both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, this method fostered a comfortable environment that encouraged respondents to share their perspectives openly. Before data collection, the researcher established a foundation of trust with the participants, facilitating their willingness to provide honest responses. However, it was essential to acknowledge the drawbacks of this methodology, as it inherently lacked systematicity and may have introduced biases into the findings. Hence, the researcher would challenge future researchers, who would be interested in continuing to explore this topic, to employ a more systematic approach: probability sampling and expand the scope of participation. All these suggestions were to ensure the engagement of a broader range of participants, enhance the sample's representativeness, minimise potential biases, increase the generalizability of the findings, and enhance the reliability of the results.

Additionally, while this study primarily centered on religious variables, it would be advisable for future research to explore other variables: economics, politics, and education, to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics underlying the Deep South insurgency. By examining these diverse factors, researchers can uncover additional insights and contribute to a more holistic understanding of the situation.

Finally, the researcher encouraged future studies to extend their investigations in different locations of the research unit, such as Yala and Pattani provinces, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the insurgency. The Deep South insurgency has experienced and heavily affected the two provinces. It would significantly contribute to the literature to see the differences in the respondents' perspectives across different provincial locations.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: MAPS OF THE LOCATION



Map of Thailand and the Location of Songkhla, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces

## APPENDIX B: STREET PAINTS CAMPAIGN

Citation	Images
(Isranwes Agency, October 28, 2018)	 <p data-bbox="663 898 1390 987">Written in Malay language 'Patani Merdeka' means 'Patani Independence'</p>
(Inn News, May 27, 2022)	 <p data-bbox="663 1518 1390 1608">Written in Malay language 'Patani Merdeka' means 'Patani Independence'</p>
(Unknown, May 16, 2014).	 <p data-bbox="663 1794 1390 1883">Written in Malay language 'Patani Merdeka' means 'Patani Independence'</p>



Written in Malay language 'Patani Merdeka' means 'Patani Independence'



Written in Jawi script 'فطاني حق كو' means 'Patani is Mine'



Written in Malay language 'Patani Merdeka' means 'Patani Independence'



Written in Jawi script 'فطاني مردیکا' means 'Patani Independence'



Written in Jawi script 'فطاني حق كو' means 'Patani is Mine'

(Wassana, April 7, 2017)



Written in Malay language 'Patani Merdeka' means 'Patani Independence'



Written in Thai language ‘ไทยจงพินาศ ปัตตานีจงเอกราช’ means ‘Thailand will perish, Pattani will be independent.’

(Thairath News,  
November 27, 2020)



Written in Jawi script ‘Merdeka’ means ‘Independence’



Written in Malay language ‘Patani Merdeka’ means ‘Patani Independence’

**APPENDIX C: THE PERCEPTIONS OF NARATHIWAT PEOPLE  
TOWARDS THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF THE DEEP  
SOUTH PROVINCES OF THAILAND**

<b>A. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA</b>		
No	Items	Choices
1	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Below than 20 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 <input type="checkbox"/> Above 50
2	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
3	District	<input type="checkbox"/> Mueang <input type="checkbox"/> Tak Bai <input type="checkbox"/> Bacho <input type="checkbox"/> Yi-ngo <input type="checkbox"/> Ra-ngea <input type="checkbox"/> Rueso <input type="checkbox"/> Si Sakhon <input type="checkbox"/> Waeng <input type="checkbox"/> Sukhirin <input type="checkbox"/> Chanea <input type="checkbox"/> Su-ngai Padi <input type="checkbox"/> Cho-airong <input type="checkbox"/> Su-ngai Kolok
4	Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Islam <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist <input type="checkbox"/> Other
5	Highest Level of Education	<input type="checkbox"/> No Formal Schooling <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree and above

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, and SA= Strongly Agree

No	Items	SD (1)	D (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
<b>B. Perceptions of the Autonomous Region of the Deep South Provinces of Thailand</b>						
6	I support for the Autonomous Region of the Deep South provinces of Thailand.					
7	I am unsatisfied with the current administrative system of the Deep South provinces.					
8	I feel more secure if the Deep South provinces become the Autonomous Region.					
9	I am hopeful that the Deep South autonomy will be achieved one day.					
10	I believe that the autonomy would solve insurgent violence in my community					
11	I do not believe that the Autonomous Region would harm religious harmony between Buddhists and Muslims in the Deep South provinces.					
12	I believe that the Autonomous Region would improve the economy of the Deep South provinces					
13	I do not think that the establishment of the Autonomous Region would harm the stability of the Deep South provinces.					
<b>C. Trust in the Insurgent Organisations</b>						

13	I trust the insurgent organisations.					
14	I feel the Thai government is less trustworthy than the insurgent organisations.					
15	I feel more afraid of the security forces than the insurgent organisations.					
16	I feel the insurgent organisations are representing the voices of the Deep South people to the government.					
17	I think it is justifiable for the insurgents to use violence against the state.					
<b>D. Satisfaction with the Government's Performance in Handling the Deep South Insurgency</b>						
18	I am satisfied with the current government's overall performance in solving the Deep South insurgency.					
19	I think the government is doing its best in finding ways to solve the insurgency crisis.					
20	I believe that the government understands the needs of people in Deep South provinces.					
21	I feel the government provides adequate safety to people in the Deep South provinces.					
22	I am satisfied with the government's transparency in security operations.					