

Understanding the Sustainability of Insurgency Conflict in Thailand

Sanakorn Manmuang, HiSanakorn@gmail.com

Maurice Yolles, prof.m.yolles@gmail.com

Institute of International Studies, Ramkhamhaeng University
Ramkhamhaeng Road, Huamark Bangkok 10240, Thailand

Sompoap Talabgaew, sptg@kmutnb.ac.th

King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok

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Abstract

This paper seeks to model the insurgency conflict in the three southern border provinces of the Kingdom of Thailand: Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. In so doing it will explore the sustainability of the conflict by representing it in terms of a conflict life cycle that is responsive to complexity and change. The cycle arises from the cybernetic viable systems theory of "living systems", and is able to foster a better understanding of what is happening empirically on the social level in these provinces, in respect to a situation characterized as one of incessant conflicts. This conflict model that arises suggests that there is an interconnection between the agents involved, and their individual and interactive dynamics. The conflict involves five types of politically related behaviour that occurs between two interactive agents: the state (engaged in searching for and making arrests of insurgents) and the insurgents (engaged in violent acts of shooting, bombing and arson). These agents are studied to the end of being able to determine the precise interactive nature of the political conflict in which they are engaged. In carrying out this investigation both quantitative and qualitative approaches are used. The research is carried out in three stages. In the first stage, time series techniques are used to determine inferentially whether the conflict is both rational and involves interactive behaviours. Stage two adopts the Weibull distribution technique to assess the political conflict. In the third stage, a statistical analysis is conducted of the conflict situation in political terms. Finally it is explained how the model and the methods used in this paper may be used to deal with intractable conflict in other social environments, and incidentally track the likelihood of conflicts being sustainable. Other agencies could utilize this approach in examining other political conflicts so as to be better able to prepare suitable approaches to coping with intractable conflicts to the end of fostering sustainable peace processes.

Keywords: Insurgency conflict, Thailand, living systems theory, Weibull distribution

1. The Sustainability of Insurgency Conflict

Conflict may arise with the "manifestation of differences working against one another" (Crawley, 1992: 10). When these contesting differences occur, they may develop as a challenge that is potentially constructive when the conflict acts as a catalyst for action resulting in individual or group achievement. However, conflicts may become disruptive, undermine the possibility of achievement, and enhance the likelihood of destruction. Interest here lies in such disruptive conflict.

Disruptive conflict may be seen as the development of instability in the interactions between two or more agents. It is caused by the recognisable occurrence of incompatible agent goal states (Galtung, 1975: 78). A realisation of one goal will exclude, wholly or partly, the realisation of

others. Conflict can also be seen to have a cultural basis (Cohen, 1983; Eder, 1985; Feher & Heller, 1983; Gorz, 1982; Melucci, 1980; Scott, 1990), when ideological and/or ethical distinctions arise between agents that with recognisably different and incommensurable paradigms. The agents experience ethical tensions due to their culturally based ideological and ethical differences. It is when these ideologically and/or ethically-conditioned differences are contested that conflicts can develop. It happens when, through these tensions, the paradigms develop normative behavioural anticipations which become coupled into a definable suprasystem through which the conflict progresses.

These conflicts may become sustainable, when actions by one agent enhance conflictual engagement establishing a basis for its continuity into the future. This paper seeks to examine behaviourally the potential for the sustainability of a disruptive conflict by examining the conflict that has been raging in the south of Thailand, developing new techniques to understand the nature of the instabilities that arise.

The three southern most towns of Thailand – Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces – have an ambiguous status within the Thai nation and state. Officially part of Siam since 1909 (Askew, 2007) the area remains around 80 percent Malay-speaking and Muslim, and has never been properly incorporated culturally or psychologically into Buddhist-dominated Thailand. Bangkok has largely pursued a policy of assimilation and standardization, making few concessions to the distinctive history and character of the region. The region has a long tradition of resistance to the rule of Bangkok, and political violence has emerged at various junctures in recent history (Ibid).

The latest series of conflicts that arose in 2004 can be connected with bad government policies that arose with the leadership of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra who had power for 4 years from 2001. These policies did nothing to address the South's grievances that arose with successive military and civilian governments (Bajoria, 2008). The re-emergence of conflict began on January 4, 2004, more than 50 militants who staged a daring raid on an army camp, seizing a large cache of weapons and scoring an enormous propaganda victory. In the three years that followed, almost 2,000 people were killed in political violence in the region. When the prime minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva, came to office in December 2008, he stated that resolving the southern conflict was a top priority for his government as well the adoption of a de-militarize counter-insurgency strategy. However, the south remains an intelligence failure. While a few leaders of the insurgency have been arrested, the government has lost the support of the local population due to security force impunity (Abuza, 2009:15-17).

The database from *Deep South Watch* at the Prince of Songklanakarin University has kept records of incidents of unrest in the Deep South since January 2004. During the past 73 months, the period of interest in this research, there have been a total of 9,446 of such incidents, resulting in approximately 4,100 deaths and 6,509 injuries. The total number of casualties of the unrest during this period, combining both the figures for the dead and the injured, has totalled more than 10,609 individuals. If the families of the deceased and the injured are included as those affected, then it is estimated that the number of people directly affected by such losses is approximately 53,045. In fact, among the dead, the Muslims outnumbered the Buddhists, and yet the majority of the injured have been Buddhists (Jitpiromsri, 2010).

This paper intends to examine the conflict using a “viable systems” modelling approach that comes out of “living systems theory” and is concerned with autonomous, active, purposeful, and adaptive social organization that can operate in complex situations and survive (Yolles, 1994 & 1999). The conflict situation in Southern Thailand benefits from analysis using system thinking because

Southern Thailand violence is complex – it simply cannot be solved strategically as a set of individual problems by separating the cases and breaking down the problem. It is therefore necessary that it be approached holistically. Importantly, the purpose of applying the approach adopted to the conflict situation is not to identify a specific strategic outcome to be worked towards, but rather it is a process that is in keeping with the notion of resolution as opposed to solution, helping inquirers to better understand the conflict situation in systematic terms, and offers an alternative procedure that can be used with case studies and implemented in a real situations. In particular, the paper explains the structure and process of the conflict from the viewpoints of the participants in the conflict, and look at the entropy of the behaviour of each agent to enable analyses of the conflict. It draws on the notion of entropy, which refers to the state of disorder of a system (Clark, 2004), and this concept has long been used for study in the field of conflict, for instance by Galtung (1967) who sees it as referring to the condition of messiness or disorder.

In pursuing this approach, the paper will initially introduce Kriesberg's (1998) conflict cycle which is interested in exploring the development of conflicts. However, this is rather a deterministic cycle based on the idea that conflicts develop within predictable environments, and it does not draw on issues that embrace complexity. Here, we shall introduce a cybernetic cycle of conflict that is sensitive to complex and chaotic situations in which conflicts develop. This cycle will be explored using stochastic analysis that is applied to the data that is indicative of the conflict.

2. Conflict Life Cycle

There are a few cycles of conflict, like that of Moore (1996) who is interested in the process of conflict mediation, or Kriesberg's (1998) conflict life cycle (Figure 1). Kriesberg's cycle begins with Bases, a situation in which no conflict has occurred before incompatibility, difference in goals, purpose develops in the next stage. Manifestation will subsequently occur the first time that the conflict becomes visible. In respect of escalation, conflict escalation generally refers to increases in the severity of the coercive inducements used and increases in the scope of participation within a conflict (Kriesberg, 1998:151). De-escalation refers to a decrease in the severity or scope of a conflict. Settlement is the fifth stage with the final stage being Consequence. In reality the conflict cycle re-occurs over time and passes through the different stages over and over again. Conflict moves through all stages in each cycle until the conflict is eventually resolved.

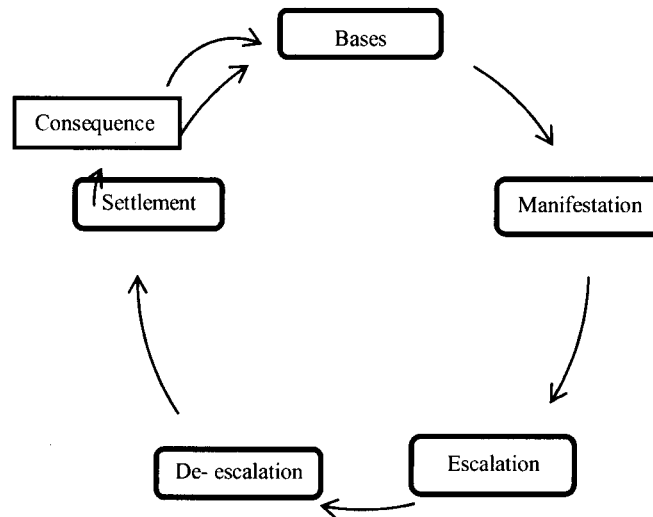


Figure 1: Kriesberg's (1998) Conflict Life Cycle

The difficulty with such a cycle is that it does not establish any explanation of the nature of the groups that are involved in the cycle, and implicitly make the assumption that a conflict is deterministic, stable, and it is blind to the idea that chaos may destabilise the whole cycle.

An alternative to this model (Figure 2) arises from Viable Systems Theory, as described by Yolles (2006: 695), and which originates from Schwarz (1997 & 2009). This model can be formulated to visualise the relationship between the two autonomous agents in conflict that are self-organising, adaptive and cognitive organisations that operate as "living systems" (Beer, 1980). Such systems have autopoietic (self-producing) and autogenetic (self-creating) functions. This paper adopts an adaptation of this model in order to represent the insurgency conflict situation. The interaction between the 2 agents is limited to the structural coupling between their operative systems. It is from the operative that the agents' structures are manifested from their figurative system, this guided by principles from the cognitive system. The structure for each agent facilitates and/or constrains/amplifies its behaviour and impacts on the other agent in the interaction.

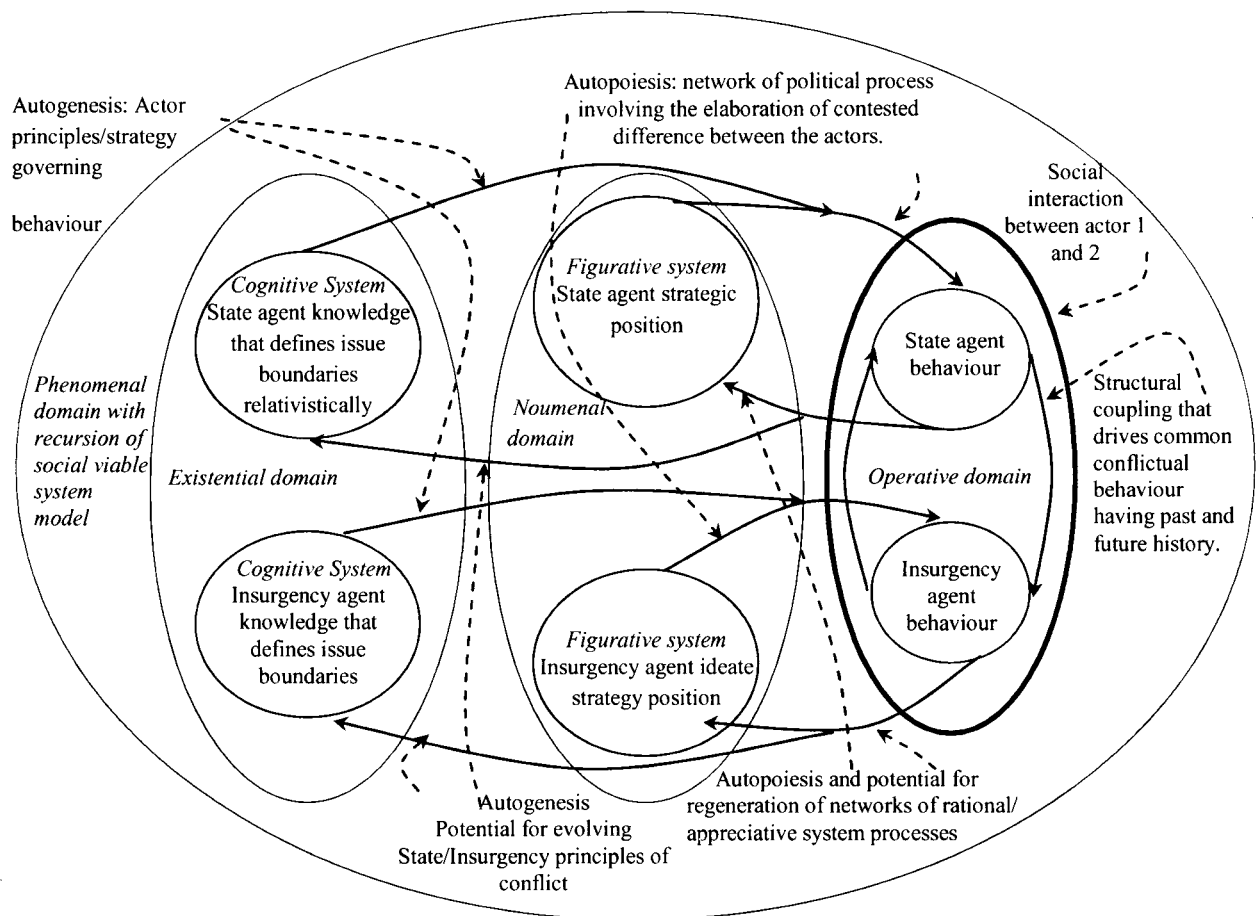


Figure 2: Representation of 2 interactive socio-cognitive agents (State agent through the police, and insurgent agent) adapted from Yolles (2006: 696).

In Figure 2 the conflict is shown as a system with three dimensions: the operative system, the figurative system, and the meta-system. The two interacting agents that operate autonomously are represented and only interact through their perception of the response to phenomena by others – in this case between state agent behaviour and insurgency agent behaviour. Each of the agencies in the existential domain is represented by the executor's knowledge that is available to the agency to undertake phenomenal behaviour. It defines the issue boundaries that enable strategy and action to develop. The system of thought represents the phenomenal social structure of the situation as perceived by each agency, and constitutes the basis from which its behavioural action derives. It involves ideological and ethical judgments that determine the nature of behavioural responses. The system also creates a pattern of anticipation for the agent that enables it to respond to the behaviour of the other actor in the operative system. This anticipation may involve associative projection that enables the agencies to come to terms with the differences between the agent perspectives, as well as attributive projection – a pathology that can exacerbate the conflict situation, particularly because the problem of cultural differentiation and knowledge migration is ignored. Behaviour is autopoietically defined, and constitutes the manifestation through political or operative processes, the patterns of actions that constitute (conflictual) behaviour (Yolles, 2006: 695-696).

A simplification of Figure 2 is offered in Figure 3, in which the interactions between state and insurgent agents are indicated. It is this version of the model that is of interested in this paper. In particular the model highlights the dynamic process that is developing within each agency that is

only implied by the feedback nature of the cybernetic model of Figure 2. It also indicates that measurable variables can be introduced into the model, and stochastic approaches can be used to determine something about these. The internal dynamics (indicated by a state of entropy), and their “cycle of change” is of particular interest in this paper. No consideration will be made of cultural or strategic position, because both create a basis towards behaviour and the agents being self organising, self-directing and adaptive systems in their own right. An agent that has such characteristics is often referred to as a human agency (Bandura, 2006), or within the context here, a human collective agency that operative through social norms, collective processes, and some degree of coherence. Both Figures 2 and 3 are also representative of two interactive socio-cognitive human activity systems each of which operate strategically, according to their own rationality, through information processes (Bandura, 1994 & 1999) that may or may not function coherently (Guo, Yolles & Iles, 2011).

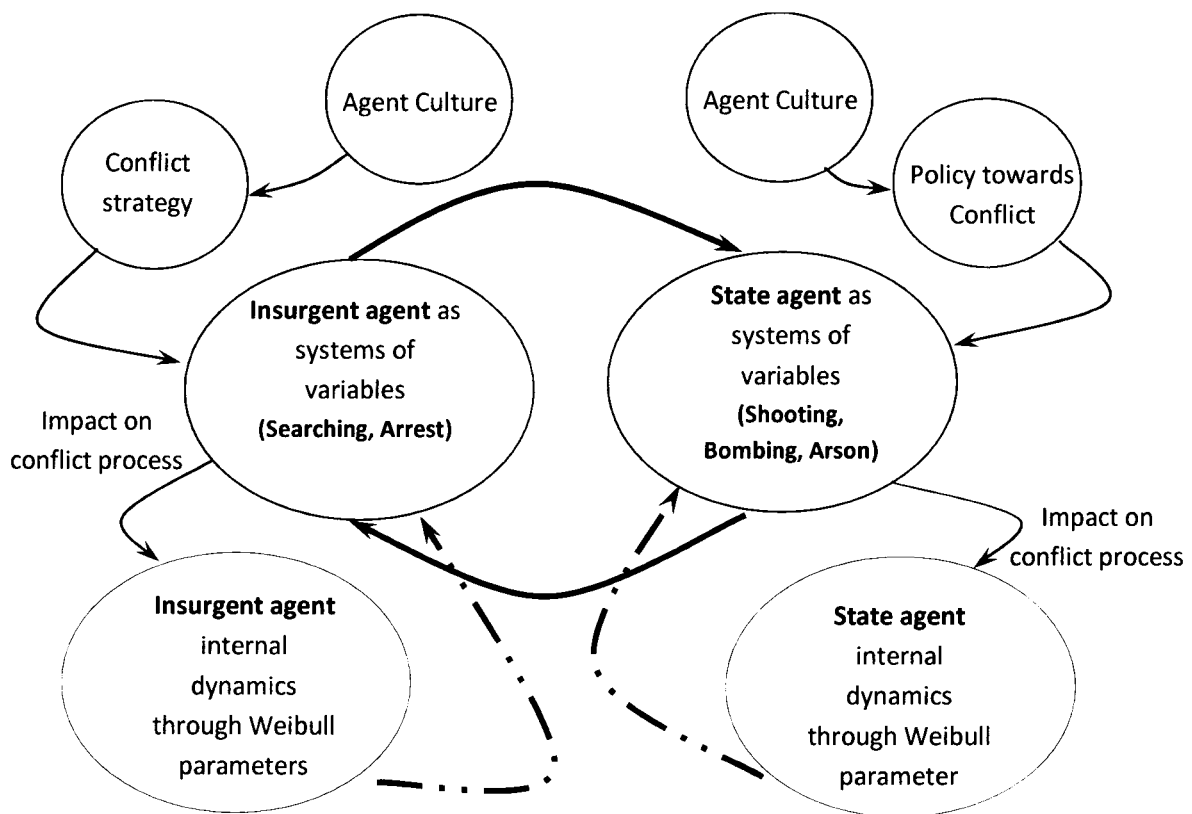


Figure 3: Simplified conceptual model of the interactive situation between two agents in conflict

The left side of the conceptual model in Figure 3 illustrates the interactive situation of the insurgent agent starting from the agent culture representing the idea of religion, nationalism, frustration and the belief that the state agent is the antagonist. Then this creates the conflict strategy, e.g. setting up the insurgency agents, planning attacks on state agents. As shown in the two central bubbles the insurgent agents as a system are referred to by their political behaviours and strategies to attack state agents such as shooting, bombing and arson. The impact on conflict processes shows the internal dynamics from the insurgent agent after they attack the state agent and it can feedback to the political behaviour (dashed line).

Meanwhile, the state agent on the right side follows the same process starting from the agent culture representing the notion of the state agent believing that the insurgent agents are the

criminals trying to inflict harm on innocent victims and provoke a violent situation. However, the state agent is assigned by the government to manage the insurgency agents. The next bubble, policy toward conflict, refers to any action plan from the government ordering the state agent to manage and solve the conflict by countering the insurgent agents. The bubble state agent as a system of variables demonstrates the responses of searching and arresting the insurgent agents in order to solve the conflict (the thick line). The two behaviours of searching and arresting are the variables for study in the quantitative analysis in this study. The bottom right bubble concerns the state agent, internal dynamics and state of entropy and represents their processes and structure in the situation which can then feedback (dashed line) to the political behaviours if change is considered and made.

Associated with both Figures 2 and 3 is a dynamic cycle of change as shown in Figure 4, and which is an adaptation from Schwarz (1997). There is one such model for each agent in the conflict. The two agents of interest are the state agent (for police actions only) represented through the variables *Search* and *Arrest*, and the insurgency agent represented through the variables *Shoot*, *Arson* and *Bomb*.

This model is comprised five steps:

- Step 1: The model of Kriesberg's existing conflicts cycle was related to other cycles to explain the conflict cycle in general.
- Step 2: It is argued that conflict can be seen as a self-organizing system which is fundamental to the viable system theory.
- Step 3: Schwarz's spiral of self-organization clarified the dynamics life cycle.
- Step 4: The Cycle of Paradigmatic Change explained the development of the new model using concepts of Yolles (2006).
- Step 5: The Dynamic Life Cycle resulted from the previous four steps and attempted to act as a new model for the complex situation.

The model constructed in this paper was taken from a cybernetic model representing the cycle of paradigmatic change (Yolles, 2010:8) and the relationship between four modes of organisational state, adapted from Schwarz (1997 & 2009) spiral of self-organizing systems.

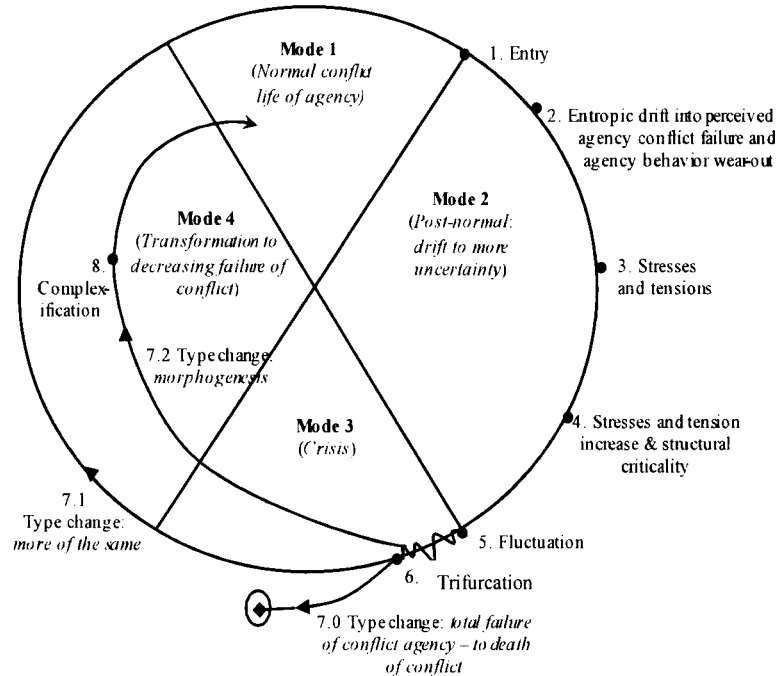


Figure 4: The dynamics life cycle of and agent in a disruptive conflict (adapted from Yolles, 2010).

3. Interpretation of the Dynamic Lifecycle of Conflict for the Thai Situation

Three border provinces in Southern Thailand, where violent conflict and a confrontational complexity situation arose, were selected to map into the new model. The two major parties in conflict are the Government of Thailand and Insurgency Agents (part of the Islamic minority agents in the south trying to make further developments into terrorism). This research explored the movement or communication towards the evolution of a measure from the communication between two agents is measured from a political incident. The cycle of conflict can be represented as four modes of conflict as explained below.

Mode 1: Normal Conflict

This is the equilibrium state of conflict; when conflict is just escalating slowly; strong relationship between cause and effect. Mode one of the cycle of conflict lifecycle process, like Kriesberg cycle (1998), is an equilibrium process in which it is assumed that full knowledge is possible in an inversely relationship with uncertainty (Tanner, 2000). Mode one represents a deterministic face of the conflict situation driven by its historical background to indicate the current situation of Southern Thailand. It includes insurgent incidents like bombings, fires, shootings etc. and their interactions with other variables of the other agent. It can also embrace political processes and negotiations where they are possible which can drift without progress. As a result failure in such processes facilitates a move of the situation into a post-normal mode.

Mode 2: Post-normal Conflict

Post-normal conflict involves the boundary instability e.g. an escalation of the conflict in unpredictable ways. There no longer exists any relationship between the two parties. Acts of terror can occur without just cause. Mode 2 paradigm drift refers to conflict transformation; a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict (Miall, 2004, p. 4). The southern Thailand situation can be moved to this mode when the paradigm that drives the interaction between the two agents drifts. This leads to a crisis from which three change options (trifurcation) arise.

Mode 3: Crisis - Trifurcation

Either conflict or death of conflict, more of the same conflict or transformation (the nature of the conflict changes). Nothing will be likely seen in the crisis mode unless political discussions have developed between the government and the terrorists (or their supporters/representatives).

Mode 4: Transformation

Where the interaction between the agents does not die, and “more of the same” fails, a change in the fabric of the conflict occurs as a cultural shift develops consistent with “transformation”. This alters the nature of the conflict, at least initially from the perspective of one of the agents. As a result, a new cycle is seen to have occurred when the type of violence or the nature of the discussions changes. The conflict situation develops into different types of terrorism in different geographical areas, such as the insurgency agent moving from the south to Bangkok, coordinating with the al-Qaeda global network for attacks in Southeast Asia.

4. Methodology

In this study a quantitative and qualitative approach was adopted. From the conceptual model, the Insurgent Agent and State Agent are taken as a system of political behaviours. To demonstrate this and following Smoker (1969), the variables associated with each system should be correlated. Where this has been shown to occur, there is a need to explain how each agent, which might be seen as a set of disparate groups that do not work together, may be seen to be represented systemically as part of a single agent. Yolles (2009) provides an argument for this by introducing the idea of a dispersed system.

A dispersed system is an autonomous social agent that emerges phenomenally when it has developed a self-defined purpose that directs its phenomenal social interactions. An autonomous dispersed¹ social agent has the potential to operate as a durable system. It is disembodied because it is not normally possible to associate it with a single named structured social organization that constitutes that construct, even though there may be individual organizations with a given orientation that constitute it. This is because it is constituted as a *dispersed collective agent*, having the capability of spontaneously establishing local social organizations of that particular cultural orientation, some of which may arise to bid for social power and the control of the social community. As such the dispersed agent is composed of a plurality of individuals, who may be interconnected by communication that is either indirect (e.g. books) or direct (e.g. interactive). It has an existential domain where beliefs (including beliefs about behavioural norms) and values exist. Behavioural norms are usually more or less adhered to by members of a cultural orientation and due to a shared history, and from this we can conceive of an implicit social structure that limits the individual's potential for behaviour. It may be expressed, for instance, as a moral code that may or may not be enforced by law. Orientational beliefs can also limit the ideate content of the noumenal domain, this ideate being composed of images or systems or coherent patterns of

thought (that may include its ideology, notions of morality, or forms of rationality) that may be maintained by constructed information.

The dispersed systemic agent therefore has at least three interconnected ontological domains. It is autopoietic because it is able to self-produce phenomenally its own components (like patterns of communications or behaviour) according to its own orientational principles (autogenesis) through a distributed network of processes. In effect this network of processes is likely to be able to phenomenally manifest the dispersed agent's own ideate. The network may involve inherent political or operative processes that may function at a personal level, and may become associated with ritual.

Yolles (2009) notes that there are orientational principles of governance that are embedded in cultural knowledge, and that inform ideology and morality as well as behavioural conduct, are likely to be implicit rather than explicit, and to which the membership of each dispersed agent more or less adheres. This is because the principle emanates from knowledge that is a normative part of the orientation.

Given that the Insurgency and State entities are seen to be interacting dispersed agents, then according to historical evidence have phenomenal variables attached to them. The State agency has the variables Searching and Arresting, while the Insurgency agent has Shooting, Bombing, and Arson as variables. There were thus five variables in the study of the relationship between the two agents, and their internal dynamics now becomes a point of interest.

Given that this stage has been reached, the relationship between the agencies can be examined structurally using the Weibull distribution. While this has mostly been used within engineering, for instance to explore fractures in materials, it can also be used within political contexts to that distinguish between the distinct phenomenal states that an agency in the conflict has reached (Petersen, 1977). These phenomenal states are reflected in the values that the variables adopt. In order to progress this further, Petersen's approach is expressed within the light of a mathematical model by Yolles (1980) that allows the structural parameter to be understood within the context of the conflict, and which will be explained further in due course.

Consequently, a study of the agencies needs to follow three stages:

Stage 1: Time Series analysis, which follows the approach developed by Smoker (1969), and from which verification occurs through inference that the agents postulated as part of the conflict suprasystem are indeed interactive. Correlations are examined between the political behaviours of State Agent and the Insurgency Agent, and the data collection used the frequency of political behaviours in four years of insurgency (2006-2009). A satisfactory correlational outcome therefore permits the agents to be considered as dispersed systems.

Stage 2: Weibull Distribution analysis, which follows the approach developed by Petersen (1977 & 1984) to model and evaluate conflicts. It also draws on the approach developed by Yolles (1987) that models conflict situations using a form of stochastic dynamic game theory. To explore the internal dynamics and state of entropy through Weibull parameters can indicate that they have level interactive position, threat perception and intensity of interaction. Data collection used time interval technique by counting from the first day after an event occurred up to the next day when a similar event occurred (Jan 1st 2006- Dec 31st, 2009 208 Weeks).

Stage 3: In-depth interviews. To explain initial quantitative results in political terms.

5. The Model used in Weibull analysis.

The stochastic model intended for use in this context is a double exponential stochastic model or a distribution known as the Weibull distribution. This model could be considered a simple extension of the time process equivalent with the Poisson-process normally shown as in equation (1).

$$P [T \leq t, \lambda] = 1 - e^{-\lambda t^\alpha} \quad (1)$$

The Weibull extension of this adopts the introduction of a new parameter that is placed as an exponent to the stochastic variable T. The two parameter Weibull distribution function is often written as follows:

$$P [T \leq t, \lambda, \alpha] = 1 - e^{-\lambda T^\alpha} \quad (2)$$

Data Analysis for Dynamics Life Cycle Model

Weibull analysis was used to explore an agent's internal dynamics. The five behaviours of Searching, Arresting, Shooting, Bombing and Arson were the variables of the Weibull technique used to explore the internal dynamics. The analysis of internal dynamics between two agents were subjected to the Weibull techniques process from Petersen (1977) and Yolles (1987). This paper used Weibull parameters values elaborated with the new model Dynamics Life Cycle applied to the model as follows:

- For $\alpha = 1$ represents an entropy constant stay in Mode 1 normal conflict life of agency
- For $\alpha > 1$ represents an entropy increase which is becoming more disorganized, staying in Mode 2 or Mode 3, Post- normal drift to more uncertainty until Crisis
- For $\alpha < 1$ represents an entropy decrease stay in Mode 4 transformation to decreasing failure of conflict

where:

λ = is taken to represent an interactive position between the two agents (Yolles, 1987)

$\lambda.\alpha$ = is taken to be the threat that the agent perceives from its conflictual partner (Yolles, 1987)

and where τ (the average waiting time according to, Petersen, 1977) can be calculated to represent the intensity of interaction for a given agent (Yolles, 1987).

These interpretations for the parameters are consistent with Petersen (1977), but draw particularly on the assumptions that underpin Weibull games – that is, that the suprasystem is conservative, and that the agents in it are rational within their own contexts.

The relationship between State Agent and Insurgent Agent from one political behaviour to another can illustrated the result show as below:

1. The Insurgent Agent had one organized compound with many cells and operated under a single principle.
2. Searching had more influence over Shooting, Bombing, and Arson than Arresting. It could decrease the conflict situation for a short time or delay the incidents.
3. More Arresting cannot work for this operation; moreover Arresting discredits the policy of Government and State Agent. Because arrests created feelings of injustice among Muslim communities as well as affecting livelihoods. Moreover, Arresting encouraged Insurgent Agents to further attack the Government and State Agent.

The results from the Weibull analysis to see internal dynamics and state of entropy can be illustrated in the following diagram:

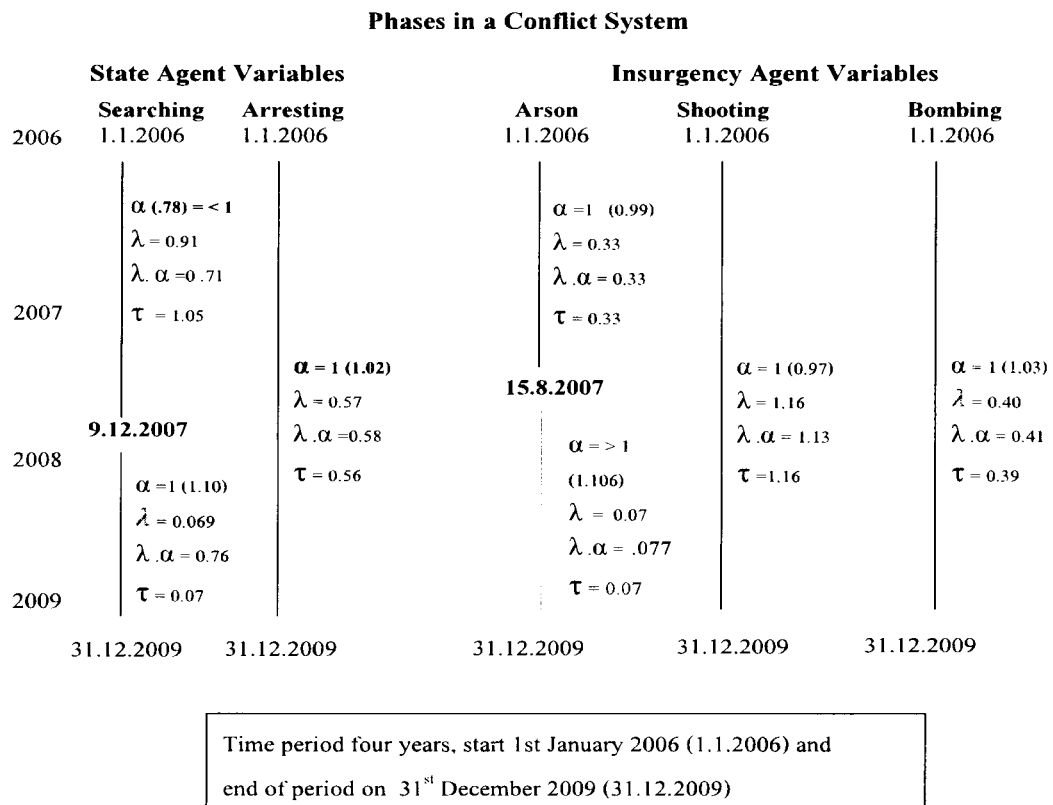


Figure 5: Diagram Illustrating Phases in a Conflict system

6. Exploratory Analysis

In Figure 5 we show the phases in a conflict system. This has been set up in connection with the Weibull 2 parameter distribution plotted into five variables and phases divided according to each behaviour. The period of the diagram started on 1st January 2006 (1.1.2006) and ended on 31st December 2009 (31.12.2009) covering a period of four years for the data collection. The five variables consisted of Searching, Arresting from the Insurgent Agent and Shooting, Bombing and

Arson from the State Agent. Exploratory Analysis described the diagram from the State Agent's behaviours to the Insurgent Agent's behaviour as follows:

Searching by State Agent consisted of two phases:

Phase One from 1st January 2006 to 9th December 2007

Phase Two after 9th December 2007 to 31st December 2009

Searching can be divided into two phases. In phase one Searching by the State Agent was just set up when conflict re-emerged in 2004. The Government was not aware of who was leading the insurgency against the Government. They continued to carry out operations following policy and tried to find ways of dealing with the situation until they employed Searching and Arresting. In Phase Two, the Government change of policy which was then translated to the State Agent who followed the policy and continued to do so. Searching by the State Agent changed the level of tension from low in Phase One to high in Phase Two.

Arresting by State Agent consisted of one phase

(From 1st January 2006 to 31st December 2009).

At that time, the State Agent carried out Arresting interacting with the Insurgent Agent with no change in this tactic. All tactics for Arresting were the same despite the policy changing in late 2007. State Agents believed that increased Arresting could reduce the insurgency situation but, in fact, it had less influence over Shooting, Bombing, and Arson than Searching. And it had a high level of tension in one overall phase which meant that this was still risky and dangerous when encountering the Insurgent Agent.

Shooting by the Insurgent Agent consisted of one phase

(From 1st January 2006 to 31st December 2009).

Insurgent Agent behaved in the same manner over four years. All tactics regarding Shooting were the same behaviour despite a change in the Government policy in late 2007. The Insurgent Agent carried out the same actions of attack against the State Agent and civilians. The rationale behind this behaviour was that Shooting tactics had an influence over the State Agent and civilian in the southern border provinces by discrediting the Government and State Agent and their protection of the civilian population. They were not afraid of the State Agent and they believed that the death toll from shooting tactics made an impact on local people even though Shooting operations had the highest threat perception.

Bombing by Insurgent Agent consisted of one phase

(From 1st January 2006 to 31st December 2009)

Bomb attacks by the Insurgent Agent followed the same strategy over four years and had the least influence on State Agent behaviours. Bombing was one of the tactics used by the Insurgent Agent which had a big impact on the Government, civilians, local populations and also the Thai public as a whole who could perceive the threat from the Insurgent Agent. The bombing tactics having a high level of tension because this tactic was very dangerous in the work field and there was a high risk of hurting themselves. Thus, there was concern by the Insurgent Agent in carrying out bomb tactics during the four-year conflict period.

Arson by Insurgent Agent consisted of two phases

Phase one 1 Jan 2006 - 15 Aug 2007

Phase two after 15 Aug 2007 – 31 Dec 2009

Phase One the Insurgent Agents in each cell carry out this tactic following the organized strategy until 15th August 2007 when the policy changed and the Arson tactics changed in Phase Two. In contrast, more incidents of Arson occurred in Phase One than Phase Two. In Phase Two the tactic of Arson by the Insurgent Agent changed across phases and there was a tendency for it to decline or the Insurgent Agent switch to another tactic. Because they were arrested by the State Agent. Moreover, this tactic was difficult to employ in the same areas. For this reason, in Phase Two there was more tension and worry than Phase One which may result in the ending or changing of this operation in the future.

Applying the Dynamic Life cycle to the real situation

The dynamic lifecycle can foresee the scenario of the conflict situation and this be an indicator of conflictual sustainability. The use of Arson will change or end or be more of the same (become the same behaviour) or transform (change to other tactics) while Shooting and Bombing tactics continue to be the same until the Insurgent Agent changes their strategy or the conflict situation changes the process and structure, e.g. a new government changes policy to negotiate with the Insurgent Agent. Then Shooting and Bombing tactics could shift from Mode 1 to Mode 2. Also, apart from Searching and Arresting more approaches should be found to deal with the Insurgent Agent. By enhancing peaceful approaches to interact with them, the Prime Minister should consider the attitude and behaviour of local state officials to be crucial in maintaining the peace process. Also, local leaders could serve as mediators in the conflict between the state and the separatist groups. The role of military and police officers in a conflict area is also significant. They must not only protect security but also be aware of nonviolent approaches to ending violence. This means they must respect and acknowledge the religious and cultural differences as well as uphold the human rights of local inhabitants. They must also avoid violating the human rights of and acting unjustly toward both the local people and the separatist groups. Therefore, these state actors (by and large Buddhists) have to promote a culture of peace in the south and the process of peace building and reconciliation for sustainable peace in the future.

7. Conclusion

The use of the term sustainability is normally used in a positive context, where the future survival of an entity is put under examination by policies and consequential behaviours that an agent pursues. In the case of disruptive conflict, examining the sustainability of the conflictual suprasystem, particularly in situations of insurgency where administrative and enforcement power is maintained in the hands of one of the agents, really offers an examination of bad policy initiatives that do little more than exacerbate a conflict situation. What is really being sought here is a way to make disruptive conflicts non-sustainable.

The approach developed in this paper stems in the first instance from work developed by Smoker (1969) using time series, and showing that the agents supposed to be in an interactive conflict can be demonstrated to be doing so empirically. It also has drawn on the methodology developed by both Petersen (1977) who used the Weibull distribution to illustrate the changes in the conflict situation, ameliorated by Yolles (1987), who produced a mathematic stochastic model that embedded Petersen's approach. It also draws on the cybernetic "living systems" cybernetic modelling approach of Yolles (2010) developed from the metamodel of Schwarz (1994).

This paper applies for the first time viable systems approach to the field of insurgency conflict, and in particular to the three southern border provinces with its attendant cycle of conflict. The methodology included time series analysis and Weibull distribution technique which are argued to be proper methods to examine conflictual interaction and internal dynamics of conflict, augmented by mathematical techniques. Although the methodological and analytical quantitative and qualitative techniques used come from “forgotten” research of the 1960-1980s, it appears to constitute a unique and a powerful way of analysing durable conflicts. It also offers new ways of understanding the conflict process and the likelihood of its sustainability. The difference between this type of situation and most others is that sustainability of the conflict process is not necessarily desirable.

One of the outcomes of this research is that it can enable investigators to recognize the implications of policy provisions in dealing with conflict processes, and enable the anticipation of potential patterns of conflict incidents. However, more importantly, it can highlight the bad policy initiatives that become instruments of the sustainability of disruptive conflicts.

8. References

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¹ This dispersed agent, once it is conceptualized, is deemed to exist either (1) in an ideational world because it is an essence that can be manifested in its ideate, and (2) in a sensate world if it can be identified phenomenally and measured.