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Nationalist Networks and Transnational Opportunities

An Illustration of GAM and PULOs Transnational Activism

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Abstract

As a reaction against unjust policies and repression the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in Indonesia and the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) in Thailand were formed at the end of the 1970s. Though their agendas have developed during the years, their demands have usually been centred on claims for independence based on nationalist arguments. GAM and PULO have used different tools in their contention against the Indonesian respectively Thai authorities ranging from armed force to political negotiations.

This thesis sets out to investigate the transnational dimension of nationalist movements. It argues that globalization processes have caused changes in social movement's contextual environment that facilitates the establishment of transnational networks.

Based on previous research such as scholar-written books and articles, reports, news articles and statements from activists, this thesis uses the examples of GAM and PULO to illustrate how nationalist movements use transnational opportunities, participate in domestic and international politics simultaneously, draw on a wide range of resources, and engage in information exchange and lobbying. By doing so they are using the transnational arena as a tool to reach political goals at the domestic level.

Key words: Asia, globalization, political opportunities, transnational activism, transnational nationalism

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1   Introduction

In a time when it has become more common that collective action transcends borders scholars have gained increased interest in the field of transnational activism. In the past decade research from a wide range of academic fields have appeared within this field. Scholars have researched topics such as the global civil society or global justice campaigns (Scholte 2005, p. 218). While these two areas have received a fair amount of attention less research has focused on the transnational dimension of issues such as terrorism, crime, or nationalism.

The focus of this thesis will be on nationalist movements in a Southeast Asian context, which remains a geographical area where transnational activism is commonly not studied (Piper & Uhlin 2004, p. 2). The empirical cases in this thesis are constituted by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in Indonesia and several movements in southern Thailand, most importantly Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO). For three decades these two movements have brought forward agendas that are similar in many aspects. Both groups have demanded independence based on nationalist arguments and have directed heavy critique towards Indonesia respectively Thailand claiming that these nations are violating their basic human rights and threatening their cultural survival.

By studying nationalist movements from a transnational perspective in a Southeast Asian context this thesis will contribute to the empirical research within the field as well as testing to what extent theories within transnational activism are applicable on nationalist movements.

1.1   Related Reseach

During the last decade scholars have gone from mainly studying political economy from a transnational scope to also include transnational contentious politics in their research. As research covering globalization has grown the interest for what has variously been called transnational/global social movements, transnational advocacy networks, transnational/global civil society, international non-governmental organizations, and global citizen action has increased (Tarrow 2001, pp. 1-3; Scholte 2005, p. 218).

Many of the transnational groups above participate in transnational activism which referrers to interaction crossing state borders involving contentious political activities, challenging or supporting existing power structures, involving non-state actors, and, at least partly is taking place outside formal political arenas (Piper & Uhlin 2004, pp. 3-5).

Within the literature it has been common to label any process or relationship that crosses borders globalization. However, by adopting the term 'transnational' instead of 'global' a more limited cross-border interaction is recognized. The term is also distinguished from 'international', which usually involves states as the central actors (Hannerz 1996, p. 6).

Transnational activism has been going on for centuries and includes examples such as the Reformation led by missionaries, the anti-slavery movements, and the spread of nationalism through colonialism (Tarrow 2005, pp. 3f). Today, transnational activism is carried out by actors such as international and domestic non-governmental research organizations, social movements, the media, churches, trade unions, regional and international intergovernmental organizations, parts of the political administration (Keck & Sikkink 1998, p. 9), rooted cosmopolitans and transnational activists (Tarrow 2005, pp. 40-43), extreme right- and left-wing movements, religious activist networks and NGOs (Piper & Uhlin 2004, p. 3).

Some of the most interesting research within the field has been carried out by scholars departing from international relations and social movement theories. Research has covered topics such as non-state actors working transnationally, particular issue-specific movements such as the peace or human rights movement, transnational organizations, international treaties and how they relate to activists, or how nations and regions have acted in the context of international agreements or institutions (Tarrow 2001, p. 9).

Criticism that has been aimed towards contemporary research is that it has not adequately defined central terms, especially globalization, a concept which is often adopted. Another problem is that that previous research has tended to focus on 'good' movements while violent transnational activism such as militant religious movements has been neglected (Tarrow 2001, p. 10).

Actors that commonly appear in the literature on transnational activism are often defined on terms of being important participants in both domestic and international politics, drawing on a variety of resources, trying to affect states and international institutions, sharing information and services, and using a common discourse (Keck & Sikkink 1998, pp. 2-4). I argue that nationalist movements share many of these key characteristics and hope that I through this thesis can contribute to existing literature within transnational activism by putting focus on a particular kind of actor that usually is not studied from this perspective.

1.2   Research Questions and Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is three-fold. Firstly, to analyse how GAM and PULO have been affected by the contextual environment that they are active in; secondly, under what circumstances transnational bonds are established; and thirdly, what role external actors have within the nationalist networks. In order to investigate these fields I have posed the following research questions that will guide the analysis:

- How has globalization affected domestic movements possibilities to establish transnational networks?
- How has GAM and PULO utilized available political opportunities?
- How has the establishment of transnational networks affected GAMs and PULOs possibilities to reach their political goals?

The first question serves to give an explanation to why and under what political circumstances domestic movements are able to form transnational bonds. Specific focus will be on the movement and its relationship to other state and non-state actors, as well as how changes in the subnational, national and international political environment has affected its development. The second and third question builds on the first one and gives a possibility to investigate what specific opportunities that have been available to GAM and PULO, how they have utilized these, and if they have benefited from it.

1.3 Disposition

This thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 is constituted by two parts; the first part discusses transnational networks and political opportunities, which is related to globalization processes and nationalist networks and; the second part outlines the specific theoretical framework, which is concentrated on the political opportunity theories, that will be applied in this thesis. Chapter 3 briefly discusses methodology and material. In chapter 4, an overview of nationalism and conflict in Aceh and southern Thailand is presented. In chapter 5, an analysis of how a diverse range of political opportunities has affected GAM and PULO is discussed. In chapter 6, the thesis is summarized and conclusions are presented.

2 Transnational Activism and Political Opportunities

In the following chapter a theoretical background and framework will be presented. The first part of the chapter aims to present a general discussion on globalization and its affect on states. It also discusses what incentives this has created for transnational networks, as well as the concept of transnational nationalism. This discussion leads into the second part of this chapter that is devoted to the specific theoretical framework that will be applied in this thesis. In this section, political opportunity structures on the domestic and transnational level are discussed. At the end of the second section, the specific opportunities that will be researched in this thesis are outlined.

2.1 Globalization, the State, and Incentives for Transnational Activism

Transnational activism is not a historically new phenomenon, however the extent of it has during the past decade increased. Processes of globalization has provided activists with new opportunities that increases their possibility to form transnational political strategies, construct transnational networks, and draw on transnational resources (Adamson 2005, pp. 31f)

Globalization is often described as a process that has affected the modern state system and caused global changes. Globalization has led to a transformation of traditional social-economic patterns, the principle of territoriality, and power. As globalization has undermined our sense of time, space and patterns of interaction, new space for transnational organizations such as global networks of production, regulatory agencies, and diverse kinds of networks have been created (Held & McGrew 2003, p. 18).

More specifically, globalization has embattled the modern state in two different aspects. Firstly, through the transnationalization and regionalization of governance there has been upsurge of international organizations, regimes, and regulatory agencies. This has led to that governmental affairs more than earlier is monitored by international agreements or transnational institutions (Scholte 2005, pp. 209-214). Secondly, the modern state and its territorial integrity have been challenged by civil society groups, identity-based groups, and subordinated groups. Developments within communication technology has made it easier to establish and maintain activist networks. These networks have been able to get

their claims implemented at a local level by advancing their claims to transnational governance institutions (Scholte 2005, p. 215; Shami 2001, p. 103).

Still, it is important to stress that the commonly perceived dichotomy between states and globalization or activism is not valid. States remain a crucial actor in several aspects; they remain responsible for many areas of policy; they offer activists opportunities, networks, and access to the national political arena; they remain an important actor in the transnational system as states use it to fulfil its goals, and to get its policies acknowledged by other states (Tarrow 2001, pp. 2f).

The development of transnational activism as a research field reflects changes in the society and in the political environment. Changes in the political structures have created opportunities that non-state actors benefit from. A consequence of these developments is that applying a strictly state-centred perspective when analysing social phenomenon rarely can generate an nuanced analysis. To understand international politics we need to take into account transnational networks that function as agents that participate in and shape politics. Transnational networks strive to influence policy debates by bringing in new ideas, norms and discourses; these networks are active within domestic and international politics simultaneously; they make use of different kinds of resources, and they use these resources to affect the state-constructed international system (Keck & Sikkink 1998, p. 4).

2.1.1 Transnational Nationalism and Activist Networks

Transnational nationalist networks constitute interesting examples of transnational activism. Often overlooked within the research field they share many features of more traditional cases. Nationalist activism rarely is a domestic phenomenon as nationalist activists participate in transnational networks and make use of opportunities generated by globalization processes (Kaldor 2001, pp. 69f). Nationalist networks attempt to bring domestic changes by utilizing transnational links and opportunities (Wayland 2004, p. 406).

The increased mobility of people and interaction across borders has provided incentives that facilitate the establishment of transnational networks and mobilization. In case of nationalist networks these can roughly be summarized around three specific factors: the mobility of people; the mobility of capital; and the mobility of ideas, information, and identity (Adamson 2005, pp. 33-37). The increased mobility of people has led to that migrant-based networks have been established. Developments within transport and communication has made it easier to maintain social networks that transcend borders, such networks contain a wealth of social capital that can be used for political mobilisation (Adamson 2005, p. 34). The mobility of capital has made informal transnational economical networks more common. Some of these are closely linked to the migration-based networks and sometime functions as sponsors of nationalist movements and their contention (Adamson 2005, p. 36). The mobility of ideas, information, and identities has had a profound influence on the creation of a national identity. Being able to follow the development in a distant homeland in real time has made

the formation and maintenance of national identity less dependent on a specific territory. Internet, through for instance on-line communities, has facilitated the creation of alternative identities and as state power has been reduced it has become more difficult to forge a single national identity (Adamson 2005, pp. 36f; Scholte 2005, pp. 234f).

Within these transnational nationalist networks diaspora play a crucial role. As people nowadays tend to change their geographical location it is more common that they follow and engage in national politics from a distant setting. Thus, people move beyond their state but continue to mobilize contention that crosses states boundaries (Adamson 2005, p. 33). This phenomena, coined long-distance nationalism, has become common (Anderson 1998) and refers to a modern kind of nationalism that has adapted to the condition of the global system and crosses territorial boundaries (Skrbis 1999, pp. 5f). Nationalist transnational networks that use modern technology to interact with their motherland can be observed while directing political claims to supranational institutions, in addition to national institutions (Adamson 2005, p. 34). Other areas where interaction is evident is for example diaspora who support democratization movements or who remain active participants in ethnic or national conflicts in their motherland through financial support or by promoting nationalist ideas (Skrbis 1999, pp. 5f).

Referring to the argument above more research should be carried out on the transnational dimension of nationalist movements. Nationalist networks fit well in the common definition of transnational networks as characterized by an existence of shared values, the use of common discourse, and the frequent exchange of information and services. Like other transnational networks, nationalist networks actively participate in domestic and international politics simultaneously, they consist of informal structures, and they use and rely on a variety of resources (Wayland 2004, p. 410).

2.2   Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Political Opportunity Structures

Approaching social movements from an agency-structure perspective has during the past three decades become fairly common. Social movements interaction with the surrounding political context has figured in studies where researchers have tried to answer questions regarding social movements origins, development, and influence on politics (Meyer 2004, p. 125). Briefly, political opportunity structures can be defined as "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for collective action by affecting people's expectations for success or failure" (Tarrow 1998, pp. 76f).

When trying to explain the interaction between contentious politics and structures of political power and institutions theories of political opportunity structures have been applied. As outlined by Tilly and Tarrow (2007, p. 57) political opportunity structures include six characteristics of a regime: the multiplicity of independent centres of power within it; its openness to new actors; the instability of current political alignments; the availability of influential allies or supporters for challengers; the extent to which the regime represses or facilitates collective claim making; decisive changes in the characteristics above.

When social movements gain external resources and find opportunities to use them contention increases. Such opportunities can be found in changes in the external aspects mentioned above. Institutional changes may divide elites whereby allies become available and regimes change policies. Such structural changes may offer incentives to challengers to advance their claims (Tarrow 1998, p. 71).

As much other research within social movements, also scholars using political opportunities to explain social movement activities have departed from the assumption that social movements are not transnational, but that they operate within state boundaries (McCarthy 1997, p. 243). Therefore it is important to complement domestic political opportunities with transnational opportunities when studying transnational networks.

It is apparent that processes of globalization have created new opportunities for transnational networks. As authority has become increasingly spread to transnational bodies it is reasonable to believe that also social movements have become transnational in different aspects (McCarthy 1997, p. 256). Moreover, movements are likely to make use of transnational opportunities when there is a lack of domestic opportunity structures, when these are insufficient to solve the conflict, or when movements think that using the transnational arena will further their cause (Keck & Sikkink 1998, p. 12). An approach drawing from both social movement and international relations traditions enables a study that explains how domestic actors can make use of the international arena to put forward their claims, get them processed, and see if it can be redirected back to change domestic politics (Tarrow 2005, p. 9).

Tarrow (2005, p. 8) outlines three interrelated trends that invites transnational activism and facilitates the formation of networks: an increasing horizontal density of relations across states, governmental officials, and non-state actors; increasing vertical links among the subnational, national, and international levels; an enhanced formal and informal structure. Such trends have created new structures that enable mobilization, resistance and opportunities for the establishment of transnational networks. It offers a second arena for transnational activists to mobilize against domestic and external actors. By extending the concept of political opportunities to include transnational factors researchers can also cover international institutions, regional alliances, informal networks, and transnational migration (Tarrow 2005, pp. 7-9).

As outlined in the discussion earlier in this chapter we need to investigate other political opportunities than those in a local level in order to understand the emergence of a transnational nationalist network. In this thesis four specific political opportunities will be researched.

Firstly, I will focus on some domestic opportunity structures as these arguably have an effect on what possibilities movements have to establish transnational networks. As pointed out earlier lack of domestic political opportunity structures can provide incentives for movements to seek transnational support (Keck & Sikkink 1998, p. 12). I will therefore research GAM and PULOs access to their national political system, if the political system that they are active in facilitates or represses collective claim making, and if perceived threats have stimulated contention.

Secondly, I intend to analyse how developments within technology, communication, and information networks has facilitated the possibilities to create and maintain transnational networks. Previous research on nationalism has pointed out that the development of domestic infrastructure, capitalism, and languages has strengthened homogeneous national identities. However, with modern forms of technology and communication national identity becomes less bound to a specific territory. Therefore, it is important to research what such development has led to in terms of transnational mobilization (Adamson 2005, p. 36).

Thirdly, I will study what transnational support GAM and PULO have gained in terms of funding and safe havens. Several networks based on nationalism or religions draw on transnational funding. In these cases diaspora, external states, and charities are important. Furthermore external states have in some cases provided asylum, or a refuge to activists, thus offering them a safe setting from where they can continue their involvement in the struggle (Adamson 2005, p. 41; Wayland 2004, pp. 421f).

Fourthly, I intend to research more specifically how GAM and PULO have been able to use the transnational arena as means to spread information and to draw attention to their cause. In this case the development of a solidarity network, where for instance diaspora are active, is crucial. Placed in a peaceful and democratic setting such networks can draw attention to the conflict. By drawing attention to certain aspects in the conflict, such as human rights abuses or unequal access to the domestic political arena, international human rights groups and institutions might start to direct attention to the conflict. Such groups can function as allies as they cover what is going on in the conflict and sometimes get involved for instance as mediators.

3   Method and Material

As the aim of this thesis is to present a detailed analysis of transnational nationalist networks and a range of political opportunities this study will be carried out as a comparative case study. The research area that will be covered has received a limited amount of attention in previous research. I therefore argue that it is particularly interesting to apply a research design that enables both in-depth analysis and comparison.

The strength of case studies is that it enables detailed analysis of transnational movements and their contextual environment. By approaching the research problem with such methods it is possible to present a holistic, contextualized analysis of transnational movements and opportunity structures (Snow & Trom 2002, pp. 149f). By using two cases in the analysis I believe that it is still possible to complete a detailed study, however with the benefits inherent to comparison. The strength of this method is that it includes the possibility to explain and illustrate differences in cases on basis of comparison.

Using nationalist networks from a Southeast Asian context as empirical examples can be motivated in different ways. Firstly, and as already mentioned, both the theoretical and empirical phenomenon remains under-researched. By choosing these examples I hope to contribute to the scarce literature in the field. Secondly, and more importantly, I believe that these empirical cases function as good examples of transnational nationalist networks. Thirdly, the networks in this study share several key characteristics: their agendas are based on nationalist and to some extent, especially in the Thai case, religious claims; both networks have attempted to establish an independent state; and the responses from the governments in the respective countries have from time to time been very similar. However, presently the case of Aceh has reached a peaceful solution to the conflict, while in Thailand the conflict and violence has escalated. This makes it interesting to contrast the diverse developments.

The material on which this thesis is based is mainly constituted by secondary literature. Within the field of social movements, and to some extent transnational activism, there exists a faire amount of literature. However, there is a limited range of literature covering the particular empirical cases, especially the Thai case. Gathering and reading material has therefore been a comprehensive task. Used material includes academic books and articles, news articles, and information from web-pages. By using a theoretical approach that draws from academic traditions such as international relations and social movement studies, and a fairly extensive and varied amount of literature hope to present a multilayered and nuanced analysis (Snow & Trom 2002, p. 150).

Within both the research field transnational activism and the empirical cases some interesting material has been produced during the past few years. Therefore,

much material used in this thesis is up to date. To get a contemporary view of the developments in Aceh and southern Thailand I have complemented scholar-written books and articles with news articles. As far as possible I have attempted to validate research and statements from multiple sources to avoid presenting a biased material. It needs to be noted that some web-pages and statements connected to activists, as well as governmental statements, sometimes differ from each other as well as to other literature. However, reading and using such material remains interesting and fruitful as it gives an insight into how these particular actors interpret the issue in focus.

Finally, the ambition of this thesis is not to generate explanations that can be generalized to a wide range of cases. I will depart from an interpretive approach and will thus instead seek to present my analysis, understanding, and interpretation of the material that relates to the topic in this thesis. The ambition is instead to present a detailed analysis of the cases in this study. Insights from this particular study might be of interest in research on other similar cases.

4 Overview of Nationalism and Conflict in Aceh and Southern Thailand

Since history constitutes an important issue in the struggle of the movements in southern Thailand and Aceh it is important to present a brief overview of the situation and the developments in the two regions before moving on to the analysis. By presenting this brief overview the purpose is to create some understanding of the context in which the movements are active.

4.1 Historical Roots of the Conflict in Aceh

On August 15th 2005 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by representatives from the Indonesian government and Free Aceh Movement (GAM). The papers were signed in Helsinki and aimed to put an end to the conflict that had been going on in Aceh, Indonesians westernmost province, since 1976 and granted Aceh "self-government' (Aspinall 2005, p. vii).

Although 1976 is the common date set for the start of the conflict it has roots much older than that. Aceh is probably the first region in Southeast Asia that was encountered by Islam. Until the 19th century Aceh was an independent, influential Sultanate that dated 500 years back in time. Through the British-Dutch treaty in 1871 the Dutch received power over the region. Colonizing the area and incorporating it into its empire demanded force which resulted in a long bloody conflict ending in 1931 (Chalk 2001, p. 254; Webster 2007, p. 88).

During the Indonesian revolution against Dutch rule in 1945-1949 Aceh remained the only part of Indonesia that was not conquered by the Dutch. The struggle against the Dutch was framed in Acehnese, Islamic, *and* Indonesian terms. While exercising a large degree of self-rule during this wartime period, the Acehnese remained loyal to the Indonesian unity recognizing that succession of different regions would not led to independence in the long run (Webster 2007, p. 89).

However, in 1953 after a chain of policy reforms that marginalized Aceh politically and economically there was a widely supported rebellion under the Darul Islam movement. Discontent steamed from Jakarta's and President Sukarno's decision to form a secular unitary state instead of an Islamic federation that would have allowed more regional self-rule (Bertrand 2004, p. 166).

In 1957 the conflict was put to an end as an agreement was settled. Three developments could be distinguished by the end of the conflict; the gap between

the Indonesian state and the people of Aceh widened; Aceh gained increased autonomy in issues that covered religion, education, parts of the legal system, took many local administrative positions, and the regional troops were replaced by Acehnese soldiers and; the Acehnese political elite was divided as some did not accept the agreement that was settled with the Indonesian government (Bertrand 2004, pp. 167f).

However, the strongly centralized Indonesian political system led to that the benefits from the 'special region' status that was granted soon diminished. Discontent remained and was commonly centred on grievance regarding the unequal political and economical relationship with Jakarta, the government initiated transmigration programs, the secular Indonesian state, and atrocities committed by the Indonesian army (Chalk 2001, p. 254; Jemadu 2004, p. 321).

The discontent led to that Hasan di Tiro, a foreign educated businessman who during the Darul Islam rebellion had represented Aceh in the UN and later was exiled to Sweden in 1980, established GAM in 1976. The GAM presented an agenda that was more radical than previous demands. The loyalties to Indonesia diminished and instead GAM, on the basis of nationalist and religious arguments, demanded the establishment of an independent Islamic state of Aceh (Chalk 2001, p. 255; Webster 2007, p. 90). In the 'Declaration of Independence of Acheh' and later documents GAM declared that Aceh had for long been an independent sovereign state and that it had been exposed to attempts of colonization by first the Dutch and later the Indonesians. GAM argued that Aceh had been illegally colonized by the artificial entity the Republic of Indonesia (di Tiro 1976; GAM 1999).

Initially GAM was a small organization and it did not pose at threat to the Indonesian unity. However, by the end of the 1980s GAM gained support from Libya, who provided insurgents with military training (Schulze 2004, pp. 14f). Indonesia increased its military presence in Aceh as GAMs armed wing grew. GAM remained a relatively small organization, but they received a lot of support from villagers. Aware of this the Indonesian forces targeted civilian using methods such as arbitrary killings, torture, detentions, disappearances etc (Bertrand 2004, pp. 172f). In the conflict, thousands of people are believed to have been killed. Because of the actions carried out by the Indonesian forces support rapidly increased for GAM who came to represent an opposition to Indonesian rule (Malley 2003, p. 198; Bertrand 2004, pp. 172f).

In 1998, Indonesian President Suharto left his seat and his authoritarian regime came to a halt. At this time the conflict in Aceh escalated and GAM took control of large parts of Aceh. This, however, led to that the Indonesian army increased its presence in Aceh. A large number of people were displaced, international aid workers were removed, and martial law was imposed (Webster 2007, p. 91). Several cease-fires were negotiated, but the issue of independence was never solved leading to that the peace process broke down and the conflict increased (Schulze 2004, pp. 74f). At the same time groups within civil society were able to mobilize one million people, a fourth of the regions population, who demanded a referendum similar to that in East Timor (Webster 2007, p. 91).

Following the Tsunami more formal peace negotiations were held under the mediation of former Finish President Martti Ahtisaari. On August 15th 2005, a MoU was finally settled after both parities had compromised its initial claims. In the MoU GAM has abandoned its claim for independence and settled with self-rule. Indonesia on the other hand has allowed local political parties in Aceh. Other central issues that are being handled in the MoU involve issues such as political participation, human rights, demilitarization, amnesty for GAM members, and the disarmament of GAM (Aspinall 2005, pp. 42-47).

In summary, the armed conflict between GAM and the Indonesian forces went on for three decades, however the conflict has century-old roots. The conflict from GAMs perspective has been fuelled by what has been argued to be forced colonization, economic exploitation, political marginalization, and excessive use of force by the Indonesian army. Further more having failed to establish an Islamic state has motivated GAM to stand up against the secular Indonesian state.

In Aceh an Acehnese identity has been forged around the demand for secession, which has fused well with the proud historical heritage, the feeling of having been abused by Indonesian security forces, the discontent with having failed to establish an Islamic state, and the unequal relationship with the Indonesian government (Tan 2000, p. 268).

4.2 The Historical Roots of Thailand's Southern Violence

The development of the conflict in southern Thailand has not been improving the last couple of years. The century-old conflict has from time to time had various intensity, but since the beginning of the 21th century the conflict has escalated.

In Thailand, also known as Siam until 1939, about 95% of the population is Theravada Buddhist. The remaining 5% of the population are Muslims, most of whom are concentrated in the southern provinces Narathiwat, Yala, and Pattani. It is mainly these provinces, also known as the southern Border Provinces, which are affected by the conflict (Mahakanjana 2005, p. 5).

The Southern Border Provinces, together with the Thai provinces Songkhla, Satun, and three Malaysian states, earlier constituted the Sultanate of Patani, established sometime during the 14th century. The Sultanate consisted of a population with a distinct Malay ethnicity, culture, religion, and language. As a consequence of intense trade with Arab merchants Islam spread in the region. A large number of people converted to Islam and in 1457 the Sultanate of Pattani declared it to be Muslim (Gunaratna et al 2005, pp. 1f).

The Sultanate remained independent until 1786 when it was concurred by a Siam Sultanate. This led to the abolishment of the Muslim dynasty and the Sultanate was divided into smaller administrative provinces to weaken Muslim power (Islam 1998, p. 443). Nevertheless, the Siamese relied on indirect rule

which led to that religious and political elites never lost their control over the region (Mahakanjana 2006, p. 6).

During the end of the 19th century some Islamic movements emerged. The aim of the movements was to either establish a separate Pattani state or to incorporate the southern states with Malaysia (Mahakanjana 2006, p. 6). However, these demands were not met. Instead the Sultanate of Pattani was officially incorporated with Siam through the Anglo-Siamese treaty in 1902 (Mahakanjana 2006, p. 6). As of this moment Siamese influence in the region increased. During the first half of the century several reforms were implemented aimed at weakening Malay identity, examples include education reforms forcing Malay student to attend secular Siamese schools leading to that Muslim education centres had to close down, and later, laws banning Muslim names, Malay language, and the replacement of Sharia law by Thai Buddhist laws. Many Muslims experienced these reforms as an attempt by central Thai authorities to erase Malay Muslim identity and to convert the population to Buddhism. This provoked rebellion that was forcibly defeated (Gunaratna et al 2005, pp. 4f).

During the Second World War the Malay Muslims, believing that they would be granted independence, supported the British. However, the British did not support these claims by the end of the war as they believed that a unified strong Thai state was preferable when communist insurgency was spreading in the region (Mahakanjana 2006, p. 7). When Malaysia was granted independence there was a revival of Malay nationalism. Pattani Malays demanded to be incorporated into Malaysia, but were neglected.

What followed was instead attempts by Thai authorities to assimilate the southern resistive population. By initiating transmigration programs authorities attempted to create ethnic and religious heterogeneity in the region. Malay Muslims experienced that this was a threat to their culture existence, which led to the development of the first organized Muslim movements in southern Thailand developed at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s (Gunaratna 2005, pp. 5f).

Several groups emerged at the beginning of the 1970s whose aim was to establish an independent Islamic state in southern Thailand. The groups used a wide range of tools to reach their aim including political violence aimed at the government, government officials, schools, police stations etc. One of the most influential groups in this vein was the Pattani United Liberation Front (PULO). Their struggle was based on an agenda of religion, race, homeland, and humanitarianism that should be described in nationalist rather than religious terms (ICG 2005, p. 8; Mahakanjana 2006, p. 9).

Following the turmoil in the 1970s Malaysia urged support for the Pattani Muslims. It offered dual citizenship the Pattani Muslims, which planted a seed for cooperation between Malay Muslims in southern Thailand and Malaysia (Mahakanjana 2006, p. 9). Subsequently PULOs transnational linkages increased. It established a headquarter in Mecca, received financial support from the Saudi government, had training camps in Syria and Lebanon, and many of its fighters had experience from studying and fighting abroad. At the beginning of the 1980s its military strength was estimated to be up to 600 soldiers, PULO however claimed to have 20000 armed forces (Mahakanjana 2006, p. 9; ICG 2005, pp. 8f).

The movements in southern Thailand were to a large extent motivated by the experience among Malay Muslims that the Thai government was corrupt, exploiting them, and did not respect the rights of the people in the region (HRW 2007, p. 10). However, during the 1980s and 1990s the government made efforts to handle the discontent in the south leading to lack of support for the separatist were largely absent during the second half of the 1990s. Political marginalization decreased, a civil society emerged, and activists were given asylum. Taken together the situation in southern Thailand stabilized and incentives encouraging militant struggle decreased, Thai officials estimate that there were less than 100 militants left in the south by 2000 (Mahakanjana 2006, p. 10; HRW 2007, pp. 10-12).

At the beginning of 2001 Thaksin Shinawatra, a former police officer and media magnet, was elected Prime Minister in Thailand. Prime Minister Thaksin transferred power from the army to the police force and politicized it, institutions that had handled issues between the military and separatists were dismantled, and in 2003 the criticized 'war on drugs' was initiated. Almost 2600 persons accused of drug offences were executed in extra juridical killings. In many areas in Thailand, and in particular the south, the campaign appeared to be a way for the government and police force to quickly sort out local disputes and get rid of uncomfortable persons (HRW 2007, p. 13). Separatist violence increased; police posts and schools were targeted; and Buddhist soldiers were killed. Thaksin created a military-police command that was to handle the conflict in the south in April 2004. However, this did not solve the problems, instead the conflict escalated again (HRW 2007, p. 19).

It should also be stressed that the upsurge of violence during the 2000s, especially after 2004, was a reaction against reforms initiated by the Thaksin government, as well as human rights offences which has caused people to loose faith in the rule of law. Together with historical grievances this has increased the support for separatist groups such as PULO (ICG 2005, p. 32). While Thai officials claim that a lot of the violence in the south is common banditry and lawlessness (ICG 2005, p. 33) key figures within PULO, some of them living in Sweden, in an interview claim that their aim remains an independent state in southern Thailand. Acknowledging that PULO are attempting to constrain its military wing, PULO, according to the interview are willing to negotiate with the Thai government (Sveriges Radio 2006-01-26).

Summing up, the violence in southern Thailand has been off and on for several decades. Around 1970 several separatist movements emerged, the largest and most effective being PULO that was formed around a nationalist and, to some extent, religious agenda. Discontent in southern Thailand steam from Thai attempts to assimilate Malay culture. Policy reforms have led Malay Muslims to fear that their culture existence is being threatened by distinction. Further, human rights violations and excessive use of force by Thai army and police forces has led to increased support for separatist movements and an escalation of violence. Finally, there are diverse framings of the situation in the south, while Thai officials characterize the violence as regular banditry, PULO officials repeat their demand for a separate Malay Muslim state.

5 Transnational Nationalist Networks and Opportunities

In chapter 2, I discussed domestic political opportunities and how globalization processes has caused changes that provide movements with extended opportunities. The aim of the following chapter is to analyse what specific opportunities that have been available and how they have affected GAM and PULO. I begin by discussing domestic opportunities and how these have shifted from time to time before moving on to analysing transnational opportunities.

5.1 Institutional Access, Repression, and Threats

As mentioned previously domestic opportunities refer to structures within the political environment that shape movement's expectation of success and failure, and therefore affects the incentives for collective action (Tarrow 1998, pp. 76f). Lack of domestic political opportunities, or opportunities that are insufficient to solve disputes sometimes lead social movements to explore transnational opportunities (Keck & Sikkink 1998, p. 12). I will therefore in the following section analyse some crucial domestic political opportunities before moving on to discuss transnational opportunities.

Social movements institutional access and the extent to which states can repress them are two kinds of domestic political opportunities. These specific political opportunities are interesting to study from the perspective of nationalist movements. While institutional arrangements and access to formal political systems can favour or weaken ethnic and national minorities (Belmont et al 2002, p. 3) the states ability to repress contention might lead movements to shift direction of their claims from a domestic to an international arena. When states successfully repress contention and are able to hinder institutional access opponents are likely to radicalize, this is particularly evident when the repression poses a threat to the existence of the opposing groups (Tarrow 1998, p. 85).

Looking at the empirical cases in this thesis from a historical perspective it is possible to distinguish that contention has tended to increase as policies threatening the position or existence of national groups in Thailand and Indonesia respectively. For instance the Darul Islam uprising in Aceh in 1953 was not a reaction against the Indonesian incorporation of Aceh per se, rather it was based on the wide discontent of Aceh having lost its provincial status, policy setbacks, and the Jakarta government's increased influence in Aceh's political institutions (Webster 2007, p. 89). At a later point in time, policy reforms banned religious

education and Islamic law, and economic exploitation increased. Such developments widened the gap between the Acehnese and Indonesians as people in Aceh felt that their cultural distinction was being threatened. Discontent led to GAMs established in 1976 based on an agenda stressing Acehnese nationalism, revitalizing Acehnese historical consciences, and claiming Indonesia to be an artificial construction whilst it attempted to gather support among Acehnese (Webster 2007, p. 90).

Contrary, the Thai government during the 1980s established institutions in the south to reduce corruption, kidnappings, extra-judicial killings, prejudice etc. Through the same institutions, the southern population and local political elites were given an opportunity to engage with central government officials. By offering access to political institutions and paving the way for an emerging civil society people in southern Thailand had little reason to support separatist groups such as PULO which meant separatist activities diminished by the mid-1990s. However, little was done to facilitate the reinforcement of Malay identity as Malay language education was not provided, and tourism to the region was encouraged, which many Malays perceived as a threat to ethnic identity (Mahakanjana 2006, pp. 10f).

Looking at institutional access, state repression, and perceived threats more recently reveals a different situation. In Thailand the development took a turn for the worse around 2000 and several separatist groups re-emerged. In Aceh the MoU of course brought changes. However, during the years leading up to the MoU the relationship between GAM and the Indonesian government was very tensed.

A breaking point in Thailand was the 2001 general elections in which Thaksin Shinawatra came to power. Thaksin broke down existing political networks and appointed relatives and associates to political positions. By creating a loyal personal network Thaksin set out to take control over the entire country and it was challenge especially in the south where his party lacked support (McCargo 2007, pp. 38f). Contrary to his predecessor the Thai government under Thaksin did not identify the southern unrest as a political conflict. They believed that it was criminal activities that could be solved with strict law enforcement (McCargo 2007, pp. 41f).

Between 2001 and 2005 violence escalated tremendously in the south and both Buddhist and Malay Muslim civilians were increasingly targeted (Mahakanjana 2006, p. 11). The escalation of violence has by analysts been attributed to policy reforms initiated by Thaksin and the governments response to the insurgency. Among explaining factors that are mentioned is Thaksin decision to close down the two institutions that were responsible for the contact between government officials and separatist, the 'war on drugs', periods of marital law, abductions, and the extended areas of responsibility for the politicized police (HRW 2007, pp. 14-18). These actions clearly marked an end to separatists ability and will to handle their claims peacefully. Unsatisfied with worsened situation in the south and the dismantling of institutions separatists once again picked up arms. Thaksin's violent counter-insurgency tactics has undermined local civilians confidence to

interact with Thai authorities as they fear arbitrary arrests and torture (Mahakanjana 2006, p. 14).

In Indonesia the fall of President Suharto and the authoritarian regime in 1998 led to an escalation of violence. As Suharto's resignation forced the military to a more defensive position, which offered GAM the space to reorganize and step up its insurgency (Sukma 2004, pp. 11f). At the same time, following the referendum in East Timor, a wide-spread movement emerged that demanded a similar solution. In the following years a combination of diplomatic negotiations and armed confrontation followed. In 2001 a Special Autonomy Law was passed that gave Aceh increased authority over regional politics and greater a greater part of the revenue generated from natural resources. However, confrontation did not decrease and in 2003 the peace process broke down and violence increased again (Aspinall 2005, pp. 87f).

In the case of GAM, and especially PULO, it is apparent that contention and grievances reflects the actions carried out by their respective governments. In periods when people in southern Thailand and Aceh have had increased access to the formal political system the support and level of opposition by the movements have decreased. Access to political institutions is also interlinked to the experience of perceived threats as lack of influence in the political institutions led antagonists taking control over decision-making.

5.2   The Transnational Solidarity Networks

As illustrated above domestic political opportunities have not been favourable to the movements challenging state authority in Thailand and Indonesia. Overall, there has been little access to formal political institutions; there have been few allies; the level of repression has consistently been high; and the perceived threat against national identity has been widespread. Such conditions encourage activists to broaden their scope and seek out the opportunities available on the transnational arena. Thus, to get a comprehensive view of these social movements, we should not limit our research to domestic opportunities, but also transnational opportunities have to be taken into account (Wayland 2004, p. 416).

In the following section I will discuss the emergence of the transnational networks, their activities, and their impact on the domestic contentions. Firstly, I will discuss the importance of developments within communications and information networks for the emergence and maintenance of transnational networks. Secondly, financial support from external actors and safe havens will be discussed, as such opportunities suggestively have an impact on domestic movements activities. Finally, and maybe most importantly, lobbying and attempts to internationalize contention will be discussed.

5.2.1 Communication and Information Exchange

To be able to establish and maintain transnational networks is highly dependent on functioning modes of communication (Uhlin 2002, pp. 157f). The past decade or so developments within technology, communication, and information networks have provided activists with the possibility to utilize less expensive international phone calls, fax machines, and Internet. Such developments have decreased the perceived distance between people in different geographical locations and made daily communication possible (Uhlin 2002, pp. 157f; Adamson 2005, p. 36).

Although both GAMs and PULOs transnational solidarity networks are fairly limited they contain a wide range of actors including diaspora, exiled leaderships, solidarity groups, human rights organizations, religious communities, and to a lesser extent supportive states. Several of these actors are actively trying to challenge existing domestic power structures using both formal and informal political arenas to reach their goals, drawing on a variety of resources, and exchanging information.

Analysing the two cases separately it is apparent that GAMs solidarity network includes several different actors such as the coalition Support Committee for Human Rights in Aceh; the Asia Pacific Consultation on East Timor that since 2005 includes Aceh in its mandate; the US-based International Forum for Aceh that has arranged events to promote a peaceful solution to the situation in Aceh; the UK-based organization Tapol that monitors human rights in Aceh and other parts of Indonesia; and several minor groups in Australia, New Zeeland, the US, Malaysia, Sweden, and other states attempting to draw attention to Aceh (McCulloch 2005; IFA 2007; Tapol 2007).

In the case of PULO it is evident that support-groups are less common. However, the exiled leadership remains active, the local NGO the Patani Malay Human Rights Organisation (PMHRO) has recently been established, and regional and international human rights organizations have started to supervise the situation southern in Thailand. While international human rights organizations do criticise PULO and the violent means used by them, their critical reports on Thailand are resources that the PULO leadership and other involved use to attract attention.

Other important actors are diaspora. Bound together by a common national identity such groups span borders and attempt to influence policies. People who have left a country because their lives are threatened or for other political matters can from democratic societies take advantage of civil and political rights such as freedom of expression and mobilization. In several of the organizations above diaspora have a central role. Furthermore, networks can mobilize in host-countries and try to affect that state and international institutions to work to increase the political rights of their ethnic counterparts (Wayland 2004, pp. 410f; 417). This will be further discussed below.

5.2.2 Financial Support and Safe Havens

Establishing and maintaining transnational networks and domestic collective action requires funds. While both GAM and PULO have different methods of accumulating funds locally failing to recognize the importance of transnational funding creates an incomplete picture. The most important actors in these cases are diaspora. In both the case of Acehnese and Malay Muslims Malaysia is an important host-country however, diaspora exists in other places as well. Furthermore Malaysia is an interesting actor as some analysts have suggested that it offers regional Muslim groups resources in terms of finance and safe havens (Asia Week 2001-03-02).

Previously activists within GAM and PULO have been able to draw benefits from Malaysia. Whether this is with the consent of the Malaysian government or not is unclear. Both GAM and PULO have in different ways been able to draw support from diaspora. GAM has received foreign donations from expatriate Acehnese living in Malaysia and Thailand. At the beginning of the 2000s when violence stepped up in Aceh it was estimated that GAM received financial support on a regular basis from thousands of Acehnese living in Malaysia. The external funds complemented what was earned domestically (Schulze 2004, p. 24). Also PULO has gained financial resources from external actors. According to analysts such as Gunaratna et al (2005, p. 177) PULO has in the past gained financial support from several Middle Eastern states and charities, European charities, and until recently from Islamic groups in Malaysia.

The external funding in the two cases has mainly constituted a partial way of financing collective action and maintaining networks. Still, this illustrates diasporas continued involvement in distant politics, as well as how groups can benefit from allies on the transnational arena.

In terms of mobility of people, moving across borders has meant that activists within GAM and PULO have been able to continue their engagement in the activities of the organizations. The political leadership of GAM and PULO have for a long time lived in Sweden from where they have been able to control their respective group also when they have been under heavy pressure. Based in liberal countries the political leaderships do not have to fear repression and can continue their engagement, which also includes lobbying and information exchange (Schulze 2004, pp. 5, 31; Sveriges Radio 2006-01-23).

The possibility for GAM and PULO activists to cross the border to Malaysia where they can mix with other diaspora has also offered them opportunities to reorganize and exchange information and ideas with supporters. When GAM was under strong pressure during the 1990s it was largely its transnational links that enabled the movements continuous existence. This is mainly due to two factors; firstly, the exiled leadership in Sweden were able to continue its work and attract international attention to the situation in the province. Second, Malaysia during the 1990s became the permanent base for many of the military leaders within GAM and it provided a functional location from where they could monitor the developments in Aceh (Schulze 2004, pp. 5, 31).

The situation is similar for PULO especially during 2000s. Thai separatists have enjoyed a safe haven in northern Malaysia where the population shares culture and they have for long been interacting with Malay Muslims with the sanction from a provincial party and without the Malaysian government interfering (Chalk 2001, pp. 244f; Gunaratna et al 2004, pp. 108f).

5.2.3 Internationalization of Contention and Lobbying

One of the most interesting aspects of transnational networks is how they use the transnational arena to spread information and draw attention to their cause. When groups have limited opportunities to direct claims to the state they may seek support in international institutions or human rights groups. If successful they can bypass their state and find transnational allies that draw attention to the issue and try to influence the state (Keck & Sikkink 1998, p. 12).

In the case of GAM it is evident that they have had a strategy to spread information and lobby against international organisations. They have actively worked to internationalize their contention (Schulze 2004, pp. 51-54). PULO has been less successful, however there are signs that they are starting to work in similar ways as GAM did, which might lead to that international interest and attention will increase for their struggle.

The exiled leaderships have been important in both GAMs and PULOs attempts to draw international attention to their struggle. GAMs leadership went into exile in during the late 1970s and formed an 'exile-government'. From Sweden the leadership has maintained a tight grip over GAM and has represented the organization in negotiations (Schulze 2005).

To increase their access to international institutions and media, GAM reframed their struggle during the 2000s. Instead of stressing nationalism and historical incentives for their contention they started to highlight the poor human rights situation in the region and atrocities carried out by the Indonesian military. Other measures included attempts to increase medias interest in the region by drawing attention to refugee crises, some of which GAM have been accused of fabricating (Ross 2003, p. 29)

The elite has been lobbying around the situation in Aceh and have actively been attempting to internationalize the conflict (Schulze 2004, pp. 51-54). GAMs attitudes and overall position in negotiations should be seen from the perspective of their central strategy to internationalize the conflict. GAM and especially Hasan di Tiro understood that they needed to get international recognition to further their claims. This led him to continuously lobby against the UN during the 1990s. GAM was aware that they could not reach their goals by military means and that the only way to gain Acehnese independence was to gain a referendum similar to that in East Timor. Thus, GAMs aim was to get international actors such as the UN and the US to pressure the Indonesian government (Schulze 2004, pp. 51f). By negotiating under the mediation of recognized international institutions such as the Swiss Henri Dunant Centre and outside Indonesia, GAM gained international legitimacy as the representatives of the Acehnese people, and

the international attention for Aceh in the Western World increased (Ross 2003, p. 29). Also in the negotiations that finally settled the current deal, granting Aceh 'self-government', external actors were involved. In this case the negotiations were held in Finland and mediated by the Crisis Management Initiative through former Finnish President (Aspinall 2005, p. 19).

While GAMs strategy of internationalization has been successful PULOs attempts to draw international attention has been more limited. However, it is possible to distinguish developments during the last couple of years that might suggest that they are working more actively with internationalization. Recently several regional and international human rights organizations have started to issue reports on the situation in southern Thailand and the way in which the government is handling the situation. The Hong Kong-based Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has criticized the way that the Thai government is handling the situation and have in an open letter to the Justice Minister of Thailand named military staff that they suspect are responsible for human rights abuses and therefore should be put on trail (AHRC 2007). AHCR has also through letters encouraged UN agencies to put pressure on Thailand (AHCR 2006). Amnesty International has in its most recent report on Thailand aimed criticism at the Thai government and separatist groups. They claim that the government has failed to keep prisons at a reasonable standard, that the military has black lists of people supporting certain opposition groups and that political killings and abduction are not investigated to a full extent (Amnesty 2006). Human Rights Group recently issued a report in which the Thai security forces are being held responsible for multiple cases of abductions of suspected Malay Muslim separatists (HRW 2007).

One explanation to why there has been increased international interest in southern Thailand might be that PULO and other activists recently have made efforts to draw attention to the human rights situation in the region, instead of stressing only issues of independence. In 2004 the Patani Malay Human Rights Organisation (PMHRO) was founded. According to its website it is a legal organization or an independent NGO that is registered in Sweden. It gets financial contributions from individuals and foundations worldwide and it strives to work together with other organization spread around the world. Its mission is to monitor and support basic human rights and bring people who have violated such to trail (PMHRO 2007). On the organizations' basic homepage one can read articles and statements that relate to the southern unrest.

PULO has recently started to direct their claims directly at international institutions. In a letter to the Secretary General of the UN the organization, on the 60 year commemoration, appeal to the UN to intervene in southern Thailand and prevent Malay Muslims from the human rights violations that they are now suffering from (PULO 2005). In 2005 UNHCR became involved in a situation that related to the southern unrest when 131 Malay Muslims crossed the border claiming that Thai security forces had executed iman in their village. Initially it was an issue between Thailand and Malaysia, but as Thaksin raised his voice and claimed that the refugees were militants the Malaysian government handled over the issue to UNHCR and the issue came internationalized (The Nation, 2005-09-08). Thaksin claimed the issue to be a PR-stunt initiated by PULO to draw

international attention. He argued that PMHRO was closely linked to PULO, and claimed that it functioned as its representatives when approaching UN-agencies such as UNHCR (Bangkok Post, 2005-09-08).

5.3   Comparative Perspective on Political Opportunities

The aim of the sections above was to discuss different political opportunities and how these have affected GAM and PULO. As illustrated the political environment in which GAM and PULO are active in has been relatively similar. In both cases access to the domestic political system has been closed during long periods of time. Such conditions offer social movements incentives to search the transnational arena for opportunities.

Both GAM and PULO have been able to establish limited, but active transnational networks. Those networks have been maintained through modern forms of communication and information networks, which has enabled activists to keep up-dated on what is happening in Aceh and southern Thailand, it has also facilitated communication and information exchange among different actors.

External actors have also provided GAM and PULO activists with support in terms of funds and protection. Such opportunities have contributed to the continuation of collective action. External allies have provided GAM and PULO with financial support, but more importantly, activists have been able to draw back to safe havens from where they have been able to monitor and manage their organizations free of fears of repression.

Interesting differences appear when focus is shifted to the information exchange and lobbying by different actors within the networks. GAM has had a strategy to internationalize their contention. This has in many cases been successful; GAM has at several occasions been able to participate in negotiations outside Indonesia under the mediation of a third-party. It has also actively lobbied against the UN and the US aware of that such actors are influential, and can affect Indonesian policies. GAM and Indonesia also signed the MoU in 2005, by which both actors changed it initial claims. This occurred soon after the Tsunami, which brought massive international attention to Indonesia, putting pressure on GAM and the Indonesians government to handle the negotiations well. PULO on the other hand still have difficulties to attract international attention. Unlike GAM, PULO has up until recently not worked very actively to internationalize its contention. This might change as PULO and PMHRO recently have approached UN-agencies and human rights groups. The deteriorating situation in southern Thailand has led to increased interest by international institutions and human rights groups.

6   Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was three-fold. Firstly, to analyse how GAM and PULO have been affected by the contextual environment that they are active in; secondly, to investigate under what circumstances transnational networks are established and; thirdly, to highlight the role that external actors have within the nationalist networks.

The analysis has demonstrated that GAM and PULO have to a large extent been affected by the political context in which they are active. The analysis shows that when the movements are left without access to the domestic political system, they are likely to explore what opportunities the transnational arena offers. Lack of institutional access, repression, and perceived threats against national identity have tended to provoke collective action and encouraged activists to approach the transnational arena in search of possible allies.

Through transnational networks a range of actors have been able to use the transnational arena to impact the domestic politics in Indonesia and Thailand. The most important actors in those networks are suggestively the exiled leaderships and diaspora who have concentrated on issues such as management, funding, and information exchange. External actors, especially in the GAM case, have actively worked with externalizing their contention by attempting to get international actors involved. This is a factor that might explain why the development has been positive in Indonesia, but not in Thailand.

Finally, a more general aim of this thesis was to test if theories within transnational activism are applicable on nationalist networks. As the theoretical discussion has illustrated processes of globalization has created incentives that increase movements possibilities to form transnational strategies, construct transnational networks, and draw on multiple resources. Globalization has remodelled the role of the nation-state which has created multiple targets for movements on a national and international level. By approaching these with new ideas, norms, and discourses networks can attempt to influence policy debates. This argument is also valid for nationalist movements, which share many key characteristics of other social movements.

7 References

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Appendix 1. Map of Aceh, Indonesia

Appendix 2. Map of Southern Border Provinces, Thailand