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## Perceptions of Human Security among Islamic School Students, Parents and Teachers in Southern Thailand's Subnational Conflict Zone

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# Perceptions of Human Security among Islamic School Students, Parents and Teachers in Southern Thailand's Subnational Conflict Zone

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## **Abstract**

Since 2004, close to 7,000 people have died in Thailand's domestic insurgency in its three Muslim-majority southern provinces, one of the longest-running, low-intensity conflicts in Southeast Asia. This study assesses perceptions of human security threats in the area among a sample of students, their parents, and teachers of Islamic private schools (n = 427, n = 331, n = 51, respectively), and how they relate to perceptions of government actors and other community institutions. Questionnaire items were drawn from the World Values Survey Wave 6. Focus groups and interviews were also conducted to deepen our understanding of conflict related dynamics.

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## Background

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) formally embraced the concept of human security in its 1994 United Nations Human Development Report (UNDP 1994). This paradigm shift reflected a belief among international development agencies that interstate military conflict would diminish with the end of the cold war, but be replaced by borderless threats such as environmental hazards, transnational terrorism and crime, and persisting human development disparities (Thomas 2001, Gasper 2005, MacFarlane and Khong 2006). The UNDP Report called for a global human development and poverty reduction agenda centered around human security (UNDP 1994). The Report thus marked an important shift in international affairs and human development discourse, and has since equipped policy makers, development professionals, and scholars with a conceptual framework to address a wide variety of social and economic problems (Khagram *et al.* 2003, Barnett and Adger 2007, Stern and Ojendal 2010).

The human security paradigm emphasizes poverty reduction, education and empowerment of women and youth, and other traditional development-based social agendas, but also ties human development solutions to preventing actual military or social conflict (Liotta 2002, Chenoy 2005). However, although the UNDP Report itself identified seven components of human security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security, it provided few concrete proposals to identify strategic interventions (UNDP 2014). Thus, the human security construct has produced a wide array of proposals to operationalize broad concepts within the context of socio-economic development, but no agreed upon approaches. Many commentators have advocated for emphasizing poverty reduction strategies (King and Murray 2001, Alkire 2003), and increasing access to very basic needs such as food and water (Allouche 2011, Cook and Bakker 2012). Others have focused on access to affordable healthcare and/or mitigation of public health risks in the wider environment (Caballero-Anthony 2004, Rees *et al.* 2008). Some have asserted the central importance of political rights as a precursor of human security, both because of the importance that people be actively involved in policymaking (Thomas 2001, Landman 2006), and the need to address fundamental disparities that marginalize women or minority groups

(Hudson 2005, Shepherd 2007). These diverging approaches reflect the broad nature of human security, and its applicability to diverse and highly context-based social problems.

Commentators have also examined the dynamics of armed conflicts *visa- vis* the human security framework. The impacts of armed conflict on civilian populations can be profound, and may include intense ‘collateral damage’ resulting from warfare, wide-scale human displacement and socio-economic disruption, and human rights violations and atrocities that clearly threaten human security (Batniji *et al.* 2009, Bruck *et al.* 2019). In some contexts, assessing human security has considerable value in identifying threats and dynamics that are salient to how conflict is understood on the ground. The ongoing insurgency in Southern Thailand provides an important case study for examining how residents of a low-intensity conflict zone perceive and experience human security. The Southern Thailand conflict is completely subnational, largely confined to its three southernmost provinces, and primarily pits domestically based, non-state actors against government authorities or civilian targets.

Scholars have principally characterized the Southern Thailand conflict as a political problem because it originated with Siam’s annexation of the region in the early 20th century (Aphornsuvan 2008, Benbourenane 2012). Muslims form the largest religious minority in Thailand (Thai National Statistics Office 2010), but are the majority of the population in this area – now the three southernmost provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala. The deep south region had strong cultural ties to the Malay Islamic sultanates before being annexed into the Thai state (Puaksom 2008). Thai authorities subsequently banned the Malay dialect and Islamic practices, and imposed harsh rules in the southern provinces designed to forcibly integrate the local Malay-Muslim population into Siamese society (Boonprakarn *et al.* 2015). These actions led to a series of small rebellions by local Muslim leaders and continued repression by central authorities during the regime of Field Marshall Pibunsongkram’s military government (Aphornsuvan 2008).

Thailand has since moved towards more democratic institutions and less stringent social policies in the Muslim-majority provinces, which has led to greater accommodations for the Muslim community and improved relations overall (Benbourenane 2012). For example, during the 1990 s, the Thai government made several conciliatory

moves towards the southern Muslim communities, and an unprecedented number of Muslims became involved in national politics (Melvin 2007). However, low-level violence surged between separatist groups and authorities since 2004, sparked by an incident in which dozens of Muslim protesters suffocated to death after being detained in military trucks (Harish 2006, Harish and Liow 2007). Human Rights Watch (2018) has estimated over 6,800 people have died in conflict-related violence since then. Drive by shootings and bombings have been common tactics used by pro-separatist insurgents targeting security forces and both Buddhist and Muslim civilians (Human Rights Watch 2010a). Aggressive security responses by the government continued to facilitate tensions and mistrust between authorities and residents (McCargo 2006, Pathmanand 2006). Security forces and proxy groups have been widely criticized for forced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings of Muslims (Human Rights Watch 2007, 2010b, 2014).

In addition to the ongoing violence, there are significant socioeconomic disparities between the three southernmost provinces affected by the conflict and the rest of the nation. Thailand's Human Achievement Index – first introduced by the United Nations Development Programme's Thailand office in 2003 to measure human development across the nation's 76 provinces in eight areas, indicates a bottom ten performance for one or more of the three provinces in each of the three separate sub-indexes: education (Narathiwat and Pattani provinces), employment (Yala province), and community and family life (Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala provinces) (UNDP 2010). Among Thailand's 14 southern provinces, the three Muslim provinces ranked in the bottom three in the percentage of the population with no education, but also had the three highest unemployment rates, and highest poverty incidence in the region (UNDP 2014). Two of the provinces (Narathiwat, Pattani) also had the lowest household income in the south (UNDP 2014).

This combination of low-intensity violence, social and economic disparities, and ethnic/religious tensions presumably create significant human security concerns in the three southernmost provinces. But what are they? Our principal questions of interest were: (1) among Muslim residents of the conflict zone, what were their overall perceptions of human security, and what threats or risks were regarded as

most salient to them?; and (2) how were threats to human security associated with perceptions of national and local institutions? These questions are important because we have found no other studies that systematically assess perceptions of human security in the South Thailand conflict, and any associations between perceptions of human security and trust in community and national institutions. Our secondary questions of interest were identifying how Muslim residents from the conflict zone differed from a national comparison group, as well as identifying perceptions of human security threats by gender.

A review of literature indicates that although there are numerous historical and policy-related commentary about the Southern Thailand conflict, few larger-scale empirical studies exist examining perceptions of the conflict among local residents. This is likely because of difficulties with data collection in a conflict zone. Several studies by social scientists or region scholars focusing on perceptions of the conflict have primarily been qualitative and based on small sample sizes. For example, both Tan-Mullins (2006) and Askew (2009) interviewed local residents about communal relations between Buddhist and Muslim villagers. Sarosi and Sombatpoonsiri (2011) conducted focus groups about the proliferation of firearms in the region, and how it has facilitated militarization of the conflict. Nadaman and Jantachum (2013) interviewed residents about the impacts of the conflict on daily life, its relationship to social problems among youth in the community, and perceptions of government policy. Brooks and Sungtong (2016) interviewed government school principals about their perceptions of the conflict and efforts to improve communal relations.

There is also a small but growing body of larger-scale quantitative studies assessing various aspects of the conflict's impact on individuals. These studies primarily focus on measuring exposure to traumatic experiences and mental health impacts. For example, Thomyangkoon and colleagues surveyed quality of life and coping among hospital personnel in the conflict area ( $n = 392$ ), and found that exposure to political violence negatively impacted social functioning and mental health (2012). Jinpanyakul and Putthisri assessed quality of life among high school students in the area ( $n = 341$ ), and found that mental health issues and prolonged school absences negatively affected overall quality of life (2018). Panyayong and Lempong assessed trauma among a sample of children who had experienced conflict-related family losses

(n = 198), and identified a PTSD diagnosis of 7.8% among their sample (2009). Phothisat surveyed children (n = 214) of police officers active in the southern provinces, and found PTSD rates of 18.2% (2013). Jampathong conducted a survey among adults (n = 1439) in the southern provinces, and found that overall 11.8% of respondents had exposure to the conflict, and 1.2% reported symptoms of PTSD (2016).

Despite these and other important studies conducted about the conflict, there is a need to deepen understanding of what specific forms of human insecurity affect community members on a daily basis. Because all conflicts are contextual and experienced locally, identifying specific sources of insecurity are necessary to develop targeted community and policy interventions. If implemented effectively, interventions and policy changes could increase actual and perceived feelings of security among residents, and potentially improve trust or confidence with government authorities and community institutions aiming to improve human security in the area. Our study is aimed at contributing to an empirical base of knowledge in this area. We employed a mixed methods approach to address our questions of interest, implementing both a survey among Muslim residents from one of the three affected southern provinces in the conflict (n = 699), as well as focus groups and interviews with survey respondents (n = 28).

## **Methods**

### ***Context of Study Population***

Our target population for data collection were students, parents of students, and teachers from four different Islamic private high schools serving grades 7–12 in the province of Yala – one of the three southernmost provinces in Thailand that has experienced significant amounts of violence and unrest. Conducting research in a conflict setting is a difficult and potentially dangerous endeavor, both for researchers and research participants. Administrators from the four schools were supportive of our study and provided permission to conduct our research activities with students, their parents, and teachers – an important factor as many schools are hesitant to allow access to students to conduct conflict-related research. The schools had suitably large



numbers of students, and also represented a mix of urban and rural settings from the same province to provide some diversity in settings. Thus, our approach facilitated the collection of survey and qualitative data from a relatively large number of respondents in safe environments, particularly youth. However, our study population should still be considered a convenience sample and not generalizable to a larger population.

Islamic private schools are based on the historical institution of the *ponok* school. *Ponok* are common throughout southern Thailand and favored by many local Muslims because of their religious education (Sateemae *et al.* 2015). *Ponok* schools were believed to have been first established in southern Thailand as early as the 17th century, and strictly provided religious education. In the 1960s, there were believed to be around 500 *ponok* throughout southern Thailand. In 2004, the Thai national government established guidelines to provide funding to *ponok* schools on a voluntary basis (Narongraksakhet 2007, Liow 2009). This policy marked a liberalization of Thai central authority towards the Muslim minority of the south, as it recognized the importance of both retaining an important religious and cultural institution for local residents, as well as improving educational outcomes for Muslim youth in secular subjects. Upon receipt of government funding, *ponok* become officially recognized as Islamic private schools under Thai law. Islamic private schools retain their religious curriculum, but also teach the required Thai national curriculum – providing graduates of Islamic private schools with the required academic credit hours to apply for national universities. The curriculum of Islamic private schools is coordinated by the Thai Ministry of Education in partnership with Islamic school administrators. Typically, Islamic private schools will teach religious subjects in the morning (Quranic studies and interpretation, ethics, jurisprudence), and secular subjects in the afternoon (Thai and foreign languages, maths, sciences).

These Islamic private schools and traditional *ponok* inhabit a unique space within the region. Thai security forces have scrutinized some Islamic educational institutions because some insurgents have used schools as clandestine points of recruitment. Continuing insurgent acts and violence targeting Buddhists and negative media coverage have contributed to suspicion of Islamic schools in Thailand, and

growing anti-Muslim sentiment (Andre 2014). At the same time, Thai government financial support and efforts to improve connections with Islamic private schools is a valuable means to improve educational outcomes for youth throughout the region (Liow 2009). Since the government altered rules to encourage more registration of *ponok* schools in 2004, the number of registered Islamic private schools has almost doubled. In 2004, there were an estimated 250 Islamic private schools (Narongraksakhet 2007). The Office of the Private Education Commission (OPEC) of Thailand indicates that there are currently 412 Islamic Private Schools that are registered with the Thai government, and 211,853 students (OPEC, n.d). It is estimated that some 70% of Muslim secondary students are attending Islamic private schools, making them the predominant school institute of choice for Malay-Muslim minority families in the region (Aree and Rahman 2016).

### **Survey**

Our survey items were drawn from the Thai language version of the Wave 6 World Values Survey (2014b), and builds off the work of Inglehart and Norris' human security framework (2012). Rather than focusing on a single issue of interest, the Inglehart and Norris framework provides a construct for examining perceptions of multiple threats to human security in a variety of domains. Because the World Values Survey has also been administered previously in Thailand, we are able to compare results from our southern Thai samples against the larger Thai population.

For our survey, we used the same WVS items employed by Inglehart and Norris to construct a 4-item Personal Security Scale (V188, V189, V190, V191), and a 6-item Community Security Scale (V170-175). Inglehart and Norris originally constructed both scales through principal component factor analysis of WVS Wave 6 items measuring public perceptions of perceived risks and threats (Inglehart and Norris 2012). The Personal Security Scale captures perceptions of household/family level threats, whereas the Community Security Scale increases the scope to wider neighborhood or community threats. As the original WVS Wave 6 survey was translated and verified in multiple languages, including Thai, there were no differences in the language of the questions or responses administered. We did, however, construct

and add one additional human security item to our survey about domestic violence that was not on the WVS. This item was also asked in the Thai language. Multiple reviews and pilot testing were employed prior to administering the survey. Actual survey administration was conducted in 2017.

Three populations from Islamic Private schools were targeted for our survey. The first group were grade 12 students (*matayom* 6) of four different *ponok* schools in one of the southern provinces. Two schools were from primarily rural areas of the province, and two schools were from the provincial capital city. Two schools had an N of 99 student respondents each, one had 82 student respondents, and the final school had 147 student respondents. The high response rate was likely due to the in-class administration of our surveys. Survey response rates among *ponok* students were high, with 427 surveys collected from 450 surveys distributed (95%).

The second group of respondents were parents of students from the same four *ponok*. All students were provided with paper versions of the survey to provide to their parents. However, there was a substantially lower response rate among parents (49%) than students, with only 221 parent respondents out of 450 distributed surveys. Finally, we distributed surveys to administration and teaching staff of the four *ponok* schools. A similar response rate was achieved, with 51 of 120 surveys completed and returned to us (43%).

As we were interested in comparing our survey sample from a national sample, we used data from the national Thailand sample of the World Values Survey Wave 6 (2014a) to compare against our three southern sub-samples. The national sample was composed of adults 18 and over and had a sample size of  $n = 1200$ . Survey administration for the national sample was conducted in 2013 (World Values Survey 2014b). It should be noted that the WVS Wave 6 survey was conducted several years before our survey, so results should not be interpreted as directly comparable.

### ***Focus Groups and Interviews***

Survey respondents from each of the four Islamic private school communities were invited to participate in focus groups or interviews to discuss our issues of interest. The purpose of the focus groups and

interviews was to solicit input from survey respondents about the overall security climate in the southern provinces, and assess perceptions of security and violence among the community to deepen our understanding of their concerns and experiences in general. It also allowed us to identify the extent to which qualitative content aligned with survey findings. A total of four focus groups were convened with students ( $n = 4$ ), parents of students ( $n = 4$ ), teachers ( $n = 2$ ), and school administrators ( $n = 2$ ). Individual interviews were also offered to individuals who preferred more private venues. Four students, four parents, four teachers, and four school administrators participated in individual interviews. Thus, a total of 28 individuals (8 students, 8 parents, 12 school teachers/administrators) participated in our focus groups or private interviews. We asked our focus group and interview respondents a series of semistructured, open-ended questions about security concerns and their impacts on daily life. As we utilized an interactive, grounded theory approach to our data collection, questions and responses were solicited until no new themes emerged. Because of the heightened sensitivity of our questions, we did not seek or ask for identifying information from participants, though the identities of some participants were known to some of the researchers. Individual interviews typically yielded more substantive responses than in focus groups. All interviews and focus groups were conducted in the Thai or Melayu language, audio-recorded, and transcribed.

## **Survey Results**

### ***Perceptions of Community and Personal Security***

We were first interested in knowing how our three study sub-samples from the southern provinces rated human security items on both the Community Security and Personal Security scales. Responses for all human security items used a 1–4 Likert-type scale, with a root question asking respondents to indicate how frequently they experienced a series of threats within the previous 12 months. Community Security Scale items used a response scale of 1 = Very frequently, 2 = Quite frequently, 3 = Not frequently, 4 = Not at all frequently, for all items except one. The single exception was the item, ‘Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?’, which used a

response scale of 1 = Not at all secure, 2 = Not very secure, 3 = Quite secure, 4 = Very secure. Personal Security Scale items used a response scale of 1 = Often, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Rarely, 4 = Never. Our question on domestic violence employed the same response choices. Thus, responses for all items had a consistent direction and range in which a lower score indicated that the item being asked about occurred or was experienced more frequently or was perceived as more problematic, whereas a higher score indicated that the item was less problematic.

To determine internal consistency of each scale, we computed Cronbach's alpha – a coefficient of reliability commonly used to determine interrelatedness of scale items. Using a scale of 0.0 to 1.0, a higher Cronbach's alpha indicates a higher correlation among items, and an alpha of 0.7 or higher is generally considered acceptable to show internal consistency (Santos 1999, George and Mallery 2006). The 6-item Community Security Scale showed an acceptably high consistency of  $\alpha = .75$ . The 4-item Personal Security Scale showed an alpha of  $\alpha = .78$ . When adding the domestic violence item to our Personal Security Scale, the alpha increased to  $\alpha = .80$ , indicating consistency with the other items. **Table 1** displays frequency distributions for all Community Security Scale items across our three study subsamples, and includes distributions by gender. **Table 2** displays Personal Security Scale frequency distributions. Analysis of frequency results indicated that responses for almost all items were not normally distributed, but were skewed towards higher values.

Due to the non-normally distributed nature of the response data, we employed Friedman's F-test to identify differences across multiple measures. Friedman's F-test is a suitable non-parametric alternative to ANOVA analysis and identifies variance among items by mean ranks (Corder and Foreman 2014). As noted previously, due to the direction of the response scales used, the lower the mean ranking meant the item was perceived as happening more frequently or being more concerning (a greater perceived threat or risk) than higher-ranked items (a lesser perceived threat or risk). **Table 3** shows mean ranking of Community Security Scale items for each sub-sample. Friedman's test indicated overall significant differences among students (chi-square = 475.204,  $p = .00$ ), parents (chi-square = 97.448,  $p = .00$ ), and teachers (chi-square = 73.382,  $p = .00$ ). Post-hoc pairwise analysis was then used to identify significant differences between individual items for all groups.

**Table 1.** Frequency distributions for Community Security Scale.**How frequently do the following things occur in your neighborhood?**

	<i>Very frequently</i>	<i>Quite frequently</i>	<i>Not frequently</i>	<i>Not at all frequently</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Students:</b>					
Robberies					
Female	19 / 6%	37 / 11%	127 / 39%	147 / 45%	330 / 100%
Male	4 / 5%	10 / 12%	24 / 28%	48 / 56%	86 / 100%
Total	23 / 6%	47 / 11%	151 / 36%	195 / 47%	416 / 100%
Alcohol consumption in the streets					
Female	14 / 4%	20 / 6%	59 / 18%	233 / 72%	326 / 100%
Male	7 / 8%	5 / 6%	16 / 19%	56 / 67%	84 / 100%
Total	21 / 5%	25 / 6%	75 / 18%	289 / 71%	410 / 100%
Police or military interfere with people's private life					
Female	61 / 18%	82 / 25%	114 / 34%	75 / 23%	332 / 100%
Male	15 / 17%	20 / 23%	33 / 38%	18 / 21%	86 / 100%
Total	76 / 18%	102 / 24%	147 / 35%	93 / 22%	418 / 100%
Racist behavior					
Female	12 / 4%	27 / 8%	95 / 29%	197 / 60%	331 / 100%
Male	8 / 9%	3 / 4%	29 / 34%	46 / 54%	86 / 100%
Total	20 / 5%	30 / 7%	124 / 30%	243 / 58%	417 / 100%
Drug sale in streets					
Female	73 / 23%	79 / 25%	83 / 26%	85 / 27%	320 / 100%
Male	27 / 31%	22 / 25%	22 / 25%	16 / 18%	87 / 100%
Total	100 / 25%	101 / 25%	105 / 26%	101 / 25%	407 / 100%
Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?					
	<i>Not at all secure</i>	<i>Not very secure</i>	<i>Quite secure</i>	<i>Very secure</i>	<i>Total</i>
Female	9 / 3%	65 / 20%	200 / 60%	60 / 18%	334 / 100%
Male	3 / 3%	13 / 15%	42 / 48%	30 / 34%	88 / 100%
Total	12 / 3%	78 / 19%	242 / 57%	90 / 21%	422 / 100%

**Parents:**

Robberies					
Female	8 / 6%	19 / 13%	34 / 24%	82 / 57%	143 / 100%
Male	4 / 6%	11 / 17%	17 / 27%	32 / 50%	64 / 100%
Total	12 / 6%	30 / 15%	51 / 25%	114 / 55%	207 / 100%
Alcohol consumption in the streets					
Female	8 / 6%	11 / 8%	21 / 15%	97 / 71%	137 / 100%
Male	3 / 5%	10 / 16%	8 / 13%	41 / 66%	62 / 100%
Total	11 / 6%	21 / 11%	29 / 15%	138 / 69%	199 / 100%
Police or military interfere with people's private life					
Female	16 / 12%	27 / 20%	36 / 27%	57 / 42%	136 / 100%
Male	13 / 20%	15 / 23%	14 / 22%	23 / 35%	65 / 100%
Total	29 / 14%	42 / 21%	50 / 25%	80 / 40%	201 / 100%
Racist behavior					
Female	7 / 5%	14 / 10%	29 / 21%	89 / 64%	139 / 100%
Male	1 / 2%	7 / 11%	17 / 28%	40 / 62%	65 / 100%
Total	8 / 4%	21 / 10%	46 / 23%	129 / 63%	204 / 100%
Drug sale in streets					
Female	19 / 14%	18 / 13%	39 / 28%	62 / 45%	138 / 100%
Male	7 / 11%	18 / 29%	13 / 21%	25 / 40%	63 / 100%
Total	26 / 13%	36 / 18%	52 / 26%	87 / 43%	201 / 100%
Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?					
	<i>Not at all secure</i>	<i>Not very secure</i>	<i>Quite secure</i>	<i>Very secure</i>	<i>Total</i>
Female	3 / 2%	18 / 13%	81 / 56%	42 / 29%	144 / 100%
Male	2 / 3%	8 / 13%	38 / 60%	15 / 24%	63 / 100%
Total	5 / 2%	26 / 13%	119 / 58%	57 / 28%	207 / 100%

**Table 1.** Frequency distributions for Community Security Scale (continued)**How frequently do the following things occur in your neighborhood?**

	<i>Very frequently</i>	<i>Quite frequently</i>	<i>Not frequently</i>	<i>Not at all frequently</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Teachers:</b>					
Robberies					
Female	1 / 4%	9 / 35%	7 / 27%	9 / 35%	26 / 100%
Male	3 / 14%	8 / 38%	10 / 48%	21 / 100%	
Total	1 / 2%	12 / 26%	15 / 32%	19 / 40%	47 / 100%
Alcohol consumption in the streets					
Female	3 / 12%	5 / 19%	18 / 69%	26 / 100%	
Male	2 / 10%	3 / 14%	4 / 19%	12 / 57%	21 / 100%
Total	2 / 4%	6 / 13%	9 / 19%	30 / 64%	47 / 100%
Police or military interfere with people's private life					
Female	5 / 19%	7 / 27%	4 / 15%	10 / 39%	26 / 100%
Male	5 / 24%	8 / 38%	6 / 29%	2 / 10%	21 / 100%
Total	10 / 21%	15 / 32%	10 / 21%	12 / 26%	47 / 100%
Racist behavior					
Female	2 / 8%	6 / 23%	18 / 69%	26 / 100%	
Male	2 / 10%	1 / 5%	4 / 19%	14 / 67%	21 / 100%
Total	2 / 4%	3 / 6%	10 / 21%	32 / 68%	47 / 100%
Drug sale in streets					
Female	4 / 16%	7 / 28%	7 / 28%	7 / 28%	25 / 100%
Male	12 / 58%	4 / 19%	3 / 14%	2 / 10%	21 / 100%
Total	16 / 35%	11 / 24%	10 / 22%	9 / 20%	46 / 100%
Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?					
	<i>Not at all secure</i>	<i>Not very secure</i>	<i>Quite secure</i>	<i>Very secure</i>	<i>Total</i>
Female	3 / 13%	15 / 63%	6 / 25%	24 / 100%	
Male	2 / 10%	4 / 20%	12 / 60%	2 / 10%	20 / 100%
Total	2 / 5%	7 / 16%	27 / 61%	8 / 18%	44 / 100%



**Table 2.** Frequency distributions for Personal Security Scale.*In the last 12 months, how often have you or your family:*

	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Students</b>					
Gone without enough food to eat					
Female	16 / 5%	31 / 9%	112 / 34%	172 / 52%	331 / 100%
Male	5 / 6%	8 / 9%	38 / 44%	35 / 41%	86 / 100%
Total	21 / 5%	39 / 9%	150 / 36%	207 / 50%	417 / 100%
Felt unsafe from crime in your home					
Female	21 / 6%	57 / 17%	145 / 44%	109 / 33%	332 / 100%
Male	9 / 11%	12 / 14%	37 / 44%	27 / 32%	85 / 100%
Total	30 / 7%	69 / 17%	182 / 44%	136 / 33%	417 / 100%
Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed					
Female	13 / 4%	28 / 9%	101 / 31%	183 / 56%	325 / 100%
Male	8 / 9%	13 / 15%	21 / 24%	44 / 51%	86 / 100%
Total	21 / 5%	41 / 10%	122 / 30%	227 / 55%	411 / 100%
Gone without a cash income					
Female	25 / 8%	42 / 13%	101 / 31%	157 / 48%	325 / 100%
Male	13 / 16%	13 / 16%	26 / 32%	29 / 36%	81 / 100%
Total	38 / 9%	55 / 14%	127 / 31%	186 / 46%	406 / 100%
Domestic violence at home					
Female	8 / 2%	24 / 7%	88 / 27%	212 / 64%	332 / 100%
Male	3 / 4%	5 / 6%	32 / 38%	45 / 53%	85 / 100%
Total	11 / 3%	29 / 7%	120 / 29%	257 / 62%	417 / 100%
<b>Parents</b>					
Gone without enough food to eat					
Female	11 / 8%	19 / 13%	34 / 24%	80 / 56%	144 / 100%
Male	4 / 6%	4 / 6%	21 / 33%	35 / 55%	64 / 100%
Total	15 / 7%	23 / 11%	55 / 26%	115 / 55%	208 / 100%
Felt unsafe from crime in your home					
Female	12 / 8%	20 / 14%	49 / 34%	62 / 44%	143 / 100%
Male	2 / 3%	7 / 11%	23 / 37%	31 / 49%	63 / 100%
Total	14 / 7%	27 / 13%	72 / 35%	93 / 45%	206 / 100%
Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed					
Female	8 / 6%	10 / 7%	40 / 29%	78 / 57%	136 / 100%
Male	3 / 5%	5 / 8%	19 / 32%	33 / 55%	60 / 100%
Total	11 / 6%	15 / 8%	59 / 30%	111 / 57%	196 / 100%
Gone without a cash income					
Female	17 / 12%	15 / 11%	37 / 26%	71 / 51%	140 / 100%
Male	3 / 5%	11 / 18%	17 / 28%	30 / 49%	61 / 100%
Total	20 / 10%	26 / 13%	54 / 27%	101 / 50%	201 / 100%
Domestic violence at home					
Female	7 / 5%	11 / 8%	21 / 15%	100 / 72%	139 / 100%
Male	2 / 3%	4 / 6%	15 / 23%	43 / 67%	64 / 100%
Total	9 / 4%	15 / 7%	36 / 18%	143 / 70%	203 / 100%



**Table 2.** Frequency distributions for Personal Security Scale (continued).***In the last 12 months, how often have you or your family:***

	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Teachers:</b>					
Gone without enough food to eat					
Female	1 / 4%	2 / 8%	3 / 12%	20 / 77%	26 / 100%
Male		1 / 5%	2 / 10%	18 / 86%	21 / 100%
Total	1 / 2%	3 / 6%	5 / 11%	38 / 81%	47 / 100%
Felt unsafe from crime in your home					
Female		3 / 12%	10 / 39%	13 / 50%	26 / 100%
Male	3 / 15%	5 / 24%	8 / 38%	5 / 24%	21 / 100%
Total	3 / 6%	8 / 17%	18 / 38%	18 / 38%	47 / 100%
Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed					
Female		1 / 4%	9 / 36%	15 / 60%	25 / 100%
Male	1 / 5%	2 / 10%	5 / 24%	13 / 62%	21 / 100%
Total	1 / 2%	3 / 7%	14 / 30%	28 / 61%	46 / 100%
Gone without a cash income					
Female		4 / 15%	6 / 23%	16 / 62%	26 / 100%
Male	2 / 10%	1 / 5%	9 / 43%	9 / 43%	21 / 100%
Total	2 / 4%	5 / 11%	15 / 32%	25 / 53%	47 / 100%
Domestic violence at home					
Female		4 / 15%	3 / 12%	19 / 73%	26 / 100%
Male	1 / 5%		7 / 33%	13 / 62%	21 / 100%
Total	1 / 2%	4 / 9%	10 / 21%	32 / 68%	47 / 100%

**Table 3.** Community Security Scale mean rankings.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>
<b>Students n = 379</b>	
Alcohol consumption in the streets <sup>1</sup>	3.53
Racist behavior <sup>2</sup>	3.41
Robberies <sup>3</sup>	3.23
Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood? <sup>4</sup>	2.97
Police or military interfere with people's private life <sup>5</sup>	2.61
Drug sale in streets <sup>6</sup>	2.50
<b>Parents n = 186</b>	
Alcohol consumption in the streets <sup>7</sup>	4.04
Racist behavior <sup>8</sup>	4.03
Robberies <sup>9</sup>	3.67
Drug sale in streets <sup>10</sup>	3.17
Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood? <sup>11</sup>	3.08
Police or military interfere with people's private life <sup>12</sup>	3.00
<b>Teachers n = 47</b>	
Racist behavior <sup>13</sup>	4.49
Alcohol consumption in the streets <sup>14</sup>	4.43
Robberies <sup>15</sup>	3.73
Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood? <sup>16</sup>	3.31
Police or military interfere with people's private life <sup>17</sup>	2.64
Drug sale in streets <sup>18</sup>	2.40

1 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?', 'Drug sale in the streets', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life', 'Robberies'.

2 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?', 'Drug sale in the streets', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life', 'Robberies'.

3 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?', 'Drug sale in the streets', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life', 'Racist behavior'.

4 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Drug sale in the streets', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life', 'Racist behavior', 'Robberies'.

5 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?', 'Racist behavior', 'Robberies'.

6 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?', 'Racist behavior', 'Robberies'.

7 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?', 'Drug sale in the streets', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life'.

8 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?', 'Drug sale in the streets', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life'.

9 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life'.

10 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Racist behavior'.

11 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Racist behavior', 'Robberies'.

12 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Racist behavior', 'Robberies'.

13 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?', 'Drug sale in the streets', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life'.

14 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Drug sale in the streets', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life'.

15 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Drug sale in the streets'.

16 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Racist behavior'.

17 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Racist behavior'.

18 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Racist behavior', 'Robberies'.

Among our Community Security Scale, we found similar trends across the student, parent, and teacher groups. Among students, the lowest-ranked item (the item perceived as the greatest threat) with a mean ranking of 2.50 was 'Drug sale in the streets'. This was then followed by 'Police or military interfere with people's private life' with a mean ranking of 2.61. On the other end of the spectrum, the least threatening perceived item among students was 'Alcohol consumption in the streets' at a mean ranking of 3.53. The second least threatening perceived item was 'Racist behavior' at a mean ranking of 3.41. Pairwise comparisons supported the overall mean ranking order of these items, with the top two and bottom two items being significantly different against the remaining four items. Among parents, the two highest-ranked items were also 'Alcohol consumption in the streets' with a mean ranking of 4.04, and 'Racist behavior' with a mean ranking of 4.03. The two lowest-ranked items were 'Police or military interfere with people's private life', with a mean ranking of 3.00, and 'Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?', with a mean ranking of 3.08. 'Drug sale in the streets' was the third most threatening perceived item with a mean ranking of 3.17. Post-hoc pairwise analysis showed similar results, with the two lowest and two highest-ranked items significantly different against each other. Finally, among teachers the two highest-ranked items were 'Racist behavior' with a mean ranking of 4.49, and 'Alcohol consumption in the streets' with a mean ranking of 4.43. The lowest-ranking item was 'Drug sale in the streets' with a mean ranking of 2.40, followed by 'Police or military interfere with people's private life', with a mean ranking of 2.64. Post-hoc pairwise analysis showed fewer significant-paired items, but similar to both the student and parent groups, showed significant differences between the highest and lowest items generally. In sum, it should be noted that across all three sub-samples, similar items occupied the top and bottom-ranked spots. This suggests an overall trend in which 'Drug sale in the streets' and 'Police or military interfere with people's private life' were the strongest perceived threats in the community security domain, whereas 'Alcohol consumption in the streets' and 'Racist behavior' were the least concerning items.

Mean rankings of the Personal Security Scale items are displayed in **Table 4** for students, parents and teachers. Similar to the community security domain, there were overall significant differences

**Table 4.** Personal Security Scale mean rankings.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>
<b>Students n = 385</b>	
Domestic violence at home <sup>1</sup>	3.40
Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed <sup>2</sup>	3.20
Gone without enough food to eat <sup>3</sup>	3.10
Gone without a cash income <sup>4</sup>	2.77
Felt unsafe from crime in your home <sup>5</sup>	2.54
<b>Parents n = 191</b>	
Domestic violence at home <sup>6</sup>	3.36
Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed <sup>7</sup>	3.14
Gone without enough food to eat <sup>8</sup>	3.00
Felt unsafe from crime in your home <sup>9</sup>	2.81
Gone without a cash income <sup>10</sup>	2.69
<b>Teachers n = 50</b>	
Gone without enough food to eat <sup>11</sup>	3.52
Domestic violence at home <sup>12</sup>	3.24
Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed <sup>13</sup>	3.06
Gone without a cash income <sup>14</sup>	2.75
Felt unsafe from crime in your home <sup>15</sup>	2.43

1 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Felt unsafe from crime in your home", "Gone without a cash income".

2 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Felt unsafe from crime in your home", "Gone without a cash income".

3 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Felt unsafe from crime in your home", "Gone without a cash income".

4 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Domestic violence at home", "Gone without a cash income", "Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed".

5 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Domestic violence at home", "Gone without enough food to eat", "Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed".

6 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Felt unsafe from crime in your home", "Gone without a cash income".

7 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Gone without a cash income".

8 Was not significantly different against any other items.

9 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Domestic violence at home".

10 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Domestic violence at home", "Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed".

11 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Felt unsafe from crime in your home".

12 Was not significantly different against any other items.

13 Was not significantly different against any other items.

14 Was not significantly different against any other items.

15 Significantly different at  $p < .05$  from "Gone without enough food to eat".

among all three sub-samples for perceptions of personal security items. However, we found less consistency in survey results across our three groups. Friedman's test generated a chi-square value of 117.719,  $p = .00$  for students, chi-square value of 44.846,  $p = .00$

for parents, and a chi-square value of 26.879,  $p = .00$  for teachers. Among the student group, the highest-ranked items (least threatening) were 'Domestic violence at home' with a mean ranking of 3.40, followed by 'Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed' with a mean ranking of 3.20. The lowest-ranking, or perceived as most threatening items, were 'Felt unsafe from crime in your home' with a mean ranking of 2.54, followed by 'Gone without a cash income' with a mean ranking of 2.77. Post-hoc pairwise analysis supported the overall ranking order by showing significant differences between the top two and bottom two items. Among parents, again both 'Domestic violence at home' and 'Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed' were the two highest items, with mean rankings of 3.36 and 3.14, respectively. The two lowest-ranked items were 'Gone without a cash income' and 'Felt unsafe from crime in your home', with mean rankings of 2.69 and 2.81. Post-hoc pairwise analysis also showed significant differences between items at the top and bottom rankings. Among the teacher group, there were very similar results. The highest-ranking items were 'Gone without enough food to eat' with a mean ranking of 3.52, followed by 'Domestic violence at home' with a mean ranking of 3.24. The two lowest-ranking items were 'Felt unsafe from crime in your home' with a mean ranking of 2.43, and then 'Gone without a cash income' with a mean ranking of 2.75. Post-hoc analysis revealed only one significantly different pair among the items, but as expected they were 'Felt unsafe from crime in your home' and 'Gone without enough food to eat', the lowest and highest-ranking items, respectively. Similar to the community security items, perceptions of the personal security items seemed relatively uniform across our three samples of students, parents, and teachers. The most concerning items were 'Felt unsafe from crime in your home' and 'Gone without a cash income'. The least threatening were 'Domestic violence at home' and 'Gone without enough food to eat'. It should be recognized that for both the community and personal security items, these rankings should not be interpreted to mean that high ranking items are not problematic, but only that they are perceived as being less concerning or not as frequently experienced as the lower ranking items.

### ***Comparisons to National Sample***

We were also interested in how our three sub-samples compared against the Thai national sample on the Community Security and Personal Security items. This question was important because we hypothesized that there would be significant differences in perceptions of human security between our southern samples versus a national sample as a result of the ongoing conflict in the south. As the WVS Wave 6 Thai national sample ( $n = 1200$ ) asked respondents for religious affiliation, we were able to sub-divide the national sample into those who identified as Muslim ( $n = 26$ ) and all others. Of the remaining national respondents ( $n = 1174$ ), the vast majority (98%) identified as Buddhist, reflecting the Buddhist majority population of the country. Creation of the national-Muslim sample allows us to compare our southern sub-samples of Malay-Muslim respondents against other Thai-Muslims across the nation, whether living in the three southern provinces or elsewhere. Due to both the small size of some of our comparison groups and the non-normally distributed nature of the response data, we employed the Kruskal-Wallis H test, a non-parametric alternative to compare central tendency ranks among multiple, independent groups (Chan and Walmsley 1997).

**Tables 5 and 6** display mean rankings across our three southern sub-samples and the national Muslim and Buddhist-majority samples for all community security and personal security items, respectively. **Figures 1 and 2**, respectively, display community and personal security item mean rankings, as well as post-hoc pairwise analysis results for differences across individual groups. The Kruskal-Wallis H test indicated significant differences among groups for all Community Security Scale items ( $p = .00$ ). Additionally, there were significant differences across groups for all Personal Security Scale items ( $p < .05$ ) with the exception of 'Domestic violence'. There were no significant differences across mean rankings among our three southern sub-samples for this item ( $p = .165$ ), and no comparisons were made to a national sample as the item was not included in the WVS Wave 6 survey.

Among the community security items, the National Buddhist majority sample reported a higher rating of security on all items compared to our three southern samples at either the  $p < .05$  level ('Robberies', 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life', 'Drug sale in the streets', 'Could you tell me how

**Table 5.** Community Security Scale mean ranking comparisons.

	<i>Students</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>National (Muslim)</i>	<i>National (Buddhist- majority)</i>	<i>Kruskal- Wallis H*</i>
Robberies						
Mean Rank	744.15	801.71	685.11	649.25	980.16	117.063
N	417	214	51	24	1074	
Alcohol consumption in the streets						
Mean Rank	1094.80	1073.83	1055.18	805.48	782.28	168.085
N	410	206	51	24	1099	
Police or military interfere with people's private life						
Mean Rank	576.26	744.66	552.23	956.24	1015.68	316.373
N	419	208	51	23	1021	
Racist behavior						
Mean Rank	695.23	739.86	754.16	700.50	890.53	95.571
N	417	211	51	14)	935	
Drug sale in streets						
Mean Rank	566.03	770.61	489.79	642.80	949.37	256.805
N	408	206	50	22	937	
Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?						
Mean Rank	770.50	861.45	763.51	1084.73	978.48	69.816
N	422	212	48	24	1118	
Community Security Average						
Mean Rank	560.35	708.42	528.24	682.63	814.66	108.671
N	379	186	47	12	823	

\*All analyses were significant at  $p < .05$ .

**Table 6.** Personal Security Scale mean ranking comparisons.

	<i>Students</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>National (Muslim)</i>	<i>National (Buddhist- majority)</i>	<i>Kruskal- Wallis H*</i>
Gone without enough food to eat						
Mean Rank	832.94	875.13	1090.64	632.19	966.69	45.323*
N	418	215	51	26	1138	
Felt unsafe from crime in your home						
Mean Rank	736.96	852.00	800.75	662.81	1013.32	117.450*
N	418	213	51	24	1137	
Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed						
Mean Rank	852.12	878.86	925.89	631.25	939.35	22.292*
N	412	203	50	26	1125	
Gone without a cash income						
Mean Rank	865.58	902.19	946.55	671.19	931.29	12.495*
N	407	206	51	26	1130	
Domestic violence at home						
Mean Rank	330.51	354.63	357.53	NA	NA	3.604
N	391	194	50	0	0	
Personal Security average						
Mean Rank	732.13	840.87	896.97	538.29	946.15	66.816*
N	418	210	51	24	1100	

\*Analyses were significant at  $p < .05$ .

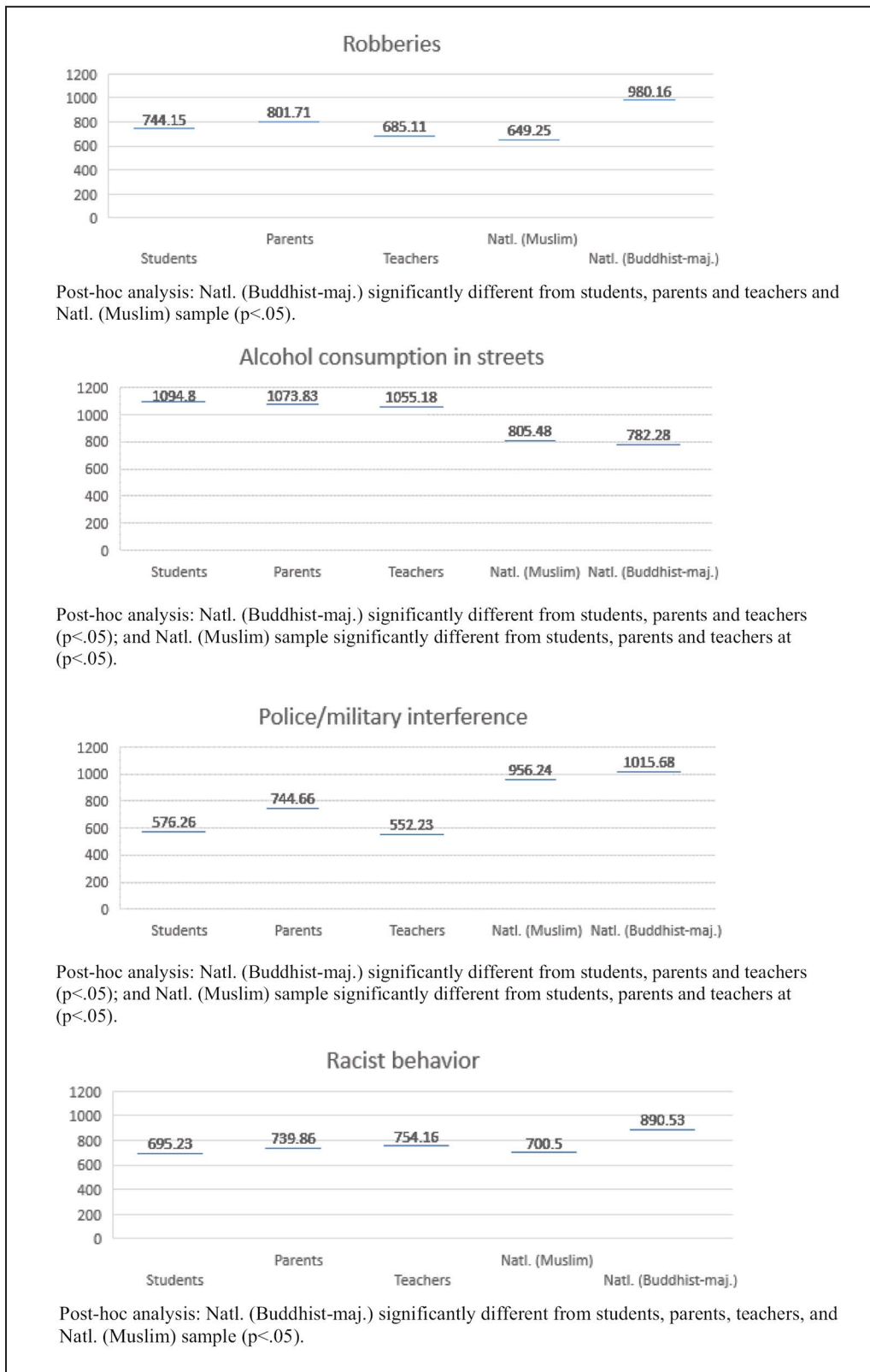


Figure 1. Community Security Scale mean ranking comparisons.



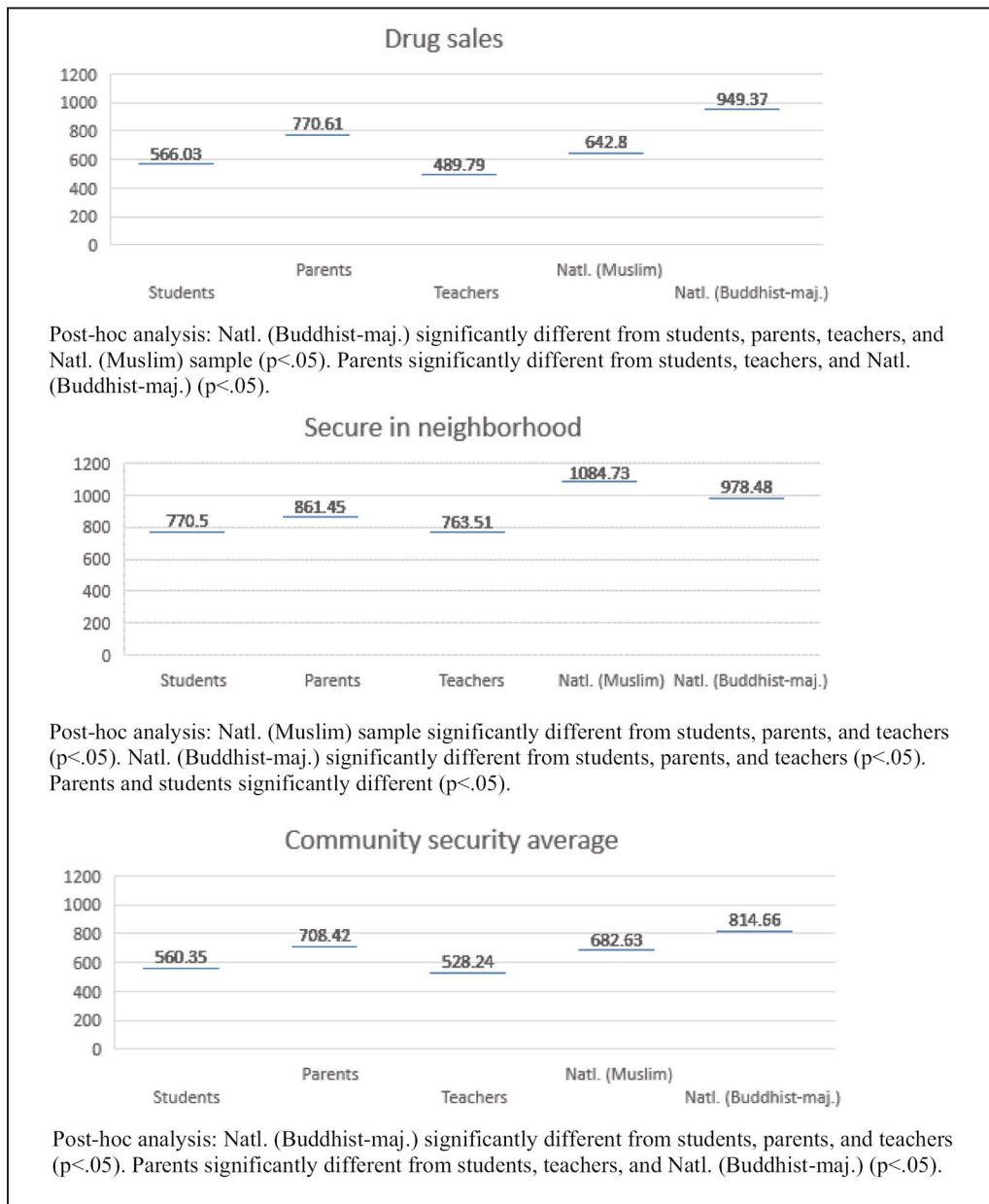


Figure 1. (Continued).

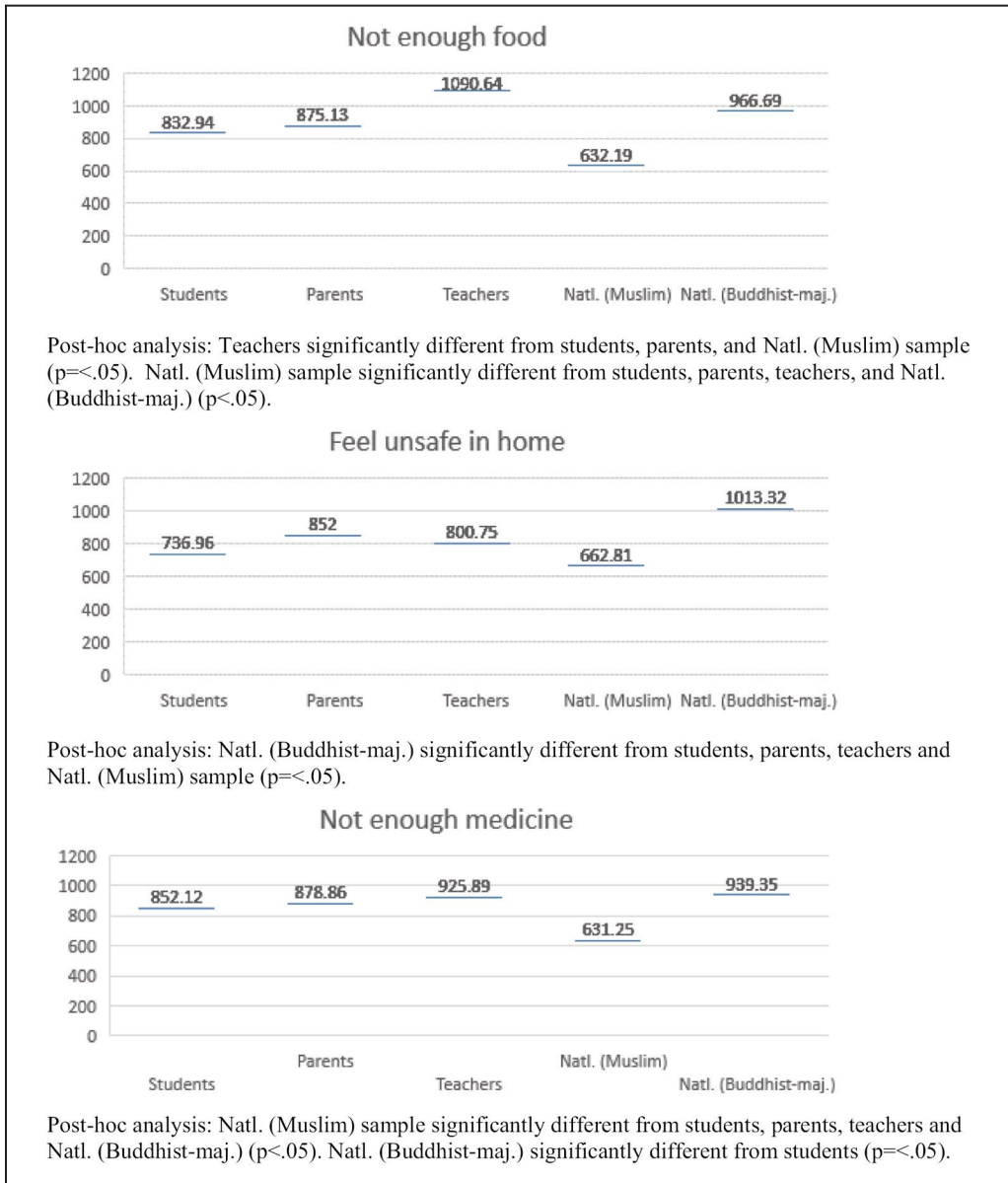


Figure 2. Personal Security Scale mean ranking comparisons.

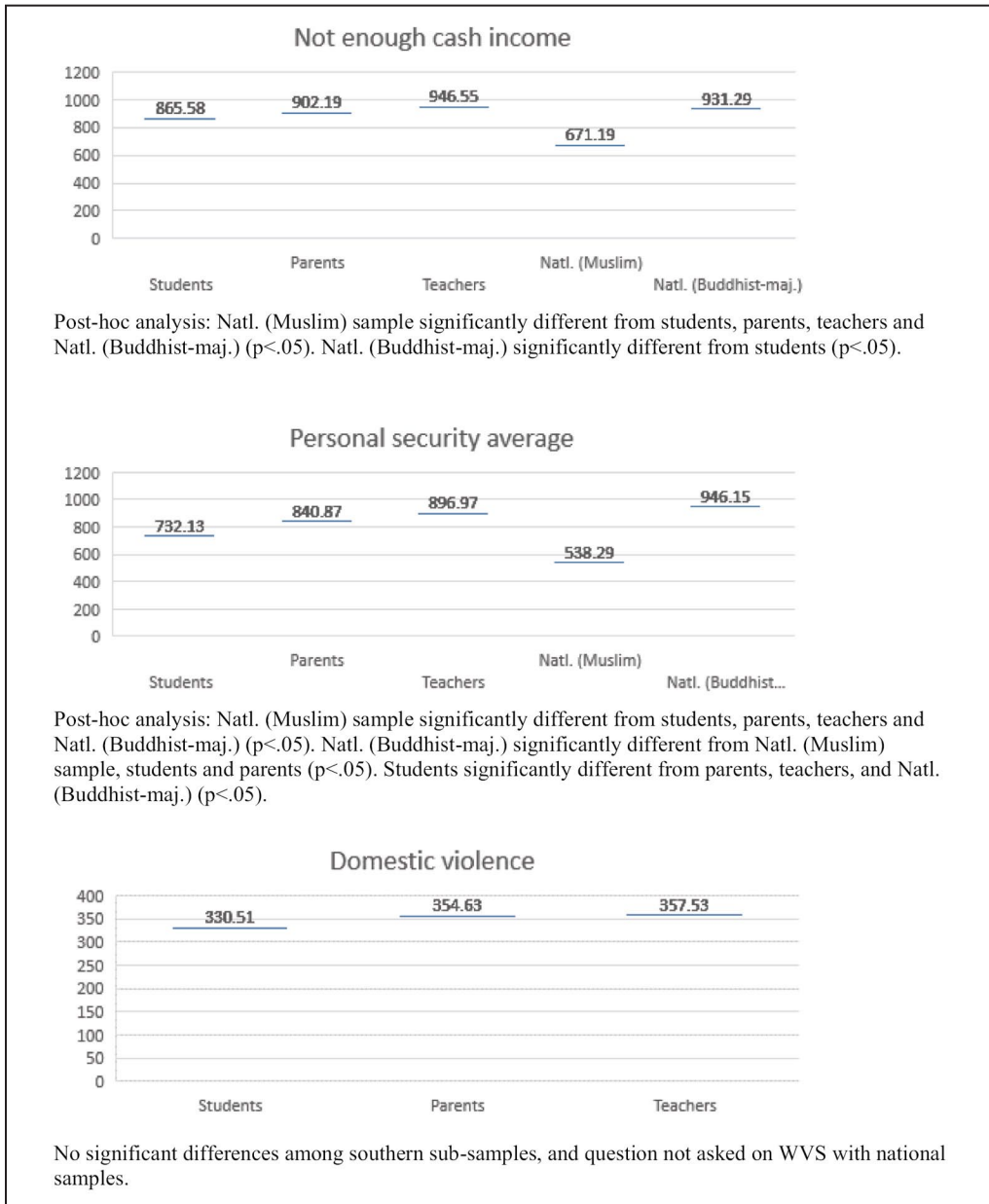


Figure 2. (Continued).

secure you feel these days in your neighborhood?', and 'Racist behavior'). This suggests major differences in experiences and perceptions of community security between Thai Buddhists nationally and Muslims from the conflict area. The National Muslim sample was not significantly different from the southern Muslim samples in 'Robberies', 'Racist behavior', or 'Drug sales in the streets'. There were however three items in which there was a degree of parity between the national Muslim and Buddhist samples: 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', 'Police or military interfere with people's private life', and 'Could you tell me how secure you feel these days in your neighborhood?'. In these three items, both national samples showed a higher security ranking than the three southern samples except for 'Alcohol consumption in the streets', in which the three southern samples showed a significantly higher security rating at the  $p < .05$  level. This is most likely due to the fact that alcohol use is considered un-Islamic and is thus much less visible in the Muslim-majority south than in other parts of the nation. Among the three southern samples, 'Drug sale in the streets' and 'Police or military interfere with people's private life' had the two lowest combined security ratings, respectively.

Among the Personal Security Scale items, there were fewer discernible trends reflecting place-specific differences among our samples. The National Buddhist majority sample reported the highest rating in 'Felt unsafe from crime in your home' against the other samples ( $p < .05$ ). However, the three southern samples and Buddhist majority sample were not significantly different in 'Gone without enough food to eat', and the southern parents and teacher subsamples were comparable to the Buddhist majority sample in 'Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed' and 'Gone without a cash income'. Interestingly, the National Muslim sample had the lowest security ratings relative to all other samples in 'Felt unsafe from crime in your home', 'Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed', and 'Gone without a cash income' ( $p < .05$ ). An average composite of personal security items also showed that the National Muslim sample had a lower score than any other group at the  $p < .05$  level. However, we should again note that comparisons between our survey administered in the conflict area and the national survey results should be made with caution due to the time difference in which the surveys were administered, and the low survey response  $N$  of the national survey.

### ***Gender Comparisons among Southern Samples***

We also compared gender preferences for all individual items within both the Community Security and Personal Security scales among our samples of students, parents, and teachers from Islamic private schools. Frequency distribution of responses indicated that they were not normally distributed, and sample sizes varied considerably. Therefore, we employed nonparametric analysis of independent samples to compare central tendencies between genders. The Mann-Whitney U-Test is an appropriate test for comparison of non-normally distributed data with considerable differences in group size (MacFarland and Yates 2016). List-wise analysis was employed for consistent comparability of results only among respondents who answered all items, who were sub-categorized into sub-samples of students ( $n = 351$ ), parents ( $n = 167$ ), and teachers ( $n = 42$ ). As the Mann-Whitney U-Test produces mean rankings to compare central tendencies, the lower the mean ranking indicates a lower sense of security for the relevant item, whereas a higher mean ranking indicates a greater sense of security. Because of the consistent response scale of our items, we also computed a mean scale score for all items within a particular scale, yielding a single score measuring central tendencies of all Community Security Scale and Personal Security Scale items. The one exception was our item on domestic violence, which we did not combine into our scale because it was not comparable to the national Thai sample. **Tables 7 and 8** depict mean rankings by gender across our three sub-samples for both the Community Security Scale and Personal Security Scale items.

In general, males tended to have lower mean ranking scores (i.e., perceived a greater sense of threat or risk) than females in both the Community and Personal Security Scales. However, statistically significant differences in ranked distributions identified a few items with greater perceived risks between gender groups at the  $p < .05$  (2-tailed) level. Among students, males perceived greater risks in domestic violence at home ( $U = 8374.0$ ,  $p = .017$ ), though female students felt less secure in their neighborhoods ( $U = 8593.0$ ,  $p = .045$ ). Within the teacher sub-sample, male teachers were more likely to feel unsafe from crime even in their homes ( $U = 133.0$ ,  $p = .020$ ), had a lower overall sense of personal security than female teachers ( $U = 135.0$ ,  $p = .029$ ), and greater sense of risk from drug sales in the streets ( $U = 121.0$ ,  $p = .010$ ).

**Table 7.** Perceptions of community security by gender.**How frequently do the following things occur in your neighborhood?**

	Female	Male	Mann–Whitney U-test	<i>p</i>
Students, ( <i>n</i> = 351 listwise)	280	71		
Robberies	172.09	191.42	8845.0	.120
Alcohol consumption in the streets	178.48	166.24	9247.0	.263
Police or military interfere with people's private life	176.04	175.85	9929.0	.988
Racist behavior	178.67	165.48	9193.0	.267
Drug sale in streets	180.02	160.16	8815.5	.128
Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?	171.19	194.97	8593.0	.045*
Community Security Average	176.04	175.82	9927.5	.987
Parents, ( <i>n</i> = 167 listwise)	113	54		
Robberies	86.73	78.28	2742.0	.243
Alcohol consumption in the streets	86.76	78.23	2739.5	.198
Police or military interfere with people's private life	87.62	76.43	2642.0	.143
Racist behavior	85.46	80.95	2886.5	.511
Drug sale in streets	85.37	81.14	2896.5	.577
Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?	86.92	77.89	2721.0	.199
Community Security Average	88.27	75.07	2569.0	.098
Teachers, ( <i>n</i> = 42 listwise)	22	20		
Robberies	19.27	23.95	171.0	.190
Alcohol consumption in the streets	23.30	19.53	180.5	.251
Police or military interfere with people's private life	23.95	18.80	166.0	.157
Racist behaviour	22.18	20.75	205.0	.649
Drug sale in streets	26.00	16.55	121.0	.010*
Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?	24.00	18.75	165.0	.111
Community Security Average	24.39	18.33	156.5	.108

**Table 8.** Perceptions of personal security by gender.**In the last 12 months, how often have you or your family:**

	Female	Male	Mann–Whitney U-test	<i>p</i>
Students, ( <i>n</i> = 351 listwise)	280	71		
Gone without enough food to eat	177.43	170.37	8871.5	.124
Felt unsafe from crime in your home	178.25	167.13	9310.0	.378
Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed	177.43	170.37	9540.5	.555
Gone without a cash income	180.92	156.58	8561.5	.053
Domestic violence at home	181.59	153.94	8374.0	.017*
Personal Security average	179.94	160.46	8836.5	.145
Parents, ( <i>n</i> = 167 listwise)	113	54		
Gone without enough food to eat	83.96	84.08	3046.5	.986
Felt unsafe from crime in your home	83.91	84.19	3040.5	.969
Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed	84.92	82.08	2947.5	.692
Gone without a cash income	84.76	82.41	2965.0	.749
Domestic violence at home	86.06	79.69	2818.0	.326
Personal Security average	84.51	82.94	2993.5	.842
Teachers, ( <i>n</i> = 42 listwise)	22	20		
Gone without enough food to eat	21.11	21.93	211.5	.703
Felt unsafe from crime in your home	25.45	17.15	133.0	.020*
Gone without medicine or medical treatment that you needed	22.25	20.68	203.5	.629
Gone without a cash income	23.30	19.53	180.5	.268
Domestic violence at home	22.43	20.48	199.5	.534
Personal Security average	25.36	17.25	135.0	.029*

### ***Human Security Correlations to Perceptions of Institutional Helpfulness or Reliability***

We were interested to know how human security experiences were associated with perceptions of the helpfulness or reliability of various institutions and entities in the community, ranging from national institutions like ‘Thai law’ to community entities such as ‘neighbors’. We asked all respondents to indicate to what extent they perceived the following entities to be helpful or reliable: Thai law, authorities, school, religious leaders, neighbors, and family members. Respondents answered on a 5-item scale ranging from 1 (very helpful and reliable) to 5 (not at all helpful or reliable). We found a number of consistently strong correlations suggesting a relationship between the Community Security Scale items and perceptions of ‘Thai law’ and ‘authorities.’ We used Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient to identify associations between the human security and institutional reliability items. Spearman’s correlation ( $\rho$ ) is a non-parametric measure of correlation between ranked variables and is suitable for non-normally distributed data (Lee Rodgers and Nicewander 1988, Bonett and Wright 2000).

As perceptions of institutional reliability were coded with lower numbers indicating greater reliability, while the human security scores were coded with higher numbers indicating greater security, a negative correlation indicates that the higher the human security item score was (i.e., the more secure, or less frequent the problem was), the more helpful or reliable the institution or entity was perceived. **Tables 9 and 10** display all significant correlations between the human security and institutional reliability items. There was a consistent, negative direction for all significant correlations, indicating that higher security (i.e., less frequent experience of security problems) was associated with greater perceptions of reliability and helpfulness. Most correlations were between  $-0.1$  and  $-0.3$ , indicating weak to moderate correlations.

Among Community Security Scale items, the strongest consistent associations across all sub-samples were between police/military interference and Thai law (students:  $\rho = -.353/p = .01$ , parents:  $\rho = -.315/p = .01$ , teachers:  $\rho = -.499/p = .01$ ), and police/military interference and Authorities (students:  $\rho = -.314/p = .01$ , parents:  $\rho = -.307/p = .01$ , teachers:  $\rho = -.517/p = .01$ ). This trend was also detected across subgroups for the community security average score

**Table 9.** Community Security correlations with institutional perceptions.

	<i>Robberies</i>	<i>Alcohol consumption in the streets</i>	<i>Police or military interfere with people's private life</i>	<i>Racist behavior</i>	<i>Drug sale in streets</i>	<i>Could you tell me how secure do you feel these days in your neighborhood?</i>	<i>Community Security Average</i>
<b>Community Security</b>							
<b>Students</b>							
Thai law			-.353**	-.137*	-.246**	-.191**	-.328**
Authorities			-.314**	-.147*	-.188**	-.175**	-.274**
School		-.119*			-.135*	-.152**	-.164**
Religious leaders							
Neighbors						-.152**	-.150*
Family members						-.115*	
<b>Parents</b>							
Thai law			-.315**				-.216*
Authorities			-.307**		-.200*	-.236**	-.307**
School	-.167*					-.163	-.198*
Religious leaders							
Neighbors							
Family members		-.165*				-.200**	
<b>Teachers</b>							
Thai law			-.499**		-.486**		-.545**
Authorities			-.517**	-.391*	-.395*		-.450*
School		-.400*					
Religious leaders							
Neighbors							
Family members		-.387**					

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pairwise deletion.

for Thai law (students:  $\rho = -.328/p = .01$ , parents:  $\rho = -.216/p = .05$ , teachers:  $\rho = -.545/p = .01$ ) and Authorities (students:  $\rho = -.274/p = .01$ , parents:  $\rho = -.307/p = .01$ , teachers:  $\rho = -.450/p = .05$ ).

Unlike the community security items, for Personal Security Scale items we saw no consistent trends in significant correlations that were shared across our three southern sub-samples. In fact, the only moderately significant correlations of the perceptions of personal security and institutional reliability existed for the teacher sub-sample. There, we see the strongest significant associations between feeling unsafe from crime in your home with perceptions of neighbors ( $\rho = -.531/p < .01$ ), authorities ( $\rho = -.461/p < .01$ ), and school ( $\rho = -.415/p = .05$ ). In other words, positive perceptions of those entities increased



**Table 10.** Personal Security correlations with institutional perceptions.

	<i>Gone without enough food to eat</i>	<i>Felt unsafe from crime in your home</i>	<i>Gone without medicine or medical treatment</i>	<i>Gone without a cash income</i>	<i>Personal Security Average</i>	<i>Domestic violence</i>
<b>Students</b>						
Thai law						
Authorities						-.123*
School			-.162**	-.212**	-.161**	-.223**
Religious leaders						
Neighbors						-.126*
Family members	-.135**		-.103*	-.192**	-.152**	-.189**
<b>Parents</b>						
Thai law						
Authorities						-.201*
School						
Religious leaders						-.187*
Neighbors						
Family members	-.274**		-.234**	-.273**	-.253**	-.152*
<b>Teachers</b>						
Thai law						
Authorities		-.461**			-.440*	
School		-.415*			-.357*	-.494**
Religious leaders						
Neighbors		-.531**			-.462*	
Family members	-.344*		-.329*			

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pairwise deletion.

if teacher respondents felt more safe from crime in their own homes. This trend was also reflected in average personal security score correlations with those same institutions, and there was an additionally strong association found among teachers between domestic violence and school ( $\rho = -.494/p < .01$ ).

### Focus Group and Interview Results

Our qualitative data is limited in the sense that it was restricted to a small number of individuals relative to our survey ( $n = 28$ ), but it did provide participants with the opportunity to provide in-depth perspectives about their experiences. Reflecting our survey findings, we found that focus group and interview participants had strong concerns about

the presence of military/ police forces in the area, and the prevalence of crime and drug use. Among our survey findings, respondents had consistently identified both of these issues as the most salient human security problems in general, as well as factors that were correlated with perceptions of Thai authorities. The qualitative data revealed how these issues were experienced on a personal and everyday level.

### ***Military Presence and Security Checkpoints***

Many participants expressed opinions about the highly visible presence of road blocks and security checkpoints throughout the region, where security forces regularly monitor traffic and movement near communities, schools, and places of worship. Checkpoints are particularly stringent in districts that authorities have identified as high-risk security areas ('red zones') due to purported insurgent activities. Anecdotally, males are more often stopped for questioning and searches than females, which heightens a sense that young Muslim men are targeted for arrests:

'I feel annoyed with the blockades on the way to school. They delay my travel to school. There are too many soldiers, not police. They are older than me a few years. They must be newly appointed soldiers. I feel uncomfortable when they spend a long time asking me questions when I pass them, but I must use the streets when I need to go somewhere' (Male student). Many respondents indicated that they did not like the presence of checkpoints, but as local residents have lived with them for over a decade, they have become an accepted fact of life in the southern provinces. During these stops, security forces typically ask questions of vehicle passengers and may take photos as well: 'I saw the soldiers only take photos of vehicle passengers. We have to stop and answer their questions: What? Where? When? Why? Such as where are you going, where is your house, why are you going this way. My kids like them because they greet them and take photos. But it seems that was the only job they are doing for security' (Female parent).

Several individuals expressed discomfort with security forces interacting with women at checkpoint stops. They indicated that although females are less likely than males to be the subject of physical searches, they expressed concerns about verbal harassment from

soldiers. Some younger female students referred to comments made by security forces of a sexual nature, which is considered highly inappropriate for Muslims: ‘Some of them are good, but some are not polite because they usually harass the girls when we pass through their blockades on the way to schools or the market. It is annoying and boring with the blockades everywhere we go. We hope they will be removed one day’ (Female student). The prospect of armed soldiers regularly stopping and interrogating young people, particularly young women, is troubling for parents – particularly if they cannot be present as well: ‘I am worried for girls in my family when they go out. I remind them always to behave properly when they meet soldiers on the street’ (Male parent).

Several participants indicated that they felt the military security checkpoints created or exacerbated tensions with the community out of fear. They believed that the mere presence of soldiers in their communities was a source of insecurity: ‘Some were good, some were bad. But I don’t like to have many soldiers on the street even though they claim that they are bringing peace to the village’ (Female student). It should be noted that anti-government insurgents often target security forces for bombings or shooting attacks, and it is not uncommon for civilians to be caught in the crossfire and die as well (see, e.g., Human Rights Watch 2019). There have also been instances in which security forces have killed civilians accidentally, thinking they were insurgents (see, e.g., Benjakat 2019, Boonbandit 2019). Such occurrences can only contribute to residents’ grievances, and fuels fear or antagonism towards security forces. As stated by another adult parent, ‘[We are] afraid to get near them because when they come to the village, the village starts to have some security problems.’ Thus, although maintaining a policy for security checkpoints may seem appropriate, it can also generate counterproductive results and ill feelings from residents.

### ***Crime and Drug Use***

Similarly, many focus group and interview participants viewed illegal drug use among youth as a serious social problem associated with street crime and public safety generally. For decades, Thailand and some of its neighboring countries have served as a global hub for

illegal drug production and trafficking. Studies have indicated that drug use are a significant problem among young Muslims in the region – particularly young men (Binwang and Laeheem 2013). Methamphetamine or *kratom* is especially prevalent. *Kratom* is a naturally occurring plant with derivatives that act as a central nervous system stimulant, and is often boiled and mixed with cough syrup or other liquids to drink as a cocktail. The highest use of *kratom* in the country occurs in the south (Assanangkornchai *et al.* 2007). It is estimated that up to 5% of the population in the southernmost provinces use drugs (BBC 2017). One survey indicated that up to 94% of teens in the deep south may use *kratom* cocktails (Fuller 2012).

Many participants believed that drug use and trafficking drove crime rates and affected community security. As stated by one male parent: ‘We must warn family to be careful when they go out. Some boys get involved in crime because they always go outside and come back home late. Many are addicted and fight among themselves, some died because of this. They needed money, they stole other people’s belonging such as farm products, animals, and rubber.’ Others we interviewed also expressed concerns about how drug addiction drives street crime. For example, theft by motorcyclists: ‘My mother always warns me not to carry a bag, or put it in the front basket while driving a motorcycle. Many girls got accidents because their hand bags were stolen by street robbers while driving or riding motorcycles’ (Female student). One religious teacher even indicated that items are stolen from mosques: ‘Yes, drugs and crime affect our well-being and everyday life. I pray my family is safe when they go out to study and work . . . . Some drug addicted boys entered into the mosque to steal, now the situation is better because we have CCTV’ (Male teacher).

It must be noted that the concern with illegal drugs in the southern provinces is linked to allegations of corruption and connections to the insurgency. For instance, it has been reported that drug traffickers hire insurgents to commit acts of violence towards rivals, or pay insurgents money to help them smuggle drugs (Watcharasakwet and Ahmad 2018). It is also asserted that insurgents use drugs as an enticement to recruit youth, or use revenue from drug sales to support their operations (BBC 2017). There are reports that insurgents themselves use drugs before attacks (Blank 2013). Some have also alleged that rogue elements of the government or security forces are

complicit in the drug trade (Kung 2018). In 2018, the Thai military commander overseeing the southern provinces announced a policy to crackdown on drugs as a priority for the community (Ahmad 2018). Thus, although the extent of the connections between the insurgency and drug problem are unclear, it is still perceived as a significant problem affecting everyday security among residents of the area.

### ***Trust in Local Officials and Leaders***

Although respondents voiced many concerns about the presence of security forces, as well as problems of crime and drugs in the community, many respondents believed that local leaders were well-intentioned and helpful resources for residents. Participants emphasized the importance of maintaining good personal relationships with local, civilian government authorities: 'I think the political leaders can and should help us more. But we really need to have a good connection with them. We may go to see our leaders of the village first if they can help us' (Male teacher). Some respondents indicated that they trust local political leaders from the same backgrounds and communities. For example, one teacher indicated: 'Yes, local politicians and government officers working in the village help us a lot. They are helpful. We elected them and they can provide help to the villagers because they were born here . . . . They treat us well because they know us better what we need. We feel it is easy to request help from them because they speak the local language' (Male teacher). This sentiment contrasts with the relative distrust towards security forces – many of whom are Thai army soldiers deployed from other parts of the nation, and lack cultural or ethnic connections to local Malay-Muslim communities. These findings seem to reflect the divergence in correlations between institutions and human security experiences. Unlike the relatively negative perceptions of 'Thai law' and 'Authorities,' focus group and interview participants seemed to expressed more confidence in the helpfulness or reliability of local political leaders.

Islamic religious teachers were also considered trusted leaders in the community, not only because of religious knowledge, but because many religious leaders have become effective intermediaries with government authorities: 'We see leaders such as the village headman or sub-district headman in our community. They can give us help all the

time. Islamic teachers and the Imam also help us well, because they know how to ask for help from the political leaders to solve our security issues' (Male parent). Likewise, several respondents indicated that they regard Islamic schools positively, likely due to the historical role that Islamic schools play in overall community life: 'I send my children to Islamic schools. I don't send them to other schools. They will get religious and academic knowledge for future careers. I want my daughters and sons to be religious, and *ponok* are the best schools for kids because they teach religious and academic subjects. So they can survive well both in this world and hereafter. We need religious knowledge as a basis for life, but we should not refuse worldly knowledge' (Female parent).

Additionally, some respondents indicated that they felt *ponok* schools are considered safe spaces because they keep youth away from harmful influences in the community, such as drugs, gangs, and violence. As stated by one student: 'Compared to other places, *ponok* is safer from drugs and other bad behaviors. It is more economical, food is cheap. They help students with food and accommodation, so there is no need to pay, or only pay a little' (Female student). Besides the historical and cultural affinity many Malay-Muslims have for *ponok* and Islamic teachers, many of them are perceived positively for providing moral and ethical guidance for youth as well (Laeheem 2013). There is a potentially strong role for Islamic schools to play in this area, particularly if the capacity of Islamic teachers to provide such support is improved (Laeheem and Madreh 2014). As indicated by one teacher: 'The government should support *ponok* rather than treat them in a suspicious way. We rely on them for Islamic education. But, there needs more improvement in quality' (Male teacher).

## **Discussion and Implications**

A principal objective of our research was to identify the most salient human security threats as perceived by our study population. Our study indicated that among all three of our southern sub-samples, there were shared concerns that the biggest Community Security Scale threats were either 'Drug sale in the streets' or 'Police or military interfere with people's private life'. Both these items ranked the

lowest, respectively, among students and teachers, whereas among parents, 'Police or military interfere with people's private life' was the most problematic. Results from our focus groups and interviews reflected these concerns. On the Personal Security Scale, the two single items that were most problematic for all three sub-samples were either 'Felt unsafe from crime in your home' or 'Gone without a cash income'. However, there was less of a convergence of concern in the personal security items than with the community security threats. In short, there was a relative consensus among respondents about threats to security that exist at the community level, but less so when queried about personal or household-level threats.

Another primary objective of our study was to determine any relationships between perceived human security threats, and perceptions of institutions. Among the five individual Community Security Scale items, the strongest correlations were again between 'Police or military interfere with people's private life' and 'Drug sale in the streets'. It is critical to note that both these items had the strongest negative correlations with perceptions of the reliability of 'Thai law' and 'Authorities' across all three of our southern samples. This suggests that community perceptions of Thai law and authorities may be more malleable than other institutions vis-a-vis human security experiences, and the direction and strength of the association indicates that a decrease in police or military interference in daily life may improve perceptions of government authorities. On the other hand, there were few or no significant associations between these human security risks with perceptions of local entities such as 'neighbors' or 'religious leaders', suggesting that local residents – not surprisingly – do not assess responsibility for insecurity on local (Muslim) entities.

The fact that our findings were reflected across all three sub-sample groups also seems to suggest that these perceptions of security issues are generally shared across the community, rather than isolated among subsections. The comparisons against the national WVS 6 findings confirm that human security experiences among our southern samples were significantly different across almost all items in the Community Security Scale. As expected, human security experiences in general among our three sub-samples were more problematic when compared to the national sample. Again, the widest disparities were seen between national comparison groups and the southern samples



on two particular items: 'Drug sale in the streets' and 'Police or military interfere with people's private life'. However, there were fewer disparities between the southern and national samples among Personal Security Scale items. For example, the most problematic single personal security item among our three southern samples was 'Felt unsafe from crime in your home', which was significantly different from the National Buddhist sample. However, the second most pressing problem – 'Not enough cash income' – showed a significant difference only between students and the National Buddhist sample.

One obvious conclusion of our results is that the continued presence of police and military forces in the region to maintain security is in itself perceived as the most salient source of insecurity by residents. Presently, an estimated 60,000 security personnel are deployed throughout communities in the three southernmost provinces (Pathan 2016, Wichaidit 2018). Although a limited deployment of security forces may be perceived as necessary in some instances to suppress violent activity, the heightened presence of security forces creates a structural environment in which residents associate the presence of security forces as a threat to community security, and drives an identity-based historical grievance. The danger of this situation is that it hardens perceptions of Thai authorities, facilitates persisting historical grievances of annexation and control of the Malay-Muslim minority, and contributes to an ethno/religious confrontation when the origins of the conflict – and its solutions – are political. It should be noted that the Thai government has changed tactical approaches to security in the region multiple times. Commentators have discussed at length how the government's response to the initial surge in violence was overly aggressive, focused on suppression, and fueled rather than mitigated violence in the region (McCargo 2006, Melvin 2007). More recently, military authorities have increased the deployment of local (Muslim) volunteers to provide security in villages in an effort to diminish the presence of non-local soldiers in the area, a strategy that could help the situation, but is unlikely to have significant impacts in isolation without addressing wider political issues (Pathan 2016).

Secondly, our survey data confirm anecdotal perceptions that drug-related criminal activity is also a major contributor of insecurity in the region, and perceived as being related to or possibly exacerbated by the presence of security forces. It should be noted that both illegal



drug abuse and trafficking have plagued Thailand for many decades, much of which can be traced to the regional availability of heroin and methamphetamine in neighboring Southeast Asian nations (Macdonald and Nacapew 2013). However, there is evidence that illegal drug use in the deep southern provinces is particularly high (Thamnukasetchai 2017) and potentially the highest in the country (BBC 2017). The Thai government, various community Islamic entities, and local civil society organizations have all initiated various programs to address drug addiction among youth, but the problem persists (Binwang and Laeheem 2013). The fact that perceptions of the helpfulness and reliability of ‘Authorities’ and ‘Thai law’ were negatively correlated with the perceptions of drug activity as a source of community insecurity suggests that the drug problem is tied to perceptions of governmental responsibility. This aligns with numerous anecdotal allegations suggesting that criminal drug activity in the south is facilitated by the political insecurity in the region, or perceptions that corruption among elements within the security forces drive drug trafficking (Ahmad 2018, Watcharasakwet and Ahmad 2018). It is worth noting that across our southern samples, males were significantly more likely to perceive and experience greater human security risks than females. Drug use and related criminal activities are principally perceived as a male rather than female problem in the south (Sateemae *et al.* 2015), suggesting that the confluence of drug activity and political violence is a particularly problematic issue driving insecurity in the region. Governmental policymakers and other community leaders could thus seek to concentrate efforts on supporting trusted local (Muslim) institutions with more aggressive roles in addressing the regional drug problem. For example, increasing Thai government support for local Islamic Private Schools and *ponok* to address issues of drug use among youth may be a beneficial approach, particularly since *ponok* and other local community institutions are perceived more positively than the authorities. Similarly, Islamic educational institutions should take aggressive steps to address drug and other behavioral problems in an effective and evidence-based manner.

Again, it is important to note that the core solutions to the Southern Thailand situation are political. Commentators have written at length about the multiple attempts at political negotiations between the Thai government and insurgent groups, which by-and-large have failed

to achieve substantive results despite years of negotiations (Wheeler 2014, Bernama 2018). Some commentators have suggested that major political solutions to the conflict, such as greater decentralization of central authority and increased local autonomy, may be unachievable due to the unwillingness of government authorities to negotiate such core matters (Melvin 2007). In this sense, the wide-scale presence of security forces should be seen as a failure of long-term policy to resolve the conflict politically. Although discussion of long-term policy solutions to the Southern Thailand situation is beyond this article, an important conclusion of our study is that the operational deployment of security forces is a tactical failure as well, since it serves as perhaps the most salient source of perceived insecurity among our sample of residents, and is associated with decreased trust in Thai law and authorities. Thus, addressing the conditions of human insecurity in the region is closely tied, if not directly intertwined, with the need to resolve the conflict politically.

## **Conclusion**

It should be recognized that although our statistical analysis indicate that ‘Police or military interfere with people’s private life’ and ‘Drug sale in the streets’ were the most problematic human security items among our samples, this should not be interpreted as meaning that the other human security survey items are irrelevant to the South Thailand conflict, or that there are no other significant human security factors relevant to the conflict not employed by our survey. The totality of the conflict’s long history, social and economic environment, and macro and local policy context all impact the conflict’s ongoing dynamics and the security of residents in complex ways. It should be noted that among all three of our sub-samples, the lowest-ranking personal security items were ‘Felt unsafe from crime in your home’ and ‘Gone without a cash income’ – suggesting that issues of poverty and crime in general are also distressing factors impacting people in the community. However, these issues were not perceived as being as salient as the deployment of security forces or the prevalence of drug use.

It is important to recognize that the WVS items within the Inglehart and Norris’ human security construct is only one approach at

measuring human security. The WVS is a global survey aimed at comparing social phenomenon across multiple nations and cultures, and therefore limited in its capacity to yield detailed findings at local levels. Still, our survey results found consistent findings identifying human security threats that were supported by the qualitative content, and a more refined human security construct that is more place and/or conflict-specific could yield many additional findings of value. We thus recommend that further work be done in this area. Additional research should focus on the development of an instrument that comprehensively identifies the multitude of human security threats and risks that impact overall well-being and public safety throughout the conflict-affected region of Southern Thailand. It is also crucial that such measures are culturally and context specific to reflect human security as experienced and understood by people on the ground. These efforts might help identify other points of intervention that would mitigate or address security issues faced by the population and improve overall well-being. Because our study suggests that many residents of the area may impute responsibility for salient security threats on the government, this provides an opportunity for policy makers to improve relationships with the Malay-Muslim community if the capacity, resources, and political will exists to address them.

There are some methodological limitations and caveats to our study that must be noted. We opted to use the WVS human security items as the basis for our survey as it provided a means for national comparison. Both our community and personal security scales showed suitable internal consistency via satisfactory alpha levels. Frequency analysis showed that by and large, no human security items were normally distributed, and showed a possible ceiling effect. To address this, we employed non-parametric measures as appropriate to identify mean rankings and intergroup comparisons. We would also caution against the generalizability of our southern regional sub-samples to the national comparisons due to sample size differences, as well as the fact that the national comparison sample was conducted several years prior to our survey. As we would expect, we found that human security experiences differed between our southern Muslim respondents versus the nation in general. Further efforts should be taken to comprehensively measure human security experiences that allow for regional comparisons against a suitable national sample. Finally,

another caveat is the convenience nature of our regional survey sub-samples. Although we are confident that the large size of our sample shows adequate reliability, it may not be representative of the larger population of Islamic Private School or *ponok* students, parents of students, or teachers in the south. Further efforts should be taken by researchers to conduct large sample studies of this population, but given the degree of instability and ongoing conflict in the area, such efforts may be difficult.

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