Who are the Patani Peace Influencers? Exploring from Perspectives of Civil Society in Southern Thailand

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Abstract

This research explores local civil society organizations' (CSOs) view on peace influencers in southern Thailand. Its key puzzle is, according to the CSOs, who are considered to be Patani Peace Influencers? Because there is a lack of reliable resources to support peacebuilding on key peacemakers, this project uses exploratory research to collect data from Buddhists and Muslims in southern Thailand. The exploratory survey was launched from January-May 2021; it received 59 nominees from 48 nominators. The dense ranking was used to generate the updated list of 10 peace influencers in Patani. The result unveils that the top three peace influencers include Ismail Lutfi Japakiya, Rukchart Suwan, and Srisompob Jitpiromsri, respectively. The list suggests that although non-religious actors have primarily been nominated, the most influential actor in the area remains the religious scholar.

Keywords: Pattani, Peace influencers, Civil society, The deep south

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, Thailand's internal security has been preoccupied with the 'Patani question.'[1] It is reminiscent of the armed conflict worldwide resulting from the involuntary incorporation of national minorities into a new nation-state (Kymlicka, 1996, Chapter 2). As the second wave of the armed conflict between Malay insurgents and Thai security forces in the three southernmost provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat (Patani) has been taking place since 2004, the number of casualties has increased. The recent studies on Islamophobia report that the conflict had considerably affected Buddhist-Muslim relations in the deep south and across the country (Buaban, 2020; Suphunchitwana, 2018; Tuansiri & Koma, 2020). It also contributed to a rise of anti-Islam sentiment in Thailand, which occurred more often in the north and northeast regions during 2012-2020 (Pathan et al., 2018). As a

[1]This paper uses the term 'Patani,' 'the deep south,' and 'the 3 southern border provinces' interchangeably. The term Patani is different from Pattani; the former refers to the area that once belonged to the kingdom of Patani, while the latter is a province in southern Thailand.

result, violent acts and contending narratives had successfully occupied people's understanding of the conflict as if violence became a dominant mode of thinking. As one informant portrays, "when there are no violent incidents for a while, it is not because the areas are now peaceful. For the local people, they are curious of when and where the next violent acts will take place". Thus, this common perception shows how people generally think about the situation on the one hand and downplay the peace efforts of the civil society organizations (CSOs) on the other.[2]

The data of the incidents in southern Thailand from the Deep South Watch (2021) shows that, from January 2004 to January 2021, there existed 20,887 incidents, 7,215 deaths, and 13,415 injuries. According to the Muslim Attorney Center Foundation's data (Awaeputeh, 2021), they have received hundreds of tortures and human rights violation cases from Malay-Muslim minorities since its establishment. However, the data also illustrates that the incidents' trend dramatically decreased from July 2014. A decline of the violent trend also coincided with the Thai Government's efforts to engage in peace talks with the armed groups, which resulted in the 2013 consensus document to launch a peace dialogue in the border provinces of southern Thailand (Strategic Nonviolence Commission, 2018). As expected, the forceful way of reporting the situation often revolves around solving a negative peace rather than building positive peace. By doing so, the role and impact of local civil society organizations or non-governmental organizations who work to build positive peace become minimal, if not unrecognized.

The idea of negative and positive peace was popularized by Galtung (1996, p. 61, 2011; Galtung & Fischer, 2013), who differentiates an absence of direct violence and war from cooperation and the integration of human society. In other words, positive peace refers to the presence of cooperation, equality, a culture of peace, and dialogue (Galtung & Fischer, 2013, p. 174). Accordingly, peacebuilding in a broad sense, which involves any activities conducted before, during, or after a violent conflict to prevent, end, or transform violent conflicts and creating the circumstances for sustainable peace (Reychler, 2010), should not only focus on doing away with direct violence but also revolve around building trust, cooperation, and justice among members of society. In this sense, peace influencers are the key to making small steps towards robust peacebuilding. Norbert Ropers (2013) rightly points out that various CSOs in the area have taken up this work for some time:

> "To manage this dilemma of balancing steps towards "negative peace" (no violence) and "positive peace" (justice, equality and self-determination), it cannot be solved alone by the "peacemakers" involved in the official peace dialogue (sometimes called "Track 1"). It requires a broad-based mobilization of public support for "positive" as well as "negative peace". Many insider peacebuilders, civil society organizations, and grassroots movements have worked on this for several years (also called "Track 2" and "Track 3"). Now is

[2] By "civil society", we refer to "organizations such as registered charities, development NGOs organizations, community groups, women's organization, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions, and advocacy groups (The World Bank & United Nations, 2018, p. 48)".

the time that they have to build a strong bridge to the Track 1 level and to intensify their efforts."

Despite many efforts in building a strong bridge between official peacemakers and informal peacebuilders on the one hand and among different groups in society on the other, knowledge about peace influencers in Patani/deep south is limited. A key academic work on actors mapping can be referred to a study of the Strategic Nonviolence Commission (2016)'s on international players in the deep south, but it does not cover local peacebuilders and peace influencers.[3] In 2020, the magazine 'Life @ Chaidantai' highlighted 10 new generation influencers in Patani, but it suffered from a bias selection since no process of selection was revealed (Editorial, 2020). Similarly, a satire page, "Abanggg"(2020), issued a yearly review of the best 12 of 2019 by highlighting some influencers in Patani, but its message was merely for a hilarious purpose. Thus, to fill a gap of knowledge on local peace influencers, this paper seeks to explore CSOs' opinions on individuals and groups who inspire them with efforts of nonviolence, civic engagement, and building positive peace.[4] By identifying these individuals, we hope to offer an updated list of local peace influencers. To begin with, the paper is divided into three sections. The following section elaborates on the research methodology and steps of data collection and analysis. Then, we offer a review about other similar works that had attempted to offer peace awards in Patani/deep south. The final section unveils key findings on the updated list of Patani Peace Influencers; the paper also provides some discussion at the end.

Methodology

Defining steps and criteria for choosing the influencers is the most pressing issue in this project. We mainly generate our data from community opinions. Community opinions are referred to the nomination from active individuals and civil society organizations on the nominees who have been working on preventing conflict and promoting cooperation (1) between the state and society and (2) among groups of societies in the area. With the observation and suggestion from Patani Forum's work, we estimate that approximately 60 active organizations have been working to alleviate vertical and horizontal conflict in the deep south.[5] Then, we generate a list of 60 key individuals and organizations, which fall within this category. This list also reflects the demography ratio of different groups in the deep south: 80 percent Muslims and 20 percent Buddhists. We approach them individually through direct

[3] In this paper, a peacebuilder refers to a professional person who works or is paid to work on peacebuilding, whereas a peace influencer may not be trained to be a peacebuilder, however, he/she makes a significant effort in building vertical and horizontal cooperation, and his or her contribution not only shapes a certain direction of peace situation in the area but also are felt among local CSOs. In this sense, peace influencers may be a member of peacebuilders or peace workers and vice versa.

[4] A concept of peace influencers is drawn from Galtung (1965, p. 256)'s idea, who views that "nonviolence is seen as an effort to influence."

[5] Vertical conflict refers to violent conflict between a state and insurgents, whereas horizontal conflict refers to the conflict between and among groups in society, such as Buddhist-Muslim conflict or ethnic conflict between different ethnic groups. In other words, alleviating vertical and horizontal conflict can be used interchangeably with promoting vertical and horizontal cooperation. By "vertical", it shows a top-down direction between a state and society; the 'horizontal,' shows a horizontal direction between members of society.

phone calls, Line, and Messenger. We also organize a workshop and seek their nomination through a survey form.

Researchers are not involved in suggesting any nominee, nor did we decide who should be included in the top 10 on the list. Our role is to organize and translate data into a set of information. In this sense, the finding of the top 10 peace influencers is derived from the voices of respondents.

We worked through 7 steps in building up the updated list of the key Patani Peace Influencers. The steps are as follows;

1. Our internal meeting between researchers and research assistants proposes a list of individuals and civil society organizations working on reducing conflict and promoting cooperation between the state and local communities and societal groups in the three southernmost provinces.
2. Research assistants create the online nomination form via Google Form, including information about the nominators and details of no more than three nominees. The name of nominees is ranked from number 1-3, but a nominator is required to nominate number 1. Number 2 and 3 are not compulsory. However, the nominator can nominate up to three persons (number 1-3).
3. The team contacts active individuals and civil society organizations to consider nominating Patani Peace Influencer's nominee. We use our pre-existing connections and the accumulated pool of networks and reach out to them via phone calls and online applications such as Line and Messenger. We also organize a side-event workshop with members of local CSOs. This step takes five months from January-May 2021 in order to ensure that all active activists and civil society organizations from different backgrounds are included in our list of nominators.
4. Research assistants compile the received responses and organize data into readable information. First, we accumulate all nominees' names into Microsoft Excel's sheet and arrange each name based on three values: rank number 1, frequency, and rank number 1-3. Table 2 illustrates a weighting system based on three criteria/values and shows an example of a score's calculation. At this stage, we have a sense of whose name has been nominated in the first, the second, and the third rank.
5. We then assign the value of frequency by identifying which nominees have been nominated more than one time. The more a person's name is nominated, the more weight he/she gains. Then, we assign the value of each rank.
6. At this stage, as we can fill in scores for each nominee, the total score of each name is now available. Then, we rearrange the order of names according to the total score each nominee receives. Therefore, the order of number 1 to number 10 should appear automatically based on the above values.
7. Finally, the team translates the data into the findings and releases a report. The updated list of influencers is provided in the final section.

Table 1 Weighting system

Criteria	Score	Example
Value of rank 1: A name nominated in rank No.1 only (number of times a name appeared in rank no.1).	5+ = 50 4 = 40 3 = 30 2 = 20 1 = 10	If A appears in rank 1 five times, A receives 50 points; if one time, it receives 10 points.
Value of frequency: A name appears in all 3 ranks (total number of times a name appeared in all ranks).	5+ = 50 4 = 40 3 = 30 2 = 20 1 = 10	If A appears in all 3 ranks 5 times, A receives 50 points; if 1 time, receives 10 points, regardless of the orders.
Value of each rank: Each rank contains different values.	rank no. 1 = 30 rank no. 2 = 20 rank no. 3 = 10	If A appears in rank 1, A receives 30 points; if in rank 3 only, it receives 10 points.
Maximum score Minimum score	130 points 20 points	If A appears in rank 1 five times, in all ranks 6 times, and rank 1, A receives 130 points; but if A appears none in rank 1, in all ranks 1 time, and in rank 3 only, A receives 20 points.
Rule of three	130 = 100% 20 = 15.4%	If A gets 130 points, A gets 100%; if A gets 20 points, A gets 15.4%.

It is important to note that, because we strongly value each nominee's decision-making, we allocate 50 points to the deliberation of the value of rank 1 and the value of frequency equally. Thus, the nominee's name frequency should occur by chance if it happens because each nominator did not know these criteria beforehand. Therefore, this grid of weighting systems warrants relatively value-free nomination and prevents an organized nomination in concert.

Other similar works

This raking project in the deep south is perhaps the first attempt to explore the current key influencers using research methods. Since the outcome of this project is neither to provide an award nor to reward the winners, our work is distinct from previous initiatives. Observers of the conflict in the deep south have seen numerous organizations' attempts to acknowledge outstanding works and award peace workers in the areas. The previous similar attempts can be divided into two different categories: state-sponsored awards and civil society-led awards.

These two categories have different aims and suffer various hurdles. The first-type award aims to win Malay-Muslims' hearts and minds on the one hand and offer moral support to those who work with the Thai state on the other. The main goal of using this strategy is for the state to control members of civil society. The advantage of the state-sponsored award is its long-term sustainability. However, its side effect is that the awardee of the state-sponsored awarding is seen as a representative of the Thai state instead of the local Malay community. Consequently, this condition promotes mistrust and suspicion among different groups in society. An example of this award is the "Border Service Medal" and the state's 50-million-baht funding for CSOs in the deep south. As a state and societies are two different and competing entities, becoming a former member may lose legitimacy in the latter.

The second-type award aims to support local civil society organization's capacity building and sustainability. Contrary to the former's effort, it often suffers from a short-lived span and lack of funding. It is not sustainable because it is dependent on international funding, nor was it homegrown. When there is a lack of funding from foreign funders, it ends with the project's discontinuity. Besides, when the award organizers are not a local or domestic organization, the activities can hardly engrain the local communities' common agenda. An example of this type is the 'Thailand NGO Award'. Indeed, this is a challenge for the CSOs in the deep south: lacking a supportive mechanism and common agenda.

According to our observation, two categories of the awards in the deep south appear in ex-ante and ex-post incidents of 2004. The ex-ante awards were given to an active citizen who contributed to southern society in general and intended to promote the late king's honor and contribution. For instance, Songklanakarin Anuson Award, which was first established in 1991 till the present time and was well received by the state's regional administration, aims to honor king Mahidol Adulyadej's contribution to Thai society. In this sense, this award can be considered the state-sponsored attempt to reproduce the meaning of a good citizen, which echoes the king's example. The award is open to Buddhists and Malay-Muslims. It has been a space for the integration of Muslim minorities into the state's recognition. Although the Prince of Songkla University is the main organizer who offers the award, it aims to support its encroachment into society.

Also, many 2004 ex-post awards suffer a similar encroachment of the state into society. For instance, on the International Peace Day, February 15, 2015, the Pirab Kaw Chai Dan Tai Award (White Dove of Southern Border Provinces) was given to active citizens who work for peace in the southern border provinces, but this award echoed a similar tone in honoring the royal image. As such, instead of working to strengthen civic engagement from below and reflecting a salience of civil society, it worked to uphold the state's value. Differently, however, the award aims to appreciate the works done by local people without linking to the state's value. This bottom-up type of civic engagement often receives an impulse for an international organization. For instance, on March 14, 2015, Oxfam, together with its partners in the deep south, offered the 'Satri Ton Beab Award' (Women's role model award) to women who devoted their lives to local development. Besides, the Hero Award also gave recognition, on October 12, 2018, to a wide range of awardees who had made contributions to society. Thus,

despite a great attempt from civil society organizations to recognize an active citizen, the 2004 ex-post award still suffers from the state's influence.

The journey of the violent conflict in the deep south is about to pass its 17 years. Still, we can hardly think of a common supportive mechanism of recognition that has so far survived since then. Plenty of organizations have their solid visions and agendas from inception, yet a few survive or remain active until now. The weak CSOs and the state-sponsored projects in the deep south may be due to several factors. First, the state-sponsored award systems had created asymmetric power between the strong state and weak society. Second, when society is weak, CSOs lack support from local CSO networks. As a result, they cannot help each other effectively, nor can they foster horizontal relations with emerging CSOs. Third, the unavailability of bottom-up initiatives such as a systematic collection of Patani Peace Influencers tells us about a lack of supportive mechanisms. This negligence about collective action only forces CSOs closer to the prisoners' dilemma.

With such concern in mind, this project sets out to explore individuals who have done a great job of reducing conflict and promoting cooperation between the state and local communities or among groups in societies. We attempt to fill a gap of information on the influential local peacemakers, which had not been previously academically revealed to the public. Thus, this project is different from other similar works in three aspects. First, it attempts to generate an updated pool of information from members of CSOs: a bottom-up approach to obtaining data. Second, this project is free from the influence of the state. As such, it can be considered a civil society-led initiative. Lastly, none of the previous works have revealed a list of the Patani peace influencers based on research methods. As this project bases its data on community opinions, the findings should broadly reflect civil society views in the deep south.

It is important to note that our team had also studied "the most 500 influential Muslims" from 2009-2021 (Esposito & Kalin, 2009; Lumbard & Nayed, 2010; Schleifer, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) and documented that 4 Muslims from Thailand have appeared in the ranking since 2009. M. Abdus Sabur appears most frequently 12 times, Winai Dahlan 11 times, Surin Pitsuwan 4 times, and Sukree Langputeh 1 time. Interestingly, in different capacities, all have experience and expertise in peacebuilding or solving the conflict in southern Thailand; Winai Dahlan stands out alone as a specialist in science and the Halal industry, while the rest are the experts on social and political science. Only Sukree Langputeh stays and works in the deep south; the rest live in Bangkok or the nearby cities. It is interesting to know whether our respondents would nominate these 4 influential Muslims into our list of Patani Peace Influencers.

Findings

Findings are divided into two sections. Section one illustrates the background of our respondents based on their sex, religion, ethnoreligious identity, location, age, and field of work. Section two reveals a result of the survey: the list of Patani Peace Influencers.

1. Background of the respondents

We received a total of 48 responses from 60 targets. Thus, the response rate is 80 percent. These data constitute characteristics of our respondents based on six factors: sex, religion, ethnoreligious identity, location, age, and field of work.

Sex. For a gender background, we cover a group of male, female, and LGBTQ+; men are the majority of our respondents. The result shows that 77.1% are male; 20 percent falls into female and 2.1% is identified as LGBTQ.

Religion: In terms of religious background, we provided an answer box with 4 choices: Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and others. The result shows that Muslims constitute a key group of respondents. As the figure below shows, 70.8 percent are Muslim, while Buddhist respondents are 25%, and another 4.2% identify themselves with atheism and none. Among 25% of Buddhists, we received responses from the non-radical and nationalist wing of Buddhist groups in southern Thailand. These include the Buddhist Group for Peace and the Ruam Thai Group. None of our respondents identifies themselves as Christian. Though the result may not reflect the opinions of Christians in the deep south, the respondents' background relatively reflects the demography of the areas.

Ethnoreligious identity: Our question on ethnoreligious identity covers 7 sub-identities; Malay-Muslims constitute the largest sup-group of our respondents. Most of our respondents perceive themselves as Malayu (45.8%), while 18.8% are Thai, 16.7% are Thai Muslim, and 10.4% are_Thai Buddhist. The rest perceives their ethnoreligious identity as Chinese, Pathan, and Mixed Malay-Chinese, respectively.

Location: The hometown of our respondents covers 8 locations. They are mainly from Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and Songkla (43.8%, 18.8%, 16.7%, and 8.3%, respectively). Respondents from Bangkok are 4.2%; the rest are from Satun, Pattalung, Krabi, and Nakhon Sri Thammarat (2.1% equally). This information shows that many activists have their hometown outside the deep south areas.

Age: A group of working people is our primary respondents; we have not reached out to those below 19. The majority of our respondents' age ranged from 30-45 (52.1%). In comparison, 31.3% are Gen X, 14.6% are youth (Gen Z), and 4.2% are in the elderly group (Baby Boomer Gen). In short, Millennials are our primary respondents.

Field of work: Information on an occupation consists of 7 categories, all of which represent key sectors in the deep south. The members of civil society organizations (CSOs) constitute our primary respondents. Data show that 43.8 percent work with CSOs, while 22.9% and 18.8% work with the state and private sectors. Freelancers and lecturers make up 6.3% and 4.2%. The rest are members of an international organization and media (2.1% equally). Unfortunately, we have not reached out to a student whose age is below 19.

In short, the respondents' background demonstrates their diversity in 6 different aspects, all of which represent the key elements of the population in the deep south. Nevertheless, it excludes a student of age below 19. We have also not reached out to a group of Christians in the deep south. In this sense, the result may not reflect their opinions. Hence, the respondents' background covers the key demography of the area.

2. The result: The Patani peace influencers

This paper defines a Patani Peace Influencer as an active member of civil society organizations that works to promote peace in the deep south in three aspects: (1) prevention of horizontal conflict between Buddhists and Muslims, (2) prevention of vertical conflict between the state and society, and (3) support cooperation between societal groups in the deep south. They may work in one of the eight fields: culture/religion, academic, public health, politics, social problem, economic, sport, and environmental.

We received a total of 59 nominees' names from 48 nominators. The nominees' backgrounds can be divided into two main groups: Buddhist and Muslim. Muslims constitute 61 percent, while Buddhists make up 39 percent. In terms of gender identity, 78 percent are male, while 18.6 percent are female, and 3.4% are non-gender (organization). The list of all nominees is included in the appendix.

From the list of 59 nominees, we assess the data based on three criteria: the value of rank number 1, frequency, and rank number 1-3. The first and second criteria contain 50 points; the third criterion is 25 points; thus, the overall score is 130 points. Then, we use a rule of three to convert 130 raw points to percentage. It is important to note that we use a dense ranking as a measurement, so more than one person may fall into the same rank/category if they receive an equal score. Drawing on our calculation, all 59 nominees come under one of each rank coincidently. The top three ranks consist of one person each; rank number 4 has two persons, number 5 has eight persons, number 6 has four persons, number 7 has 11 persons, number 8 has one person, number 9 has 13 persons, and number 10 has 17 persons (Figure 1). As Figure 1 demonstrates, most nominees come under rank 10, 9, and 7, respectively, while one nominee falls into rank 1, 2, 3, and 8. Because some names are nominated more than once by different nominators, they score higher than others.

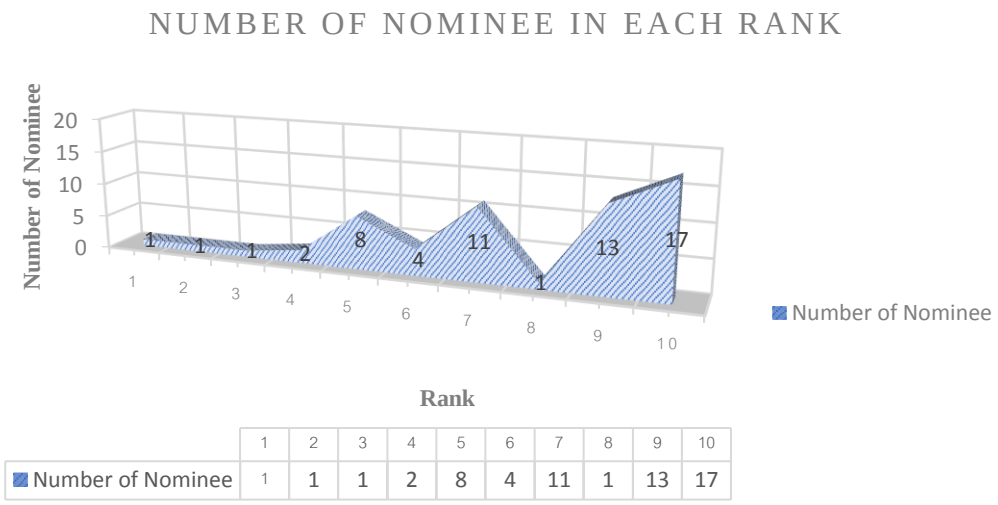

Figure 1 Number of nominees in rank 1-10

Figure 2 shows the ranges of scores that nominees in each rank receive; it ranges from 100% to 15.4%. It demonstrates that nominee in rank number 1 scores 100%, number 2 scores 92.3, number 3 scores 69.2, number 4 scores 61.5, number 5 scores 53.8, number 6 scores 46.2, number 7 scores 38.5, number 8 scores 30.8, number 9 scores 23.1, and number 10 scores 15.4 respectively. In short, the highest score is 100%, and the lowest receives 15.4%. The three largest groups of nominees receive 15.4 (17 persons), 23.1 (13 persons), and 38.5 (11 persons). It should be noted that the more the score is increased, the more the view of nominators converges.

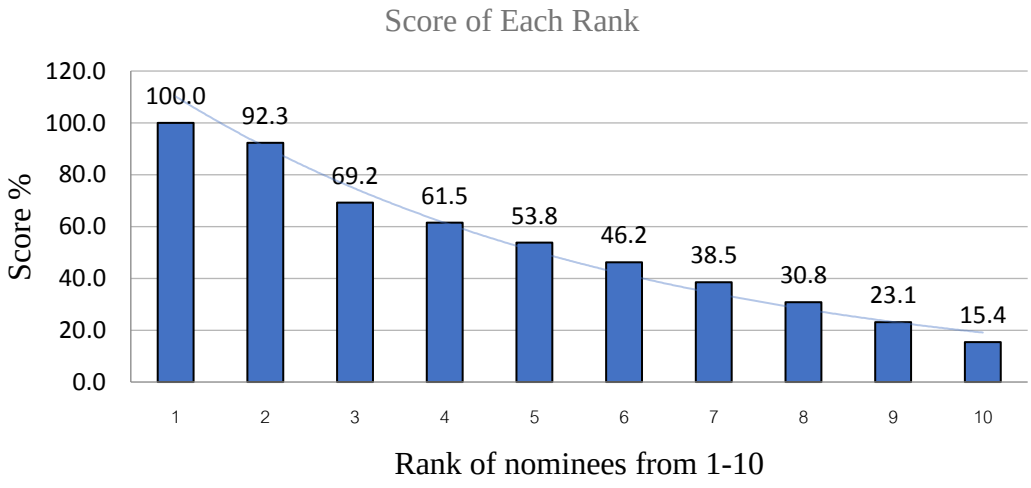

Figure 2 The score of each rank

Figure 3 shows a picture of score, rank, and numbers of nominees; it illustrates the combination of the number of nominees' names and the score of each rank. It shows that the top three nominees receive a score more outstanding than the other. As it demonstrates, rank 1 to 3 has one person, and each receives a score of 100, 92.3, and 69.2; rank 4 has 2 persons having a score of 61.5; rank 5 has 8 persons having a score of 53.8; rank 6 has 4 persons having a score of 46.2; rank 7 contains 7 persons scoring 38.5; rank 8 contains 1 person scoring 30.8; rank 9 contains 13 persons scoring 23.1; rank 10 contains 17 persons scoring 15.4. It should be no surprise that a vast number of nominees come under rank 10. This happens because their name appears only once, while the one who appears in rank 1 to 3 receives more nominations from different nominators. In this sense, it seems to have a near consensus that nominees in the first three ranks are viewed as the peace influencers in Patani/the deep south.

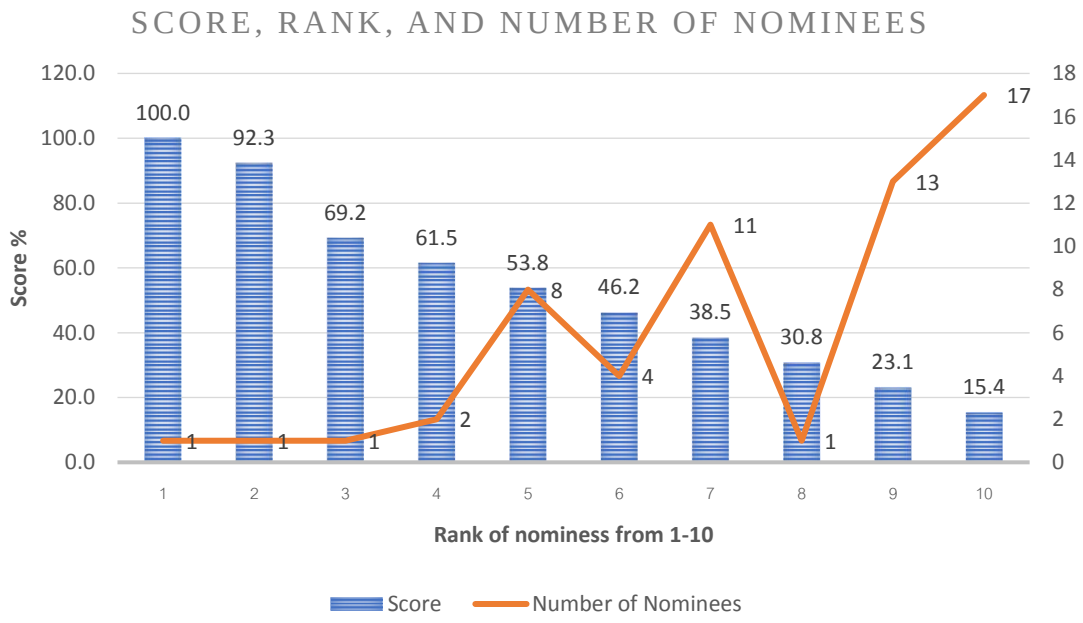

Figure 3 The score, rank, and number of nominees

Thus, drawing from our survey data, all nominees' names are included in the ranks of 10 groups. Table 2 show the updated list of 59 Patani Peace Influencers. The first three-person are Associate Professor Dr. Ismail Lutfi Japakiya, Rukchart Suwan, and Assistant Professor Dr. Srisompob Jitpiromsri. While two of the mentioned names are academia, Rukchart Suwan is a leader of Buddhist civil society in southern Thailand. However, Ismail Lutfi Japakiya is the founding rector of Fatoni University and working as an Islamic scholar, whereas Srisompob Jitpiromsri is a political scientist at Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Pattani Campus, and a founder of Deep South Watch and the Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD) who works on conflict resolution in the deep south.

Table 2 The list of the Patani peace influencers

Rank	Name	Score %
1	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ismail Lutfi Japakiya	100.0
2	Rukchart Suwan	92.3
3	Asst. Prof. Dr. Srisompob Jitpiromsri	69.2
4	Pornpen Khongkachonkiet and Hasan Yamadibu	61.5
5	Muhammad Aladi Dingnee, Pongsak Phomsang, Wijit Sakulkaew, Anas Pongprasert, Kiflan Doloh M.D, Asst. Prof. Jehabdulloh Jehsorhoh, Atif Sogo, Phra Kru Kosit Sutaporn	53.8
6	Wan Muhamad Noor Matha, Lamai Manakhan, Soraya Jamjuree, Muhammad Ayub Pathan,	46.2
7	Wankanok Po-I-Taeda-O, Kanthapat thauiponsub, Peaceful of Southern Boundary's Organization (POSBO), Luukrieang, Sadam Waeyusoh, Rushdi Yusoh, Husni Binhajikhonoh, Baba Ismail Sepanjang, Pitak Kokiatpitak, Ramadan Panjor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mark Tamthai	38.5
8	Anantachai Thaipathan M.D.	30.8
9	Dr.Muhammad Fahmee Talek, Zulkiflee Lateh, Pongsak Yingchoncharoen, Korakot Sangnoy, Duangsuda Sangaumpai, Waraporn Goenrasadon, Mangsud Mateh, Patimoh Sadiyamu, Col. Manee Chanthip, Asari Lateh (Babazu), Asst. Prof Suporn Soonthornnon, Salahuddin Hajiyusoh, Abdul Aziz Duramae	23.1
10	Mazlan Tareh M.D, Jaturon Iamsopa, Komet Jaetuengo, Den Tokmina, Nasrudeen Kachi, Abdulrahman Molo, Phra Ajan Rawat Tirasattho, Anukul Awaeputeh, Sukhom Charoenphol, Chookiat Piticharoenkit, Muhammadsuriyee Masu, Somjai Chuchat, Dr. Worawit Baru, Dr. Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij, Kalanya Eosakul, Anwar Haji-Teh, Tawee Sodsong	15.4

Discussions

This study builds on the idea that emphasizes the role of civil society as the main force of conflict resolution, including peacemaking and peacebuilding. This school of thought can be referred to Alexis De Tocqueville (1969), who popularized the importance of civil society

in building effective democracy in the USA. In addition, Putnam et al. (1994) show that the difference in civic engagement is the key determinant of institutional effectiveness in northern and southern Italy. Though Putnam et al. (1994, p. 114) found no correlation between conflict and civic engagement, they point out that "networks of civic engagement are an essential form of social capital: The denser such networks in a community, the more likely that its citizens will be able to cooperate for mutual benefit" (1994, p. 173). In this connection, Varshney (2002) articulates that interethnic engagement, rather than intra-ethnic cooperation, is more effective in preventing ethnic violence between Hindus and Muslims in India. This line of thought has also been fostered in the deep south of Thailand. On November 6, 2018, the World Bank and Patani Forum (2018) held the roundtable meeting at the Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus on "Pathway for Peace, Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violence Conflict", which focuses on building trust and cooperation on the one hand and developing relationships between the state and civil societies in the deep south on the other. Despite attempts to support civil society in the deep south, a lack of a dataset on key local influencers remains a hurdle of peacemaking.

The findings of this research generate at least 3 major issues concerning peacemaking in the deep south. Firstly, it answers the question of who are the peace influencers in Patani. As the updated list of 59 influencers reveals, they are from diverse backgrounds, but the most influential who appears on the top is a religious scholar: a founding rector of Fatoni University. This finding also reveals that the local context has substantially changed from the age of traditional Islam (the old school) to an era of Islamic revivalism (the new school). As a leader of a Salafi group in the deep south, Ismail Lutfi Japakiya rejects the use of violent means in rebuilding Patani society on the one hand and promotes harmonious cooperation between state and society, and between Buddhists and Muslims on the other (Yahprung, 2014). His approach parallels a group of local fighters who embrace the Shafi'e's traditional Islam, or the old school. As his name appears on the top, it shows that his influence is significantly felt among the members of civil society in the deep south.

Secondly, the updated list reveals that, according to the CSOs and academia, the influencers are not only local actors, nor are they only men. They can be a person from Bangkok and female who have been engaging with the local people. An example of a non-local person is Pornpen Khongkachonkiet (rank no. 4), a Director of the Cross-Cultural Foundation and has been working on human rights issues, connecting the local problem to the global mechanisms. Mark Tamthai, who is based in Chaing Mai, is another example of a non-local influencer. As for an example of a female influencer, Wankanok Po-I-Taeda-O (rank no. 5) is a founder of the Association of Children and Youth for the Peace in the Southernmost Provinces of Thailand (Luuk Rieng Group), who has been up and running to support child victims in the deep south. Soraya Jamjuree, a director of Civic Women's Network, is a great example of a female influencer who spends most of her time and energy uplifting the lives of Malay women victims. Thus, the updated list shows a rather inclusive pool of peace influencers, a non-local player, or a female activist.

Lastly, despite what has been said, CSOs in the deep south remain relatively weak because of a lack of international support, sustainability, and organic cooperation among CSOs, or between the state and CSOs. As it can be seen, when international donors stop supporting local CSOs, many cease to exist. As for the CSOs that survive, however, they face other challenges such as restriction and encroachment by the state. Thus, it has never been easy for the CSOs to emerge and survive without international actors' support. It is even more challenging for them to work in the time of the non-democratic regime and the COVID-19.

Conclusion

This study aims to explore Patani Peace Influencers who have been promoting vertical and horizontal cooperation and preventing conflict in southern Thailand. We engage with civil society by surveying civil society organizations, activists, and experts on peacebuilding in the deep south. Data collection is carried out via online surveys, focus group meetings, and telephone calls. We receive the data from 48 respondents, which consequently generate 59 names of nominees. Three criteria of weighting are used; the value of rank number 1, frequency, and rank number 1-3. The report presents the 59 peace influencers in Patani based on a dense ranking. Essentially, the data show that the most influential person in the eyes of CSOs and the active members in the society, for a Muslim group in the deep south, is a religious leader: Ismail Lutfi Japakiya. As for a Buddhist group, an active Buddhist activist, Rakchat Suwan, receives the most score. Besides, the data also show that most of the influencers' pool are activists and active members of CSOs. They work in diverse fields, including community development, human rights, research, social cohesion, public space, public health, and children. The full list of 59 peace influencers in Patani suggests that although the violent conflict in the deep south continues unabated, active members of CSOs have been up and running to make a positive difference. Their hard works and contributions can be a starting point for anyone who wants to learn more about a story of positive peace and alternative narratives in the deep south.

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Appendix

Full list of Patani Peace Influencers in 2020-2021 according to alphabetical order (A-Z).

A	
Abdul Aziz Duramae	Muhammad Aladi Dingnee
Abdulrahman Molo	Muhammad Ayub Pathan
Anantachai Thaipathan	Muhammad Fahmee Talek
Anas Pongprasert	Muhammadsuriyee Masu
Anukul Awaeputeh	N
Anwar Haji Teh	Nasrudeen Kachi

Asari Lateh	P
Atif Sogo	Patimoh Sadiyamu
C	Peaceful of Southern Boundary's Organization
Chookiat Piticharoenkit	Phra Kru Kosit Sutaporn
D	Phra Rawat Tirasattho
Den Tokmina	Pitak Kokiatpitak
Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij	Pongsak Phomsang
Duangsuda Sangaumpai	Pongsak Yingchoncharoen
H	Pornpen Khongkachonkiet
Hasan Yamadibu	R
Husni Binhajikhonoh	Romadan Panjor
I	Rukchart Suwan
Ismail Lutfi Japakiya	Rushdi Yusoh
Ismail Sepanjang	S
J	Sadam Waeyusoh
Jaturon Iamsopa	Salahuddin Hajiyusoh
Jehabdulloh Jehsorhoh	Somjai Chuchat
K	Soraya Jamjuree
Kalanya Eosakul	Srisompob Jitpiromsri
Kanthapat thauiponsub	Sukhom Charoenphol
Kiflan Doloh	Suporn Soonthornnon
Komet Jaetuengo	T
Korakot Sangnoy	Tawee Sodsong
L	W
Lamai Manakhan	Wan Muhamad Noor Matha
Luukrieang	Wankanok Po-I-Taeda-O
M	Waraporn Goenrasadon
Manee Chanthip	Wijit Sakulkaew
Mangsud Mateh	Worawit Baru
Mark Tamthai	Z
Mazlan Tareh	Zulkiflee Lateh