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Title of Thesis : In-Between Space: The Identity of Three generations of Patani Muslim Women in the Modern Education System

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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to understand the formation of Patani Muslim women of three generations in the three Southern Border Provinces of Thailand. These women had access and opportunity to study in the modern education system since the assimilation policy in the Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat period until the present. During this period, the modern education system had started in the region. The central government increasingly implemented its cultural and educational policy towards the three Southern Border Provinces. In my thesis, I argue that the expansion of the educational policy has constructed new values in society, and the number of Muslim women in Patani who had chance to study outside their hometowns increased rapidly. Meanwhile, the Thai state became preoccupied with the idea of regulating and managing Islamic education. The government thereby promoted the Thai secular curriculum instead of the traditional Islamic education and attempted to reform its curricula. The Thai State's educational policy, however, had some impact on the educational routes of Patani Muslim women. *Firstly*, the Muslim women from the urban elite and middle class group in Patani who had gone through the Thai secular curriculum normally chose to go directly to Bangkok, the capital. After finishing their education, most of these women worked as governmental staffs. *Secondly*, women from the religious leader's families and networks who had been trained in a parallel curriculum, either secular or religious, chose to further their education abroad in Muslim countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Egypt. After graduation, most women of this group would continue their career in Islam private schools. These trends showed that the education routes were quite related to the differential location, family background, class and austere religion. This could also be meaningful for their further distinctive identity formation.

The first phase of my research deals with the identity formation of the first generation of Patani Muslim women in the three Southern Border Provinces who had been educated from the "two routes" in the Modern world, and had demonstrated the complexity of their identity construction influenced by the living 'in between space'. Firstly, They had realized their Malayu Muslim identity in the cultural controversial zone at the Centre of the Thai State; likewise, when they encountered with other forms and performances of the Muslim identity outside the three Southern Border Provinces in Islamic countries. Secondly, they underwent a transformation of their identity with Islamic Revivalism in which they followed strictly the pious practice in

religious disciplines and connected themselves to the Muslim world more than the local traditional Muslim. Religious disciplines became, thus, the important element of constructing their modern selves and, meanwhile, challenging the Western modern thought.

I further develop my research to merge with my doctoral thesis in which I will focus and extend my fieldwork to gather data from the grassroots. I intend to apply a qualitative research to study not only one, but three generations of Patani Muslim women in the Three Southern Border Provinces. These groups of women had better chance to educate themselves outside their hometown in the early years of modern educational system in Bangkok, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Egypt. Moreover, it is my attempt to look for any primary historical record which would distinctively described the lives and experiences of these pioneering women dynamically. My attempt is to understand their identity formation in order to cope with present-day globalization and the 'restive' deep South.