Preserving Tawheed Among Patani Youth Activists: Exploring the Role of Ethno-Religious Identity in Resisting Systematic Oppression

Mansurni Abadi
Institute of ethnic studies, The National University of Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
e-mail: abadimansur25@gmail.com

Ana Octavia Golasila
Faculty of Sociology for peace studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece
Email: anaoctavia@theol.uoa.gr

Wulandari
Faculty of sociology, Open University of Indonesia in Kuala Lumpur (UT-KL Pokjar), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Email: wulandari06052001@gmail.com

Abstract

The conflict between the Thai government and Malay-Muslim insurgents has made southern Thailand—particularly Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani, and parts of Songkhla—a volatile region in Southeast Asia. Rooted in the intersection of ethnicity and Islam, the Pattani people's ethno-religious identity has shaped their resistance. This study examines how Pattani youth, in both Thailand and Malaysia, inherit and utilize this ethno-religious spirit as a tool for activism, resistance, and cultural preservation. Based on qualitative methods, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight youth activists—four residing in southern Thailand and four in Malaysia. Findings show that the internalization of ethno-religious identity empowers the Malay-Muslim community, which faces systemic oppression and marginalization, to sharpen solidarity and develop strategies for resistance. This resistance manifests in five forms: epistemic disobedience, security culture, anti-authoritarianism, ethnic-nationalism, and direct action. Beyond resistance, the internalization of ethno-religion strengthens *tawheed* (belief in God and His commandments), fostering spiritual and cultural resilience. The study introduces a four-stage model of ethno-religious identity development—awareness, exploration, deepening, and internalization—that highlights its critical role in sustaining activism and preserving cultural and religious identity. By exploring the interplay of faith, identity, and resistance, this research provides significant insights into the dynamics of ethno-religion as a unifying force in contexts of systemic oppression. It contributes to the fields of ethno-religious, identity development, and resistance studies, emphasizing the transformative potential of ethno-religion for activism and cultural survival, and the preservation of Islam.

Keywords: Ethnoreligious, South Thailand Conflict, resistance studies, Ghayrah, Tawheed.

Article History

Introduction

The protracted conflict that occurred in the southern Thailand region began in 1786, when the Malay Kingdom of Patani was seized by the Siamese government (Mohammad Zamberi Abdul Malek, 2006; Talib, 1986) and then fully occupied after the Anglo-Siamese Treatym that resulted two significant consequences First, since Britain and Siam agreed to divide up the Malay States' land as they saw fit, the Malay States lost some of their most valuable provinces to the Siamese. It also shows that both the British and the Siamese were eager to divide northern Malay areas for their imperial purposes by handing up Malay sovereignty to the British. For Pattani people especialy activist, every 10 Mac become a day that is always commemorated by protesting against the legacy of colonialism that causes them to live in oppression (Personal interview with Mara Pattani Activist, 2022).

This resistance is sometimes violent, but also featured a resilient attachment to faith, language, and historical landscape (Lamey, 2013). According to the Heidelberg conflict barometer, Southern Thailand conflict is oldest modern conflict in Asia that is still active (Jampaklay, Ford, and Chamratrithirong 2020) that Encourages prominent conventional warfare theorists' findings and advises modern security forces and policymakers what not to do (Rupprecht, 2014). The destabilization has resulted from a highly multifaceted conflict, of which religious and ethnic conflicts, political turmoil, and even criminal networks are often claimed as the key causes (Nuchpiam & Prateeppornnarong, 2020).

The BRN (Barisan Revolusioner Nasional) or The Patani Malay National Revolutionary with guerrilla unit called *"Runda Kumpulan kecil"* is often blamed for gun attacks and car bombs in the region, targeting security officers and civilians (Nuchpiam & Prateeppornnarong, 2020). The insurgency in Thailand's deep south is characterized by sabotage, assassinations of alleged state collaborators including teachers and village headman, improvised explosive device attacks, and small-scale ambushes on security forces. All these examples indicate that bloodshed in the Deep South is motivated by fundamental interactions and their ongoing dynamic, which has become a flaming "*framework of violence"* (Jitpiromsri, 2019; McDermott, 2021).

During insurgency situation, religious radicalism gaining momentum in South Thailand, that lead to acts of intolerance, extremism, and radicalism. But In other ways, Thailand military also using the emergency decree to cover human rights abuses without accountability, according to International Crisis Group (2009) no effective policy to checks on abuses by the security forces. Despite frequent peace efforts, the region that serves as an international transit point remains gripped by the threat of violence, which can erupt at any moment. As a result, the Thai government is reluctant to revoke the military emergency status in the area and replace it with a more accommodative approach (Nishikawa, 2009; Ridwan, 2014; Tan-Mullins, 2009). Ironically, the continuing embers of conflict in southern Thailand, according to Croissant (2007), demonstrating the erosion of respect for human rights and other political rights and the deepening political divide in Thai society.

Since the early 2000s, the conflict in southern Thailand has seen a continuous rise in casualties, reflecting the region's entrenched volatility. According to Deep South Watch (personal interview,2024) , a conflict-monitoring organization under Prince songkla University in Pattani, that active since 2004, particularly following the tragic Tak Bai and Krue Se Mosque incidents, the number of victims has steadily increased. By 2023, the death toll had increased to 7,540, and the number of injuries to 14,021.

Victims include both Malay-Muslim and Thai-Buddhist civilians, as well as Monks (reuters, 2019), security forces (Abdullah, 2024),police officers, civil defence volunteer / Ranger Volunteer (Tanakorn, 2023), foreigners (bernama, 2019), including insurgents (Benjakat, 2024) Despite Malaysia's role as a mediator in peace talks, violence continues to flare up in the region, and the Thai government remains hesitant to shift away from a military-focused approach (Wheeler & Chambers, 2019). In 2024, the Thai government allocated 6.65 billion baht to the region's integrated development plan, signaling ongoing reliance on military solutions while peace remains elusive (Ahmad & notharat, 2024). This extended conflict encompasses not only issues of injustice

and separatism but also reflects an effort at hegemony by the Thai government, referred to as Siamization. This initiative seeks to impose Thai values, language, customs, and other aspects upon the Malay Muslim population. Such actions are perceived as a form of cultural genocide, wherein the Malay Muslim ethnic group is permitted to exist, yet the elements of their culture, including their religion, are gradually being eradicated (Bilsky & Klagsbrun, 2018; Paronyan et al., 2021).

In southern Thailand, Malay culture and Islamic teachings are deeply intertwined, resulting in strong ethnoreligious undertones within the conflict (Chambers et al., 2019). According to Yong, (2023) effort to create Thai unity and patriotism, the Malay Muslim population became a major problem for the rulers and the nationalist project, so that from here there was a pretext to continue to exercise state power by force in the southernmost region of Thailand. That's why, The resistance by some Malay-Muslim ethnic groups is not solely about seeking independence, but also an effort to combat what Otto von Feigenblatt describes as "Existential Uncertainty," an intersubjective reality that creates a general sense of stability and group cohesion. These groups fear that their culture and religion may be forgotten, leaving future generations without a clear identity of their origins, apart from the one imposed by the central government (Yong, 2023).

The younger generation of Pattani is viewed as pivotal in shaping the future of cultural and religious practices, making the preservation of their ethno-religious identity essential for both cultural continuity and resistance. While significant research has explored the structural causes of the conflict, less is understood about the role of ethno-religious identity in sustaining cultural and religious resilience among Pattani youth. Specifically, how do these youth leverage their ethnoreligious identity to navigate systemic oppression while preserving their culture and religion? Furthermore, what mechanisms within this identity contribute to resistance and the reinforcement of Islamic beliefs?.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the dual role of ethno-religious identity as a tool for resistance and a vehicle for preserving Malay-Muslim cultural and religious practices. By focusing on Pattani youth in both the deep south and the diaspora, particularly in Malaysia, the research aims to illuminate how this identity fosters resilience and combats cultural erasure. It seeks to (1) analyze the impact of ethno-religious identity on resistance strategies, and (2) assess its effectiveness in reinforcing Islamic principles. This investigation offers insights into the dynamic interplay of faith, identity, and resistance in contexts of systemic oppression, contributing to broader discussions on cultural and religious survival in conflict zones.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach based on phenomenology, that integrating identity development, ethnoreligious and resistance theories to explore the complex interplay between identity, culture, and resistance among Patani Malay youth. Data gathered By examining lived experiences and social dynamics within the context of ongoing conflict, we aim to uncover the nuanced ways in which ethno-religious identity influences resistance strategies and maintaining ethno-religious element, both in southern Thailand and among diaspora communities.

The research utilized semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data from eight pattani youth activist that become workers and student , with four of them still living in southern Thailand and rest in Malaysia. The data collection process started with recruiting participants through community networks and referrals. Interviews were held in locations that were convenient for the participants to ensure their comfort and confidentiality. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent for transcription and analysis. This varied group was selected to reflect the intricate nature of ethno-religious identity and the strategies of resistance within differing socio-political environments. Selection criteria included age, gender, and a degree of awareness regarding cultural and political matters pertinent to the Patani community. The interviews were centered on personal stories, enabling an in-depth examination of the participants' lived experiences. As for the background, age, and origins of the research subjects, we present this information in the table below, using their initials.

Table 1. research participant profile

No.	Initial	Male/Female	Background	Domicile
1.	AL	Female	Student	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2.	ST	Female	Student	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
3	ES	Female	Workers	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
4	ZT	Male	Workers	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
5	AM	Male	Workers	Narathiwat, Thailand
6	PS	Male	Student	Yala, Thailand
7	BD	Female	Worker	Yala, Thailand
8	HP	Male	Student	Narathiwat.Thailand

Source: list of research participant

The analysis of the data was conducted through thematic analysis, adhering to the guidelines established by Braun and Clarke, to pinpoint and categorize key themes that arose from the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Brulé & Finnigan, 2020; Von Feigenblatt, 2010).This methodology allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how ethnicity and religion intersect in influencing and maintain the identities and resistance initiatives of Patani youth. By cross-referencing the findings with existing literature, the study ensured that the interpretations were firmly rooted in both the voices of the participants and relevant theoretical frameworks, thereby offering significant insights into the ethno-religious dynamics within the ongoing conflict in southern Thailand.

Results

To facilitate the results of our online and offline interviews conducted between March and August, we engaged with eight young Patani individuals living in Pattani and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. We utilized identity development theory to guide our interview questions, focusing on both internal factors such as personal, emotional, and spiritual and external factors such as social, community, family (Bögre, 2021; Brennan & Canny, 2023; Stryker, 2008; Suckert, 2022).

The interview findings were categorized into four distinct stages of identity development by erikson, that consist of (a). Awareness: Recognizing one's difference from other Thais; (b).Exploration: Understanding what it means to be a Malay-Muslim in non-muslim society (c).Deepening/Commitment: Engaging more deeply with and finding fulfillment in expressions of Malay-Muslim identity through active participation in community activities; and (d).Internalization/Synthesis: Integrating these aspects of identity into daily life (AVRUCH, 1982; Chapman & Werner-Wilson, 2008; Gilleard & Higgs, 2016; Kendra Cherry B, 2022; Lunsky, 1966; Maree, 2021; Mcleod, 2013).

Based on the interview results, we correlates the answers with four key aspects of personal development. This approach allowed us to clearly map how each participant's experience aligns with these developmental stages, offering deeper insights into their individual and collective growth to make ethnoreligious embedded..The first point about awareness of the distinctions between individuals as members of the Malay-Thai community and the predominant non-Muslim Thai population. We pose four key questions, including: (A). How do you view the differences between your identity as a Malay-Thai and the broader Thai society, particularly regarding religion and culture? ; (B). At what moment in your life did you first recognize the disparities between your community and the larger Thai society?; (C). In what ways does your affiliation with the Malay-Muslim community influence your interactions with the majority of non-Muslim Thais?; (4). And, how does this awareness of cultural and religious differences inform your perspective on the current social and political climate in southern Thailand?.

The findings indicate that the participants' identity as Malay-Thai Muslims is significantly shaped by their ethnic background and religious convictions. They express no issues with these differences in social settings, as Islamic principles embrace diversity, which they view as part of divine destiny *(sunnatullah).* Three participants emphasized the idea of *lil taarafu* (to know each

other) as Islamic framework for fostering positive interactions in multicultural landscape rooted in inclusivity, respect, and the celebration of individual uniqueness, all while adhering to moral and ethical standards. Conversely, in political contexts, there is a heightened awareness of identity differences framed in an us versus them mentality. While they do not perceive all Thai individuals as adversaries, they tend to maintain a degree of separation from the majority group, creating a protective social bubble. In addition, there are several occasions of human rights abuses reported in southern Thailand, which have elicited a defensive stance from some Thai citizens regarding the conduct of the authorities. The majority of the officers and officials operating in this area are primarily from the dominant ethnic group, causing them to be cautious in their dealings with the majority population. AL stated, "*Most of the Thai people we know in the south are often spies for the government. On social media, they frame our large gatherings for cultural or religious activities as attempts to undermine the country.*"

Figure 1. Clash between thai forces and Malay-muslim resistance group

At this juncture of awareness, the idea of "otherness" became evident, a term that Edward Said first explored in his pivotal text Orientalism . According to Crețan et al (2023) Said highlighted how the West's knowledge systems frame the East as "other," imbued with exoticism and inferiority, which perpetuates the dominance of colonizers over colonized populations. In this context, "*otherness*" is more than a simple descriptor; it is closely intertwined with power relations, where the identities of the colonized are shaped by their perceived departures from Western values and norms. In the context of Pattani, sense of "otherness" shapes the Malay-Thai Muslim youth's understanding of their cultural and religious identity, as they navigate a society where their practices are marginalized by the dominant Thai-Buddhist culture.

Just as in Said's critique, the narrative of difference is reinforced through media representations, public policy, and social interactions, perpetuating a power imbalance that sustains feelings of exclusion and resistance within the minority group. Additionally, since taking control of Pattani in early 20 century, the Thai government has enacted a minimum of three oppressive policies targeting the Malay-Muslim culture in the south. These include the Thesapeban policy, which abolished the institution of Malay kings across the seven states of Pattani following the Bangkok Agreement of 1909; the Rathaniyom policy, aimed at promoting assimilation into Thai identity and culture; and the *Nikhom Sang Kon Eng* policy, designed to diminish the Malay Muslim majority in Southern Thailand (Sarii, 2023).

The issue of "*otherness*" that befalls minority is interesting to discuss, especially in the context of identity as a Muslim in non-muslim society, research about "otherness", written by Sharaby (2021) describe how Youth Muslim in Netherlands, navigate sense of "otherness" in urban space that influence their experiences within the intersectional dynamics of race, ethnicity,

gender, and religion that challenge them to think again about what a Muslim body looks like, what it can do, and how it interacts with other bodies, human and non-human, in shaping socio-spatial life. These can created (micro)social conditions of aggression, silencing, insecurity, and tension what it means to be Muslim and/or religious not only in Netherlands but worldwide including Thailand. to overcome otherness, according to Sharaby (2021), is by displaying symbols of their ethnic and religious identity while continuously fighting for the rights to be different in collective spaces.

The second point, about Exploration that related to understanding what it means to be a Malay-Muslim in non-muslim society in Thailand, we pose five key question, such as (1). How do you define what it means to be a Malay-Muslim from insurgency area that living in Thailand?; (2).How do you feel about expressing your religious or cultural practices in public spaces in Thailand?; (3). Have you ever faced any challenges in practicing your religion or maintaining your cultural traditions in Thailand?; and,(4). and what ways do you think being Malay-Muslim influences your role in Thai society that can contribute to patani-muslim society?. All Respondents, describe being Malay-Muslim is proud to their culture and religion, especially in a context where they feel threatened. They might express a strong desire to preserve their identity amid the ongoing violence and oppression from the government. Informant, Sts who reside in Kuala Lumpur as student, describe:

> *As a Pattani Malay-Muslim, my cultural and religious identity is a source of pride for me. However, I often experience a sense of tension regarding my background, which highlights the differences between myself and the wider Thai community. In Pattani, being a Malay-Muslim often means belonging to a group that feels marginalized and misrepresented. The media frequently depicts us in a negative light, and there is a lingering concern that our culture and faith may gradually fade away. This ongoing struggle instills in me a strong desire to affirm my identity and share our narrative, particularly with fellow Muslims, as part of one ummah (brothers and sister).*

All respondence, highlights the alienation they experience in a predominantly non-Muslim society. They could also mention how their cultural celebrations and their movement are sometimes overlooked or even disrupted due to security concerns. Alienation creates feelings of exclusion or discrimination, which strengthens their identity as different from the majority culture with praxis seeks to negotiate identity and authenticity (Dorairajoo, 2009). Informant initial Hp, that still reside in Southern Thailand, by whatsapp call , describe :

> *The experience of being a Malay-Muslim in Thailand, particularly in the southern provinces, is marked by a constant struggle with feelings of alienation. This sense of being an outsider is widespread, especially in a predominantly non-Muslim environment where my cultural and religious identity is often misunderstood and scrutinized. The ongoing regional conflict further compounds this alienation, as many members of my community are wrongly perceived as troublemakers or extremists, leading to increased isolation.*

Although Thailand officially provides freedom of religion, allowing Muslims and other minorities to access worship, the reality in the southern region tells a different story. In provinces like Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani, and four distict in Songkla province, religious institutions like Pondok (traditional Islamic bording school) and mosque are subjected to strict monitoring. This heightened surveillance reflects the state's ongoing concerns about security and stability in a region plagued by conflict. Even though Muslims can still practice their faith across Thailand, but in deep south they do so under the watchful eye of the government, which often intervenes in religious activities. Movement restrictions are often implemented in the southern region, the existence of military checkpoints,to monitor movement, maintain order, and deter potential threats on every street corner is a daily sight that makes southern Thailand seem as if it is constantly tense. In digital space, government impelemt Mandatory biometric registration

Third Point about Deepening/Commitment: Engaging more deeply with and finding fulfillment in expressions of Malay-Muslim identity through active participation in community, we pose three question such as, (1). How do community activities in southern Thailand contribute to the fulfillment of Malay-Muslim identity among the youth?; (2). In what ways do participation in community events influence the perception of Malay-Muslim identity within the broader Thai society?; and (3). How does the conflict situation in southern Thailand affect the intergenerational transmission of Malay-Muslim identity through community?

Informant ZT who reside in Kuala Lumpur, describe "*The conflict has deepened our resolve to embrace our Malay-Muslim identity. We seek solace and fortitude in our cultural practices and religious events. This strong commitment allows us to resist assimilation pressures and maintain our ties to our heritage, our deen (religion)".* Meanwhile informant PS, who reside in Southern Thailand, describe "*The experiences of discrimination and violence have prompted us to engage actively in movements that seek to reclaim our narrative and challenge the status quo".*

All informant highlight, the role of Community activities, such as religious festivals and cultural events, as medium for nonviolence resistance. By engaging in these activities, all informant can counteract the narratives from oppressor, showcase the richness of their culture, and enhance sense of brotherhood as muslim.

in the context of southern Thailand, where Malay-Muslim youth often experience systemic oppression, community engagement is not merely about participation; it is an active resistance with or without violence against state forces that seek to undermine their identity and rights. Activism is crucial part, to challenge oppression and maintain identity. By engaging in these activities, they assert their rights, seek recognition, build solidarity, make a plan, and organize mass. Informan AM, who reside in Southern Thailand, describe:

> "*Joining forces, we enhance our shared identity and commitment to advocacy and mass action. Events such as workshops, conversations, and public demonstrations serve to illuminate the issues we confront while also rallying support for our causes. Some our friend choose violence resistance but we choose peace initiatives that reflect our resilience and our steadfast refusal to be silenced in an environment where our voices are often marginalized"*

For Last point about Internalization/Synthesis that Integrating ethno-religious identity into daily life, we pose two question such as, How do you incorporate elements of your Malay-Muslim identity into your everyday routines and practices? And In what ways do community interactions influence your understanding and expression of being Malay-Muslim, especially within the context of ongoing conflict?. All respondents emphasize the significance of communal gatherings, religious lectures, and activism related to rights advocacy in shaping their understanding of what it means to be Malay-Muslim in a predominantly non-Muslim environment. These interactions play a crucial role in developing a collective identity that aligns with Islamic principles of brotherhood (Ummah) and solidarity. For all participants, communal engagement empowers them to express their identity more assertively, motivating them to partake in activism rooted in Islamic values of justice (Adl) and social responsibility.

Furthermore, in the context of jihadism, respondents consciously strive to distinguish their activism from violent extremism, although they do not entirely dismiss the use of force, provided it is not associated with terrorism or the killing of innocent individuals. In Islam, warfare is permissible under specific conditions. The Quran states, "And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors" (Quran 2:190). This verse indicates that self-defense and resistance against oppression are valid justifications for conflict. Instead, they focus on non-violent forms of resistance that are consistent with their religious beliefs. Such dialogues can foster a sense of unity and strength, reinforcing their ethno-religious identity as a source of resilience against oppression while explicitly rejecting extremist ideologies.

On other side, the issue of maintaining *tawheed* or Fundamental beliefs and doctrines in Islam that form the basis of a Muslim's faith also important to overcome cultural genocide, based

on our focus group discussion in middle of august, all respondend agree the challenges facing the youth of Pattani in the future are no longer about which school of thought (Mazhab) they adhere to or which method of struggle they choose (between peace or war), but rather about the challenges of faith that can shift towards secularism or extremism (non-moderation). As the Prophet advised, "Do not die except as a Muslim," there is a vision and hope for Islam that must be preserved, as it holds the key to happiness in this world and the Hereafter

In Thailand today, there has been a rise in the legalization of certain practices that Islam view as immoral (Munkar), including the legalization of cannabis, the recognition of LGBTQ rights (same sex marriage), and prospitution. These developments are seen by some as contradictory to Islamic teachings and has been existed into Southern Thailand. As muslim, they agree must take action based on principle *amr bil ma'ruf wa nahy an al-munkar*, which translates to "enjoining what is good and forbidding what is wrong." This principle is derived from several Quranic verses and Hadith, emphasizing the responsibility of Muslims to promote virtue and prevent vice. In other side, Thailand secularism and forced assimilation in educational context, be the focus of maintaining religious beliefs (aqeedah) because secularism and forced assimilation in Thailand education created syubhat (or shubhat), islam term that refers to ambiguous or doubtful matters, particularly concerning beliefs and practices. It often denotes situations where something is uncertain or unclear, leading to potential misunderstandings about Islamic teachings. In the context of faith, In shubha**t** (also spelled *syubhat*) refers to ambiguous or doubtful matters, particularly concerning beliefs, actions, or practices can challenge a believer's understanding of key tenets, such as *aqidah* (creed) and practices. Overall our result have three points , Ethno-Religious Identity: Participants' sense of identity is deeply rooted in their cultural and religious background, serving as a source of resilience and solidarity amidst marginalization; Resistance and Adaptation: Participants navigate their identity by engaging in non-violent resistance while addressing challenges of alienation and forced assimilation; and Preservation of Faith: There is a collective commitment to maintaining Islamic principles and countering secular influences to safeguard their cultural and religious heritage.

Figure 2. Pattani Grand Mosque in the Night

Discussion
How sense of ethno-religious among patttani works from resistance lens

Among Pattani youth, the sense of ethno-religious identity is shaped by a framework of resistance that reflects historical, social, and political realities. This identity functions as a tool for challenging systemic oppression and cultural marginalization, particularly in Thailand's southern region, where Malay-Muslim communities have often felt disconnected. By examining this through the lens of resistance, we can identify five prominent ways in which ethnoreligious identity emerges as a form of rebellion: epistemic disobedience, security culture, anti-authoritarianism, ethnic nationalism, and direct action.

First way, Epistemic disobedience, refers to the rejection of dominant knowledge systems imposed by state authorities, particularly in contexts where these systems marginalize specific cultural identities. In Pattani, this disobedience manifests as a robust challenge to the narratives constructed by the Thai government, which frequently overlook the historical and cultural

significance of the Malay-Muslim population. This resistance is pivotal for reasserting local knowledge systems and reclaiming agency in identity formation, The act of resisting imposed narratives is not merely a rejection of dominant discourses; it also involves the active promotion of alternative epistemologies that reflect the lived realities of marginalized communities (Graubart, 1999; Mignolo, 2016; Nayar, 2006; Santaballa & Mignolo, 1997; Schwaller, 1996).

The resistance expressed through epistemic disobedience resonates within broader Islamic movements that champion social justice and equity. The notion of "Ummah," or community, plays a vital role in Islamic philosophy, underscoring the importance of solidarity and collective action in confronting injustices. The involvement of Pattani youth in shared activities—such as group prayers, local art reflecting Islamic themes, and protests against injustices—illustrates their dedication to both their religious and cultural identities while building resilience against external oppression (Rahayu et al., 2022; Sanurdi, 2018; Sodiqin, 2006, 2016). This convergence of Islamic identity and epistemic disobedience exemplifies how marginalized communities can reclaim their narratives and confront dominant power structures. The experiences of Pattani youth remind us that resistance can manifest in various forms, from cultural expressions to collective activism, all aimed at preserving identity and asserting rights amidst systemic marginalization (Liow, 2016).

Second way, Security culture, in Pattani to response intensified surveillance and military presence imposed by the Thai state, which justifies its actions in the name of national security. prompting Pattani youth to develop their security culture as a form of collective resistance. Drawing from anarchist principles, this culture emphasizes autonomy, mutual aid, and the rejection of state-imposed authority, creating networks of solidarity that empower individuals and communities to reclaim their agency (Behravesh, 2018; Cash, 2020). , the role of digital platforms in facilitating this security culture cannot be understated. Social media serves as a vital tool for organizing and disseminating information, allowing Pattani youth to mobilize quickly and share their experiences with a wider audience. This aligns with anarchist ideals of decentralized communication and collective action, enabling them to challenge oppressive narratives while promoting their agenda for self-determination and social justice.

Figure 3. Military checkpoint in pattani city

Figure 4. Military checkpoint with watch tower to inside Pattani

From Islamic perspective, security culture similar with The principle of caution (al-hayat) that emphasizes the importance of prudence, thoughtful consideration, and ethical responsibility when addressing challenges and conflicts, as prescribed by various teachings in the Quran and Hadith. This principle is deeply rooted in the concept of maslahah (public interest), which prioritizes actions that serve the greater good and protect the community. The Quran advises believers to engage in actions that are beneficial and to avoid harm, as highlighted in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:195), which states, "And spend in the way of Allah and do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good."

Third point, Anti-authoritarianism among Pattani youth is significantly shaped by their ethno-religious identity, particularly in response to oppressive governance from the Thai state, which has historically marginalized the Malay-Muslim community. This resistance is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings that advocate for justice, the protection of the oppressed, and the rejection of tyranny. In the context of Islamic thought, the concept of zulm (oppression) is explicitly condemned, and Muslims are urged to stand against unjust leaders. Basicly, Islam encourages believers to speak out against tyranny, as stated in the Hadith: "The best jihad is to speak a word of justice to an oppressive ruler" (Sunan Ibn Majah). This underscores the moral imperative for Pattani youth to express their anti-authoritarian stance through various forms of activism. Their protests against military actions and demands for political representation are manifestations of this Islamic duty to challenge injustice and uphold the principles of shura (consultation) and adalah (justice).

Fourh way by Ethnic nationalism way that plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of Pattani youth. It serves as both a unifying force and a basis for resistance against external cultural imposition. The idea of a distinct Malay-Muslim identity is often articulated through symbols, narratives, and cultural practices that emphasize their unique heritage. This nationalism can be seen in the promotion of local art, music, and literature that reflect the experiences and struggles of the Pattani people. By fostering a sense of pride in their ethnic identity, youth can collectively resist the cultural hegemony imposed by the Thai state . This form of nationalism also links the local struggle to broader movements for self-determination and autonomy within Southeast Asia.

Fifthy way by Direct action that deeply intertwined with the concept of jihad, which, in its broader sense, refers to the struggle for justice and righteousness. This form of struggle encompasses various dimensions, including the struggle against oppression, inequality, and injustice, which resonates profoundly with the experiences of marginalized communities, such as the Pattani youth. Direct action can be viewed as a form of jihad al-'amali (struggle in action), where individuals and communities actively engage in efforts to bring about social change. This perspective aligns with the Islamic principle that all believers have a responsibility to work towards

a just society. Jihad have many form not only armed struggle but includes peaceful protests, advocacy, and social movements aimed at achieving justice and equity.

Figure 5. Pattani girl student to school using tuk-tuk

Echoes of Resistance: Ethno-Religious Identity and Activism in Pattani

Beyond security lens that describe resistance among pattani youth as criminal, from Islamic perspective, based on our research , their resistance is guided by Islamic values, emphasizing moral responsibility, community solidarity, and the pursuit of justice with 3 principle such as .Amr bil Ma'ruf wa Nahi an al-Munkar ,This term translate as "enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong." It reflects the communal responsibility of Muslims to promote justice, ethical behavior, and social welfare. Activism based on this principle encourages Muslims to speak out against tyranny, corruption, and injustice, and supporting the idea that resistance is a collective duty

Second, Ummatic Solidarity that refers to the unity and collective responsibility of the Muslim community (ummah). It emphasizes that Muslims should support one another, particularly those facing oppression or injustice. This solidarity can manifest in various forms of resistance, from grassroots organizing to international advocacy, reinforcing the idea that injustice against one is injustice against all. From a resistance perspective, ummatic solidarity is underpinned by the Islamic principle of tawhid , which signifies the oneness of God. This foundational belief calls for unity among believers, reinforcing the idea that Muslims are part of a single ummah (community) with shared responsibilities. The Qur'an emphasizes this unity, urging Muslims to support one another in times of adversity (Qur'an 3:103). Such verses highlight the importance of collective action in the face of oppression, reflecting a theological mandate for resistance.

Ummatic solidarity serves as a form of resistance in several ways. First, it acts as a counter-narrative to oppressive regimes that often seek to divide and weaken communities through sectarianism or ethnic tensions. By emphasizing shared beliefs and values, ummatic solidarity promotes social cohesion and resilience among Muslims facing persecution. Second, this solidarity encourages collective action and grassroots mobilization. For example, in the Palestinian struggle against occupation, the notion of ummatic solidarity has been pivotal in rallying support from Muslims worldwide, leading to campaigns that highlight Palestinian rights and resistance against Israeli policies. Initiatives like the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement as non-violence movement against zionist colonialization (Barghouti, 2021) that demonstrate how ummatic solidarity can translate into practical actions aimed at challenging injustice and advocating for self-determination (Culcasi, 2016; Hitchcock, 2023; Zanotti et al., 2015).

In pattani, ummatic solidarity is a vital aspect of resistance for Pattani youth in their struggle against systemic oppression and cultural marginalization. Grounded in Islamic principles and the shared experiences of the Malay-Muslim community, this solidarity empowers individuals to come together in their quest for justice and recognition. By embracing their collective identity, Pattani youth not only challenge the narratives that seek to suppress them but also reinforce their

resilience against ongoing oppression. This dynamic underscores the significance of ummatic solidarity in shaping resistance movements within the Pattani context and islam worldwide

Third, Tawhid, the fundamental Islamic concept of the oneness of God, is central not only to individual faith but also to the collective socio-political resistance against oppression and injustice. This principle asserts that God's sovereignty and justice must permeate all facets of life, including governance, law, and social interactions. In contexts of resistance, tawhid serves as a powerful ideological framework that legitimizes opposition against authorities or systems perceived as unjust or illegitimate. The notion of tawhid extends beyond mere theological belief; it encapsulates the idea that any authority contradicting divine principles lacks legitimacy. resistance grounded in tawhid compels believers to challenge oppressive systems, particularly those that enforce inequality or violate ethical norms. (Kersten, 2022; Saikal, 1987). For instance, during Soviet – afghan war , the concept of tawhid was invoked to rally the populace against the soviet regime, which was viewed as evil forced that will against Islam (Roy, 1990).

Conclusion

The connection between ethnicity and religion plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of young people in Pattani and their resistance to ongoing oppression in Southern Thailand. This study shows how the combination of being both Malay and Muslim acts as a strong foundation for their resistance and cultural preservation. The research found that young people in Pattani engage in various activities like challenging dominant knowledge systems, developing a sense of security, opposing authority, promoting ethnic pride, and taking direct actions to defend their rights and cultural identity in the face of exclusion. Their 'resistance' refers to the active measures they take to counter the oppressive forces, such as participating in protests, advocating for their rights, and preserving their cultural heritage. The study also emphasizes the importance of embracing their ethno-religious identity, strengthening their commitment to Islamic beliefs and their collective will to resist oppression. The four stages of awareness, exploration, deepening, and internalization show how their interaction with their identity evolves over time, helping them navigate their sociopolitical situation in Thailand and Pattani diaspora communities like Malaysia.

The research also highlights the vital role of Islam in shaping the identity of Pattani youth and their fight against oppression. Islam is not just a part of their identity; it is a key framework for their resistance, promoting social justice, and preserving their culture. In the future, it is vital to recognize how religious identity contributes to the resilience of individuals and communities, especially those who are marginalized. Islamic principles such as justice (adl), unity (ummah), and resistance against oppression (jihad) form the basis for peaceful activism and provide a unifying force for asserting their rights. This study also suggests that understanding the role of religion and ethnics is crucial for policymakers and community leaders when working with oppressed groups. On other side, Embracing the positive values of Islam—such as peace, justice, and respect for human dignity—can lead to better support for youth in conflict areas. Additionally, promoting interfaith dialogue and a deeper understanding of Islam's peaceful teachings could help reduce divisions between different communities, offering hope for a more harmonious future.

The study further emphasizes the need to support youth movements that draw strength from their religious and cultural identity. These young people are fighting to preserve their culture and advocating for human rights and social justice. The findings from this research guide efforts to empower marginalized youth while fostering respect, mutual understanding, and harmony in diverse communities. The lessons from Pattani's youth movements can also contribute to global discussions on the intersection of religion, identity, and resistance, offering valuable insights for conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and the empowerment of faith-driven movements in oppressed communities. For further research, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies that track changes in the identities and resistance strategies of Pattani youth over time, especially as they interact with different political and social environments. Comparative studies examining similar ethno-religious issues in other regions, such as the Muslim communities in Myanmar, the

Rohingya, the Moro in the Philippines, or Papua in Indonesia, could provide valuable insights into how shared religious identity influences resistance movements in various contexts.

References

Abdullah, B. (2024). *Two killed, 9 soldiers hurt in southern ambush*. Bangkok Post. https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2772958/two-killed-9-soldiers-hurt-in-southern-ambush

Ahmad, mariyam, & notharat, pachaiharun. (2024). *Two decades on from a watershed year, peace still eludes Thailand's Deep South*. Benar News. https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/thai/insurgency-anniversary 01052024151830.html

AVRUCH, K. (1982). On the "Traditionalization" of Social Identity: American Immigrants to Israel. *Ethos*, *10*(2).

Barghouti, O. (2021). BDS: Nonviolent, Globalized Palestinian Resistance to Israel's Settler Colonialism and Apartheid. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, *50*(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/0377919X.2021.1906067

Behravesh, M. (2018). State revisionism and ontological (in)security in international politics: the complicated case of Iran and its nuclear behavior. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, *21*(4). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-018-0149-x

Benjakat, abdullah. (2024). *Suspected insurgent killed, soldier hurt in Narathiwat clash*. Bangkok Post. https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2843791/suspected-insurgent-killed-soldier-hurt-in-narathiwat-clash

bernama. (2019). *Malaysian killed, another injured in shooting in southern Thailand*. Free Malaysia Today. https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2019/02/13/malaysian-killed-another-injured-in-shooting-in-southern-thailand/

Bilsky, L., & Klagsbrun, R. (2018). The return of cultural genocide? *European Journal of International Law*, *29*(2). https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chy025

Bögre, Z. (2021). Narrative identity as a bridge between two historical models of identity: a sociologist's perspective. *Sociologie Romaneasca*, *19*(1). https://doi.org/10.33788/sr.19.1.2

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide. *QMiP Bulletin*, *1*(33). https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsqmip.2022.1.33.46

Brennan, A., & Canny, A. (2023). Problematising Irish student-teachers' (dis)engagement with sociology of education in initial teacher education programmes. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *130*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104173

Brulé, E., & Finnigan, S. (2020). How to do a Thematic analysis Braun. *Usability Geek*.

Cash, J. (2020). Psychoanalysis, cultures of anarchy, and ontological insecurity. *International Theory*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971920000147

Chambers, P., Jitpiromsri, S., & Waitoolkiat, N. (2019). Introduction: Conflict in the deep south of Thailand: Never-ending Stalemate? In *Asian International Studies Review* (Vol. 20, Issue 1). https://doi.org/10.16934/isr.20.1.201906.1

Chambers, P., Jitpiromsri, S., & Waitoolkiat, N. (2020). Introduction: Conflict in the Deep South of Thailand: Never-ending Stalemate? *International Studies Review*, *20*(1). https://doi.org/10.1163/2667078x-02001001

Chapman, E. N., & Werner-Wilson, R. J. (2008). Does positive youth development predict adolescent attitudes about sexuality? *Adolescence*, *43*(171).

Creţan, R., Covaci, R. N., & Jucu, I. S. (2023). Articulating 'otherness' within multiethnic rural neighbourhoods: encounters between Roma and non-Roma in an East-Central European borderland. *Identities*, *30*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2021.1920774

Croissant, A. (2007). Muslim insurgency, political violence, and democracy in Thailand. In *Terrorism and Political Violence* (Vol. 19, Issue 1). https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550601054485

Culcasi, K. (2016). Engaging in the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (bds) debate. *Geographical Review*, *106*(2). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1931-0846.2016.12158.x

Dorairajoo, S. (2009). Peaceful Thai, violent Malay(Muslim): A case study of the 'problematic' muslim citizens of Southern Thailand. *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, *27*(2). https://doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v27i2.2544

Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2016). Connecting Life Span Development with the Sociology of the Life Course: A New Direction. *Sociology*, *50*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038515577906

Graubart, K. B. (1999). The darker side of the renaissance: Literacy, territoriality, and colonization. In *Rethinking Marxism* (Vol. 11, Issue 3). https://doi.org/10.1080/08935699908685602

Hitchcock, J. (2023). Framing Palestinian Rights: A Rhetorical Frame Analysis of Vernacular Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement Discourse. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, *53*(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2022.2095422

International Crisis Group. (2009). Southern Thailand: Moving Towards Political Solutions? *Human Rights*, *December.*

Jampaklay, A., Ford, K., & Chamratrithirong, A. (2020). Migration and Unrest in the Deep South Thailand: A Multilevel Analysis of a Longitudinal Study. *Demography*, *57*(2). https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-020-00856-w

Jitpiromsri, S. (2019). The deep south of Thailand: 15 years in fields of open conflict, violence and peace narratives. *Asian International Studies Review*, *20*(1). https://doi.org/10.16934/isr.20.1.201906.79

Kendra Cherry B. (2022). Erikson's Stages of Development. In *Verywellminded.*

Kersten, C. (2022). 3 Islam as resistance. In *A History of Islam in Indonesia.* https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748681853-007

Lamey, J. (2013). Peace in Patani? The prospect of a settlement in Southern Thailand. *Stability*, *2*(2). https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.bt

Liow, J. (2016). Thailand's Southern Border Provinces: Constructing Narratives and Imagining Patani Darussalam. In *Religion and Nationalism in Southeast Asia.* https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781316711811.006

Lunsky, L. L. (1966). Identity and the Life Cycle. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, *118*(3). https://doi.org/10.1001/archinte.1966.00290150102025

Maree, J. G. (2021). The psychosocial development theory of Erik Erikson: critical overview. *Early Child Development and Care*, *191*(7–8). https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2020.1845163

McDermott, G. B. (2021). The Beginnings of Conflict Transformation in South Thailand. *Peace Review*, *33*(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2021.1953811

Mcleod, S. . (2013). Erik Erikson - Psychosocial Stages. *Simply Psychology*, *1959.*

Mignolo, W. (2016). The Darker Side of the Renaissance. In *The Darker Side of the Renaissance.* https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.8739

Mohammad Zamberi Abdul Malek. (2006). Pensejarahan Patani. In *Siri kajian sejarah.*

Nayar, P. K. (2006). The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization (review). *Journal of American Folklore*, *119*(474). https://doi.org/10.1353/jaf.2006.0049

Nishikawa, Y. (2009). Human security in Southeast Asia: Viable solution or empty slogan? *Security Dialogue*, *40*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010609103088

Nuchpiam, P., & Prateeppornnarong, D. (2020). Addressing instability in Thailand's deep south with law and development. *Law and Development Review*, *13*(2). https://doi.org/10.1515/ldr-2020-0051

Paronyan, H., Carballido, R. M., & Matos, M. A. (2021). The concept of cultural genocide: An international law perspective. *Universidad y Sociedad*, *13*(S3).

Rahayu, S. H., Nugroho, T., Muthmainnah, M., Nadjih, D., Parid, M., & Bahem, N. A. (2022). Problematika Integrasi Masyarakat Muslim-Thai Dalam Negara Thailand. *Ulumuddin : Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, *12*(1). https://doi.org/10.47200/ulumuddin.v12i1.1110

reuters. (2019). *Gunmen kill two Buddhist monks in Thailand's troubled south*. Reuters Media. https://www.reuters.com/article/world/gunmen-kill-two-buddhist-monks-in-thailands-troubled-south-idUSKCN1PC260/

Ridwan. (2014). Pattani central mosque in Southern Thailand as sanctuary from violence. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, *4*(2). https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v4i2.213-232

Roy, O. (1990). Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan. In *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511563553

Rupprecht, K. (2014). Separatist conflicts in the ASEAN region: Comparing Southern Thailand and Mindanao. *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, *7*(1).

Saikal, A. (1987). Islam: Resistance and Reassertion. *The World Today*, *43*(11).

Santaballa, S. R., & Mignolo, W. D. (1997). The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization. *Hispanic Review*, *65*(4). https://doi.org/10.2307/474313

Sanurdi, S. (2018). ISLAM DI THAILAND. *Tasamuh: Jurnal Studi Islam*, *10*(2). https://doi.org/10.32489/tasamuh.42

Sarii, H. (2023). THE MARGINALISATION OF ISLAM IN SOUTHERN THAILAND: ANALYSIS OF THAILAND'S (SIAM'S) GOVERNMENT POLICY AND CONFLICT ISSUES ON THE PATANI ISLAMIC COMMUNITY. *SPAJ Journal UKM*, *7*(2), 13–20. https://spaj.ukm.my/ajehh/index.php/ajehh/article/view/230

Schwaller, J. F. (1996). : The Darker Side of the Renaissance : Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization . *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, *27*(3). https://doi.org/10.2307/2544115

Sharaby, R. (2021). Between cultures and generations: Ethnic activism of 1.5 generation immigrant leaders. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, *8*(1). https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/665

Sodiqin, A. (2006). Budaya Muslim Pattani (Integrasi, Konflik dan Dinamikanya). *Jurnal Kebudayaan Islam*, *14*(1).

Sodiqin, A. (2016). HUKUM ISLAM DAN BUDAYA LOKAL DI MASYARAKAT MUSLIM PATTANI THAILAND (Integrasi, Konflik dan Dinamikanya). *IBDA`: Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Budaya*, *14*(1). https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v14i1.524

Stryker, S. (2008). From Mead to a structural symbolic interactionism and beyond. In *Annual Review of Sociology* (Vol. 34). https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134649

Suckert, L. (2022). Back to the Future. Sociological Perspectives on Expectations, Aspirations and Imagined Futures. *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie*, *63*(3). https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975622000339

Talib, S. (1986). History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani (Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani). Translated by Conner Bailey and John N. Miksic. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University, Center for International Studies, 1985. (Monographs in International Studies, Southeast Asia Series, no. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, *45*(4). https://doi.org/10.2307/2056149

Tan-Mullins, M. (2009). Armed conflict and resolutions in Southern Thailand. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *99*(5). https://doi.org/10.1080/00045600903260689

Tanakorn, A. (2023). *Insurgents in Thailand's Deep South Province Pattani Throws Bomb and Injures Ranger Volunteer*. The Pattaya News. https://thepattayanews.com/2023/01/25/insurgents-in-thailands-deep-south-province-pattani-throws-bomb-and-injures-ranger-volunteer/?fbclid=IwY2xjawF8pnVleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHQcfA0vVAZ5uuXBmxz2zRoRfeMb8B3qidh4ak994uHq_SntpRzKQM2PrHQ_aem_FXPgDRXDKXAR6Sc7GutPaA

Von Feigenblatt, O. (2010). The Muslim Malay Community in Southern Thailand: A 'Small People' Facing Existential Uncertainty. *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies*, *27*.

Wheeler, M., & Chambers, P. (2019). The tragedy of conflict irresolution: Peace dialogue in southernmost Thailand under military rule. *Asian International Studies Review*, *20*(1). https://doi.org/10.16934/isr.20.1.201906.25

Yong, K. H. (2023). Can the Malay Muslims be Thai enough in Thailand's far South? *Asian Anthropology*, *22*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/1683478X.2022.2158650

Zanotti, J., Weiss, M. A., & Ruane, K. A. (2015). Israel and the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement. *Current Politics and Economics of the Middle East*, *8*(3).