

# Conflict of the Thai-Malaysian Gas Pipeline Project

Nopadol Burananuth

**Abstract**—This research was aimed to investigate (1) the relationship among local social movements, non-governmental Organization activities and state measures deployment; and (2) the effects of local social movements, non-governmental Organization activities, and state measures deployment on conflict of local people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project. These people included 1,000 residents of the four districts in Songkhla province. The methods of data analysis consist of multiple regression analysis. The results of the analysis showed that: (1) local social movements depended on information, and mass communication; deployment of state measures depended on compromise, coordination, and mass communication; and (2) the conflict of local people depended on mobilization, negotiation, and campaigning for participation of people in the project. Thus, it is recommended that to successfully implement any government policy, consideration must be paid to the conflict of local people, mobilization, negotiation, and campaigning for people's participation in the project.

**Keywords**—Conflict, NGO activities, social movements, state measures.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project is a project that the government wants in order to develop the southern sea coast area and to increase economic stability by reducing dependency on crude oil resulting in a lot of foreign exchange. The project started on February 21, 1979 when Thailand and Malaysia entered into a memorandum of understanding to explore the possibility of jointly developing newfound gas reserves in the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area (JDA). The JDA, approximately 7250 square kilometers or about 4.5 million Rai, located in the southern area of Gulf of Thailand, near the coast of Songkhla province, was established to resolve the overlapping claims between the two countries over hydrocarbon resources in the continental shelf [1]. Although this project was beneficial, there were some groups of people, local fishermen, villagers and environmentalists that did not agree and established a group after becoming aware of the public relations of PTT project in 1998. There were opponents of the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project performing movement and demonstrations in four districts, including Chana district, Namon district, Hat Yai district and Sadao district of Songkhla province [2].

The rally against the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project increased in severity continuously. Due to the fact that people's rally for objecting showed that conflict against the

Thai-Malaysia gas pipeline project increased severity continuously.

This project is an event which indicates that Thai society still lacks the skill for solving conflict occurring from the government policy.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

### A. Conflict of Local People

Presently the world is in the era of communication without frontier, people have more knowledge and understanding about their rights and freedoms so that they will not be violated by government authority.

Nowadays, there is inspection of government policies. People will accept good policies. However, if any issued policy causes severity or social problems, it will cause people to have conflict [3]. When people's conflict increases, it will cause the government to upgrade or review such policy; so that people will be more satisfied [4]. People will have conflict resulting in disobedience, civil disobedience. Most disobedience is caused from wrong government regulations and unfair policy operations [5].

In summary, people's conflict towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project involves; (1) local social movements trying to realize common benefit, grouping to claim, negotiation and compromise; (2) Non-governmental organization activities consisting of campaign, information, coordination and mass communication; and (3) deployment of state measures mentioning about public relations, benefits that the government gives to the people and project participation.

### B. Local Social Movements

Presently, the local social movements are a new social movement which is different from the old social movement and does not have revolutionary objectives or is not an agent of a political party [6]. But it is a process that wants to reform a society, so that society accepts people's participation at every level.

From the study of Nesbitt and Weiner [7], it was found that the integration of groups for conserving the environment was associated with a sense of ownership, practical procedures and utilization of natural resources which was not justified. In a study by Gudavarthy [8], it was found that local social movements in India had identified with constructive in a way of discipline and development and change in better way with democracy. In a study by Hornsey, Jetten, McAlliffé & Hogg [9], showed that the norms of the individual affected the acceptance of group members in local social movements.

Therefore, it could be seen that the local social movements have important factors in this study regarding benefits that the

Dr. Nopadol Burananuth is now a lecturer at the Doctor of Philosophy Program in Development Administration, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (corresponding author phone: 06621601196; fax: 06621601199; e-mail: Nopadol.b@hotmail.com and Nopadol.bu@ssru.ac.th).

government gives to the people, mobilization, negotiations and compromise.

### C. Non-Governmental Organization Activities

People generally desire to join with a NGO in a campaign in solving conflicts and they desire to join in the work even more, if the action is a matter of accuracy in maintaining the local environment [10]. Therefore, NGO must use media for publicizing news systematically, so that people or participants become aware of the facts or gain a correct understanding to achieve cooperation in the activities for the benefits to society [11].

In summary, the main activities of NGO had important minor factors in this study, including campaigning, educating the public or information related to the learning process, coordination and any activities to achieve a set of objectives. One important thing to get the job done well was to have coordination, whether internal coordination or external coordination. Good coordination must include correct planning, sincerity, being in the scope of the law, regarding regulations, rules, and using mass communication.

### D. Deployment of State Measures

Using a decentralized state administration, promoting participation of citizens and changing the requirements for the better are things that all contribute to conflict resolution [12]. To negotiate the requirements of the state is a significant factor in making operation of policy effective and in preventing conflict. Therefore, using the good requirements of the state can satisfy the people. If there is good publicity, having equality and spreading from above down to the grass roots may actually lead to cooperation in the campaign to resolve the problem [13], [14]. As mentioned above, it can be seen that deployment of state measures has an important sub-factor in this study including public relations, benefits that the state offers to the public and having people participate in the project.

### E. Research Hypothesis

This research hypothesis can be written as the following:

1. Local social movements depend on Non-governmental Organization activities (including campaigning, information, coordination and mass communication).
2. Deployment of state measures depends on local social movements (including benefits collectivism, negotiation and compromise), Non-Governmental Organization activities (including campaigning, information, coordination and mass communication).
3. Conflict of local people towards the Thai Malaysia gas pipeline project depends on the local social movements (including benefits, mobilization, negotiation and compromise), Non-Governmental Organization activities (including campaigning, information, coordination and mass communication) and deployment of state measures (including public relation, benefits and project participation).

## III. METHODOLOGY

Research method consists of a quantitative approach, collecting data, from January 1, 2013 to January 31, 2014.

### A. Population and Sampling

Target population included the population in the affected area from the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project. Sampling was consisted 1,000 people of the total population in the four districts in proportion from the population of each area, including Chana district, Namon district, Hat Yai district and Sadao district, Songkhla province.

### B. Research Construct Instrument and Data Analysis

The main variables used in this study were derived from the conflict of people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project, local social movements, NGO activities and deployment of state measures which can be evaluated by a set of 62 questions, with a range of scores from 1-10 and from checking the reliability of the whole scale as moderate to very high (Cronbach's alpha .5885-.8467).

### C. Data Collection Procedure

In this research, an opinion survey was conducted, by way of distributing questionnaires on various issues about public opposition to the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project, local social movements, Non-Governmental Organization activities and deployment of state measures. Data analysis consisted of: (1) descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation; and (2) techniques of ordinary multiple regression analysis, and the hierarchical regression analysis.

## IV. FINDINGS

According to the concept that was presented, the major findings of this study were as follows:

### A. Factors Affecting the Local Social Movements

As indicated in Table I, the result of the analysis revealed that the local social movements depended on Non-Governmental Organization activities. Information and mass communication had positive effects on the local social movements. This finding was in accordance with the hypothesis set forth, except that the campaign and coordination had no effect on the local social movements.

TABLE I  
FACTORS AFFECTING LOCAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Independent variable	Beta	t	Sig.
Campaign	.011	.419	.578
Information	.355	13.920	.000
Coordination	.008	.239	.913
Mass Communication	.489	19.789	.000
R <sup>2</sup> = .45, SEE = 1.23, F = 188.78, Sig. of F = .000			

### B. Factors Affecting the Deployment of State Measures

As shown in Table II, it was found that the deployment of state measures of the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project depended on the local social movements. The compromise

affected the difference in the perception of the public about the deployment of state measures. This finding was in accordance with the hypothesis set forth, except for the collectivism, mobilization and negotiation of the local social movements did not affect the deployment of the state measures. For Non-Governmental Organization activities, it was found that only coordination and mass communication had an influence on the perception of the public about the deployment of state measures, except for the campaign and information, there was no effect on the deployment of state measures.

TABLE II  
FACTOR AFFECTING DEPLOYMENT OF STATE MEASURES

Independent variables	Standard regression coefficient	
	Model 1	Model 2
Collectivism	.099**	-.045
Mobilization	.004	.002
Negotiation	.003	.013
Compromise	.223***	.0189***
Campaign		.040
Information		.016
Coordination		.057*
Mass Communication		.233***
R	.29	.36
R	.08	.12
SEE	1.11	1.09
F	25.34	16.73

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ .

### C. Factors Influencing the Conflict of the Local People towards the Thai-Malaysian Gas Pipeline Project

As shown in Table III, the analysis of the data revealed that the conflict of the local people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project depended on the local social movements. There was only mobilization and negotiation that affected the conflict of the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project. This complied with the specified hypothesis, except for the collectivism and compromise that did not affect the conflict of the local people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project.

For the Non-Governmental Organization activities, there was only campaign that affected the conflict of local people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project, which was complied with the hypothesis set forth, except for the information, coordination, and mass communication that did not have any effects on the conflict of local people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project.

For the deployment of state measures, there was only project participation that had an effect on the conflict of local people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project, complying with the hypothesis set forth, except for the publicity relationship and benefits that the state offers to the public. There was no effect on the conflict of local people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project.

### V. CONCLUSION

In summary the findings show that only mobilization, negotiation of local social movements, campaign of Non-

Governmental Organization, and project participation had an effect on the conflict of local people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project.

TABLE III  
FACTORS INFLUENCING CONFLICT OF THE THAI-MALAYSIAN GAS PIPELINE PROJECT

Independent variables	Standard regression co-efficiency		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Collectivism	-.061	-.044	-.035
Mobilization	-.220***	-.225***	-.222***
Negotiation	.094**	.093**	.088**
Compromise	-.032	-.079	-.028
Campaign		.172***	.189***
Information		-.020	-.016
Coordination		.028	.029
Mass Communication		-.002	-.016
Public relation			-.028
Benefit			.015
Participation			.103***
R	.24	.30	.32
R	.07	.10	.12
SEE	1.40	1.45	1.47
F	16.57	12.85	10.57

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ .

### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

From this research, recommendations were divided into two main topics, policy-oriented recommendation and academic recommendation.

#### A. Policy-Oriented Recommendation

The study found that mobilization and negotiation of the local social movements, the Non-Governmental Organization campaign and project participation in the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project, had a relationship with the conflict of the local people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project. Therefore, the government has to pay more attention to these factors prior to implementing policies concerning large projects affecting a lot of people.

#### B. Academic Recommendation

The variables according to the concept and defined hypothesis did not have much power to explain the variation of local social movements, deployment of state measures and conflict of the local people towards the Thai-Malaysian gas pipeline project. Thus indicating that, there are other variables involved. Therefore, there should be a study or more research about variables or other factors, such as good governance, that should have more clarity to explain local social movements, deployment of state measures and conflicts of the local people towards the government projects.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was supported financially by Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Separation Plant, *Thai-Malaysian and Gas separation plant*. Retrieved January 24, 2014, from <http://www.hydrocarbons-technology.com>
- [2] L. Lohmann, *Gas, Waqf and Barcays capital: A decade of resistance in southern Thailand*. Retrieved January 24, 2014, from <http://www.thecornerhouse.org>
- [3] T. W. Victor, and L. N. Linda, Perceptions of inequity, and conflict in Task-Oriented Groups. *Human Relations*. Retrieved January 25, 2014, from <http://hum.sagepub.com>
- [4] O. Ogunbayo, Conflict management in Nigerian construction industry: Project manager's view. *Scholarlink Research Institute Journals*. Retrieved January 25, 2014, from <http://www.jetems.schllarlinkresearch.com>
- [5] P. Wehr, Civil Disobedience. *Optic Officially Retired*. Retrieved January 25, 2014, from <http://www.colorado.edu>
- [6] D. A. Snow, E. B. Rochford, S. K. Worden, and R. D. Benford, Frame alignment process, micro mobilization, and movement participation. *American Sociological Association*. Retrieved January 25, 2014, from <http://www.jstor.org>
- [7] J. O. Hobson, Social movements influencing environmental justice. *Extramural Research*. Retrieved January 24, 2014, from <http://cfpub.epa.gov>
- [8] A. Gudavarthy, India Human rights movements in State, civil, society and beyond. *Contribution to Indian Sociology*. Retrieved January 25, 2014, from <http://cis.sagepub.com>
- [9] M. J. Hornsey, J. Jetten, B. J. McAlliffe, and M. A. Hogg, The impact of individualist and collectivist group norms on evaluations of dissenting group members. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. Retrieved February 6, 2006, from <http://www.sciencedirect.com>
- [10] A. B. Grodeland, Public perceptions of non-governmental organizations in Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Macedonia. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. Retrieved May 20, 2006, from <http://www.sciencedirect.com>
- [11] J. Freire, L. Fernandez, and R. Muino, Role of the Spanish scientific community in the initial assessment and management of environmental damages caused by the Prestige oil spill. *Marine Policy*, Vol. 30, pp. 308-314, 2006.
- [12] R. I. Tambulasi, Decentralization as a breeding ground for conflict; An analysis of institution conflict in Malawi's decentralized system. *JOAAG*. Retrieved January 31, 2014, from <http://www.joaag.com>
- [13] P. R. Oyono, C. Kouna, and W. Mala, Benefits of Forests in Cameroon. Global structure, issues involving access and decision-making hiccoughs. *Forest Policy and Economic*, Vol. 7 pp. 357-368, 2005.
- [14] B. B. Davies, and I. D. Hodge, Exploring environmental perspectives in lowland agriculture: A Q methodology study in East Anglia, UK. *Ecological Economics*. *Article in press*. Retrieved May 27, 2006, from <http://www.sciencedirect.com>.