

**MALAY-MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN
SOUTH THAILAND (1930S-1990S)**

by

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MALAY-MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH THAILAND (1930S-1990S)

Abstract

The study investigates the development of institutions under the *madrasah* pattern and other institutions established on the basis of *madrasah* system from the 1930s until 1990s. *Madrasahs* in the South of Thailand were influenced by *madrasahs* of the *Haramayn* which had developed since the late 19th century. However, the first generation *madrasahs* (1930s-1940s) could not last long due to government pressures. The development of *madrasah* in Bangkok and nearby provinces had begun earlier in the 1910s. They expanded in the following decades to follow closely the government policies while some of them were taken over by the government.

The second generation *madrasahs* (1950s–1960s) had grown rapidly throughout Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat through graduates of the *Haramayn* especially from *Madrasah Dar al-‘Uhm* and *Madrasah Indonesia*. It was from these second generation *madrasahs* that the Islamic Private School came about in the 1960s and thereafter while others managed to keep their *status quo*. The success of *madrasah* could be seen by the late 1960s through the establishment of the *Tadika* and other institutions including the *Kulliyah*, *Madrasah Tahfiz al-Qur’an* and *Dar al-‘Aitam*.

The government response towards their development had begun in the early 20th century when the old Patani Kingdom was integrated into the Thai state. The government also made education as the major tool for national integration. The government response to Malay-Muslim educational institutions was through different approaches ranging from giving closer attention to Malay-Muslim students in the

Haramayn and Cairo to cooperating with their parents in Thailand to gather the relevant information. The government also run various programmes to attract Malay-Muslim children to attend government schools and attempted to establish the higher Islamic educational institution in Thailand.

The development of Malay-Muslim educational institutions showed a historical continuity even though Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat had been integrated into the Thai state for over a century. A major agenda behind the establishment of all types of educational institutions is to maintain religious knowledge as well as to preserve their Malay identity as long as possible.

INSTITUSI PENDIDIKAN MELAYU MUSLIM DI SELATAN THAILAND (1930-AN - 1990-AN)

Abstrak

Kajian “Institusi Pendidikan Melayu Muslim di Selatan Thailand” memaparkan sejarah perkembangan institusi pendidikan dalam bentuk *madrasah* dan institusi-institusi lain hasil kejayaan *madrasah* daripada 1930-an sehingga 1990-an. *Madrasah* yang dibangunkan mempengaruhi sistem *madrasah* di *Haramayn* yang berkembang semenjak akhir abad ke-19. Namun *madrasah* dari generasi pertama (1930-an-1940-an) tidak bertahan lama disebabkan tindakan kerajaan. Perkembangan *madrasah* di Bangkok dan wilayah sekitar pula muncul lebih awal iaitu pada 1910-an. Ia terus berkembang serta cepat menyesuaikan dengan dasar pendidikan kerajaan bahkan sebahagiannya diambilalih oleh kerajaan.

Madrasah generasi kedua (1950-an–1960-an) berkembang pesat di Pattani, Yala dan Narathiwat melalui lulusan *madrasah* di *Haramayn* terutama *Madrasah Dar al-‘Ulum* dan *Madrasah Indonesia*. *Madrasah-madrasah* generasi kedua inilah yang berkembang menjadi Sekolah Agama Rakyat semenjak 1960-an manakala yang lain tetap menjaga *status quo*. Kejayaan *madrasah* boleh dilihat semenjak akhir 1960-an dengan penubuhan *Tadika* dan institusi-institusi pendidikan yang lain berdasarkan bentuk *madrasah* termasuk *Kulliyah*, *Madrasah Tahfiz al-Qur’an* dan *Dar al-‘Aitam*.

Tindakan kerajaan terhadap perkembangannya pula berlaku semenjak bekas kerajaan Melayu Patani disatukan ke dalam Thailand awal abad ke-20 bahkan pendidikan merupakan dasar asas dalam menjayakan penyatuan negara. Tindakan kerajaan dibuat melalui cara yang berbagai daripada pemantauan secara rapi terhadap

pelajar-pelajar Melayu Muslim di *Haramayn* dan Cairo kepada kerjasama dengan ahli keluarga mereka di Thailand untuk mendapatkan maklumat pelajar-pelajar di sana. Kerajaan juga menganjurkan program-program tertentu untuk menarik perhatian kanak-kanak Melayu Muslim untuk belajar dalam sekolah kerajaan bahkan berhasrat untuk membangunkan institusi pengajian tinggi Islam di Thailand.

Perkembangan institusi pendidikan Melayu Muslim jelas menunjukkan kesinambungan sejarahnya walaupun Pattani, Yala dan Narathiwat telah satu abad disatukan ke dalam negara bangsa Thai. Agenda utama sebalik penubuhan institusi pendidikan dalam apa jua bentuk adalah bertujuan dalam mempertahankan agama Islam dan budaya Melayu selama mungkin.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Previously, Thailand consisted of various small ethnic kingdoms that emerged across the region in the northeastern borders of Myanmar, central and northern Thailand and Laos.¹ Historians believe that the Tais were the first to attempt to build a nation state in this region. These Tais (ไท) were the ancestors of the present day Thais, Laos, the Shans of Myanmar and a wide range of highland societies from mainland Southeast Asia namely the Black, Red and White Tais of Laos and Northern Vietnam and the Lu of Yunnan, China.²

Scholars believe that the early Tais slowly moved southwards from western China in the seventh century. They rapidly adapted the beliefs, ideas, language, technology and religions of those who came into contact with them.³ A variant of the Tai-state was Angkor, the great Khmer kingdom located on the eastern part of modern Thailand. From the 11th to 13th centuries, Angkor was very powerful but declined thereafter. The Tais then settled to the northeast of Angkor to establish their first kingdom known as “Sukhothai” which controlled Angkor, the Mekong delta and the Vientiane plain in the north and Ligor (Nakhon Sri Thammarat) in the south. Many scholars in Thailand and elsewhere claim Sukhothai to be the first Thai nation state which was subsequently followed by Ayudhya (1351-1767), Thonburi (1767-1782) and

¹ Peter Church. 2003. *A Short History of Southeast Asia*. Singapore: John Wiley & Sons (Asia) Pte. Ltd, p. 161; Saichon Satayanurak. 1996. *Prawatsart Thai (The History of Thailand)*. Bangkok: Sukhothai Thammathiraj University Press, p. 3; D.G.E. Hall. 1968. *A History of Southeast Asia*. New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 169.

² David K. Wyatt. 1984. *Thailand: A Short History*. New Heaven: Yale University Press, p. 2.

³ Wendell Blanchard. 1970. *Thailand: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture*. New Heaven: HRAF Press, p. 22.

Bangkok (1782-present) under the Chakri Dynasty. Beginning with Rama I of the Chakri Dynasty, what is now known as Thailand became clearer in terms of its geographical shape and frontiers. It covered all mainland Southeast Asia except those areas under Burmese and Vietnamese suzerainties, as well as a few Malay states in the south. All ethnic tribes or groups like the Mon, Khmer, Cham, Malay, Chinese, Lao, Shan, and others were considered to be under the patronage of the *Phra Borom Pothisompharn*, the royal patronage. The prevailing state ideology was predominantly Buddhist in its values which aim to assimilate and unite all the ethnic groups into one nation.

Modern Thais regard Sukhothai as the birthplace of the Thai nation. They also believed that the nation was first established during the second half of the 13th century.⁴ This means the Thai nation was based on different ethnic background. Even some Thai kings could not rightly claim to be of Tai origin such as King U-thong of Ayudhya and King Rama I; the former was of Chinese origin while the latter's mother was Chinese.⁵ Mixed marriages had assimilated the people of different backgrounds to become the Thai race. The patterns of marriage relationship probably contributed to the gradual character of Thai settlement within the area.⁶

In terms of religion, Hinduism and Buddhism were influential in all aspects of public life in mainland of Southeast Asia including the Thais during the 13th-14th centuries although it should be noted that Muslim traders were actively preaching Islam throughout the region especially in the southern part of mainland Southeast Asia. As noted by Maluleem, it was strongly believed that Islam had already established itself in

⁴ Charnvit Kasetsiri. 1976. *The Rise of Ayudhya*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, p. 39.

⁵ Peter Church. *op. cit*, pp. 163-165.

⁶ Charnvit Kasetsiri. *op. cit*, p. 41.

the south before the Sukhothai period and possibly earlier, before the immigration of the Tais from southern China.⁷

Islam had already existed in Thailand before the Sukhothai period (about 1357 A.D.) which is considered the beginning of Thai history. This means that Islam existed in the area before the Thai (Tai) people moved from Yunnan in China. Muslims in the southern part of Thailand were aborigines who settled in the Malayan Peninsular since 43 B.C. in the kingdom of Langkasuka⁸

The discussion thus far shows that the Thai people originate from various ethnic communities who were different from one another.⁹ Nevertheless, the Tais had adapted well to other groups' identities and were equally successful in assimilating them. The Tai's success in assimilation may have been due to three major institutions namely Buddhism, the bureaucracy and the monarchy. This success is most evident among the ethnic-groups in the north and east of the kingdom.¹⁰ The only region where stiff resistance had taken place, and still is widespread, is the southernmost part of the country where the people are not only of different ethnic background, namely Malays, but are culturally different (speech, dress, belief, and other aspects of life).

During the first half of the 20th century, the people of this southernmost part were never mentioned as "Thais" but were known as "Khaek" i.e. visitors or guests. Royal documents and reports in the Thai court initiated since the beginning of the Chakri Dynasty do not mention Malay-Muslims in the South as "Thai" people; instead,

⁷ Imron Maluleem. 1995. *Wikrok Kwam Khatyaek Rawang Rathabarn Thai Kab Muslim Nai Prathet Thai (Analysis on the Conflict between the Government and the Muslims in Thailand)*. Bangkok: Islamic Academy, pp. 3-4.; This idea is supported by local academicians like Thongchai Winichakul, Suchit Wongthep, Sisak Waliphodom and Rattiya Saleh. See Suchit Wongthep (ed.). 2004. " "Srivijaya" Kaukae Kua Nai Prawattisart (Patani in "Srivijaya" older than Sukhothai in the History)." Bangkok: Mattichon.

⁸ Jaran Maluleem. 1998. "The Coming of Islam to Thailand", in *PROSEA Occasional Paper No. 15*, April, p. i.

⁹ Surin Pitsuwan. 1988. "The Lotus and the Crescent: Clashes of Religious Symbolisms in Southern Thailand. ", in *Ethnic Conflict in Buddhist Societies: Sri Lanka, Thailand and Burma*, K.M. de Silva et. Al (ed.). Colorado: Westview Press, p.187.; Prayoonsak Chalaichanadhet. n.l. *Muslim Nai Prathet Thai (Muslims in Thailand)*. Bangkok: Thonson Mosque, pp. 34-35.

¹⁰ Surin Pitsuwan. *op. cit.*, p. 188.

they were denoted as “Khaek” (visitor), “Khaek Muslim” (Muslim visitor), and “Khaek Melayu” (Malay visitor).¹¹ These terms were used widely to refer to the Malay-Muslims, especially in the first part of the twentieth century. In 1939, the term “Siam” was changed to “Thailand” which was a significant move. Thailand became the land of the Thai people from the different parts of the land covering the South, North, Center, East and Northeast (the “Isan” region), and the different religions. Thais were subsequently identified as “Thai-Buddhists”, “Thai-Muslims”, “Thai-Christians” and so forth. However, those from the South preferred to be known as “Malay-Muslims” rather than “Thai-Muslims”.

Prime Minister Field Marshal Phibun Songkram who initiated the change from Siam to Thailand had also announced a new policy called *Raththaniyom* that put emphasis on Thai nationalism. Since then “Thai Islam” and “Thai Muslim” were used officially to refer to all Thai citizens who were Muslims. The official term denotes these people were Thais who happened to be Muslims; while the popular term of Malay-Muslims connotes the people are Malay-Muslims who happened to live in Thailand.¹² It means that these people accepted Thai citizenship but their identity remain Malays who are firm believers in Islam. The terms, “Thai Islam” and “Thai Muslim”, however, was created as part of the government campaign of promoting Thailand as a civilized and unified nation, the words were thought to be a polite mode of official Thai reference to Islam and Muslims in Thailand. Their use was part of a general movement to build nationalism and to promote the assimilation and integration of minority groups at that

¹¹ Chaiwat Satha-anand. 1988. “Buranakarn Thang Sangkhom Kab Khwam Mankhong Khong Rath (Social Integration and the National Security)”, in *Roirauw Nai Sangkhom Thai? Buranakarn Kab Khwam Mankhong Khong Chart (Split in Thai Society ? Integration and the National Security)* Khusuma Sanitwong Na Ayudhya (ed.). Bangkok: Faculty of Political Sciences, Chulalongkorn University, p. 67.; Thongchai Winichakul. 2002. “Raeuk Lau Chark Chaidan (Stories from the Borders)” *Sillapha Wathanatham*. Vol. 12, Oct., p. 77.

¹² Astri Suhrke. 1989. “The Muslims of Southern Thailand”, in *The Muslims of Thailand, Volume II*, Andrew D.W. Forbes (ed.). Ranchi, India: The Catholic Press, p. 1.

time.¹³ Despite the backlash against Phibun's nationalist policies in cultural affairs, the two terms, in fact, have gained popularity not only in the government bureaucracy and in popular journalism, but also among central-Thai speaking Muslim scholars and academics.¹⁴

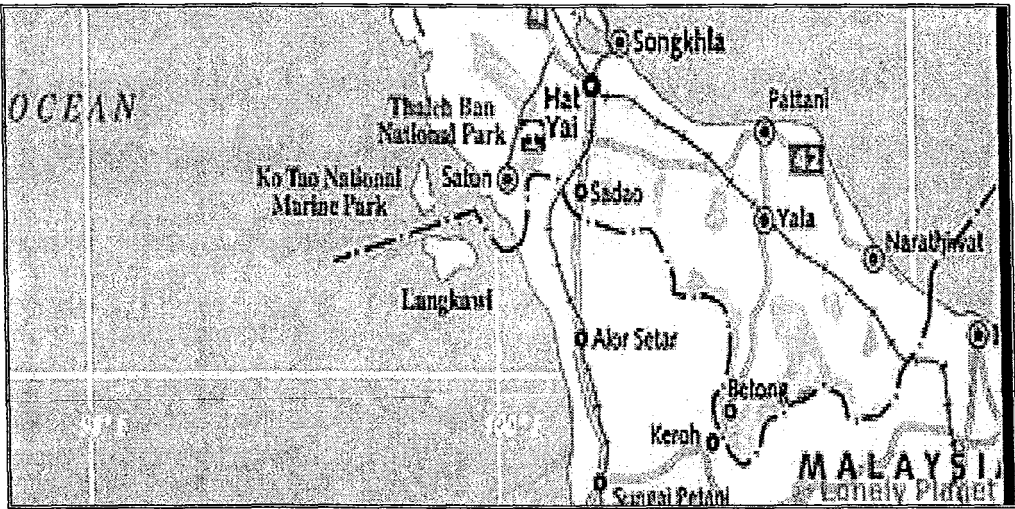
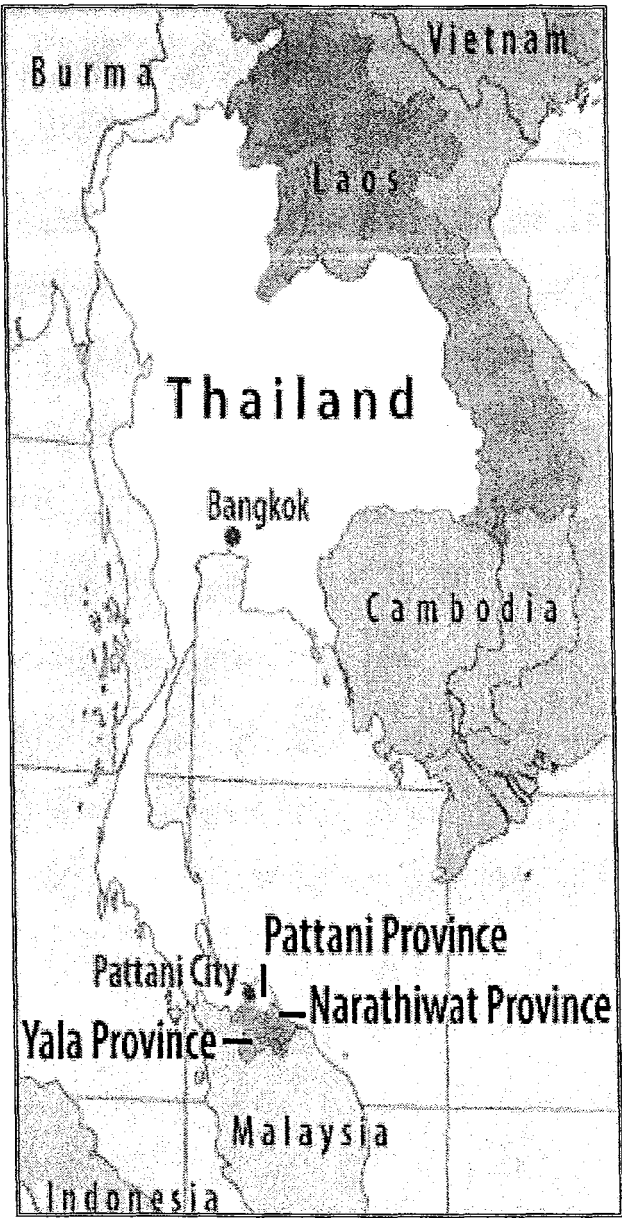
There are differences if one look from the perspective of the government and from the Malay-Muslims' view. To avoid any misunderstanding on the national identity, the government uses "Thai Muslims" instead of "Malay-Muslims." However, as described by Omar Farouk, the difference between "Thai Muslims" and "Malay-Muslims" is one of categorization namely between the "assimilated" and the "unassimilated". The "assimilated" Muslims mainly refer to Muslims who do not settle in the three provinces of South Thailand while the "unassimilated" ones refer to those who settle in the three provinces of South Thailand i.e., Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat where they have been practicing their own way of life.¹⁵

¹³ Thanet Aphornsuvan. 2003. "History and Politics of the Muslims in Thailand.", in www.einaudi.cornell.edu/Southeastasia/outreach/resources/MuslimThailand.pdf, March 20, 2010.

¹⁴ A.V.N. Diller. 1988. "Islam and Southern Thai Ethnic Reference" in, *The Muslims of Thailand Vol. I*, by Andrew D.W. Forbes (ed). Ranchi, India: The Catholic Press, pp. 134-155.

¹⁵ Omar Farouk. 1989. "The Muslims of Thailand: A Survey.", in *The Muslims of Thailand, Vol. I*, by Andrew D.W. Forbes (ed). Ranchi, India: The Catholic Press, p. 5.

Figure 1.1: Map of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, South Thailand.



As a result of the incorporation of the three provinces into the Thai Buddhist nation from the north, the populations of these provinces have been dominated by Malay-Muslims who are vastly different in religious, linguistic and cultural characteristics. An assertion of this difference is manifested through resistance to the national institutions notably the government and the bureaucracy.¹⁶

To preserve their own identity the Malay-Muslims resorted to various approaches notably the establishment and preservation of the educational institutions. From the Islamic perspective, a good Muslim is a person who strictly adheres to the tenets of Islam. Muslims need to understand the religion through knowledge which can be gained through education. This explained why education is very significant to the Muslims that led to the establishment of a variety of educational institutions in the Malay-Muslim society in the South. *Pondok* and *madrasah* are among the major educational institutions within the region. Even though these institutions have been subjected to change or had changed in form, they had strived to maintain ethnic identity as much as possible.

South Thailand in this study refers to the three border provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, where various types of educational institutions, both formal and informal are found.¹⁷ The educational institutions have been set up by the Malay-Muslims based on three approaches namely (1) to maintain their Islamic traditional institutions, (2) to adapt to the new academic system by combining it with traditional religious teaching, and (3) to establish a curriculum that provides basic knowledge to children besides preserving their Malay-Muslim identity, customs and language.

The chaotic situation in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat compelled the government to take an interest in the Malay-Muslim educational institutions especially unregistered

¹⁶ Surin Pitsuwan. 1982. "Islam and Malay Nationalism: A Case Study of the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand." *Ph.D. Dissertation*, Harvard University, p. 4.

¹⁷ There are 14 provinces in Southern Thailand out of 76 provinces from the different regions.

ones like the *Tadika*, *Pondok* and *Ma'had* (or *Madrasah*). Teachers of these institutions are addressed as “Cikgu”, “Ustaz/Ustazah”, “Babo” and “Tok Guru” while their students are known as “Anak murid”, “Budak sekolah”, “Pelajar” and “Tok Pakir.” Government officials often suspected these teachers to be behind the current instability throughout the three southern provinces although in many cases there is no direct evidence to implicate them.

Graduates of these institutions have gone to become heroes of the independence struggle both in Malaysia and Indonesia. In Thailand, graduates of these institutions had been accused of taking part in the struggle for Patani's independence.¹⁸ Consequently, they are viewed as social parasites while these institutions as hotbeds for separatist movements. Quite often unrests in South Thailand were suspected of being the work of the separatist movements although this was denied by Malay-Muslims.¹⁹ In actual fact the unrests were caused by many factors including misunderstanding of the historical background of the Malay-Muslim minority, poor and inefficient disbursement of state benefits and the belief by the locals that they were discriminated against by the state.²⁰

Although there are differences between the Malay-Muslims and the government, both agree on the significance of the *Tadika*, *Pondok* and *Madrasah*. The Malay-Muslims always view these institutions as centres for seeking Islamic knowledge. Even though there are Islamic subjects taught in village schools either at the primary or secondary levels or in secondary schools nearby, these are insufficient. However, the

¹⁸ Ibrahim Narongraksakhet. 2005. “Pondok and Their Role in Preserving Muslim Identity in Southern Border Provinces.”, in *Knowledge and Conflict Resolution: The Crisis of the Border Region of Southern Thailand*, Uthai Dulyakasem and Lertchai Sirichai (eds.). Nakhon Si Thammarat: School of Liberal Arts, Walailak University, p. 115.

¹⁹ Omar Farouk Bajunid. 1984. “The Historical and Transitional Dimensions of Malay-Muslim Separatism in Southern Thailand.”, in *Armed Separatism in Southeast Asia*, Lim Joo-Jock and S. Vani (ed.). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; Wan Kadir Che Man. 1990. *Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.

²⁰ Ibrahim Narongraksakhet. *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114.

authorities do make serious attempts to interfere in the remaining educational system in the south.

The most important concern when studying Malay-Muslim educational institutions is the Islamic Private School which many understood was transformed from the traditional institution of *pondok*.²¹ However, in terms of its pattern of learning, nature of organization and annual assessment, it was found that the *pondok* have different characteristics which are not consistent with the formation of the Islamic Private School as an educational system. As a result, the Islamic Private School might be transformed from another kind of educational institution whose model is close to the Islamic Private School which is the schooling system. The closest model is the *madrasah* system which was began to introduce in the south in the 1930s and became more well-known in the 1950s and 1960s. However it requires a historical investigation to determine whether the Islamic Private School was transformed from the *madrasah* system or otherwise. Also after the coming of the *madrasah* system how far it develops and how far does the government give its attention to. To understand this phenomenon is important as a way to understand the Malay-Muslims since educational institution is a very important section of the Malay-Muslim social institution.

²¹ See for examples Rung Kaewdaeng. 1968. "Thassana Khong Tokkhru Tor Karn Prabprung *Pondok* Phen Rongraen Rad Sorn Sasana Islam (The Study of the Attitude of Religious Teachers (Tok Guru) towards the Reformation of *Pondok* into the Islamic Private School)" *M.A.Thesis*, The National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA).; Prakij Prachanapajchaneuk. 1973. "Karn Prabprung Lae Songserm *Pondok* Hai Phen Rongraen Rad Sorn Sasana Islam (The Improvement and Encouragement of *Pondok* to be the Islamic Private School)" *M.A.Thesis*, Chulalongkorn University.; Chamlong Sawanakhunanon. 1975. "Botbart Khong Tokkhru Rongraen Rad Sorn Sasana Islam (Role of Religious Teachers (Tok Guru) in the Islamic Private School)" *M.A.Thesis*, Srinakarinwirot University., and Mayuri Charuphan. 1975. *Karnseksa Nai Changwad Pattani Yala Lae Narathiwat (Education in the Provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat)*. Bangkok: the Office of National Education Committee. Such studies conclude that the emergence of the Islamic Private Schools in the early 1960s was the achievement of the government in improving and encouragement of the traditional institution of *pondok* to be the private school.

Hence, there is a need to understand the development of these institutions in the context of Thai history. The study also intends to focus on the nature of their organization, development and the changes that had taken place as well as the factors that had contributed to their existence.

Study Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows.

1. To explore the early development of *madrasah* as the major Malay-Muslim educational institutions in South Thailand.
2. To trace the development of *madrasah* from the first to the second generations, the establishment of other institutions and the government response to this institution.
3. To place the development and changes of the Malay-Muslim educational institutions within the Thai historical context.
4. To fill in some of the gaps in the historiography of Thailand with regards the contributions and roles of Malay-Muslims in South Thailand in the field of education.

Scope of Study

The term “Malay” refers to an ethnic group which is the majority of the indigenous people in the “Malay” Peninsula which include those in the south of Thailand. The word “ethnic” is used in a broad sense covering factors that differentiate one group of people from another. The distinctions include language, race, religion and skin colour.²² There are many ethnic minorities in the modern world although their situation may differ from one another. As mentioned earlier, ethnic minorities have their own racial identity which they always attempt to preserve as much as possible. Preservation of identities is

²² Yash Ghai. 2000. *Ethnicity and Autonomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 4.

often manifested through demands for equality, development, integration and autonomy.²³

In the Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, the word “ethnicity” or “ethnic group” refers to a group of individuals who consider themselves, or are considered by others, to share common characteristics which differentiate them from the other collectivities in a society, within which they develop distinct cultural behaviour. The term was coined in contradistinction to race, although members of an ethnic group may be identifiable in terms of racial attributes. They may also share other cultural characteristics such as religion, occupation, language, or politics. Ethnic groups should also be distinguished from social classes, since membership generally cross-cuts the socio-economic stratification within society, encompassing individuals who share (or are perceived to share) common characteristics that supersede class.²⁴

The Malays in Thailand thus constitute a typical ethnic group, since they include individuals of different racial origins, social classes, mother tongues, political beliefs, and religious commitment (from orthodox to modern), yet still consider themselves to share a common Malay identity that distinguishes them from, while not necessarily placing them in opposition to, the wider Thai society. Ethnic groups are therefore fluid in composition and subject to change in definition. New ethnic groups are constantly being formed as populations move between countries. The concept of ethnicity is particularly important when it forms the basis for social discrimination (as, for example, the case of Jews in Nazi Germany) or for independence movements (as in the Soviet Union).

²³ Suria Saniwa bin Mahmood. 1998. “De-radicalization of Minority Dissent: A Case of the Malay-Muslim Movement in Southern Thailand.” *M.A. Thesis*, Universiti Sains Malaysia, p. 7.

²⁴ Gordon Marshall. 1998. “Ethnicity”, in *A Dictionary of Sociology*, www.encyclopedia.com, June 11, 2009.

The term “institution” refers to organization or society for helping people with special needs.²⁵ This study involves “educational institution.” Educational institution may be in the form of schools, colleges, universities, or traditional and modern educational institutions. Their style of instruction is either formal or informal. It is imperative for a society to have its own educational institution so that it will be the centre for acquiring knowledge in that society. Since education is seen as the way to improve the quality of life from one generation to another, each country needs to establish educational institutions for this purpose. Knowledge is very crucial to man especially in the preservation of one’s identity especially among the minority. The study focuses on the educational institutions that are built and maintained by the Malay-Muslims in South Thailand. The discussion focuses on those institutions which are not part of the national education system but are targeted at preserving the Malay-Muslim identity through their curriculum and administration. These institutions are the *Madrasah, Tadika, Kulliyah, Madrasah Tahfiz al-Qur’an* and *Dar al-’Aitam* (House for Treating Orphans).

The word “South Thailand” refers to the southern part of Thailand which consists of fourteen provinces, but this research focuses only on the three southern provinces which are located near the Thai-Malaysia border namely Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat.²⁶ These provinces are selected because of their inherent differences with the other “Thais” of Thailand or even within the South itself. The locals here have their own way of life which is similar to the Malays in the northern states of Malaysia like Kelantan and Kedah.

²⁵ Oxford University. 1989. *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 650.

²⁶ There are 76 provinces in Thailand from the different regions, South, North, East, Northeast, Central (which is the location of the capital Bangkok) and West.

The study spans the period from the 1930s until the 1990s. This period is selected as it witnessed considerable changes in the nature of educational institutions in South Thailand. In the early 1930s, there was a major change in Islamic education among the Malay-Muslims when the *madrasah* system was established. This Islamic school system was later transformed into other kinds of educational institutions while many of the *madrasahs* adapted themselves to the “Islamic Private School” system which uses an integrated curriculum. The *madrasah* system and its graduates had contributed immensely to changes within the Malay-Muslim community. By the 1990s, these institutions were found predominantly in the south.

Literature Review

Academic writings on the Malay-Muslim ethnic minority in the South relate primarily to the provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. Its existence can be traced to the 1950s when the *Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani* (the History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani), written by Ibrahim Syukri, was first published in 1958. The publication of this academic tome was aimed at raising awareness about Patani’s historical past and subsequent development.²⁷ In outlining his argument, Ibrahim was addressing a local audience, with an intimate knowledge of shared values. It was also done for a political purpose to persuade, mobilize, and inform his fellow Muslims on the cause of Patani.²⁸ Besides explicating the origins and rise of the Patani kingdom and its subsequent decline, the book also discusses political development during the late 1940s until the early 1950s.

²⁷ Ibrahim Syukri. 1961. *Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani*. Pasir Putih: Majlis Ugama Islam Kelantan, p. ii.

²⁸ Ibrahim Syukri. 1990. *History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani*, translated by Corner Bailey and John N. Miksic. Ohio: Ohio University, p. x.

Teeuw and Wyatt had compiled a translation with an analysis of *Hikayat Patani*, the classical text outlining the historical development of Patani. In their analysis, Teeuw and Wyatt had noted correctly that *Hikayat Patani* or *the Short History of Patani* was a blend of both historical facts and legends:

That is to say, however, that the text is not a mere chronological enumeration of facts, but it is a story in which the author worked very selectively and with a clear aim in mind. We have reasons to believe that he did not limit himself to historical facts, and that in his story, both fact and fiction occur side by side, although this distinction may have been irrelevant to the author himself.²⁹

The huge demonstrations in downtown Pattani and the subsequent violent crackdown by the authority on the protestors between December 1975 and January 1976 drew international attention to the ethnic issues in South Thailand. As a result, a plethora of articles, books and academic works were generated by both local and foreign scholars since the late 1970s until the early 1990s. Three major reasons can be cited for this phenomenon. First, the successful overthrow of the military dictatorship by student demonstrators in Bangkok in 1973 led to the emancipation of thought and the subsequent expansion of academic freedom, which contributed to a highly intellectual and critical analysis of events plaguing the South. Second, the emergence of a breed of new scholars of Muslim and non-Muslim descent before the 1980s and the 1990s prompted an explosion of intensive research that led to numerous academic tracts and in-depth scholarly works. Using English as medium they were able to draw international attention to what had hitherto been a largely obscure domestic problem. Finally, the 1975 demonstrations by themselves engineered a political reawakening in Pattani that in turn spawned numerous militant and political organizations like the Barisan Revolusi

²⁹Teeuw, A. and Wyatt, D.K. 1970. *Hikayat Patani, The Short History of Patani*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 289.

Nasional (BRN), Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani (BNPP) and Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) which were largely responsible for initiating and strategizing the local insurgency against the government's political and socio-cultural hegemony. This drew the attention of scholars from Thailand and outside Thailand to the nascent conflict that fostered some critical analysis of the situation.

During the 1990s, research into the political scenario in Patani underwent a transformation as the Malay-Muslim population embraced democratic means to resolve the Patani issue with some of the Muslim politicians holding major political positions in the Thai cabinets. A Muslim group called "Wahdah", the United Group under the flag of the Inspiration Party (Phak Khwamwang Mai) led by General Chowwalit Yongchaiyut had played considerable roles in running projects focusing on the following aims.

1. To unite Muslims in Thailand.
2. To preserve the basic rights and necessities of Muslims in Thailand.
3. To improve the Muslim community in the aspects of politics, economy, education and social orientation.
4. To give advice and to instill awareness on the political issue among the Muslims.
5. To achieve the implementation of Islamic approach in order to promote its correct practice among Muslims.
6. To promote and develop proper understanding on the Thai democratic system.³⁰

In recent years many studies on South Thailand focusing on Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat had been undertaken especially by post-graduate students in and outside

³⁰ Wahdah. 2006. "Yisib Pi Klum Wahdah Bon Sanam Karn Muang Peau Sangkhom Muslim (20 Years of Wahdah Group on the Political Route for the Muslim Society)" *Muslim News*, Vol.1, July 15-August 14, pp. 11-12.

Thailand.³¹ The present unrest managed to direct the attention of academicians to conduct research on South Thailand. Since early 2004 up to the present, there are more than seventy books written about South Thailand in various disciplines especially on the ethnic unrest. This list does not include the large number of articles, documents and reports that have been completed and published. The fields of studies are myriad including politics, history, linguistics, culture, economy, sociology and anthropology and education.

Below are the major academic works on the Malay-Muslims according to the disciplines of history, politics, sociology and anthropology, language and culture, and education.

In the field of history a few major academic works on the Malay-Muslims in the South of Thailand have incorporated discussion on the historical background of the area. Whatever the details of the discussion, it depends on the limited knowledge of the authors. Most of the authors referred to the historical background just like one side of a coin either as local history meaning history that was produced by the Malay-Muslims or as Thai history emphasizing the area as part of this history. In the case of local history, three sources are important namely *Tarikh Fatani* (History of Patani), *Hikayat Patani* (Story of Patani) and *Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani* (History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani). Different historical sources have not avoided the segregation in history which according to Chaiwat, becomes “the violence in the history” and “the lying history of Patani”.³² The difference in content from two historical sources would lead people to gain different understandings on the history of the Malay-Muslims which concern them especially the issue of how far the Malay Kingdom of Patani was acting

³¹ Numan Hayimasae. 2004. *Selected Bibliography on Patani*. Pattani: n.l, p. i.

³² Chaiwat Satha-anand. 2004. “Khuam Runraeng Nai Prawat Sart: Prawat Sart Haeng Karn Luang Kaeukab Patani (The Violence in History: The Deceptive History of Patani).” *Silapa Watthanatham*. Vol. 80, p. 1.

as an independent state of Patani in the past and the rationale of the Thai kingdom to include this region as part of Thailand during the early 20th century.³³

The most recent studies are conducted by Francis Bradley (2009) and Davisakd Puaksom (2008). Francis Bradley had written *Moral Order in a Time of Damnation: the Hikayat Patani in Historical Context*, and he found that moral authority as expressed in the *Hikayat Patani*, centred on key elements in Patani society. The position of the *raja* as indicated in all themes became the defender of the moral order who resided in the sacred centre of the society. The rulers performed not only their functional roles as *raja*, but also had a crucial ceremonial position at court and tied intimately to the sacred music. The authors of the *Hikayat Patani* constructed the legitimacy of the *raja* by placing them at the crux of the foundation of the polity, the conversion to Islam and the maintenance of the justified social order.³⁴

Bradley further argues that the invasion by Siam in 1785 had destroyed Patani of its political order. The Siamese army killed, enslaved or displaced a large portion of the sultanate's population. As a result the Patani people turned away from the *raja* as the centre of life toward a new moral authority- Mecca. Patani actually had experienced a social revolution in the early nineteenth century that elevated Islam from one of a number of social forces to the primary dynamic for cohesion in the community which completely reshaped Patani social fabric. The greatest Patani '*ulamas*, Syeikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani and others travelled to Mecca to study Islamic knowledge, to reflect upon Patani's political problems and to advocate for educational reforms back home.³⁵

³³ Chaiwat Satha-anand. 2008. *Khuam Runraeng Kab Karn Chadkarn "Khuamching": Pattani Nai Rob Keng Sattawat (Violence and Management of "Truth": Pattani During the Half Century)*. Bangkok: Thammasart University Press, pp.85-95.

³⁴ Francis R.Bradley. 2009. "Moral Oder in a Time of Damnation: The *Hikayat Patani* in Historical Context." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol.40, No.2, p. 290.

³⁵ *Ibid*, pp.291-292.

Bredley further asserts the following.

With this in mind, studies of the *Hikayat Patani* must afford Patani an autonomous history when placing the chronicle within the social and historical context in which it was written. In doing so, we may gain a deeper understanding of the motivations, aspirations, and accomplishments of the writers and the condition of the world in which they live. Future scholarship on the early history of the Malay-Thai borderland should continue to forge along the same path to move beyond nation-state-dominated historical paradigms that impress contemporary strictures back upon earlier times.³⁶

Davisakd Puaksom had studied Patani historiography focusing on the perspective of its contention. He concludes that the authors of Patani histories like *Hikayat Patani*, *Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani* and *Patani: Dahulu dan Sekarang* had clear political objectives. Historical perceptions about the Malay kingdom of Patani still form a crucial foundation for the movement's justification to reclaim "absolute independence" for Patani. The Thai state, on the other hand, has tried its utmost to outshine the lesser radiance of the Patani state, the successive uprisings is a testament to the fragmented nature of the Thai nation. As aging nations show signs of cracking in other regions of Southeast Asia, and indeed in many other parts of the world, Thailand is also struggling with its own past, that of its recent construction as a territorial nation-state. It is a struggle over the nation's identity as a territorial entity, and one wonders whether the border may be on the move.³⁷

Other historical works relating to Patani history includes Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud's *Anglo-Thai Relation, 1945-1954*, Mohd. Zamberi Abdul Malik's *Umat Islam Patani: Sejarah dan Politik*, and Ahmad Fathy al-Fatani's *Pengantar Sejarah*

³⁶ *Ibid*, p.292.

³⁷ Davisakd Puaksom. 2008. "Of a Lesser Brilliance: Patani Historiography in Contention.", in *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on a Plural Peninsula*, Michael J.Montesano and Patrick Jory (eds.). Singapore: NUS Press, pp.84-88.

Patani. The most credible of these is undoubtedly Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud which was part of his Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of Hull in 1989.

Although Nik Anuar's thesis title does not mention directly the history of Patani, the British colonial policy in Malaya had impacted directly on the former Kingdom of Patani i.e. the present three provinces of the South in particular during the British-Thai border agreement of the early 1900s. This thesis was later translated into Malay under the title of *Sejarah Perjuangan Melayu Patani* which published by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia press.

After the 1909 Bangkok agreement, the Malay speaking area became a part of Thailand. The British position with regards the Malay-Muslims depended on imperial interests which changed according to the political situations. During World War II, the British planned to incorporate the three border provinces into Malaya but when the war ended, the plan was shelved as the British needed the assistance of the Thai government especially in rice imports. The close connection between Britain and Thailand increased with the threat of communism in Southeast Asia particularly in Malaya during the late 1940s. The British needed Thai support to curb the communist menace at the Thai-Malaya border.³⁸

Two books on Patani written by the descendants of Patani exiles in Malaysia were Ahmad Fathy al-Fatani's *Pengantar Sejarah Patani (Introduction to the History of Patani)* and Mohd. Zamberi Abdul Malek's *Umat Islam Patani: Sejarah dan Politik (Muslims in Patani: History and Politics)*. Both are descriptive and very similar to one another. Based mostly on English and Malay secondary sources, these two works are weak in terms of the indigenous sources used. However, Zamberi rightly concludes that the history of Patani began from the period of Langkasuka, followed by the 452-year

³⁸ Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud. 1999. *Sejarah Perjuangan Melayu Patani, 1785-1954*. Bangi: Penerbit UKM, pp. 11-12; Nik Anuar Nik Mahmud. 1989. "Anglo-Thai Relation, 1945-1954." *Ph.D. Thesis*, University of Hull.

Patani Sultanate, the incorporation of Patani into the Thai state, and ends with more contemporary incidents. In contrast, the work written by Ahmad Fathy al-Fathani gives less detail compared with Mohd. Zamberi's study.

The recent study by Iik Arifin Mansurnoor looks at the separatism movement in the South Thailand as one of the significant rise of Muslim radicalism in Southeast Asian region after the Pacific war besides those in West Java, Aceh and Moro. He views that all radical movements among Muslims in Southeast Asia uphold the importance of religion in defending their rights and addressing injustices. According to him, historical circumstances and contemporary challenges, however, determine the manifestation of such a religious concept of *Jihad*. Even the diehard founder of the Darul Islam movement, as he cited from Kartosuwirjo, was pragmatic enough in implementing the concept of *Jihad* throughout his political career.³⁹

The academic studies on the Malay-Muslims often touch on the two issues that matter most: politics and history. There are many in-depth political studies although it is not possible to mention all. Among the major ones include Surin Pitsuwan's *Islam and Malay Nationalism: A Case Study of the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand*, Chaiwat Satha-anand's *Islam and Violence: A Case Study of Violent Events in the Four Southern Provinces, Thailand, 1976-1981*, Wan Kadir Che Man's *Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand*, Panomporn Anurongsa's *Political Integration Policy in Thailand: The Case of the Malay-Muslim Minority*, Ahmad Omar Chapakia's *Thai Politics and Struggle of the Malay Society* and Suria Saniwa Mahmud's *De-radicalization of Minority Dissent: A Case of Malay-Muslim in Southern Thailand, 1980-1990*.

³⁹ Iik Arifin Mansurnoor. 2006. "Southeast Asian Muslims and the Rise of Radicalism after the Pacific War.", in *Reflections on Southeast Asian History since 1945*, Richard Mason and Abu Talib Ahmad (eds.). Penang: Penerbit USM, pp.129-159.

Undoubtedly one of the best studies on the Malay-Muslims is by Surin Pitsuwan which was originally a Ph.D. dissertation submitted to Harvard University in 1982. Pitsuwan saw the issue of ethnic nationalism through linking the two main factors that have helped sustain the people's behaviour with the development through the different periods of Thai political history. Islam and Malay ethnicity constitute the "primordial ties" or the "unreflective" sense of collective selfhood for them.⁴⁰ Pitsuwan describes the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of South Thailand which continues to influence relations between the Muslim minority in the South and the Buddhist authority in the North. The study highlights the tussle between the British and the Thai for control over a region that eventually resulted in the drawing of boundaries between British Malaya and Thailand in 1902 which incorporated the region into a portion of Thailand. The political events which took place from 1902 until 1982 decisively transformed the socio-economic structures of Thailand. Through a series of historical "accidents", the Malay-Muslims of South Thailand "have been living under the jurisdiction of a government that can hardly claim their loyalty."⁴¹

Pitsuwan concludes that the strongest bond that binds the Malay-Muslims together is Islam. In fact, his study can be seen as an effort to explain the role of Islam in the long process for the independent struggle of the Malay-Muslims within the "changing economic, political and other social circumstances" of Thai political history.⁴²

Satha-anand recounted how the Malay-Muslims used violence in their struggles and utilized Islam to justify their actions. The possibility of non-violent action does exist in Islamic tradition and therefore a creative interpretation of Islam is much

⁴⁰ Surin Pitsuwan. *op.cit*, p. 281.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 269.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 282.

needed.⁴³ Wan Kadir's study indicates a different account because he compares two different Muslim separatist movements from 2 different communities. Wan Kadir concludes that these movements are a type of ethnic minority community which resulted from the incorporation by a state of autonomous peoples or tribes inhabiting alien territory. For these people or tribes, separation becomes a political possibility because of a socio-historical logic, the coincidence of geography and cultural plurality, the long distance from the centre of authority, and the support of an external community.⁴⁴

Panomporn Anurongsa emphasizes the implementation of a political integration policy on the Malay-Muslims minority. She argues that the policies of the different governments since the late nineteenth century until 1982 are part of the trajectory that the Thai society has taken in the modernization process. She indicates that the most important approach of the government in nation-building is ensconcing the Thai Muslims especially those who are willing to accept Thai legitimacy. Policies regarding education, economics, administrative reforms and security are implemented and they work towards these goals and those who do not comply with them, such as "the orthodox Muslims, and theological graduates from abroad, the separatists" are politically suppressed.⁴⁵

Ahmad Omar Chapakia's *Thai Politics and Struggles of the Malay Society* and Suria Saniwa Mahmood's *De-radicalization of Minority Dissent: A Case of Malay-Muslim in Southern Thailand, 1980-1990* examine the Muslim policies that were deliberated in the Thai parliament. Using qualitative and quantitative approach, Suria

⁴³ Chaiwat Satha-anand. 1994. "Pattani in the 1980s: Academic Literature and Political Stories", in *Muslim Social Science in ASEAN* by Omar Farouk Bajunid (ed). Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Penataran Ilmu, p. 58.

⁴⁴ Wan Kadir Che Man. 1990. *Muslim Separatism: the Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, p. 172.

⁴⁵ Panomporn Anurongsa. 1984. "The Political Integration Policy in Thailand: The Case of the Malay-Muslim Minority" *Ph.D. Dissertation*, University of Texas at Austin, p. 476.

Saniwa describes the changing patterns of Malay-Muslim politics under parliamentary democracy. Ahmad Omar's study is similarly done although he applied the qualitative method. Their main difference is that Suria goes in-depth into the "Wahdah" while Ahmad Omar describes the Muslim politics in general terms within Thailand's political history.

The academic works in the field of sociology and anthropology had been conducted as early as the 1960s when Thomas M. Fraser first investigated the fishing community of Rusembilan and published two books on this coastal village located in the east of Pattani province. Its focus was the community life of the Rusembilan Malay villagers whose main economic activity was fishing. Fraser outlines a village system with both its strengths and weaknesses. In particular, the idea of modernization as manifested by the introduction of motorboats to tow fishing vessels to the fishing grounds is illuminating of the way in which technological development has been affected by social factors. This study can be seen in the behaviour of the Malay-Muslims in the south which had become clearer to us as a result of this anthropological framework.

Chavivun Prachuabmoh's *The Role of Women in Maintaining Ethnic Identity and Boundaries: A Case of Thai Muslims (The Malay Speaking Group in Southern Thailand)* is one of the major studies in the field. She indicates rightly that the Southern Thai Muslims maintain their distinctive ethnicity through various social organizations. She also found out that the women are more influential on the children through a more intimate and emotional process of imparting, teaching and learning with regards ethnicity.⁴⁶ She also highlights Islam had become the source of ethnic identity and

⁴⁶ Chavivun Prachuabmoh. 1980. "The Role of Women in Maintaining Ethnic Identity and Boundaries: A Case of Thai Muslims (The Malay Speaking Group in Southern Thailand)" *Ph.D. Dissertation*, University of Hawaii, pp. 253-255.

boundary maintenance besides providing the mechanism for organizing an ethnic group.⁴⁷

An important work in the field of language and linguistic is by Seni Mudmarn titled *Language Use and Loyalty among the Muslim-Malays of Southern Thailand*. His study found that the Malay language is strongly associated with the notion of Malay ethnicity and Islam. This language serves both as intra-group communication and linking the contemporary Malays to a glorious past. In short it reminds them of their history as a separate sovereign nation. Malay is also considered a source of cultural heritage. This study provides further details on how the Malay-Muslims maintain their language with home and religious institutions as the two main pillars of Malay cultural heritage. Mudmarn advises the government to promote the Malay language as the “official” language at the regional level so that the people will not lose their mother tongue. With this guarantee he believes the Malay-Muslims would be more willing to acquire the Thai language.⁴⁸

Since the unrest of 2004 until the present day many novelists and writers had written novels related to the Malay culture and society notably on the present situation and the Malay-Muslims in the south. Some of these works do indicate unjust practices perpetrated by Thai officials.⁴⁹

In the field of education, the existing studies are of two main types. The first type relates to research on the national education policy that was implemented in the south focusing on the tensions between the government and the Malay-Muslims. The national education policy means compulsory education for Thai children at both the

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 263.

⁴⁸ Seni Mudmarn. 1994. “Social Science Research in Thailand: A Case of the Muslim Minority.”, in *Muslim Social Science in ASEAN*, Omar Farouk Bajunid (ed). Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Penataran Ilmu, pp. 35-38.

⁴⁹ Shinnawat Thangsutthichit. 2008. “Lark Lai Khrua Ma Thae Kan Phen Khrua Siam Prathet Thai (Diversity of Families Combined into One Family of Siam-Thailand)”, *Seminar the Islamic World and Muslims in Southeast Asia*, arranged by the Foundation of Textbooks Project on Humanities and Social Sciences, 28-29 November, Twin Lotus Hotel, Nakhon Si Thammarat, pp. 16-18.