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**THE CHALLENGE OF MORALITY AND CULTURAL
FORCES OF EMOTION IN THAI POLITICAL
CONFLICTS AND POLARIZATION**



THANNAPAT JARENPANIT

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL
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IN SOCIAL SCIENCE**

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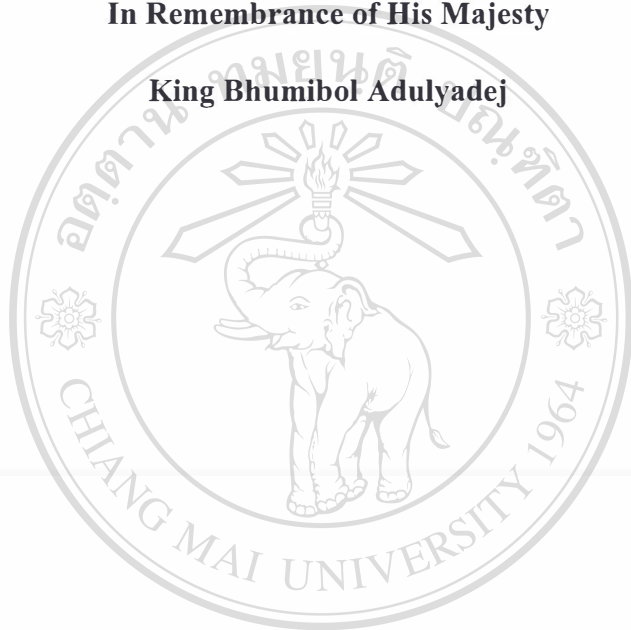
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To
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And
In Remembrance of His Majesty
King Bhumibol Adulyadej



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ความท้าทายทางศีลธรรมและพลังทางวัฒนธรรมของอารมณ์ในความ
ขัดแย้งและการแบ่งขั้วทางการเมืองไทย

ผู้เขียน

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บทคัดย่อ

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้มุ่งหวังที่จะศึกษาปัญหาและความขัดแย้งต่างๆ อันเป็นสาเหตุที่นำไปสู่ความแตกแยกทาง
การเมืองแบบหยั่งรากลึกที่ยังดำรงอยู่ในสังคมไทย โดยเฉพาะความแตกแยกระหว่างกลุ่มเสื้อเหลืองและ
เสื้อแดง อย่างไรก็ตาม งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ได้แย้งว่าความขัดแย้งแบบแบ่งแยกระหว่างกลุ่มคนเสื้อเหลืองและคน
เสื้อแดงนั้นไม่สามารถทำความเข้าใจได้ว่าเป็นความขัดแย้งในเชิงอุดมการณ์ทางการเมืองระหว่าง
อุดมการณ์อนุรักษ-ราชาชาตินิยมกับอุดมการณ์เสรีนิยมประชาธิปไตย

อันที่จริงแล้วปัญหาของความขัดแย้งทางการเมืองไทยแสดงให้เห็นอย่างชัดเจนถึงการช่วงชิงของ
ความหมายทางการเมือง ประชาธิปไตยและความยุติธรรมซึ่งหล่อหลอมขึ้นมาจากอารมณ์ทาง
วัฒนธรรมที่แตกต่างกันของผู้คนที่ร่วมสนับสนุนกับกลุ่มเสื้อเหลืองและเสื้อแดง การช่วงชิงทาง
ความหมายการเมืองเหล่านี้ได้สะท้อนให้เห็นถึงความซับซ้อนและปัญหาความขัดแย้งต่างๆ ที่สำคัญและ
ซ่อนอยู่ในสังคมไทย อีกทั้งยังแสดงให้เห็นถึงความแตกแยกในความเข้าใจความหมายทางการเมืองและ
ความชอบธรรมของระเบียบทางการเมืองไทยบนฐานของชุมชนศีลธรรม

การช่วงชิงทางความหมายต่างๆ นี้ได้ทำการศึกษาผ่านพลังทางวัฒนธรรมของอารมณ์ต่างๆ อันหมายถึง อารมณ์ความรู้สึกที่แรงกล้าซึ่งถูกหล่อหลอมสร้างขึ้นจากประสบการณ์ของการเรียนรู้ในเชิงวัฒนธรรมภายใต้บริบทของผู้กระทำการ พลังทางวัฒนธรรมของอารมณ์นี้เชื่อมโยงกับภูมิหลังทางสังคมที่หลากหลายไม่ว่าจะเป็นประสบการณ์ การรับรู้ อารมณ์และชนชั้นของผู้คนที่สนับสนุนกลุ่มเสื้อเหลืองและเสื้อแดง จากพื้นที่เมืองใหญ่ในแต่ละจังหวัดภูมิภาคของประเทศไทย อันได้แก่ เชียงใหม่ อุดรธานี กรุงเทพมหานคร และอำเภอหาดใหญ่ สงขลา

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to study the problems caused by the deep political divisions that currently exist in Thai society, and the conflicts they are causing, and in particular the division between the ‘yellow shirt’ and ‘red shirt’ political groups. Regardless, the major argument is the division conflicts between the yellow shirts and the red shirts cannot be fully comprehended simply by contrasting between two political ideologies: conservative royal-nationalism and liberal democracy.

The problem of Thai political conflicts highlighted the contestation of meanings of politics, democracy and justice shaped by the cultural emotions among the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters, as a reflection of complexities and underlying conflicts within Thai society. Also, it showed the disintegration of the Thai political meaning and legitimacy of a Thai political order based on a moral community.

This contestation of meanings examined through the differences of cultural force of emotions, which refers to the intense feelings formed by experience of cultural learning within the context of the subject’s position. This cultural force of emotion is linked to the

diversification of social backgrounds in experiences, perceptions, emotions and classes of the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters from different capital cities of Thai regions including Chiang Mai, Udon Thani, Bangkok and Hat Yai district in Songkla.

This cultural force of emotions is very much closely linked to a moral community, as the basis of Thai social and political order as well as the Thai cultural identity. The interrelationship between morality and emotions supported the belief in charismatic legitimacy of many Thais. Therefore, another argument is emotion not only motivate human action, but also help to maintain the social and political order in society.

The research method draws on the phenomenology of politics of everyday life. This approach focuses on an interpretation of experiential meaning and perception, which contributes to the constitution of meaning in the social and political realities of social actors within their particular context and position.

As a result, the diversity of thought, belief, emotions and values of social actors showed the underlying causes of conflicts within the seemingly binary conflicts between the yellow shirts and red shirts. The main problem faced by Thailand is the gap in understanding that exists between the yellow shirt and red shirt groups in terms of their emotions and feelings, the actions and meanings of politics and values they have applied, those which are highly dynamic given the current contexts of Thai modern state and society.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASTV	Asia Satellite TV
DAAD	The Democratic Alliance Against Dictatorship
CDRM	The Council for Democratic Reform under Constitutional Monarchy
CPT	The Communist Party of Thailand
CRES	The Center for Resolution of Emergency Situation
CRMA	Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy
NCPO	The National Council for Peace and Order
NESBD	The National Economic and Social Development Bank
OTOP	One Tambon One Product
PAD	The People Alliances for Democracy
PAPR	The People's Assembly for Political Reform
PDRC	People's Democratic Reform Committee
UDD	United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Atamayata	(Pali) unconditionability
Barami	(Pali: parami) charisma, goodness, merit, moral power
Bodhisatta	(Pali): Buddha-to-be
Bun	(Thai): merit
Chaklaphat	(Pali-Skt.): Emperor
Chakravatin	(Skt.): universal monarch
Dasa kusala	(Pali): ten moral actions
Devarāja	(Pali): The god-king
Dharma	(Skt.): doctrine, teachings. (P. dhamma)
Dharmarāja	(Pali): The highest man of virtue and protector of moral-law
Karma	(Skt.), (Pali: <i>kamma</i>): Buddhist theory of karma; force of one's own or collective action(s); its process.
Khrūēng rāng	(Thai): the amulet
Mai-prakati	(Thai): abnormal
Mandala	(Skt.): The circles of kings, the cosmological schemes of Tantric Hinduism and Buddhism
Mettā	(Pali): generosity

Phiti pluk sēk (Thai): the rite of sacralisation

Phu yai (Thai): senior, the older

Phu noi (Thai): junior, the younger

Pluk sēk khāthā (Thai): chanting sacred words

Prakati (Thai): normal

Saksit (Thai): special power, magico-divine power

Siladhamma (Pali): moral

Ta sawanng (Thai): awakening or knowing the truth

Tanhā (Pali): lust, passion

Thotsaphit rachatham (Thai): The ten principles of righteous king

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ข้อความแห่งการริเริ่ม

ผู้วิจัยขอรับรองว่า เนื้อหาของวิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้เป็นผลงานของผู้วิจัย วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้มีได้เสนอเพื่อสำเร็จการศึกษาในระดับอื่นๆ งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาค้นคว้าเรื่องความท้าทายทางศีลธรรมและพลังทางวัฒนธรรมของอารมณ์ในความขัดแย้งและการแบ่งขั้วทางการเมืองไทย ซึ่งเป็นการศึกษาความขัดแย้งและการแตกแยกทางการเมืองและสังคมไทย นับตั้งแต่หลังการรัฐประหาร ปี พ.ศ. 2549 เป็นต้นมา โดยเน้นการศึกษาความขัดแย้งระหว่างกลุ่มคนเสื้อเหลืองและเสื้อแดง



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STATEMENTS OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this dissertation is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted to any institution for any degree. The thesis studies the challenge of morality and cultural forces of emotion in Thai political conflicts and polarization. This study focuses on the conflicts and political and social division after the military coup of 2006, especially, the conflicts between the yellow shirt and red shirt groups.



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CHAPTER 1

Cultural Force of Emotions and Moral Community in Contemporary Thai Political Conflicts

1.1 Introduction

When writing this introduction, King Bhumibol passed away. The soul of Thai people had departed, leaving an uncertain future for Thai society. Before the Bureau of Thai Royal House announced the death of the King at 7pm on Thursday 13th October 2016 (Thai local time), I had heard several rumours on social media about his death due to deteriorating health. While waiting at my house-share in Canberra, Australia, for an official announcement, I opened my Facebook to check the news in Thailand. At Siriraj Hospital, I saw Thais wearing pink and yellow T-shirts (the color pink represents good health and the color yellow the King's birthday), holding pictures of the King. Most of them were crying with the grief of losing a close family member. They sang royal songs with tears in the eyes and shouted "Long Live the King!" (shong pracharearn) at the end of each song. Meanwhile, many groups of people were praying for the King. They hoped that this could provoke a miracle whereby the King would recover from his serious illness. However, at 18.58 pm., an official announcement from the Bureau of Thai Royal House stated that King Bhumibol Adulyadej had died at 15.52 pm, aged 89 years old. Suddenly, many Thais cried once more with grief and repeatedly shouted "long live the King" for hours on end. On Facebook, almost all of my Thai friends changed their own profile pictures to a black screen in order to express their sorrow. They posted "I will be your humble servant in every incarnation" (kho pen kha rong pra bath tuk chart pai) or "Always be our beloved King" (shong pen pramahakasat pu pen ti ruk ying khong lao talord pai).

In my own feelings, I was also stunned by this event and was confident that if I had been present at Siriraj Hospital, I would also cry with the crowd of mourners. Even if I am not sure that I really love the King, the expression of collective Thai sentiment was very

strong. I felt guilty in my mind that so many Thai friends spoke of their grief and how they had cried. However, I did not cry or feel sad. This made me feel odd and fearful. I feared that if my Thai friends knew I did not feel sad, they would project blame and anger towards me. I felt better when I talked with one of my Thai friends. She said that she did not feel sad for the King's death. On the other hand, it did not mean that she felt glad, just passive. Thus, it made her feel alienated from other Thais and guilty in her mind. After listening, I shared the same emotion with her. I said that I did not feel sad and had not cried too. Hence, it might mean that I am a bad Thai.

How do I reflect upon this event and the conversation between me and my friend? The feeling of strangeness, guilt and alienation in our minds occurred after we did not share the same emotion with other Thais. Crying is an expression of love, sadness and loyalty to the King. And good Thais should be loyal to the King with their love and faith. They should feel sadness for the death of the King. So, that is why my friend and I felt wrong in our minds, fearing blame, anger and hate from other Thais. These are the cultural forces of emotion and morality that dominate our conscience. The expression of love and loyalty to the monarch is not only an individual emotion, but the moral standard for all Thais. Also, it expresses that you belong to the same community with many Thais.

It is claimed that expressing feelings of love and loyalty to the monarch can represent the consequence of royal-nationalist ideals which have been cultivated in Thai culture and society over a long period of time. At first, I thought like this as well. However, I changed my mind after returning to Thailand and conducting fieldwork in Chiang Mai and Udon Thani. I talked with several yellow shirt supporters there. Most of them had known that the King would die one day because of his long illness. They felt sympathy for the King with grief and adoration. I asked questions to try and understand why they expressed their feelings like this. One of them said "the King worked so hard and did many good things for the people with his devotion. We cannot have a king like King Bhumibol anymore." He talked with tears in his eyes. He said "I'm sorry for crying". I replied "never mind, I understand that you miss the King a lot".

However, in actuality I did not understand his emotion. I did appreciate that such emotion became intensified to protect the King and express grief over his death. It is not merely a feeling motivated by royal-nationalist ideology. It is rather an intense feeling instigated

through cultural forms of Thai society. Therefore, I wondered how this intense feeling formed as a cultural force of emotion in Thailand. In this regard, let me describe more experiences from the fieldwork in San Khampheang district, Chiang Mai.

Actually, I studied the red shirt group in San Khampheang, which is the birthplace of the ex-prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Many local villagers in San Khampheang district supported the red shirt protests, but I also found that there are several yellow shirt supporters here, of whom most are middle-class Thais and government officers. Therefore, after visiting On Tai sub-district in San Khampheang with my friend and her students. I had to reconsider the dividing line between yellow and red shirt groups, both in terms of geography and class. During the fieldwork, we travelled around On Tai community and visited several places such as the municipality, an organic farm, and a local temple. The villagers frequently recalled many visits of King Bhumibol to their area. The most significant event was in 1966, when a white elephant was offered to the King. Accordingly, one of the senior villagers, who volunteered as a tour guide for our group, showed us photographs from that event. He was so pleased and proud about his involvement, and to have stood close to King. This showed a positive memory of the King, and the feeling of a close relationship to the villagers in On Tai sub-district. It is an important sentiment and perception shared by most Thais. While we were visiting the Patung-Huaymor Dairy Cooperative Limited of On Tai sub-district, the vice-manager told the story after King Bhumibol once paid a visit to Siriraj Hospital. The doctors urged the King not to have direct contact with any animals, yet he decided to visit his dairy farm at Chitlada Palace and feed the cows. Suddenly, he had cried out with feelings of sadness and love to the King. My friend agreed that 'we miss him'. After that the vice-manager had to stop talking and leave us as he could not stop crying. One of our students also cried. This stunned me, demanding a revision in my understanding of the emotions of love, loyalty and grief.

Reflecting on the scenario described above, it is possible to say that the relevance of feeling in sentiment and as a perceived relationship to the King is very powerful in the emotions and perceptions of many Thais. It is a cultural force of emotion formed through the experience of cultural learning of Thais, together with a memory of kinship with the King. This process of cultural learning has developed during the long reign of King Bhumibol. It is a consequence of the Thai social and political order based on a belief in

the nature of royal power through Hindu-Buddhist thought and the belief in supernatural mystical power that has emerged since the Thai primordial period. All these are the elements of what I called “the moral community” in this thesis. The moral community is a unification of power, beliefs and emotions in the charismatic and sacred power, and morality in religion that unite people into a single community. The commitment and adherence of people in the moral community are forced and formed by the common-experiences, perceptions and collective consciousness of the socio-cultural learning and ideology in society.

As one can see, the interrelationship between beliefs, emotions and moral community, has expressed in the cognitive processes and perceptions of most Thais, is related to the religious belief in Buddhism and royal-nationalist discourse. For instance, Thai Buddhist doctrine teaches people to fear sin, evil and the consequence of karma. Thus, some Thai people may avoid performing actions perceived as ‘bad’ because of this fear. The fear of sin, karma and evil also merges with morality within the socio-cultural context of Thainess (Thai identity). Therefore, as a Thai, if you do not love the nation and the monarchy, then you are ‘bad’, a sinner betraying your country and the King, and someone lacking gratitude towards the motherland (pandin). This discourse of gratitude to the motherland (katan-yu, rukun tor pandin) is closely associated with royal-nationalist doctrine and the concept of goodness in Thai morality. Consequently, the feeling of love is combined with religious belief, goodness, and faith or loyalty to King and nation as promoted in royal-nationalist ideology. It is a feeling of love embedded in the cognition and consciousness of the Thai people. The promotion of a particular Thai morality and royal-nationalist discourse has occurred since the Siamese modern state. The long development of cultural learning and deep feeling towards the King became refined in its projection to King Bhumibol (Rama IX). This became the cultural force of emotion for most Thais within a moral community. It helps to explain why many Thais express utter love and loyalty (khawm chong rak phak dee) to the King, recently expressed as an outpouring of grief to his death. Subsequently, a moral and emotional standard has emerged in Thai society as the emotional reality and social reality that maintains the institution of monarchy, a royal-nationalist discourse, and moral political ideals of a royal-focused democracy that was guided and promoted by the ruling elites and the

monarchy itself after the mid-1970s. Also, it became part of the Thai political order and social order centred on the monarchy.

These strong beliefs and emotions have intensified actions, especially during a time of social division and political conflict in Thailand. The feeling of relevance to the King has been cultivated with a belief in the legitimate power of monarchy. The yellow shirt movement applied this feeling in their political strategy, as inspired by royal-nationalist ideology. However, I argue that royal-nationalist ideology cannot fully explain why many who joined the yellow shirt protests show utter devotion to their King. We should understand this intense feeling as cultural forces of emotion, formed by a collective experience, perception and consciousness of cultural learning within Thai moral community. Hence, it means that the division between the yellow shirt and red shirt political groups cannot only be defined in terms of political ideology, socio-economic class, and geographic location. Instead, we should further consider the diverse background of people's experiences, and how their perceptions are grounded in a specific positionality, especially the cultural context refining their emotional landscape and beliefs. Such an approach can provide a more appropriate reflection of the diversity of thoughts, beliefs, values, and groups within a polarized and conflicted Thai society.

In this regard, my argument in this thesis is that conflicts of political division between yellow and red shirt groups cannot be understood simply as conflicts between different ideologies, as several scholars have suggested (Chairat, 2012; Apichat et al., 2013; Watcharobon, 2014). I propose to focus more on the differing cultural forces of emotion for those who joined political protests, consisting of different desires, demands, beliefs, and thoughts. This can provide a clearer reflection of the complexity of Thai political conflicts and polarization. In particular, the contestation of meanings in politics, democracy and justice among the yellow and red shirt supporters, as a reflection of underlying conflicts within Thai society and the disintegration of Thai political meaning and legitimacy of a Thai political order based on a moral community.

The understanding of emotions as cultural forces, which are formed by the experiences of cultural learning and socialization between different classes and actors in Thailand, represents what I call 'the cultural forces of emotion' in this thesis. This notion of 'the cultural forces of emotion' is applied as an approach to study the diversity of thoughts,

perceptions, values, emotions and beliefs among the yellow and red shirt supporters from different cities in Thailand, including Chiang Mai, Bangkok, Udon Thani and Hat Yai. These locations have been identified as the main base of the yellow and red shirt protests in each region of Thailand.

In addition, I also analyse the link between emotions and moral community. I will look at emotions as the bi-directional mediators between social actions and social structure. That is to say, emotions can influence social actions and maintain social order or social norms such as an accepted moral code. As previously mentioned, my feelings of guilt and cultural isolation resulted from not sharing the same emotions of grief, love and loyalty as other Thais, after the death of the King. My fears of incurring anger and resentment reflect the fact that emotions are related to social norms as a decisive ingredient of social control. This linkage between social norms and emotional expression is the result of social practices, conventions, and the internalization of emotional norms (Scheve, 2013). Social norms are often determined by emotions, and certain emotional expressions are expected of actors in specific situations. For instance, Thais are expected to show their grief and mourning after the death of the King. Those who do not conform to this behaviour will receive anger and hate from many Thais, and accused of royal defamation as presented in the *lèse majesté* law.

From this point of view, emotions help to maintain and enforce social norms, while social norms played a crucial role in shaping the emotional culture or emotional norms of a social unit. Accordingly, emotions help to sustain a moral community as the social norms and political order of Thai society. They also motivate human actions as well as becoming the basis of human thought, rationale and belief, as presented in Weber's concept of ideal types in affective action. That is an action determined by the actor's specific affects and feeling states. Weber states that rationality determines human action, but also that an important source of human thought is arrived at through emotions. These are actions that occur in the form of conscious release of emotional tension (Weber, 1978, p. 25).

This thesis primarily focuses on the political conflicts after the military coup in 2006, especially the red shirt groups that emerged as a challenge to the moral community and the counter-movement against it with the military coup and the People's Alliance for Democracy (the yellow shirts). Significantly, this thesis attempts to demonstrate the

differences of red shirt groups and communities in order to show the diversity of thoughts, beliefs, emotions and conflict issues among them. Therefore, the red shirts cannot be represented only as pro-Thaksin groups and anti-monarchy groups.

The development of the red shirts was closely linked to the issues of injustice and violent state suppression in Thai society. In particular, the state suppression and control of public discourse on the monarchy, as related to Article 112 of the Criminal Code, also known as the *lèse-majesté* law. As a result, the radical and progressive red shirt groups emerged as challenges to structures and political ideologies legitimized by the monarchy and its network, with the King situated as the center and symbol of legitimate power in Thai political culture, including being placed at the top of this structure. The red shirt confrontation appeared in rhetoric, gossip, metaphors, codes and graffiti, which showed an anti-monarchy sentiment. Notably, the red shirts represented a rejection of unequal political and socio-economic structure legitimized through its association with the monarchy (Hewison, 2013 referred from Ünalı, 2014). In other words, it challenged what Duncan McCargo (2005) calls “the network monarchy”, which refers to “a form of network governance centred by the Thai King and his allies”. It focuses on the active interventions in the political process by the Thai King and his proxies, notably former prime minister Prem Tinsulanond” (McCargo, 2005, p. 499).

Subsequently, the Thai political order with the King as its symbolic center has been challenged from many groups of people, especially those who joined the red shirt protests. This shifting of ideology and perception of the legitimacy of royal power was not universal throughout the country. For instance, the legitimacy is grounded in charisma (*barami*) closely linked to beliefs in religion, supernatural power, mysterious energy and nationalist sentiment. As previously discussed, cultural emotions were forced into the minds of many Thais such as that of the King regarded as the highest revered and endeared with his superior *barami* (goodness/merit). Also, since the 1970s the King’s image and his exploits have been promoted and reproduced through the media, project-work and government discourse. Hence, King Bhumibol was provided with the status of head of state and situated as the symbol of the nation and the spirit of the people. Thai people perceived him as a person dedicated to the country and his people, who is righteous and generous, and a protector of Thai society. This has led to the perceptions of social and political realities and the realities of feeling of relevance between the King and the people.

Ultimately, the belief was created that Thai political and social order would be maintained by the stability of the traditional institution of the monarchy (Thak, 2007).

As a result, the shifting of ideology, perception and emotion can be seen in the complexity of Thai socio-political conflicts, especially in the contestation of political meanings and values among social sub-groups inside the yellow shirts and red shirts. This, in fact, reflected the challenge of red shirt groups to the Thai political and social order as well as to Thai political culture, which has long been based on the concept of moral community. It became the reason why the red shirts attempted to struggle for power in the meanings of politics, democracy and justice within Thai society. This struggle occurred along with the development of the red shirt groups in several parts of Thai regions especially after the military coup of 2006 and the violent military suppression of April and May 2010. Subsequently, the Thai moral community was also challenged. All this took place within the seemingly binary conflict between the yellow and red shirt protests.

1.2 Research Questions

This thesis attempts to understand the complexities of Thai political conflict as polarized through the cultural forces of emotion. It demonstrates the diversity of thought, perception, belief and values among the yellow and red shirt supporters. The aim is to understand and explain why Thai society has become more conflicted and polarized since the military coup of 2006. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the cultural forces of emotions among people who joined the yellow and red shirt protests from different cities of Thailand including Chiang Mai, Bangkok, Udon Thani and Hat Yai district in Songkla?
2. How does the difference in cultural emotions reflect the diversity of thought, perception, belief, meanings of politics, contentious issues and sub-groups among the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters in Thai socio-political conflicts?
3. Why has the contestation of meanings of politics, democracy and justice among the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters led to the conflicts of Thai moral community and polarization in society?

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims at:

1. To study the diversity of thought and belief in politics shaped by the different cultural forces of emotions among those people who have joined in the yellow shirt and red shirt protests
2. To revise the understanding on conflicts between the yellow shirt and red shirt groups and the issues concerning polarization in Thai society.
3. To provide a new theoretical framework to understand current Thai politics.

1.4 Multiplicity of Understanding on Contemporary Thai Political Conflicts

In this section, I examine previous studies relating to contemporary Thai political conflict. Over the past decade, social scientists have attempted to understand the conflict between yellow and red shirt movements, and how it expanded through the country. The objective of the section is to frame the rationale for my thesis research, using a critical review of previous studies.

Much research has concentrated on the emergence of inequality between urban and rural areas. Anek Laothamathat (2009) proposed that insufficient rural development has resulted in inequality between urban and rural areas in Thailand. This inequality can be seen in income, education and infrastructure services. Thaksin's economic policies were promoted as a means to fill this gap and respond to the economic demands of many rural inhabitants. That is why he gained tremendous support from rural-voters, leading to a strong majority in national elections. Consequentially, a feeling of dissatisfaction was created among the urban middle-class due to Thaksin's development policies seeming to favour grassroots economic development. This situation contributed to the divergence of ideologies concerning democracy, between the urban and rural classes. Accordingly, the red shirts represented a rural democracy movement, who struggle for equality and fight against the military dictatorship, as well as opposing capitalist groups whom have monopolized Thai resources for a long time. On the contrary, the yellow shirts represented a moral democracy movement of an urban class who opposed what they perceived as the immoral or crony capitalism of the Thaksin regime (Anek, 2009).

Several academics took issue with Anek's study. For example, Naruemon and McCargo (2011) noted that the distinction between urban and rural was too simplistic. In actuality, urban and rural dwellers cannot be classified based solely on whether or not they live in a municipality, since municipal boundaries bear little relation to current patterns of urbanization of any stratification of class, income and occupation (Naruemon & McCargo, 2011, p.1007). Similarly, the research of Apichat et al. (2013) claimed that most red shirt protestors were lower-middle-class, and were not poor in terms of finance or other assets. They were strong contributors to the informal economy and looking for economic stability. However, even if they were not poor, they still had a lower socio-economic status than yellow shirt protestors who most commonly consisted of the established middle class. For Apichat, economic inequality was not the key factor of Thai political conflicts that emerged after the military coup on 19 September 2006. Rather it was issues of ideology and psychology, with the red shirt protestors feeling disenfranchised by the military coup and suffering from many injustices at the hands of mainstream Thai society.

Many scholars argue that Thai political conflicts did not arise out of the economic structure. Rather they are the products of the political and cultural system (Crispin, 2012; Fullbrook, 2012; Pasuk & Baker, 2012). That is to say, the lower middle-class joined and supported the red shirt protests to fight for their political rights and greater participation in the political process. As a catalyst, the military coup of 2006 witnessed a partial withdrawal from a democratic system, violated rights, and limited peoples' ability to participate. A Bangkok-centric media mocked red shirt protestors as country bumpkins and stupid uneducated buffaloes who were easily manipulated by the millionaire politician Thaksin Shinawatra (Keyes, 2012; Pasuk & Baker, 2012; Apichat et al., 2013). They were dehumanized and alienated by the yellow shirts and the PDRC (People's Democratic Reform Committee) movement and portrayed as non-Thai, immoral and disgusting people (Prajak, 2016). As a result, conflict emerged through issues of inequality in political rights, power, opportunity and prestige. Also included is the inequality of emotions such as feelings of unfairness among Thai people within the political and socio-cultural system. These inequalities can be linked to issues of double-standards, violent suppression and injustice within Thai society (Nidhi, 2010). Subsequently, Thai political conflicts emerged within political and cultural structures

rather than the economic structure. The conflicts encouraged the desire of red shirt protestors for democracy, justice and equality within Thai society (Hewison, 2012). Concurrently, such struggles and issues in inequality have led to a division between Bangkok/upcountry and urban/rural groups in Thai politics (Glassman, 2010).

On the other hand, most scholars suggested that the yellow shirt protests were supported by the urban or established middle-class and the royalist elite class. This included those who were worried about losing socio-economic power under the changes to political and economic structures during Thaksin's government, and dissatisfied about the uprising of the red shirts movement. Notably, they feared and hated Thaksin Shinawatra, who created new political alliances among his crony capitalists, and implemented populist policies that favoured the suburban middle class and informal workers in urban areas. Moreover, the yellow shirts were also concerned about the uncertain future of monarchy. Thus, they wanted to protect their own power and socio-economic interests within the traditional elite establishment and reproduce royal-nationalist discourse (Kasian, 2010; Nidhi, 2010; Uchen, 2013; Pasoot, 2015). This influenced a desire to destroy the Thaksin regime and return Thai society to its previous social values and moral order (Eakkapollanut, 2012). Thus, the changing of contexts after the military coup in 2006 is important for the understanding of current political conflicts. On one level, we can identify a pro-Thaksin and an anti-Thaksin camp. In addition, there is a conflict of class, culture and political ideologies.

Some scholars argued that the class conflict highlighted in an analysis of yellow and red shirt groups does not reflect the complexity of Thai political and social conflict. They propose that we should understand the political networks and multiple class relations inside each group. According to Naruemon (2016), yellow shirt networks are associated with the monarchy, military, judiciary, and bureaucracy. They are also supported by a variety of professional organizations, state enterprise unions, the Santi-Asoke Buddhism and its Dharma Army group, communitarian NGOs, networks of small-scale farmer organizations, and urban middle-class individuals. On the contrary, the red shirt group comprises a loose set of networks in a horizontal organizational structure, bringing together pro-Thaksin groups, anti-military coup groups, autonomous rural small-scale organizations, the UDD (the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship) red shirts and various sub-networks such as People's Television Network members, provincial

leaders, and the members of opposition parties. Red shirt networks were also joined by some 1970s activists and old members of the Communist Party (Naruemon, 2016).

It is difficult to support the notion that Thai political conflict is a pure class war as argued by Giles (2009) and others. It rather represents the conflict of interests among groups and networks within Thai society. As we shall see, both groups actually comprised a variety of social classes, social groups, and network connections. Pinkeaw (2013) asserts that red shirt networks in Chiang Mai comprised multiple social classes and networks from several rural sites. In this sense, the red shirt protests reflected the development of rural democratization in Thai society (Pinkeaw, 2013), while scholars such as Kevin Hewison (2010) viewed the red shirt movements as a subaltern rebellion (Hewison, 2010). Other commentators viewed many rural villagers joining red shirt protests because they wanted to fight for their own ideology, desires, rights and identity rather than as doing so out of pure support for the UDD red shirt movement in Bangkok (Anan, 2011; Walker, 2012).

At the same time, these two political groups were never really internally unified, as they comprised a wide range of sub-groups who shared different desires, demands, values and ideologies. This is apparent in the development of several small red shirt groups with different ideologies, demands, strategies and hopes, after the prolonged protests of two principal protest groups (the yellow shirts and the red shirts). These groups were not part of the UDD red shirts, but remained under the red shirt umbrella (Nidhi, 2010; Nostitz, 2014). Meanwhile, some scholars found that the background of many UDD red shirt leaders did not conform to the image of a grassroots class or rural poor in the Northern and Northeastern regions. Frequently, they were former politicians, vote-canvassers and rural elites. Most of them came from the Southern region and Bangkok (Crispin, 2012; McCargo, 2012).

In sum, there were several social sub-groups with different demands, desires and thoughts who joined the yellow and red shirt protests. However, previous studies have not described the different backgrounds among them, and the diversity of thoughts, values, emotions, and perceptions. This motivated my proposal to study the differences in the cultural forces of emotion for those who had supported the yellow or red shirt political movements. The aim is to understand and explain the diversity of thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and values among the sub-groups, as well as social class and cultural context

within their regional locations. This will help to explain the complexity of Thai political conflict as well as the struggle for power among social groups and classes within a polarized Thailand. In particular, the study looks at the contestation for power expressed through conflict over politics, democracy, and justice shaped by different cultural emotions among yellow and red shirt supporters. Notably, it can explain how conflicts are not limited only to issues around the economic structure in Thailand and the underlying causes of conflicts within the binary conflicts between the yellow shirts and red shirts. Furthermore, it could help us further understand the disintegration of political meaning and legitimacy in the charismatic power of the monarchy, and the domination of a hierarchical Thai royal-democracy. Several scholars attempted to reflect on this issue during the red shirt protests in Thailand, which displayed an anti-monarchical sentiment (Thongchai, 2014; Pavin, 2014; Ünal, 2014).

In this regard, I purpose to focus more on the interrelationship between cultural forces of emotion and moral community in Thai political conflicts, because it can help us understand the underlying causes of conflict among yellow and red shirts within Thai political and socio-cultural structures, examining contestation in the meanings of politics, democracy and justice. In addition, it helps to fill knowledge gaps left by previous studies on inequality issues.

1.5 Theoretical Framework: Moral Community, Cultural Forces of Emotion, and Political Conflicts and Polarization in Thai society

To construct a conceptual framework, this thesis applies the concept of a moral community to explain the divisive conflicts and polarization among the yellow shirt and red shirt groups as well as the characteristic of Thai political and social order. The moral community is the unification of power, belief and emotion into political ideology; the charismatic power of monarchy; and morality in religion. It has led to a construction and formation of the Thai political order and social order based on the hegemonic power of monarchy as well as Thai cultural identity. In this regard, the moral community can be compared to a religious cult grounded in a common belief in and emotion for the charismatic power of monarchy, ideology and morality. It also includes the relationships between people who committed themselves to the community and the charismatic figures or the center of moral community. Therefore, this thesis argues that Thai morality is not

merely the social practices or social obligation and it cannot be understood in simple terms of religion, in fact, morality is involved with power, belief and emotion. The formation of Thai moral community has taken place over many centuries in the Siamese state, while it has frequently been faced with contestations from the challenges of the social sub-functions. In this regard, the moral community is actually dynamic within the context of power struggles in state and society.

Meanwhile, the concept of power that is intertwined with morality is based on the Hindu-Buddhist doctrine in cosmology and the beliefs in supernatural beings (phi) of supernatural mysterious power and magical power of people. That is why the moral community became the social and cultural forces in people's beliefs and emotions. This integration of morality, power, beliefs and emotions helped to justify the legitimate power in charisma of the monarchy or authority as well as the reality and application of morality with power. In this concept, the King is placed at the centre of the state and regarded as 'the great man' or 'the man of prowess' who is considered an extraordinary person with qualities that distinguished him from others and treated as endowed with supernatural power. For instance, the King had accumulated many merits by ascetic performance since his past life. Also, he is perceived as divine-like or god-like (Śaiva-like) because his energy seemed to match Śaiva's divine energy. As a result, the King became the Chakravartin (universal monarch), Bodhisattva (Buddha-to-be) and Dharmarāja (the highest man of virtue and protector of moral-law) according to the tantric procedures of rituals, ceremonies and supernatural mantras spells (Wolters, 1999, p. 19-20, 112).

These can be understood further using the mandala concept proposed by Stanley J. Tambiah (1976) in the galactic polity theory. The mandala refers to the cosmological schemes of Tantric Hinduism and Buddhism, representing both concepts of cosmological topography and geopolitics. The mandala is composed of two elements; a core (manda) and a container or enclosing element (la). Mandala designs, which can be both simple and complex, arrange satellites around a center. Similarly, the kingdom represents a cosmos, with the palace at the center as an iconic representation of Mount Meru, the pillar of the universe. The King gains equal status as a god adopted by the Hindu-Buddhists, and his princes, including ruling chiefs, represent the hierarchy in heaven (Tambiah, 1970). The power and status of the King is supported by a ruling elite and a symbolic landscape constructed of images, special ceremonies and rituals. The cosmological frame

legitimizes the divine status, and power of the King in the political sphere (Geertz, 1980). It is what Clifford Geertz (1980) called “the theatre state”, which refers to a state of rituals and metaphysical theatre. The mandala or the circles of kings identified with divine and universal authority, and claimed personal hegemony over other rulers in his mandala who were his obedient allies and vassals. The importance of a mandala did not depend on its geographical size, but on networks of loyalties that could be mobilized to provide power to leaders or the Kings. The social and political relationships within the mandala were grounded in the tradition of inequality of spiritual prowess and political status (Wolters, 1999, p. 27-34, 94). Accordingly, the moral community is not a political structure. It is in the form of a charismatic community that is centred on the king in a hierarchical relationship. It is constructed by power, ideology, belief and emotion in the cosmology of Hindu-Buddhism, or by sacred and hegemonic power.

However, during the reign of King Rama V the concept of King and state changed significantly due to the centralization of the Siamese modern nation-state. The mandala concept applied into the state resulted in a loose organization. In this respect, the King became absolute in his power and authority and was situated as the supreme ruler of the kingdom and lord over all the lands (Attachak, 1993). The component parts of the Siamese state were much more responsive to the center. In the meantime, the source of the King’s power changed from traditional support by the sangha, palace, and high-ranking nobility, to now include the military forces, administrative power, legal reform and elite intellectuals. The successful formation of the Siamese modern nation-state demanded the unity of the people under the absolute power of the King. Therefore, the King and elite intellectuals attempted to integrate the concept of monarchy with the concept of nation and state, and placed the King as the center of the Thai nation and the soul of the people. As a result, King Rama V was named “The Great Beloved King” (Phra Piya Maharaj), who helped the Thai nation avoid Western colonialism, and was appreciated for his royal grace. Monarchy and religion became central to the Thai nation, with the King taking royal duties to maintain moral order, religion and nationhood. It was a new world perception for Thai people towards the formation of the Siamese modern nation-state, their national identity and the role of the King.

Meanwhile, Buddhist doctrine was used as a state tool for integrating all subjects under the authority of Siam or Bangkok, which became the centre of the polity (Saichon, 2014).

This occurred when reforming Buddhism and restoring moral discipline among the monks, especially during the reign of King Buddha Yot Fa Chulalok (Rama I: 1782-1809). As a result, Buddhism became the standard of Thai morality and was adopted as state ideology, political order and Thai national identity, while aligned with the role of the King. The Thai state had long been a Buddhist state since the 18th century. Hence, Thai morality in the Buddhist doctrines helped to justify the political order and legitimate power of the monarchy, while it cannot be separated from the concepts of state, nation and society.

This concept of Siamese state formation has been strongly reproduced since the time of King Rama V, especially during the reigns of King Bhumibol (Rama IX). The King Bhumibol period was considered as a significant period of reinstitution of the monarchy and moral community, as I will describe in chapter 2. During the Sarit government (1957-1963), King Bhumibol was promoted as Head of State and situated as the symbol of the nation and the spirit of the people, a source of morality and ethics through a position of Divine kinship. This has become established as the tradition of moral values for Thai people and the source of legitimate power in Thai political culture (Thak, 2007). The King's image is promoted as a virtuous, sacred and popular man through developing public roles such as visiting remote areas and initiating royal projects to help the poor. The royal charities, and special ceremonies and rituals support the legitimacy of the King as the figure of highest reverence. The media portrayed King Bhumibol as a popular King who devoted himself to the Thai people and manifested a moral power or charisma (barami). This produced legitimacy through barami (charismatic power) and saksit (magico-divine power), using a royal-democratic model where the King became a guiding leader of democratic reform. Subsequently, the discourse of royal-nationalism, with the King at its center, intensified after this period. His status was regarded as that of a divine being. This model was encouraged by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat and it has been redefined and reproduced several times by the elite establishment. Subsequently, morality in religion had been integrated as part of the concepts of the King and state. This results in the hierarchical order in Thai state and society, and the ideological combination of nationhood, religion and monarchy (Connors, 2007).

The integration of morality with power, belief and emotion along with the Siamese/Thai state and society formation can be called a “moral community” as previously discussed.

It is the basic characteristic of the Thai state, culture and society as well as the disposition of many Thais. In this thesis, I will use the term *moral community* to represent the characteristics of Thai political and social order based on hegemonic power of the monarchy and also analyze the cultural emotions and beliefs in the context of political conflict and polarization in Thai society.

For cultural emotion, I have previously mentioned that morality is exercised in the mentality of Thai people as intense feelings, perceptions, consciousness and cultural identity. Also, morality and emotion are part of the belief in legitimacy of Thai political and social order. Since Thai moral community has been integrated into state and society, it is involved with the formation of experiences in cultural learning and the disposition of Thais. Subsequently, it creates the cultural forces of emotion, namely the intense feelings and experiences of learning within the subject's particular position (Rosaldo, 1989, p. 2). The notion of force involves both affective intensity and significant consequences of experiences which are based on cultural learning over a long period of time (Rosaldo, 1984). Hence, the cultural forces of emotion are considered as a pattern which are internalized in the personalities of individuals who adopt it. It is the kind of feelings one experiences through learning (Rosaldo, 1989).

As we have seen, Thai people have a long experience of cultural learning within processes of royal-nationalist discourse. The discourse frames their beliefs, perceptions and deep feelings of reverence for the King, especially to King Bhumibol. This is outwardly expressed by many Thais through extreme love and loyalty to the King, as witnessed during political conflicts between yellow and red shirts over the last decade. The power of intense feeling defines an individual's conduct, beyond cultural forms or traditional cultural expressions. Therefore, the cultural forces of emotion can reflect the diversity of thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, values, and actions of social actors. Likewise, this thesis will illustrate differences in cultural forces of emotions among yellow and red shirts supporters from the main capital cities in each region of Thailand.

Consequently, we can see the dynamic of emotions and the crucial role they play in socio-cultural and political structures. This role sees emotions as bi-directional mediators between social action and social structure. As we shall see, several social scientists have paid attention to the role of emotions in stimulating human action, and constituting social

and cultural structures. They viewed emotions as a key concept to understand human behaviour and action in culture and society. Commentators here include Michelle and Renato Rosaldo (1983, 1984 and 1989), Robert C. Solomon (1984), Catherine Lutz (1982, 1986), and Christian von Scheve (2013). Indeed, the study of emotion has long been dominated by the natural sciences and field of psychology, which have viewed emotions in biological terms as universal inner states. Therefore, debate has long excluded sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists.

Many scholars who studied Thai political conflicts focused on emotions as potentially key variables for their explanations. For instance, they have tried to chart the feelings which motivated the yellow and red shirt protesters during the last decade, such as hate, fear and anxiety by many yellow shirt supporters (Kasian, 2010; Pasoot, 2015), or anger, dissatisfaction, fear, sadness, anxiety, frustration and vengeance of red shirt protestors (Walker, 2012; Sopranzetti, 2012; Apichart et al., 2013). However, they viewed the state of emotions in totality, and did not mention differences in the cultural forces of emotion, which are linked to the individual experiences, and specific cultural learning and positionality of those people who joined the protests. Thus, several studies have an oversimplified understanding of the diversity of thoughts and meanings that are implied in the emotions and actions of the yellow and red shirt protestors. This is the reason why they see political conflicts in Thai society as binary conflicts, with political groups as singular entities.

This thesis attempts to study how the cultural forces of emotion could reflect the complexity of contemporary Thai political conflicts. In particular, it focuses on the different backgrounds, positions and contexts among those who had joined yellow and red shirt protests. The aims are to reflect the diversity of thoughts and meanings of different cultural emotions, the conflict issues and also trace the contestation of political meanings and values among several social sub-groups, within the seemingly binary political conflict. The thesis also demonstrates how the Thai moral community has been challenged by changing perceptions, consciousness, and the struggle for power and conflicts that arose during the past decade in Thai society.

In conclusion, it shows the interrelationships among morality, power, cultural emotions, beliefs, political ideologies, social and political actions, and socio-cultural and political

order in Thai society, using the context of political conflict and polarization. This can contribute to understanding Thai politics as a fragmented and complex state and society through focusing on the power struggles in the contestation for political meanings and values among social sub-systems in Thai society. This ultimately reflects that the Thai political and social order embodied in a moral community had never been unified; it has always been confronted with challenges inside the state and society. Therefore, Thai political conflict and polarization manifests this issue of Thai political and social order. These themes comprise the conceptual framework below:

1.6 Conceptual framework

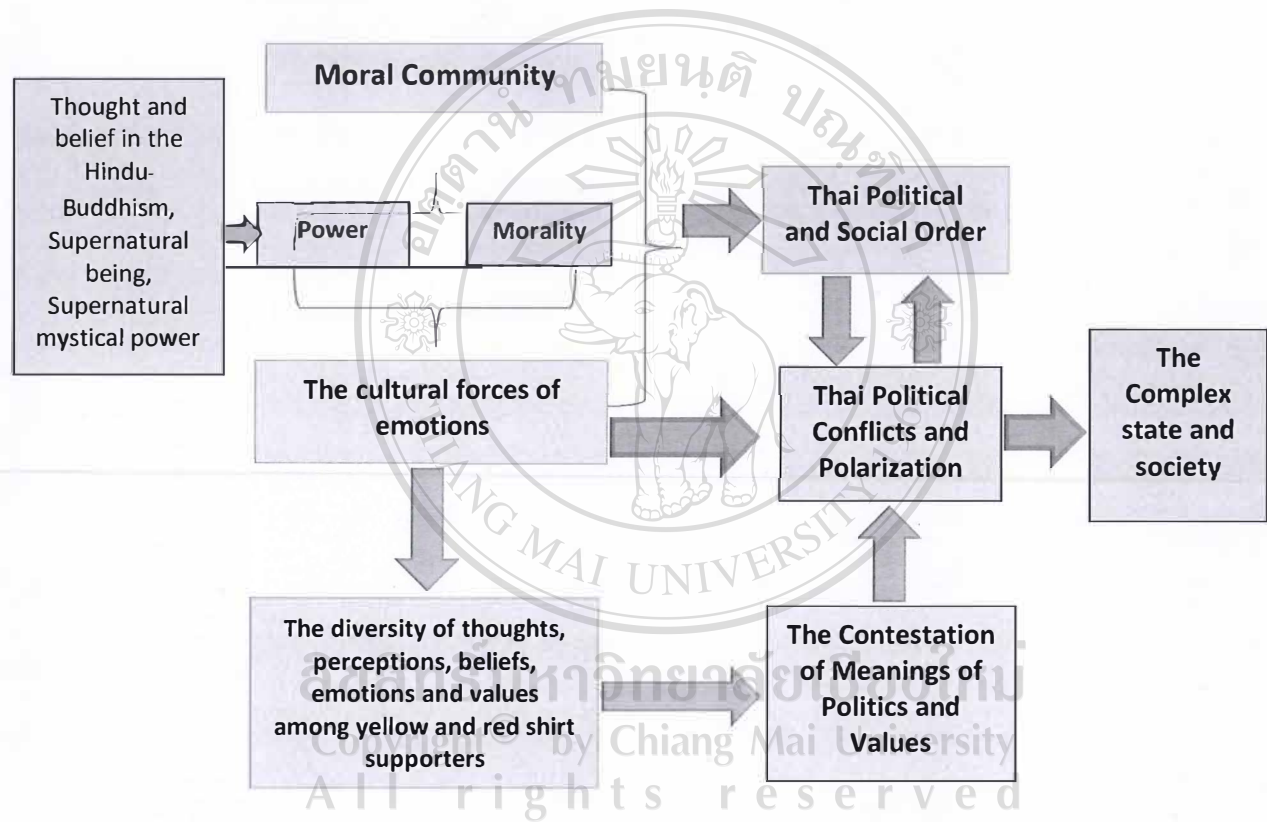


Diagram 1.1 Conceptual Framework

1.7 Research Methodology

In conducting research on Thai moral community and the cultural forces of emotions in Thai political conflicts, this dissertation focuses on the phenomenology of politics in everyday life. This approach concentrates on perceptions that social actors share. These perceptions may include previous experiences and the way that an individual or group

understands social and political reality within their particular context or position (Bernstein, 1976, p.146-147). In short, the approach involves an interpretation of experiential meaning and perception, which contributes to the constitution of meaning in the social and political realities of social actors (Taylor, 1979, p. 45-57). It most emphasizes the cultural forces of emotions of social actors, which are derived from individually positioned cultural learning and socialization. This affects dispositions, intense feelings, values and meanings that actors give to their lives, and are transformed from beliefs and perceptions into social realities or truths as well as the emotional realities of them. By focusing on differences between cultural forces of emotions, we can reflect upon the diversity of social backgrounds in experiences, social classes, thoughts, beliefs, cultural emotions and values of social actors. Also, it could reflect the underlying causes of conflicts inside the yellow shirt and red shirt protests such as the class conflicts and conflict of interests. However, it is also important to consider the way that social actors share their understandings, thoughts, emotions, and experiences toward politics and society within social groups and to other individuals. This is the study of emotional realities and political realities in the intersubjective meanings of social actors.

As a result, this thesis interprets the cultural forces of emotions and perceptions for those who supported yellow and red shirt protests. Most of them are aged between 60 to 70 years old. These groups of people are the key informants in this study, using in-depth interviews during fieldwork. They live in the capital cities of different Thai regions including Chiang Mai, Udon Thani, Bangkok and Hat Yai. Geographically these cities represent centers of yellow and red shirt protests in each region of Thailand. The research focuses on both the yellow and red shirt supporters in each location, in order to reflect differences in experiences, perceptions and cultural emotions among them. It aims to examine my argument that the division between yellow and red shirt groups cannot simply be placed in terms of a binary order of political conflict in ideologies.

The interviews conducted were semi-structured interviews. They focused on the political and social backgrounds of the informants, placed in terms of life experiences, perceptions, understandings, feelings and thoughts. They also explored the roles of informants during the various political conflicts. Connection and conflicts were identified within and between different yellow and red shirt groups. Moreover, I attempted to understand the intense feelings that act as markers of identification to join in the political protests as red

shirt or yellow shirt supporters. I also tried to observe and understand any intense emotions expressed during the interviews and interactions with others in my presence. Observations were noted through words, narratives, gossip, and metaphors used by the key informants.

Several problematic issues were confronted when conducting the interviews. Firstly, it was impossible to conduct interviews with all social sub-groups within yellow and red shirt groups. There are too many independent individuals, sub-groups, and networks in each political movement, present in several places around the country. Hence, I attempted to interview a variety of social sub-groups and individuals of both political movements in each geographic location, to represent a diversity of thoughts and cultural emotions.

Secondly, this research was conducted from 2015 to 2017 under the rule of a military government. During this period, the activities of both political groups have been prohibited by the government, sometimes through criminal charges. Nevertheless, there remain yellow and red shirt supporters in Thai society, and conflict and polarization between them persists to this day. Thus, I tried to reach informants of each group using snowballing techniques, initially connecting with prominent leaders or coordinators, and searching for contacts through websites, Facebook and personal relationships.

For example, I contacted Mr Suriyasai Katasila, a former coordinator of the People Alliance for Democracy (PAD) through his Facebook page. I interviewed him and then contacted other leaders of the PAD such as Mr Pipob Thongchai and Mr Somsak Kosaisuk. I made other contacts through Mr Suriyan Thongnueiad, a former coordinator of the PAD in the Northern region. This provided a doorway to other key informants of the yellow shirt movement in Chiang Mai, Udon Thani and Songkla provinces. As an attempt to contact diversified social sub-groups, I used the walk-in interview method by going to the public or private places that are known as centres of yellow and red shirt protests. Locations included open markets in San Kham Pheang district, Chiang Mai; the red shirt club named “chom rom khon rak Udon FM 97.5 MHz” (the FM 97.5 Udon Lovers) in the city of Udon Thani; and the shopping mall “Imperial World Lat Phrao” in Bangkok.

Of interest is the diversity of activities by yellow and red shirt groups as a means to enhance their immediate sense of community. For instance, the PAD (People Alliance for

Democracy) in Chiang Mai conducts many events to promote social solidarity, which often celebrates activities of the King and royal family. On the contrary, some red shirt groups in Bangkok organized themselves as a public cremation service association, and career support association, in order to help red shirt members and enhance relationships between them.

I persuaded some key informants to help collect interview data. For instance, I persuaded Mr. Sriwan Chanphong, a UDD red shirt leader in Chiang Mai, to collect interview data and conduct a focus group in Fang district. He also helped to connect with other red shirt supporters in Fang district. At every step, I tried to enhance the good relationships between the researcher and key informants, using social media such as Facebook and Line to talk directly with them. Additionally, I attended yellow shirt meetings in Chiang Mai and volunteered to organize the robe offering ceremony for a red shirt group in Chiang Mai.

Documentary research is used to support the interpretation method and contribute to the argument and analysis of this thesis. This includes publications, newspapers, public statements, and memos of yellow and red shirt groups from the military coup of 2006 to the military coup of 2014. Additionally, a literature review is provided on research studies, theses, reports and academic papers.

Finally, the empirical data from interviews of social actors and materials will be presented and analysed through an interpretative understanding and rationalized from the social actors' point of views, experiences, perceptions, position of social classes and contexts that formed their cultural emotions and understandings in the realities of Thai culture, politics and society. This interpretation and understanding could examine the complexity of Thai political conflict and polarization. In particular, the contestations of meanings in politics, democracy and justice shaped by the different cultural emotions among social actors. Besides, it could show the underlying causes of conflict within Thai society that have resulted in the polarization and social disintegration of Thai political and social order.

1.8 Thesis Chapter Outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter contains the background, rationale, argument, significance of study and research questions. It provides a literature review, highlighting core contributions to the argument of this thesis, and identifies existing gaps in knowledge. In addition, a conceptual framework and research methodology are put forward.

Chapter Two provides a definition and analysis of the formation of moral community as the basic of Thai social and political orders as well as Thai cultural identity. It discusses how a moral community was formed, transformed and contested in Thai history from the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama 5) until the reign of King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama 9), when a new political consciousness has challenged the notion. The chapter primarily focuses on the period of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, as it was then that the absolutism of belief and the status of the King placed above politics developed within the concept of moral community. This successfully united the emotional culture of most Thais under the belief in the nature of charismatic (barami) power within a hierarchical power structure. The chapter proposes that moral community promotes an illusion of power in Thai political culture, and is embedded in the perceptions and dispositions (also cultural emotions) of Thai people. The chapter also discusses the transformation and contestation of moral community in periods of political transition in Thailand such as after the military coup of 2006. The rise of the red shirt movement is used to reflect the challenge to the Thai moral community during the later period of King Bhumibol.

Chapter Three presents the differences of cultural forces of emotions for yellow and red shirt protestors in Chiang Mai, Udon Thani, Bangkok and Hat Yai. These cultural forces of emotions are linked to meanings in politics, democracy and justice and manifested through a variety of social and cultural contexts. They reflect a diversity of thought and belief among social actors in each geographic location. This leads to a greater understanding of the embeddedness of moral community in Thai political culture and its influence on the divisions in Thai political conflicts as well as the contestation of ideals, beliefs and emotions to the moral community. Thus, the chapter is arranged by the following sub-topics: 1) Moral Politics: Fear, Disgust and Hate of the Yellow Shirt Middle Class in Bangkok and Udon Thani; 2). Justice: Anger and Fear of the Yellow

Shirts in Hat Yai, Songkla; 3) Loyalty: Love and Anger of the Yellow Shirts in Chiang Mai; 4) Love and Anger: Justice and Hope of the Red Shirts in Chiang Mai and Bangkok; 5) Justice: Hope, Fear and Feelings of Loss of the Red Shirts in Udon Thani; 6) Truth and Justice of the Red Shirts in Hat Yai, Songkla. Consequently, this chapter analyzes the conflicts in political meanings and values, the issues of injustice and violence in Thai society as well as the conflicts of class and interests within the seemingly binary conflict of yellow and red shirt protests.

Chapter Four concentrates on the diversity of thoughts, beliefs, emotions and contentious issues among yellow and red shirt groups in order to explain the complexity of Thai political conflicts and polarization. Significantly, the diverse meanings of politics, democracy and justice reflect differences of thoughts, beliefs and conflicts among Thais, as constructed through differences in cultural forces of emotion within the contexts of political conflicts and polarization. Therefore, each section of the chapter focuses on the sub-groups inside the yellow shirts and red shirts as well as the meanings of politics, emotions, beliefs, ideologies and conflict issues of them will be demonstrated using matrix models. These can reflect the complexity of Thai political conflicts and polarization, and the underlying causes of conflict among the yellow shirts and the red shirts.

Chapter Five provides a conclusion and discussion of a new theoretical framework for understanding why Thailand has become more conflicted and polarized since the military coup of 2006. The chapter discusses the problem of Thai politics, as it is closely linked to the problem of Thai moral community as an established part of Thai political and social order. The crucial issue has grounded in the contestation for meanings of politics, democracy and justice among the red shirts and yellow shirts as a challenge to the reality, ideology and order of Thai moral community. Therefore, the chapter discusses the problem of Thai politics and proposes to redefine political meaning or understanding of politics in Thailand, according to differences of cultural emotions, beliefs and perceptions of many Thais. In particular, it is concerned with diverse meanings of politics, democracy, and justice as expressed and defined by red and yellow shirt supporters. Importantly, the meaning of politics should be described in terms of the politics of everyday life, which can come from everywhere around us, and ascribe meaning to consolidate the consensus, emotional and political realities among people within Thai society.

CHAPTER 2

Moral Community: Meaning and Its Formation

This chapter provides a definition and formation of a “moral community” as the foundation of Thai political order and social order as well as Thai cultural identity. The chapter discusses how a moral community was formed, transformed and contested according to Thai historical contexts before it has been challenged by new political consciousness during the contemporary Thai political conflicts.

The purposes of this chapter are: to understand the meaning of moral community and its formation; and to examine how Thai state and society were formed and engaged within the moral community concept. In particular, I propose that a moral community is a unification of power, belief and emotion in the political ideology, the charismatic power of monarchy and morality in religion. This unification has led to the formation of moral community as the cult of Thais which created a social solidarity, the system of shared beliefs, values and perceptions, and the moral order in society. The cult is a kind of setting of a balance between the forces of social, embodied in beliefs, sentiments and general understandings, and the individualised forces of personal needs which are derived from the individual's interaction with the social world (Cotterrell, 1999, p.113-114). It is the reason why a moral community became as the characteristic of Thai political and social order as well as Thai cultural identity. The relationship between people and the centre of moral community had been formed by the power relations in hierarchical structure, the collective beliefs and emotions into the community which embodied with morality (in religion and common beliefs) and the hegemonic power of monarchy. Hence, the formation of Thai moral community was based upon the concept of power and morality such as the Hindu-Buddhist thoughts, supernatural beings (phi), magical power and supernatural mysterious power, embodied with the shared beliefs and emotions of most Thais.

Subsequently, the moral community became as the socio-cultural and emotional forces – on the nature of belief in the royal power of monarchy in barami (charisma), the power relations between the monarchy and people in Thai society and the cultural identity of Thais. Hence, a perception, belief, disposition and cultural emotion of many Thais have been embedded in this moral community. Meanwhile, these socio-cultural and emotional forces helped to maintain the social and political order based on the hegemonic power of monarchy.

This formation of a moral community in the Thai state and society has long been inculcated in Thai historical contexts since the primeval period. Notably, it has distinctively been shaped during the King Bhumibol period (Rama IX: 1927 – 2016). Hence, this chapter particularly focuses on the reign of King Bhumibol, which is a significant period of a moral community construction in Thai political culture and in the sense perception of many Thais. This chapter is presented by the chronological periods of Thai history from the King Chulalongkorn (Rama V: 1853-1910) period to the period of King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX: 1927-2016). The definition of a moral community and its foundation will also be discussed in order to show how a moral community is constituted. Additionally, this chapter also attempts to demonstrate how a moral community has been transformed and contested according to the political, economic and social contexts especially after the military coup of 2006, and how it has been consolidated with the nation-state formation, politics and sociocultural order and finally has become the perception and cultural identity of Thai people.

2.1 What is a moral community?

The meaning of moral community refers to the characteristics of Thai political order and social order as well as Thai cultural identity based on the unification of morality and power, belief and emotion in the political ideology and communal relationship within the community centred by the hegemonic power of monarchy. The concepts that helped to construct the moral community are comprises of the Hindu-Buddhism as mandala, supernatural beings, magic power and supernatural mysterious power.

According to the concept of mandala, the King represented as the centre of state and surrounded by the state sub-systems. The King became a ‘cakravatin’ (universal monarch) or ‘devarāja’ (the god-king) according to his status and kingship in the circles

of kings or mandala as the kingship of Khmer rulers during the early Southeast Asian political system. Notably, the King appeared as the 'the great man', 'man of prowess' or 'the big man' which means the extraordinary persons with qualities that distinguished them from others. This prowess signified and justified the spiritual and leadership resources of the King in the absolute status and being a person such a god-like (Wolters, 1999, p. 27, 112-113).

The Hindu-Buddhism concept describes the King as rajadharma or the moral King who follows the dhamma rules and acts as the maintainer of morality in the state and society. Thus, the state is governed by moral (dharma) and the ultimate purpose of the state is the moral purpose in Hindu-Buddhist doctrines. The King is considered the exemplary centre of the state and the highest good man (dhammaraja) according to his moral power. In other words, the King became as the 'man of prowess' in the concept of mandala. The early Hindu-Buddhists turned to be a symbol of the King's images and symbols of legitimate kingship and sovereignty (Tambiah, 1976, p. 44).

In this regard, the Hindu-Buddhism helped to legitimate power of the monarchy as the leader of Siamese state formation and the traditional Thai political structure centred on the monarchy. It provided a theoretical groundwork for the nature of royal power of the monarchy and the social order in moral hierarchy structure where the King is the superior moral power with his many merits accumulated. This can be found within the Hindu-Buddhist doctrine in the hierarchical cosmology of the Traiphuum. The Traiphuum was based on a correlation of ascending degrees of religious merits with higher levels of wisdom and heavenly existence. It provided a religious reflection and justification for the social hierarchy focused on the King (Jackson, 1989, p. 52). Subsequently, the Hindu-Buddhism helped to construct the reality of power of the monarchy especially the merit and sacred power. This power relation between people and monarchy in the hierarchy structure had been cascaded through communities within the Siamese state. Thai villages or communities were centred by the Buddhism, which was, therefore, served for legitimate power of the ruler in moral hierarchy structure.

Significantly, a belief in Hindu-Buddhism has intertwined with a belief in supernatural beings (phi), magic power and supernatural mystical power of many Thai people. This can be seen in the spirit rituals and the rites of sacralisation of amulets, Buddha images

and statues in Thai society. These rituals reflected a belief in sacred or supernatural power and charismatic power of Thais. As one can see, the amulets (*khruēang rāng*) reflected meaning an object having sacred or supernatural power from chanting sacred words (*pluk sēk khāthā*) in a ceremony (*phiti*). These amulets had a power to provide protection and prosperity for all possessors. The Buddha images, statues, and coins of persons have implied the meanings of special power (*saksit*), charisma (*barami*), and protective virtue through the rite of sacralisation (*phiti pluk sēk*) (Tambiah, 1984, p. 199-209). The processors are believed in a virtue and goodness power as well as a supernatural power of its. In the meantime, this process of sacralisation also applied with the King's images and statues. So, the kings became sacred and virtuous as a god-like. Also, a belief in merit (*bun* or goodness) justified power and status of the King as the great man who has many merits accumulated in the Kingdom. Therefore, the beliefs in Hindu-Buddhism, supernatural beings and supernatural mystical power of Thais are supported a belief in charismatic and sacred power of the King. Meanwhile, the sacred rituals and beliefs in supernatural power became as a means of evoking the emotion and feelings associated with the moral order of Thai community (Tanabe, 2008, p.102). Accordingly, Thai moral community expresses itself like as the sacred and charismatic community centred by the kings who regarded as the highest merit or charismatic persons.

In addition, Buddhism is used as the state's tool for integration of all the state sub-functions into the common community of the Siamese state. Evidence can be seen from the reforming of Buddhist Sangha and the local monks conducted by the monarchy. As we shall see, the King Chulalongkorn (Rama IV: 1853-1910) reformed the Sangha or Dhammayuttika-Nikaya in 1833 and made the Siamese state and society the Theravada Buddhism State (Tanabe & Keyes, 2002). It emphasized the royal Buddhism of the Thai court. The Buddhism reformation thus led to the development of a religious absolutism that paralleled and legitimated the political absolutism of the Thai monarchy in the second half of the nineteenth century (Jackson, 1989, p.46).

Hence, morality had been integrated with power of the monarchy and the formation of Thai state and society based on the Hindu-Buddhism concept and the beliefs in supernatural beings, magic power and supernatural mysterious power. Whilst Buddhism has been served for construction of the reality of the meaning of morality, it also justifies the moral hierarchy structure where the King is situated as the top of the structure and as

the most virtuous being with superior morality. This is the reason why morality cannot be separated from the concepts of the King and state. In addition, it helps to constrain power in politics and societies.

This formation of the Siamese state and society in moral community concept is very important to understand the characteristics of Siamese modern-nation state in absolutist sovereignty of the King, and the sacred state of Thailand with the King as the highest revered and the supreme good man. This formation significantly helped to construct the reality in nature of royal power of the monarchy in Thai politics, and the strong belief and perception of Thai people toward the morality and the monarchy as part of the social norm and the state order. In the following section, I will further discuss how this formation of a moral community constituted, transformed and contested within the contexts of the Siamese state and society.

2.2 The Formation of a Moral Community during the Siamese State Formation

The foundation of a moral community in Thailand is constituted by the Hindu-Buddhism thought in cosmology and rituals with the belief in supernatural beings and supernormal mystical power that justifies the meaning and reality of morality as well as the legitimate power of monarchy in merit (*barami*) and sacred (*saksit*) power. Morality in the Hindu-Buddhism had been integrated with the legitimate power of the king as the absolute ruler. This idea was also appeared since the primordial period of the Siamese state. Since then, it has become the basis of Thai state and society as well as Thai political order and legitimacy especially after the Siamese state formation during the 19th century.

In the reign of King Rama V (1853 – 1910), the status of the King was magnified when Prince Damrong Rajanubhab gave him a regnal name “Phra Piya Maharaj” or the great beloved King. King Rama V governed the Siamese state by emphasizing the role of a ruler who possessed kindness and morality, and embraced his people from all groups and backgrounds. Meanwhile, morality in Buddhism was used to control and manage the society. Somdet Phamahasamana Chao Kromphaya Vajirananavarorasa, who was the tenth Supreme Patriarch of Thailand (1910-1921), played a crucial role in institutionalizing and promoting Buddhism as part of Thainess and Thai social order. This helped justify the legitimate power of King Rama V as the absolute ruler who was the centre of Siamese state. The traditional royal ceremonies also played a crucial role in

constituting the sacred and absolute power of the King in the highest position of state and society (Saichon, 2014).

This perception to the absolute power of Siamese King was also popularized by the centralization of power of the Siamese modern nation-state and the expansion of bureaucratic system such as a provincial administration or known as the thetsaphiban system. The thetsaphiban was a model of colonial administration of the Dutch East Indies and British India. It was implemented progressively throughout the Siam Kingdom around 1893 in the reign of King Rama V. The new system was introduced to replace the old regional ruling houses with commissioners (kha luang) appointed by the central administrative office from Bangkok. The new administrative regions, known as monthon, were created to replace the older territorial units. Ultimately, it revoked the power of the local lords and centralized all the provincial regions and tributary states under the control of the Siamese centre. The centralization of power during the 19th century highlighted the idea of a moral community as part of Siamese modern state and society by enhancing a new experience, consciousness and perception to the local Siamese in absolutism of the Siamese state and monarchy. This form of monarchy, with more centralized and bureaucratized structure, was based on the European colonial power system (Jory, 2016, p. 149-153).

The power relations between the centre of state and territories showed the characteristics of a moral community in totality and hierarchy. Chaiyan Rajchagool (1994) called this characteristic of Siamese modern state as the “internal colonialism”, which refers to the internal structure of Siamese state in absolutism based on monarchy and Bangkok. Chaiyan argued that the socioeconomic conditions that were influenced by colonial power during the early Siam Kingdom eventually led to economic changes and forced the Siamese state to expand their power in depth by penetrating the local society and shaping the new bureaucratic structures. As a result, the Siamese modern state was governed in a hierarchical structure and its geopolitical identity was composed of three domains including Bangkok, the principalities, and the vassal states. Bangkok established itself as the hegemonic power based on the absolute power of the King while the rest of Siam considered themselves a unified nation-state with Bangkok as the centre of power (Chaiyan, 1994). Hence, despite the fact that Siam has never been colonized by the

western powers, it can be claimed that the country experienced internal colonialism as Chaiyan (1994) mentioned and its moral community has been transformed.

To strengthen absolutism of the monarchy, King Rama V also commanded that a royal symbol was to be used across the Siamese state. Besides, the King had encouraged the morality in “harmony” among Thais as the significant moral of Thai society while the Buddhist doctrines of loyalty (love and loyal) had also been interpreted to cover loyalty to the King and the nation. The elite establishment attempted to define harmony in the meaning of a mutual relationship between the senior/older (phu yai) and junior/younger (phu noi). In other words, it was the patronage relationship in which the senior helped the junior with kindness while the junior repay the favour with honesty, respect and gratitude to the senior. That is to say, people should to know their own place (rujak ti tum ti sung) based on their social status in the social relations structure (Saichon, 2014). This reflected the moral hierarchy structure within Thai political and sociocultural order. Harmony in this context is not the morality that is based on an equal relationship but it is rather a harmony within inequality of the hierarchy structure in this moral community.

Apparently, morality in Buddhism was used to organize the social and power relations and defined what is Thai or Thainess. Significantly, it contributed to the culture of inequality in Thai socio-culture structure. The harmony between the King and people was built in strict hierarchy but with endearing sentiment. That was a feeling of gratitude to the royal grace, love and loyalty to the King who was the great beloved King for all Thais (Saichon, 2014, p. 73). Constituted by the Thai royalist elites, the morality depended mainly on charismatic power of the King through a special rituals and ceremonies of the state. The King represented the centre of state and the top of hierarchy structure. Thus, Thai polity emphasizes on the moral leader who possessed the charismatic power (barami) and a hierarchy structure. It shows that the idea of moral community in Siamese culture relied heavily on social and political hierarchy where the highest good man held a position of power over others due to his superior barami (Jory, 2016, p. 175). This concept of power in Thai moral community has embedded in Thai political culture, including a social cognition and emotions to the monarchy of Thais until the present day.

However, there were also several power struggle contested to the order of moral community which tried to integrate all the state sub-systems under the absolute power of

the monarchy and Siamese state. For instance, the resistance movement in Isan (Northeast) region called “the Buddhist millennialism” (Phu Mi Bun) occurred against with the integration into the Thai nation-state during 1900-1902 (Keyes, 2014). As Thao Buncan who was the leader of the Phu Mi Bun movement in the vicinity of Khunkhan (Sisaket province today), he had followed by at least 6,000 believers in 1902. Thao Buncan organized the phu mi bun movement to oppose a new governor appointed by Siam because he felt that he should be a governor. They wanted to establish the kingdom which was not under either the Siamese or French in the area. The rebellion of Phu Mi Bun had led to the violent crackdown between the rebels and Siamese government. The government forces were sent to several locations of rebel resistances. As a result, a number of rebels were killed and many of them were captured (estimated 400 rebels). The nine major leaders were a monk; another, a local noble; the others, villagers were executed in their home communities (excepted monk), while the minor leaders were given prison sentences. For the ordinary villagers who had become followers of the phu mi bun were ordered to participate in ceremonies to drink the water oath of allegiance and pledge themselves to believe strongly in the king of Siam (Keyes, 1977).

The millennial beliefs and movements reflected the power struggle of local people in Northeast to the Siamese political power. Meanwhile, the concept of “person-who-have-merit” or “meritful person” (Phu Mi Bun) obviously challenged to the conception of the king as the greatest merit person or the most meritorious person in a Buddhist kingdom.

Another sample of rebels occurred in the Northern region of Thailand, a popular revolt known as “the Phraya Phap Rebellion” of 1889 – 1890 led by the local leaders in Chiang Mai. It emerged against the new taxation imposed on them by the Siamese government. The rebellion destroyed all the Chinese-owned distilleries in the villages because the Chinese was the tax collectors. The rebels was joined by around 12,000 men and many their partisans in the city included priests. The priests played a crucial role in encouraging the rebels and gave the religious sanction. Phraya Phap had gathered all men and attacked the city and the Siamese quarter. The Siamese (people from Bangkok) and Chinese were to be exterminated. Hence, the rebellion was precisely occurred against power of the Siamese ruling classes and the Chinese (mainly tax farmers and their followers), and also opposed to the power structure of oppressive forces of the Siamese government (Chaiyan, 1994, p.94-95).

All these rebels reflected that the concept of moral community and the absolutism power of monarchy and Siam were not unified throughout the state. The moral community and the Siamese government were often contested by power struggles. Therefore, the moral community of Thai state have been adjusted according to the contexts of Thai politics and society, while they have extended their forces over the state sub-functions in order to control, suppress and dominate them under the power of state and government centred by the monarchy.

Similarly, the King Rama VI (1880 – 1925) emphasized the significance of monarchy to the nation and promoted Buddhism as the national religion. King Mongkut saw the Buddhism as the state tool in integrate people under the royal power of the King. However, unlike King Rama V, King Mongkut did not pay attention on the sentimental of people to the monarchy. On the contrary, King Rama VI rather focused on promoting the consciousness of loyalty to the nation, religion and the King as the triad pillars of the nation. He created a perception among Thai people that the King was vital of the nation and the national security and that prosperity depended on the stability of the monarchy (Saichon, 2014, p. 172). Furthermore, King Mongkut also reformed Thammayut School (nikai) of the Thai Sangha to support the power of the monarchy. The Sangha became an instrument of royal power (Jory, 2016, p. 123). As the Buddhist doctrines indicated the superior status of the King as the merit person who accumulated many merits since the earlier incarnation, it is possible to say that loyalty to the monarchy can be compared to doing a good deed or merit in Buddhism. Showing loyalty to the King became a required national characteristic.

The influence of Hindu-Buddhist cosmology helped justify the moral power (barami) and sacred power (saksit or magico-divine power) of the King in the political and social order. The concept of a nation (Chart) did not mean that all Thai people were equal. It rather meant that people belonged to different social classes and social origins (Saichon, 2014). The Thai moral community highlighted a moral hierarchy where the King was situated at the top of hierarchy and political order. This created a unique relationship between the monarchy and the people in the country. The monarchy did not only represent absolute political power, but they also upheld the highest moral quality. Therefore, many Thais showed strong sentiment to the monarchy. Buddhist doctrine and Buddhist ceremonies were employed to maintain and emphasize the power relations between people and

monarchy and the social order of Thai society. Eventually, the concepts of monarchy and morality were inextricably intertwined and became an essence of Thai political order and democratization development until the absolute monarchy was overthrown after Siamese Revolution in 1932.

2.3 The Failed Revolution in 1932 and Its Consequences

After the absolute monarchy was overthrown in 1932, the embeddedness of a moral community remained in Thai politics and society. Meanwhile, the royalists who believed in the power of the monarchy attempted to strike back the People's party and commoners. This led to the political conflicts after the 1932 and extended to the 1957.

The core problem concerned the role and power of the King in the politics as well as the feeling of relevance in sentiment to the King of most Thais. This showed the embeddedness of moral community which formed since the Siamese state formation. It was also a result of the unfinished power negotiation between the monarchy and the People's party. The People's Party was fully aware of the degree of sentiment Thai people had for the monarchy, especially those in Bangkok. Rather than focusing on democracy development in Thailand as the People's Party originally intended to, the 1932 revolution actually showed the consolidation of the monarchy's long-established power and a conflict between the monarchy, royalists and the People's Party. As a result, democratization of Thailand faced an uphill battle giving an opportunity for the royalists and the monarchy to restore their power in the politics and used the concept of a moral community to regain their popularity.

Even though the People's Party wanted to compromise and consolidate the political relationship with King Prajadhipok (Rama VII: 1925-1935), the network of the King supporters and royalists moved underground against the People's Party. According to Nattapoll Chaiching (2010), the network of the monarchy supporters was comprised of the members of the royal family, secret agents, military officers, assassins, civil servants and journalists who were loyal the traditional monarchy regime. The network aimed to restore the power of the King and absolute monarchy. The movement organized the Blue Army Rebellion in mid-1933. Nevertheless, the Blue Army was not able to restore the King's power from the People's Party while the King Prajadhipok was abdicated from the throne on 2 March 1935 while he resided in London (Nattapoll, 2010).

However, the royalists and monarchy managed to restore their power after the World War II (1939-1945) due to the collapse within the People's Party, which divided the members into two major factions- the Field Marshall Phibunsongkhram faction and the Pridi Banomyong faction. Between 1942 to 1945, the royalists both living in Thailand and overseas supported the Pridi's underground resistance movement (or commonly known as "the Free Thai Movement: Seri Thai") against Phibun's government and the Japanese forces and declared themselves being part of the Allies.

After the Japanese was defeated in the World War II, Pridi issued a declaration stating that Phibun's 1942 declaration of war was unconstitutional and subsequently legally void. His declaration helped Thailand from having to pay severe war reparations to the Allies. After that, Pridi became Thailand's Prime Minister and set up a civilian government to replace Phibun's military government in March 1946. In the meantime, King Ananda Bhumibol (Rama VIII: 1935-1946), who was recognised as King by the National Assembly in 1935 and had been residing in Switzerland, returned to Thailand in 1945.

Unexpectedly, King Ananda died on 9 June 1946 and the event forced Pridi to resign as Prime Minister. Pridi was accused of being involved in the death of the King and there was a rumour that he supported the Communist Movement in Southeast Asia. Thailand's political instability was intensified when the military declared the coup in 1947 led by Field Marshall Phibunsongkhram. The coup was also supported by the royalists who wanted to restore their power after the absolute monarchy system was brought down in the Siamese revolution of 1932. The royalists, such as Seri Pramoj and Kukrit Pramoj, were involved in the drafting of new constitutional in 1949, which aimed to restore the power and rights in asset of the monarchy. For instance, they issued the law for the crown's property in 1948. The royalists went on to support the military coup in 1957, which was led by Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat to seize the political power from Phibun (Nattapoll, 2010).

The military coup in 1957 was successful because Phibun failed in his attempt to establish a popular image of himself as the embodiment of Thai nationalism. He put too much effort to promote and embody a spirit of Thai nationalism. He tried to project himself as an alternative to the monarchy. For instance, he attempted to promote a popular nationalism while he set himself up as the patron of the Buddhist religion, a role

previously played by the Kings, during the celebration of 2500th anniversary of the death of the Buddha in 1956 and 1957. However, his effort was unsuccessful. He also failed to promote a democratic system because Thai bureaucracy was deeply rooted in the hierarchy structure. The officers with a superior status had been used to being able to determine what was best for the populace without being held accountable to representatives of the people. Thus, Phibun's democratic reforms were greatly resisted. Phibun had been criticized from the populace that he was closely linked with General Phao Sriyanond's corruption and the coercive power of the police to make the move toward democracy feasible. General Phao was said to be involved in the manipulation of the February 1957 election and this eventually led to a public protest against Phibun's government and the conflict inside the army (Keyes, 1987, p. 75 and 80). These opened an opportunity for Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat to declare a military coup in 1957. Phibun and Phao were in exile and Phibun died in 1964. Meanwhile, the royalists successfully restored their power after the Sarit coup in 1957. It led to the end of People's Party Revolution of 1932 era.

As I mentioned previously, the crucial issue after the revolution of 1932 was the conflict concerning the role and power of the monarchy in Thai politics and the feeling of relevance to the King of many Thais. Although the absolute monarchy regime had been overthrown, the belief and sentiment in the royal power in charisma (*barami*) and sacred power (*saksit*), and the structure of power in moral hierarchy still remained in Thai politics and society. These helped to constitute the position and role of the monarchy above the politics. That is to say, although the constitution stated that the position and the role of the monarchy were under the democratic constitution, in fact, the monarchy still actively influenced major political decisions. Thongchai (2016) noted that in the belief of many Thais, the monarchy was truly above the politics. However, the monarchy is actually the political power bloc that has been very active throughout modern history, characterized by unstable political fortunes until it eventually ascended and established the royal democracy in the mid-1970s (Thongchai, 2016).

In my view, this represented the embeddedness of moral community remained within Thai political order and social order as well as Thai political culture. It contributed to belief and emotion into a unique role, position and power of the monarchy in Thai politics and society where the monarchy has not only been integrated with the political and social

system but it has also been part of the national identity. Importantly, the Siamese Revolution of 1932 was not able to change or diminish the role of the monarchy in politics and was not able to create the new community that can replace the moral community. The revolution only changed the political system but it did not change the essence power of Thai politics. The People's Party did not develop the political culture that fully deviated from the absolute monarchy era. The revolution of 1932 was seen as the failed revolution and the aftermath political conflicts were mainly related to the role and power of the monarchy in the politics as well as the belief and deeply sentiment to the monarchy and morality of many Thais.

As a result, Thai politics showed the power struggles among social sub-functions within the moral community after the 1932 revolution, especially the conflicts of political legitimacy and interests. That is to say, Thai political leaders had to struggle and justify for their political authority based on power of the King in Thai political culture. In the meantime, the monarchy has to cooperate with the royalist elites and military leaders in order to maintain its legitimate power, role and status as the established part of Thai political and social order. This, in turn, helped to recreate the royal-nationalist ideology integrated with the concepts of Thai democracy and cultural identity especially after the military coup of 1957 led by Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat.

2.4 The Sarit Era and the Reinstitution of Moral Community with the Thai-Style Democracy

The military coup led by the Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat in 1957 did not only show the conflict within the military, but it also reflected the reinstitution of power of monarchy and reconstitution of moral community in Thai political culture. According to Thak (2007), the 1957 coup provided a new democratic era or commonly known as "Thai-Style Democracy", which refers to the leadership style of Sarit in the concept of "phor khun" (godfather), which was derived from the title of the King Ramkhamhaeng (1276-1317). Phor khun suggested Sarit's legitimate power and enabled him to enforce the democracy work as the representative of people. Phor khun showed an image of a strong, benevolent and decisive leader-statesman whose responsibility was to the nation, not to the groups of voters. In this sense, Thai democracy concept was embedded within legitimate power of the Sarit regime. Meanwhile, the political legitimacy of Sarit was derived from a

charismatic person as the father of nation who gained support from institutions such as the monarchy and social groups in patronage relationship, such as government, civilian bureaucracy, and military. In addition, the public image of Phor khun was to take care of the life of people and to respond to their needs directly to maintain the well-being of people. Thus, the concept of Thai leadership in democracy is based on public perception, not from a consensus of people in the country. In this sense, the paternalism actually reflected the nature of the despot (Thak, 2007).

On the other hand, the concept of modern Thai state and political order during the Sarit's regime were based upon Thai traditional ideals, especially the fundamental values of Thai people in triad pillars of the King, religion, and nation. It was created based on the belief that Thai political order would be made safe by the stability of a nation's traditional - style social system rather than foreign theories. Therefore, the concept of "nation" was presented as a family while the role of the governor was like a father of the family or called "Phor khun" (godfather). This reflected in Sarit's paternalistic leadership style. Sarit adopted a character of a father of the family (nation) who took care of the children (people). On the other hand, the King was seen as a symbol of the spirit of Thai people, Thai traditions, a source of social morality and ethics in the concept of Devine kinship, and a source of political legitimacy. As one can see, Sarit used the monarchy to legitimise his power and cultivate solidarity among the elites and social factions by social affairs, ceremonies and charity works. Meanwhile, he projected his image as the highest military successor. These were the domestic legitimizing functions in which the monarchy institution played the role of a legitimiser of political power in supporting the board regime policies, promoting and imposing sanctions in intra elite solidarity and becoming a symbolic of national unity (Ibid.).

As Charles F. Keyes (1987) mentioned, the Sarit's period showed the renegotiation of the relationship between the monarchy and the government by using a different approach to the leader of the 1932 coup. Both the King and the Queen played a large part of this process of renegotiation. The royal couple made many trips abroad and to different parts of Thailand during 1959-1961 (Keyes, 1987, p. 80) to restore the role of the monarchy. During the time, several royal projects were introduced by King Bhumibol in 1957. The royal projects were a direct result of the patronage relationship among the monarchy, intellectuals, government officers and technocrats. Besides, the royal projects have also

been supported by many people and organizations both inside and outside the network of monarchy (Chanida, 2011, p. 211). Consequently, the royal projects expanded the monarchy's network in several parts and levels of Thai society and restored people's sentiment feeling towards the King. The network helped to protect and promote the role and status of the King. Mass media under a control of government and private sectors also played an important role in publicising the royal projects. In the meantime, the traditional rituals and ceremonies were promoted to support the role of the monarchy among the populace and sustain the King's position at the top of the Kingdom's hierarchy (Handley, 2006, p. 120). Notably, the King managed to gain a popular support and he was known as the developer King, who heavily devoted himself for his people and also proved himself as the merit good man whereas Sarit managed to gain support from of the King's barami (charisma) and sustain authoritarian power as a statesman.

As we can see, King Bhumibol expressed his confidence in the Field Marshal Sarit by presenting him with gifts, visiting his farm and praising him for his dedication to the country. Sarit was allowed to share the throne's prestige by performing royal ceremonies on the King's behalf such as presenting a royal kathin (a ceremony to present robes to Buddhist monks) in Khon Kaen (Handley, 2006, p. 154). As Thak (2007) addressed, it showed the alliance between the monarchy and the government in a pragmatic sacralisation of power and leadership. In this regard, Sarit, as the prime minister, enjoyed the cosmological sanction of the throne and managing the country on behalf of the throne. Finally, he received his own public legitimacy (Thak, 2007).

In addition, the King played a crucial role in reconstitution of a moral community in Thai society. He stated that Thailand could not survive without a pure-of-practice dhammaraja, following the ten royal virtues. The dhammaraja is regarded as the ideal king for all Thais, while this position had to be held by a full Chakri or a man who carried the blood and spiritual inheritance of previous dhammarajas. This notion had been assimilated with the Thai political and social order. As we can see, the King possessed both spiritual and secular power as the head of state and religious leader. Also, the King concluded that the politics and Western democratic government which adopted in the revolution of 1932, created the conflict and disunity among Thais and hindered the people's progress and development. It cannot create justice and peace in Thai society. The politics governed by the corrupt men is an inherently dirty and useless process, it cannot attract men of virtue and produce

capable leaders. The best way to solve this problem is creating a good government under a sagacious sovereign of the king to select the good men for leading the country (Handley, 2006, p. 239-240). This helped to establish the absolute power of the king in Thai politics and the royal-democracy guilded by the king during and after the Sarit's era. On the other hand, the politics and democratic system were regarded as an immoral and inefficient political system governed by the corrupt and selfish politicians.

Furthumore, the United States of America also played a crucial role in reinstituting the role and power status of the monarchy during the early 1960s. The US Information Service had virtually taken over public relations for the Thai government, heavily funding equipment and programming for television and radio broadcasts with an anti-communist and pro-monarchy theme. The King's journeys aboard and in Thailand were recorded on film by American and Thai cameramen. The US Agency for International Development and USIS also printed hundreds of thousands of posters and calendars with the King and Queen's pictures each year to distribute them throughout the country. The royal pictures became a wall decoration in the homes of most Thais including the poor peasants and villagers (Handley, 2006, p. 149).

The publishing of the royal pictures helped to create the public understanding in the role and status of the monarchy as the highest revered institution and the King became as adored person for ordinary people. Notably, the charismatic power of the monarchy was considered very important in Thai political culture and in people's perception as it emphasized the order of a moral community among ordinary Thais. This is the great transformation of moral community in Thai political culture, politics and society because during and after this period, the King and Queen became like as the father and mother of the life of the nation. As one can see, the king's birthday had been celebrated as the new National Father's Day on 5 December 1980, while the Queen's birthday had been celebrated as the New National Mother's Day on 12 August 1976 (Thongchai, 2016, p.7). This had resulted in the strong belief and sentiment among Thais toward King Bhumibol as the father of all Thais and as the supreme extraordinary person (and king) of Thai nation. Also, it created the belief that the Thai nation would be maintained by the monarchy. All these clearly expressed in the hyper-royalism sentiment and political actions during the protests of the yellow shirt protestors. It reflected the characteristic of

Thai moral community as the social order and social force in the sentiments and actions of many Thais.

Moreover, to further protect the monarchy institution, the *lèse-majesté* law was revised after the Criminal Code of 1956 was issued. Under the article 112 of Criminal Code, “anyone who defames, insults or threatens the King, the Queen, the heir-apparent or the regent will be punished with up to 7 years in prison” (It changed to 15 years in prison after the 6 October 1976). This article decreed in the category of offences related to the security of Thai Kingdom. The Sarit’s government invoked the law stating that any violation to the monarchy was considered as committing an offence to the state security (ilaw-freedom, 21 September 2015). The *lèse-majesté* law was issued to protect the monarchy from any criticism and to preserve their highest status of prestige. It was also used to eliminate the Sarit’s political opponents and those being accused of joining the communist group. Meanwhile, the monarchy became sacred and unviolated under this law. At the same time, the military became the protector of the nation and monarchy (Chanida, 2011, p. 117- 213).

Consequently, by the mid-1960s, King Bhumibol’s prestige was greater than that of any Kings since Chulalongkorn and positioned the absolute monarchy. David Wyatt (1984) described that Thailand in the 1960s was the period of bourgeoisisation of Thai monarchy. According to Thongchai (2016), it is the construction of new monarchy under democracy development of Thailand which began in the early 1960s under the royalist military regime of Sarit Thannarat (1958-1963) and Thanom Kittikhachon (1963-1973). It was also supported by the role of the United States in promoting the monarchy to counter with the Communist insurgency in Thailand. The profile of the monarchy was created as being active in non-political public affairs, such as agriculture and rural development, education and welfare for people in rural areas and so on (Thongchai, 2016). As a result, it constructed the King (Bhumibol) as the popular King who held the position and role in above the politics and conflicts, especially after the student movement uprising in 1973.

The belief in the position, role and power of the monarchy had been embedded in the perception of many Thais. It became an illusion of power relations between people and the monarchy in which the King and the royal charities were organized as exemplars of Buddhist religion. Most people had been inspired by the King’s selfless behaviour.

Hence, the ordinary citizens, rich and poor, were willing to support and donate money to the royal charities. King Bhumibol began to display confidence in his superior insight into his kingdom and people during the 1960s. The King was also perceived as the Buddhist symbol, the father of nation, the exemplary centre of the state, and dhammaraja King (Handley, 2006).

In summary, the Sarit's regime played a crucial role in reinstituting the power of absolute monarchy in Thai politics. Sarit successfully legitimized his political power and leadership style as the statesman although he abolished political parties and the country was undemocratically governed. To reinstitute the power of monarchy was a way Sarit used to justify his political legitimacy in Thai style-democracy governance. Therefore, Thai politics during Sarit regime reflected a despotic paternalism system rather than democracy. Besides, Sarit also reformed the Buddhist sangha by promulgating the law that brought the entire sangha under a control of the government in 1962. The sangha was promoted as the national goals of government. Meanwhile, the mass media, newspapers, educational and cultural organizations were strictly controlled by the government (Keyes, 1987, p. 77).

Furthermore, Sarit exercised his leadership in the notion of Phor-Luk (father-children) in helping the children (people), maintaining a social prosperity, promoting health, well-being and morals and responding to the needs of the citizens. He paid a great attention to cleanliness, purity, and discipline of society in order to construct a civilized society and modernize the nation. However, Sarit's development policies were rooted in the old Thai ideal that prosperity and well-being depended on the merit of the ruler. Subsequently, Thai democracy was based on his ideas and traditional political culture in Thai public understanding, in particular, the belief and perception of Thai people towards the role and power of the monarchy as the political legitimizer and exemplary of state in the concept of moral community.

Therefore, the political legitimacy power in Thailand is not solely based on political consensus of community, the democratic government and legal-rational institutions. The power is rather based on the cultural politics context, particularly in the charismatic power of the monarchy in the moral community. That is to say, good political leaders have to embody the goodness (charisma) of the monarchy. The political legitimacy can be

acquired by the consent of people through their recognition and understanding in the goodness of the leaders where the King appears as the highest good man or the great man. The accountability of the leader equates with karmic merit and the role of the father which is a fundamental concept of Thais. This concept of leadership, power, and democracy is precisely different from the Western ideals and it has deeply embedded in Thai people's perception of the nation.

2.5 The Communist Expansion: The Contestation and Transformation of Moral Community after the Sarit Era

After the Sarit's regime, the monarchy absolutely held the position above politics in Thai public understanding. The monarchy positioned themselves as the moral authority superior to and on the top of the realm of normal politics, but not out of the political system. Meanwhile, the King became the source of political legitimacy and influenced the political ideal and issues. Importantly, the King played a crucial role in the political conflict during the student uprising on 14 October 1973 and guided the royal-democracy after the 1973.

The student movements were organised to act against the authoritarian rules of military dictatorship during Thanom Kittikachorn's and Praphat charusathian's regime (1963-1973). Sarit's development policies led to a rapid growth in education and economy in Thailand, especially, in Bangkok. As a result, the middle class, students, and labours had emerged and empowered. These groups of people demanded political, social and economic development. In particular, many intellectuals wanted fundamental improvements to the new constitution that had been promulgated in 1968.

The social discontent had increased by the corruption scandals of the government, Thailand's involvement in the Vietnam War, growing numbers of Americans using Thai Army facilities, and an increase of Japanese financial interests in Thailand. Simultaneously, the government abolished the constitution and dissolved the parliament in the late of 1971. Hence, students started to organise demonstrations to demand a new constitution on 14 October 1973 (Terwiel, 2011, p.279). The protestors were arrested. This triggered a demonstration led by students from Thammasat University, Bangkok. The student movements expanded and they organised a large demonstration against the

Thanom and Praphat government as well as Narong Kittikachorn- Thanom's son and Praphat's son-in-law on 14 October 1973 (Keyes, 1987, p. 82).

The role of the monarchy was also one of the main issues that led to students' demonstrations. According to Chanida (2006), the King Bhumibol frequently provided an opportunity for students to join the King's musical band through his personal radio station every Friday at Chitlada Palace. The close relationship between the monarchy and students made students feel more relevant to the King. This was clearly expressed in the 14 October demonstration. At that time, the students believed in the leading role of the monarchy in national democratization. They also promoted the role of King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) and royal-democratic nationalism discourse as opposed to the military dictatorship (Thongchai, 2001; Prajak, 2005). As Thongchai (2001 and 2016) mentioned, the 14 October 1973 event was the significant turning point for the role and status of monarchy in Thai politics. The monarchy was integrated with democratic and royal-nationalism discourse. The monarchy became popular and regarded as a symbol of Thai nation and political legitimacy. As we can see, the student demonstration used the royal portrait of the King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit to express their royal-nationalism sentiment against the military dictatorship as illegitimacy.



Figure 2.1 The student demonstration showed the royal portrait of the King and Queen to oppose Thanom and Praphat military dictatorship government.

Source: Pattaya Daily News, n.d., Retrieved June 20, 2017 from <http://th.pattayadailynews.com>.

Moreover, the triumph for popular democracy also marked the monarchy's ascendancy to political power as in above the politics which refers to the role of monarchy above the conflict between the military and popular democracy. As I previously mentioned, the monarchy was held as a moral authority superior to and on top of the realm of normal politics, but not out of the political system. The King became the only source of power legitimacy and the determining factor in major political issues. This role was demonstrated through, in particular, the event that the royal family came out from the palace to meet with the student demonstrators who escaped from the police and climbed over the fence inside the palace ground for refuge on morning of 14 October 1973. Then, the King appeared on the television and declared the 14 October as "the Most Tragic Day". The King also announced through the radio about Thanom, Praphat's and Narong's exile (The King asked them to leave the country). He informed the country would return to a constitutional government and he asked the students and others to return home. After that, the turbulent situations declined and the image of the King became symbolically important for Thai politics (Keyes, 1987; Thongchai, 2008 and 2016). At the same time, it showed the significant characteristic of the monarchy as the centre of legitimacy and reflected Thai democratization in "royalist-guided democracy", which refers to the democracy that was guided by the role of monarchy and elites rather than the elected democracy government. As Thongchai (2016) noted, the "royalist-guided democracy" or "royal democracy" is as an ostensibly democratic polity in which the electorate and elected authority do not have substantive power since true power remains in the hands of the monarchy (Thongchai, 2016).

Hence, the democracy development of Thailand after the 1973 appeared in the form of royal-democracy in which the true power in sovereignty was retained with the monarchy. The most significant element was embedded sentiment of royal nationalism and a belief in a royal-democratic leading role of the students, intellectuals and the urban middle class. Actually, it reflected the illusion in power of a moral community which was transformed within the royal-democracy. This perception has strongly remained in most Thais during the 21st century.

After the students' movements, democracy in Thailand was gradually developed after the country had been ruled by military dictatorship for a long time. Students played an important role in the political and social development in the new era. Some joined the

political parties, particularly the New Force and Socialist Party. Many of them went into the countryside to spread democratic ideas and assist farmers and labours to improve their quality of life. The National Student Centre of Thailand also supported the first large-scale protest by farmers in March 1974. Sanya Thammasak, a new prime minister appointed by the King, responded to the farmer's protest with sympathy by giving a guarantee of higher rice prices and earmarking some 300 million baht to reach farmer's demand. Hence, it encouraged other villagers to organize their own petitions to the government to help and solve their problems. Around 53,650 petitions were filed during the mid-1974. At the same time, around 20,000 textile workers from 600 factories located in or near Bangkok also went on strike. This strike was supported by the National Student Centre of Thailand. After that, the Farmers' Federation of Thailand (FFT) was established in December, 1974 with the support of some student organizations. The FFT was based in Chiang Mai and was headed by Intha Sibunruang, a former village headman in that area (Keyes, 1987, p. 90-94). Subsequently, an alliance between students, workers, and farmers or known as the "three links" was formed as the progressive activists. This was significant transformation in Thai society (Haberkorn, 2007).

The growing of the FFT and transgressive alliance among students, workers and farmers as well as increasing struggles in the countryside eventually led to fears among the urban middle class and elites (Ibid.). Additionally, the triumph of the communists in neighbouring countries such as Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam in April 1975 had intensified more fears that progressive alliance between the students, labors and farmers could become a vanguard of the communist party in Thailand. These fears contributed to the politics of fear environment and emergence of the radical right-wing movements in 1975 and 1976 to act against the leftist-wing movements, and finally justified another military coup in Thai politics (Keyes, 1987, p. 94). Ultimately, it led to a violent massacre in Bangkok on 6 October 1976 and others violent suppression in the country.

The right-wing groups which emerged during 1975 and 1976 were comprised of the Red Gaurs (krathing daeng), which was supported by the military and attended by former mercenaries and vocational students in Bangkok, the Nawaphon, which was organized by active and retired rightist military officers, and the village scouts (luk sua chaoban), which was founded in 1971 by the Border Patrol Police with the support of the Ministry of Interior as a government sponsored program to mobilize villagers in security sensitive

areas in support of the state and against communism (Ibid., p.94-96). The most prominent right-wing group was the village scout movements of which the King and Queen were the patrons. The group allowed villagers throughout the country to become a member.

According to Katherine A. Bowie (1997), the village scout movement was supported by King Bhumibol, who was regarded as a unifying symbol of hope for the lower and middle classes. The King, who served as a powerful symbol of unity and who was admired by many villagers clearly contributed to the dramatic expansion of the village scout movement after the 1975. The royal patronage was granted in 1972 accompanied by the use of the state rituals to encourage the emotional bond of people to the monarchy and the nation. The nation was portrayed as a large family with the King as the royal father. Hence, the village scout movement supported by the King was believed to be able to unify fractions of an increasingly divided society with love and unity. Furthermore, the King also usually visited the rural areas to extend the charity or merit legitimacy. The royal patronage significantly resulted in the expansion of the village scout movement. The scout leaders were from the local elites at district level. Meanwhile, royal charities activities were often supported by the Chinese-Thai businessmen who subsequently were rewarded with awards and titles by the King for their generosity. All these were the interaction of interests among social classes and the village scout movement growing under the high regard with the King and appears as a unity image of Thai people. This precisely expressed the order of moral community. The village scouts' core values were Thai's main institutions: monarchy, religion, and nation. Therefore, the villagers were embraced into an imagined national family, with the King and Queen as the nation's parents and all scouts as their children. Notably, the idea of national family provided an illusion of equality, but it was actually a moral hierarchy structure where the King was situated as the top of the structure. Nevertheless, the village scout movement declined after the new government was set up due to the military coup on 20 October 1977. In the beginning of 1978, Kriangsak's government offered amnesty to the students and intellectuals who had joined with the Communist Party underground because of the event of 6 October 1976. It led to the change of the balance of forces within the country after the collapse of the Communist Party of Thailand in 1987 (Bowie, 1997).

Consequently, the contrast between the leftist and rightist wings in Thai society was intensified by the political environment of fear that finally led to many violent

suppressions in Thailand. This was a transition of Thai politics and society as well as the emotions and perceptions of people to the monarchy. In particular, the violent massacre in Thammasart University on 6 October 1976 changed the perception and emotion to the monarchy of many student activists who escaped into the jungle and joined the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) after the violent incidents. Many students supported anti-feudalism (Sakdina) in Thai society and hope that the triumph of people revolution would change Thai society (Suthachai, 2015, p.126). Nevertheless, after Kriangsak government announced the amnesty, the students and others who joined the CPT after 6 October 1976 returned from the jungle. Meanwhile, the CPT gradually declined in the countryside after the conflicts inside the CPT. Prem Tinsulanonda, the prime minister at that time, purposed a military action in combating communist insurgency. A number of high-ranking members of the CPT were arrested in 1984 (Keyes, 1987, p. 111). Subsequently, the authoritarian government, where the monarchy was situated in the highest status of symbolic and power in Thai political culture, was reinstituted without any conflict or threats after the late 1970. The moral community concept with the Thai royal-democracy was successfully transformed after the 1973.

2.6 The Constitution of Moral Politics during the 1990s of Thailand

The basic of Thai state, political order and political culture was found within the moral community concept where morality (in religion) and charismatic and sacred power of the monarchy were interwoven. Whilst the monarchy was situated in the position of above politics in the perception of many Thais, in fact, the monarchy played the active role in guiding the royal-democracy after the 1973 and became the source of legitimacy power in politics. Besides, the King was also perceived as a fundament of moral politics of Thailand. King (Bhumibol) was regarded as the highest good man and he was adored for his superior charisma for most Thais. The King's ideals were published and integrated with the ideal of national and social development, especially after the mid-1990s. This shows that the elected democracy and elected authority do not have the essential power since the true power remains in the hands of monarchy (Thongchai, 2016).

Meanwhile, the image of the King's dedication to his people was often portrayed in a total contrast to the corruption and selfishness of elected politicians, particularly since the late 1980s. The virtuous image of King Bhumibol was enhanced by his numerous royal

projects which were supported of the royalists and intellectuals. As we can see, the pictures of the King, who wore a camera around his neck with a map and a pencil in his hand, had been promoted through mass media. This emphasized an image of a devoted king and virtue man. The King's contrastive image to the immoral power of elected politicians manifested the charismatic power (barami) in moral goodness of the King that no one could be matched. This power became a central idea of Thai democratic and moral politics during 1990s.

After the mid-1980s, Thai economic development grew globally. Gross National Product in Thailand had increasingly grown since the early 1960s. The country appeared to be rushing toward becoming one of the new industrialized Asian Tigers. This was a result of Prime Minister Chatchai Choonhavan's free economic policies by the end of 1980s. Chatchai also diminished the power of military in favour of business interests, which, however, triggered a new military coup led by the National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC) in February 1991. The NPKC appointed Sunthorn Kongsompong as the interim Prime minister. After that, Anan Punyarachun was placed as the prime minister. Anan managed to be on a par with the military clique. He rapidly passed a string of liberal economic reforms. Meanwhile, the military council interfered with the drafting of constitution to provide the special rights for the National Peace Keeping Council. Until the election of 1992, the social discontents occurred when one of the military coup leaders, General Suchinda Kraprayun, was appointed as the new prime minister. It led to a large demonstration in Bangkok led by General Chamlong Srimuang and joined by many prominent politicians, academics, labour leaders, students and members of the educated middle class. However, the effort of military in disintegration of the protest caused many casualties or commonly known as "The Black May Event" (Terwiel, 2011, p. 283).

The May 1992 demonstration aimed to bring down Suchinda Kraprayoon's government and demanded for economic and political reform. Nonetheless, the 1992 demonstration differed from the 1973 demonstration because the royal-nationalism discourse had not been stimulated during the demonstrations. In contrast, the urban middle class people who took part in the demonstrations wanted Thailand to be more globally developed and to reform Thai politics and economics in a global context (Nidhi, 2014). Globalization played a very important role in politics in the modern era. Hence, the elites had to accept

the new demand in political reform and supported drafting of the new constitution of 1997 in order to compromise with the new social forces in the context of globalization.

The King, again, appeared as an intermediary of political conflicts. The image and status of the King above the politics was evident when the King invited the key state men for a meeting. With his privy councillors, Prem Tinsulanonda and Sanya Thammasak, kneeling at his side whilst at his front, Chamlong Srimuang and Suchinda Kraprayoon sitting down on the floor at his feet, the King spoke, "It may not be a surprise as to why I asked you to come to this meeting.... But it may a surprise as to why General Suchinda Kraprayoon and Major General Chamlong Srimung have been invited, when there may be many other performers and actors involved. However, the two of you have been invited because at the beginning there was a situation in which the two of you were confronting each other, and at the end it has become a confrontation or a struggle on a large scale... If the confrontation continued, it would only lead to the utter destruction of Thailand." (Handley, 2006, p. 354-355).



Figure 2.2 The King Bhumibol was talking with Major-General Chamlong Srimuang and General Suchinda Kraprayoon on 20 May 1992. *Source:* Blogger, 2010, Retrieved July 19, 2017, from http://teetwo.blogspot.com/2010/05/blog-post_9931.html

After the King's intervention, Chamlong called off the protests and Suchinda resigned from prime minister. After that, the constitutional amendment was proposed. Repeatedly, King remained a symbol of unity and mediator in unresolvable political circumstances as well as took a leading role in royal democracy in the globalisation contexts.

In the new election in September 1992, Chuan Leekpai, the leader of the Democrat Party won the election and became a new prime minister. Chuan showed his image as a clean, modest and gentle politician. He took an effort in amending the constitution to make it more democratic and gave an opportunity for social activist groups and NGOs to express their opinions in the public policies, especially in the environment public policies. Chuan also took his action in demolishing the military – bureaucracy monopoly on television and radio. However, his party was criticized by a corruption scandal in 1995. Then, his government was replaced by a coalition government led by Banharn Silpa-archa, with partner parties led by Samak Sunthornvej, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh and billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra in July 1995 (Handley, 2006, p. 367).

According to Pasuk & Chris (2013), the Banharn's government focused on the share-out of the budget among political factions rather than the national economy management, which seemed to boom of its own accord over the previous decade. For instance, Banharn appointed a pliable young politician and then a pliable technocrat to be a financial minister. After that, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, the next prime minister in 1996, promised to set up a 'dream team' to manage the national economy. However, he failed to recruit the technocrats he wanted. Within months, he had lost his finance minister, central bank chief, and finance permanent secretary, and again was forced to accept mediocre replacements. It showed a sign of the looming economic crisis in 1997 (Pasuk & Chris, 2013, p.253). Despite of Thailand's rapid economic growth during the 1980s and most of 1990s, Thailand's foreign debt was rising dramatically from around 31 billion baht in 1992 to over 90 million baht in four years. It was because of the high-interest foreign loans of the country. On the other hand, the Thai baht was kept firmly pegged to the American dollar in order to attract foreign investment. Thus, when the dollar appreciated in 1995, the Thai currency became overvalued. Subsequently, the government faced difficult economic and currency troubles. The government was forced to sever the Thai currency from the US dollar allowing the baht to float freely in June 1997. The devaluation of currency resulted in loss of confidence and weakness in the financial sector. The property market failed dramatically and many banks and firms went bankrupt. Finally, the country was faced with an economic crisis and it affected other countries such as Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia. It was commonly known as the "Tom Yam Kung Economic Crisis" in 1997 (Terwiel, 2011, p. 283).

The economic crisis allowed elite royalists and intellectuals to promote their ideals to rescue the country from the economic crisis. In particular, a concept of moral politics was proposed as the way to solve the problem of a national crisis such as the corruption and inefficiency of coalition governments. This occurred alongside the concept of “good governance” by the IMF (International Monetary Fund) to improve the efficiency and accountability of the public sector, and to tackle corruption, as essential elements of a framework within which economics can succeed. After 1996, good governance became a key element of quality assurance in both private and public sectors in Thailand (Kasien, 2009).

Interestingly, an idea of “good governance” in Thailand was closely related to morality and royal democracy. The term good governance is defined by Thirayuth Boonmi, the former student activists and famous scholars as “Thammarat”. Thammarat refers to collaboration between the public, social and private sectors to create governance and administration that are transparent, legitimate, accountable and effective. It can contribute to the cooperation among people, institutions, political organizations and society. This cooperation will cultivate good morale, knowledge, morality and will be a symbol of hope for people living in extreme tension and suffering as well as during the national crisis (Thirayuth, 2002, p. 29-30).

Although the concept of good governance defined by Thirayuth was different from that of the World Bank and international organization, this concept of good governance was supported by the NESDB (the National Economic and Social Development Board) and the King Prajahnipok's institute during 1998. Thammarat became means a state that runs on Thamma (Dharma). Besides, it was also combined with the King's ideal in sustainable development as a national strategy in solving the economic problem. The concept of Thammarat aimed to empower people and communities, especially NGOs, to recognize in their rights and citizenship awareness. It is believed that NGOs should play an important role in cultivating people's awareness in their rights (Ibid., p. 34-35).

Anan Punyarachun (1991-1992) also took an active role in Thirayuth's Thammarat concept. Anan delivered the keynote address that formally launched the forum on good governance of Thailand Project at the faculty of Chulalongkorn University in March 1998. Anan insisted on conceptualizing Thammarat as a matter of administrative process,

not the power relations between the state and its people. Thai state and every organization should perform Thammarat as the administrative basis. Hence, Thammarat became the Thai - style good governance by using Thamma (moral righteousness, truth, law, etc.) as the norm to control, regulate and discipline the Thai state while it also provides a legitimate ground for civil disobedience of people (Kasien, 2009).

Thammarat campaign was operated as the political and social norm within the Thai state and society. It was combined with the political reform after the national crisis as it appeared in the section 77 of the new constitution of 1997 that “the state shall prepare a political development plan, moral and ethical standard of holders of political positions, government officials, officials and other employees of the state in order to prevent corruption and create efficiency of the performance of duties” (The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 1997).

There was an attempt to prevent the corruption by selecting a good man into the politics while the efficiency of administrative leaders was promoted. The concept of a good man was clearly adopted from the image of the King, who had been regarded as the highest good man. This concept allowed the elite royalists to restore their power in the politics again after they were faced with the trouble in the 1997 economic crisis. For instance, General Prem Tinsulanonda, the Chair of the Privy Council and former prime minister proposed the idea in “National Government”, which was the alternative way for solving a crisis of the country. The national government was a process of selecting a good man into the politics and government (Matichon, 1997). This obviously showed the embeddedness of moral community in Thai politics and political culture.

Moreover, the 1997 constitutional drafting process also gave an opportunity for political participation of Thai people to participate in politics. It was the golden age of the civil society reform while the royalists remained powerful. Thus, the new constitutional drafting and political reform were considered the consolidation between the liberal progressive forces and the conservative forces of elites. Subsequently, Thailand political order was more extensively reformed during the second half of the 1990s (McCargo, 2012, p.3). The moral politics discourse of Thammarat was combined with the political reform after it was encouraged by the King, elite royalists and intellectuals after the 1996.

In fact, the moral politics also played the crucial role in guiding the royal-democracy after 1973.

In short, the moral politics is governed by a good King on the concept of Thai moral community with the royal-democratic form while people are expected to be good Thais citizens. This is the transformation of moral community with the new political ideal during the contexts of liberalism. The state is also expected to be governed by the moral norm or moral standard as the Thammarat concept based on the order of Thai moral community. Therefore, the moral politics seemingly contrasts with the elected democracy since the elected politicians have been considered immoral and selfish and they were the cause of a national crisis during the 1997. In addition, the moral politics with the Thammarat concept clearly showed the inefficiency of the elected democratic system, which did not lead the country to prosperity with peace and harmony. Thus, Thai political reform after the national crisis of 1997 was encouraged by the moral politics as the way to solve the national crisis and to provide a right direction for the country and society. This moral politics was mostly guided by the King's ideas in national and economic development, such as the sustainable development. Nevertheless, the contrast between the moral politics discourse and the elected democracy eventually led to the political conflicts during the 2000s.

2.7 The Change of Power Relations within Thai Society during Thaksin's Government: The New Challenge to Thai Moral Community

Since Thai politics had been developed based on the concept of moral community, it made Thai political and social order and political culture inseparable from morality and the monarchy. Thai democracy actually appeared to be royal-democracy, which was developed after the 1973. It was supported by the roles of monarchy and the network of monarchy, such as Prem Tinsulanonda. It was a process of positioning the monarchy above the politics and on the top of social hierarchy with his barami (charisma). It occurred along with the domestic legitimizing functions and the direct patronage system where the monarchy played the key role as a legitimiser of political power and a supporter in sustaining the government and state policies, promoting the solidarity among elite, military, private sectors and social sectors, imposing sanctions on immoral governments, and becoming a symbol of national unity (Thak, 2007). Meanwhile, the monarchy was

also supported by many groups of people and organizations both inside and outside their network such as government officers, technocrats, private companies, civil sectors, the sangha and so on. All of them helped to promote the royal power in barami (charisma) and sacred of the King into the public understanding both in reality and imagination through organizing the special rituals, ceremonies and events to celebrate loyalty as well as producing and publishing materials related to the royal family. The pictures and stories of the King had been pervaded in the public's everyday life since the early 1980 such as on television and other forms of media, billboards, posters, in theatres, public malls, conference halls, and offices (Thongchai, 2016). It made many Thais feel more relevant to the King as their emotional reality and also gave them the illusion in the power relations between the King and people in sacred and virtuous ways. Thus, it formed the Thai moral community which the monarchy became the centre of sacred, merit (goodness) and symbolic unity of community. Meanwhile, many Thais belong to this community with the shared beliefs, sentiments, perceptions and consciousness. It showed the traditional power relations within Thai society that were based on the moral hierarchy structure with the King at the top. Notably, it expressed the connection among the moral community, political power and democracy during the long reign of King Bhumibol.

However, after the Thaksin's government era there was a transformation of power relations within Thai society, particularly in the local areas. It was because Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai Party were successful in their populist policies and able to gain a tremendous support from the grass roots. This made his party won a landslide election again in 6 February 2005. Thaksin's and the Thai Rak Thai Party's success in the elections led to major changes in power relations within Thai society.

The first major change was the shift in the patronage system and political alignment in Thai politics. In the past, Thai democratic parliament had been characterized by the coalition government which comprised of many small and medium-size parties and organized internally around the powerful factions. The maximum size of parties and factions was constrained by the preference for a minimum winning coalition in the parliament. These factions were the root of corruption and a patronage relationship when the cabinet seats became rewards or negotiation in the politics (Ockey, 2004, p. 46-47).

However, the 1997 constitution changed the electoral system to combine the plurality system with the proportional system. The House of Representative consisted of 500 members, 100 of which were elected on the party-lists and 400 of which were elected on a constituency basis while provinces were divided into the smaller constituencies. Thus, the voters could cast their votes for one candidate in their constituency. The aim of this electoral system was to reduce vote-buying and an influence of political canvasser in a small constituency. The candidates could present themselves directly to the voters while the voters could develop a closer relationship with the candidates and could check their accountability. For the party-lists system, each political party had to submit a list of not more than 100 candidates to the Election Commission and the whole territory of Thailand was regarded as the constituency. Thus, the prime minister and the cabinet were expected to come from the party-list members of the House of Representative. Moreover, the constitution also offered the opportunity for technocrats, businessmen, professionals or basically non-provincial boss-type candidates to enter politics without electioneering in order to reduce the vote-buying and strengthen the political party. Hence, it provided the opportunities for national-level capitalists to form political parties and access a state power like as a case of the Thai Rak Thai Party (Prajak, 2013).

Consequently, the new electoral reform supported a large political party in the parliament and strong executive power of the government while reducing the power of the smaller political parties and factions. Thus, the smaller factions had to join the larger political factions or parties in order to obtain a share of patronage. This enabled the Thai Rak Thai Party to employ a new strategy in creating the grand coalition of factions and parties to set up the coalition government by dividing the cabinet seats into smaller shares and making it difficult to implement. Subsequently, it limited the ability of a single faction to undermine the coalition. Thaksin supported many parties to ally with the Thai Rak Thai Party in a coalition government to ensure their position in the coalition and in the cabinet. Thai Rak Thai managed to coerce other parties to merge with Thai Rak Thai. This new patronage system sustained the grand coalition government of the Thai Rak Thai (Ockey, 2004, p. 47-48).

Furthermore, Thaksin also controlled the power of political factions in his party by assigning the factional leaders. Most of prominent cabinet members came from his inner circle, family-connected allies, or technocrats and professionals, and Thaksin frequently

rotated or reshuffled his cabinet members in order to maintain his power control (Prajak, 2013). The new patronage system organized by Thaksin and the Thai Rak Thai Party changed the nature of the patronage system in Thai politics, political factions and parties' alignment. Thaksin and his party were successful in using the populism policies and rural subsidy projects in the rural parts of Thailand. This was also considered a major change in the local power politics.

According to Prajak (2013), Thaksin's political projects and the Thai Rak Thai's political strategy reshaped the local politics in three significant ways: changing the balance of power among political bosses and families in each province; intensifying extent conflicts among them; and making provincial bosses' social and political standings more vulnerable. Thaksin organized the political alliances with the prominent provincial bosses or most influence men in all regions such as Narong Wongwan at Pare and Sanoh Thienthong at Sae Keaw province by offering them a constituency seats in the electoral system (Prajak, 2013). He also recruited local politicians and vote canvassers who had their own electoral networks in place, such as provincial councillors to join Thai Rak Thai (Ockey, 2004, p. 45). Therefore, Thai Rak Thai candidates belonged to both a party brand and prominent political clans in the province which were supported by their family networks, electoral networks and the Thai Rak Thai Party. This direct intervention altered the balance of power among provincial politicians. The political strategy of Thai Rak Thai reduced the power and political position of the provincial godfather under his administration while he still received tremendous support from the rural voters (Prajak, 2013).

Moreover, Thaksin also intervened in the bureaucratic system and politicalized the senior bureaucracy by creating the CEO Governors to extend executive authority into the provinces. The CEO Governors' roles change the power position of the local godfathers. It was a massive change in the political culture because the CEO practice replaced the old personal bonds (Phuak), with a direct, universalized relationship between citizen and state (Pasuk & Chirs, 2009).

The third major change during Thaksin's government was the shift in economic power in the country. His new economic policies and new political and capitalist alliance ultimately affected the rural development that was monopolized by the ideal of royal development

for a long time. In addition, after the economic crisis in 1997, Thailand had suffered from a huge debt payment to IMF. Thaksin, as a hope agent, promised to recover Thailand from the IMF's debt. He presented a different economic model from the neoliberal model that the IMF tried to introduce to Thailand in dealing the crisis. The model believed that growth came from well operating markets and government's role was to create the laws and institutions to enable such system. The role of government was to protect and promote the private sector to overcome disadvantages of competing against more advanced economies. Thus, Thaksin government pursued the idea of creating a new structure of production at the grassroots by introducing the technology and marketing opportunities such as the OTOP project and a village fund program. It was the Dual-Track Development Strategy that focused on outward orientation in improvement the stability in banking and grassroots development (Pattana, 2012). He also moved a capital (or capitalism) closer to the people under the brand of populist policies. Rural people were imperfectly integrated into the market economy (Pasuk & Chris, 2009). Thaksin imposed a moratorium on \$1.6 billion in debt owed by the country's farmers, lent \$23,000 to each of Thailand's 70,000 villages and introduced record-setting budgets that sent the debt rising again (Arnold, 2003). As a result, he was able to stimulate economic growth and the rural villagers had more opportunities to access the capitals and gained more economic power in a capitalist market. Besides, his populist policies changed the local politics system. Local politicians had to rely on the party to implement the policies while people voted for politicians based on their parties (Pattana, 2012). Subsequently, Thai Rak Thai gained the mass votes supported from the rural areas.

Thaksin was also successful in gaining supports from several alliances and networks. For instance, he created an alliance network with the ex-radicals from the October event in 1973-1976. These groups of people helped him to set up the Thai Rak Thai's social agenda. They also legitimized Thaksin to journalists, social activists and NGOs from the same generation. This was because they believed that the state power could solve all problems that they concerned and demanded. The other networks that joined the Thai Rak Thai Party were the business groups such as CP, telecom companies, the Land & House, Italian and media and entertainment, education, included Manager Group of Sondhi Limthongkul (the key leader of the yellow shirt protests). Thaksin also created several allies in the key cohort, for instance, several of Class 10 members were promoted to

higher posts (Pasuk & Chris 2009, p. 70-71, 250). The major telecommunication firms had financial links to the Thai Rak Thai Party or contested seats for the Thai Rak Thai Party (Ockey, 2004, p.48). Therefore, the vast alliance networks supported Thaksin to gain the legitimacy from every group in the country before the conflicts emerged and some of his network deviated from him, such as the Manager groups led by Sondhi Limthongkul, who organized the anti-Thaksin alliance movement in 2005 and eventually created the People Alliance for Democracy (Yellow Shirts Movement).

All of the power shifts during Thaksin's government reflected the transformation of power relations within Thai society at both national and local levels. It was the first time that a Thai prime minister successfully received the mass support from the rural base and was able to organize the grand coalition of political parties and factions by the one political party leading role. The rapid transformation of power relations during Thaksin's government resulted in the conflicts that developed into the anti-Thaksin alliance movements between 2005 and 2014 as well as the military coup in 2006 and 2014. Moreover, it also influenced a new perception of many Thais, especially the rural people. The new patronage system of Thaksin and the Thai Rak Thai Party changed the nature of the traditional patronage system in Thai politics and society, including political factions and political party alignments as well as capitalist alignments. Significantly, Thaksin's government created the new sources of political legitimacy which derived from the electoral votes in democratic system. Therefore, Thaksin's political power was not depended on the legitimate power of the monarchy and balancing of power among government, royalist elites, military and bureaucracy as the traditional power relations.

The consequence of Thaksin's government also changed rural people's perception toward the political system and capitalism. As we can see, more rural people actively took part in political discussions because they had a better understanding of how important the election was as a political mechanism for people to bargain a power with politicians and political leaders. In addition, they viewed economic populism policies as a support from the state to fulfil their capitalist desires in the economic system.

This new perception was in contrast with the traditional moral ideal and social structure of Thai society which was dominated by the elite establishments. As Andrew Walker (2012) noted, there was a significant difference between the policies of Thaksin—which

eroded the moral authenticity of rural culture by promoting immoderate economic expectations, and the King's sufficiency economy ideas – which are anti-capitalist and anti-globalization, and also anti-Thaksin to a degree (Walker, 2012).

Consequently, the change of power relations during and after Thaksin's government affected the traditional power relations among the monarchy, the network monarchy and people in moral hierarchy structure. The new political and economic policies opened more the opportunities and rights for rural people to access political power and capitalists. It was a direct response to the capitalist demands and aspires of many rural people and compatible with the new contexts of the rural society which was more modernized and closely linked to the global market economy. It intensified the political conflicts within Thai society, especially the conflicts between the ideal of moral politics and elected democracy. It became the reason why Thaksin regime was overthrown after the military coup of 2006.

2.7.1 The Formation of Political Conflicts during Thaksin's Downfall

The change of power relations during Thaksin's government contributed to the political conflicts during and after his period. Most of the conflicts were intensified by moral politics discourse, especially in anti-the corruption and immoral legitimacy of the Thaksin regime, which altered the moral politics discourse under royal democracy and the perception and sentiment of many Thais. Meanwhile, the difference between the two political ideals of the traditional moral politics and the liberal democracy was magnified and it eventually led to the divided conflicts in the society and politics.

The conflict started from a disagreement between Thaksin's government and NGOs. The problem expanded from the case of Pak Mun Dam protest in 1990s led by the Assembly of the Poor and the protest in Hat Yai from the case of Thai-Malaysian cooperation in a natural gas pipeline construction when Thaksin was meeting with the Malaysian premier in December 2002. It ended in violence forcing Thaksin to eventually hold a meeting with the Assembly of the Poor and other NGOs leaders. Thaksin portrayed the NGOs protestors as dishonest recipients of foreign funding. After that, the government drafted a new law to register and control NGOs and this led to dissatisfaction of many NGOs at that time (Pasuk & Chris, 2009).

According to Nidhi (2014), the conflict between Thaksin and NGOs was not only because Thaksin had broken a promise with the Assembly of the Poor and other NGOs but it was because Thaksin purposed the new economic projects which offered the opportunity for the private sector to exploit community resources. The government policies challenged the principle of community development purposed by NGOs. As a result, NGOs were very keen to overthrow Thaksin's government and his family's political involvement. This intention was well supported by the Thai elites who also had every intention to expel Thaksin from the prime minister as his popularity seemed to create instability of their political status (Nidhi, 2014).

This showed the conflict of interests among NGOs, Thaksin and elites. The conflict contributed to promoting the moral politics ideal with royal-nationalism discourse to oppose Thaksin's political power. Later, many projects and policies introduced by Thaksin's government were heavily criticized. The scandal of the purchase of x-ray baggage scanning devices (CTX 9000 DSi) for Suvarnabhumi Airport, for instance, delayed the opening of the airport by a year (Alongkorn, 2007). Thaksin's privatization plan in State Enterprises such as Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) and the PTT Group (Thai Premier Multinational Energy Company) also faced with some 50,000 protesting from EGAT employees, who disagreed with this plan. Moreover, Thaksin was accused of human rights violation in his drug war policy and his policy in dealing with the insurgencies in the Deep South of Thailand. The protests against Thaksin's business transaction and his policies were organized both in Bangkok and in large provincial cities such as Chiang Mai led by the anti- FTA Thai-USA group. A petition was organised and signed by more than 50,000 citizens, which triggered a court procedure against any person in office and the Prime Minister. These actions forced Thaksin to dissolve the parliament and call for a snap election on 2 April 2006 (Terwiel, 2011, p. 291).

The expansion of conflicts had also encouraged by the academicians, opposition groups and media during 2004 to 2006. During 2004 and 2005, the movement of anti-Thaksin groups was set up by "Chomrom Khon Ru Tun" led by Lieutenant General Chareonsak Tiangtham who were close to Lieutenant Commander Prasong Sunsiri, ex-secretary of the prime minister during General Prem Tinsulanonda's government. The group was also joined by around 500-600 people, many of whom were academicians, researchers,

businessmen, elite royalists and others from several occupations (Matichon weekly, 2004, p.11).

After that, “Kabuan Kan Khon Ru Tun Thaksin” (We know Thaksin’s true political motivation) and “Kabuan Kan Klead Thaksin” (the anti-Thaksin movement) movements were formed. These movements were led by well-known academicians and ex-student activists such as Therayut Boonmee, Ammar Siamwara and Somkiet Tangkitvanich. They openly criticized Thaksin’s populism policies such as the village funds and Bank for the Poor. After the public was more aware of Thaksin’s corrupt policies, more intellectuals, NGOs, academicians and other groups joined the anti-Thaksin movement. The State Enterprises Worker’s Federation of Thailand, for example, organized a seminar on “the Role of State Enterprises Worker’s Federation of Thailand in Regionals” in Nakorn Si Thammarat province. This seminar was considered crucial to the anti-Thai Rak Thai Party campaign (Matichon weekly, 2004, p. 9.).

In the meantime, the Democrat Party won the election in Bangkok’s gubernatorial election on 29 August 2004 with 911,441 votes. The victory was a result of the anti-Thaksin and the Thai Rak Thai Party trend consisting of many urban middle class, intellectuals, scholars and opposite politicians from the Democrat Party. The anti-Thaksin movement expanded throughout Bangkok, perimeters and nearby provinces (Matichon weekly, 2004, p.10.).

Even though Thaksin attempted to promote a positive portray of himself and his policies through media, and prevented the media to criticize him or his policies, the tensions had come to a boil when Thaksin attempted to control the media and curb press freedom, especially after “Muang Thai Rai Subda”, which broadcast on MCOT TV. was removed from the programme on 15 September 2005. Sondthi Limthongkul, who was the moderator of this television programme, began to organize “Muang Thai Rai Subda” by using other different venues. At first, it was held at the Sriburapha Conference Hall in Thammasat University on 23 September 2005 and broadcasted live through ASTV satellite and other channels owned by the Manager Groups. Then, it was moved to Lumpini Park. Sondthi and his provocative character and eloquent word strategy had an impact in mobilizing people to attend his show. Sondthi was successful in mobilizing people who disliked Thaksin’s government administration and his policies. Thaksin’s

government was questioned about his corrupt policies and a conflict of interest with the Shinawatra business group such as concession of mobile phone which shared the interest with AIS company, exempting tax for IP Star satellite of Shin Satellite Company, converting mobile phone concession in taxation and alleged corruption in the Suwanaprom airport project as well as a case of Thaksin's family shares in Telecommunication Company Shin Corp which was sold to Singapore's Temasek Holding on 23 January 2006 (Ghosh, 2006). After this event, the number of allies had increased drastically due to the reaction of people's nationalism sentiment against transferring state's property to an overseas company. The reaction was also encouraged by Sondhi's campaign. Sondhi's popularity had grown immensely. "Sondhi's fever event", where a large number of people came to attend Sondhi's speech daily. Sondhi became the leader of the anti – Thaksin's government campaign and he was determined to remove Thaksin from his power. It was the beginning of The People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) or the Yellow Shirts movement, which was formally established on 8 February 2006. The PAD was joined by people from various classes in the Thai society who railed against Thaksin and his party. The supporters included the state enterprise labor unions and the anti – privatization groups, activists from the people's sector (phak prachachon), urban middle classes, conservative Buddhist groups from Chamlong Srimuang, the former leader of the Palang Dharma party and his Dharma Army", who claimed to join the protest until Thaksin decided to step-down, Southerners, civil government officers, and the elites who were close to the monarchy (Rachanikul) (Kengkit & Hewison, 2009).

The People's Alliance for Democracy had a prominent role in the demonstration against Thaksin and his policies. It was led by the five leaders from different sections; Sondhi Limthongkul, Major General Chamlong Srimuang, Somsak Kosaisuk, Phipop Thongchai, and Somkiet Phonangpaibul. They employed modern media to campaign against Thaksin's government. The PAD supporters wore yellow, which is the royal colour and claimed that they were defending King Bhumibol Adulyadej and the monarchy against the alleged disloyalty of Thaksin. Thaksin was accused of insulting the King in many occasions including when he sat on the Chair in a position similar to the royal majesty's position in the National Buddhist ceremony at Wat Phra Kaew on 10 April 2005. Thaksin also challenged General Prem Tinsulanonda, the high respected elite person and the chair

of the King's privy council, when he addressed among the gathering of high – level bureaucrats that the “extra – constitution person” with a high degree of charisma (barami) wanted to remove him from office appointed by the King. His remark referred to General Prem Tinsulanonda, the Chairperson of the Privy Council. Since this event, Thaksin was intensely accused of insulting the monarchy or Royal prerogative (Lamed Prarachaaumnaj) by the media and public, particularly publication in the manager media group (Pu Jad Karn). Although the snap election on 2 April 2006 was boycotted from the opposition parties and the PAD, the Thai Rak Thai Party still won the election with 61.1 percent (460 seats) of the valid votes (Nelson, 2006, p.1-22). Nevertheless, the constitutional court ruled that the election on 2 April 2006 was invalid as it violated the constitution.

Thaksin's government did not only cause a conflict between politicians but it also extended to a divided opinion between the urban middle class such as businessmen and government officers (most in Bangkok) as well as the elite royalist in the network of monarchy, notably Prem Tinsulanonda and the lower class. James Ockey (2004) analyzed the reasons behind of Thai middle class in joining with the yellow shirt movements and explained that the middle class believed in their attitudes and ability to support the democracy development. Since the 1992 uprising, the middle class expressed their decision to protect their democracy from corruption and vote buying and supported the writing of the new constitution. Ockey addressed that the middle class, the media and academicians who promoted the democracy focused on the reform. They saw politicians as being corrupt and that the lower middle class were not capable of effective participation in democratic politics. The evidence of this incapacity was the practice of vote buying. It was believed that the lower class were not able to vote for the ‘good people’ in the politics. This was why the middle class supported the new constitution that was designed to encourage “good people” to both regulate and dominate politics (Ockey, 2004, p. 168). Thus, Thaksin's government and the election results betrayed their trust in the electoral system and the legitimacy of the 1997 constitution. A large support that the Thai Rak Thai Party and Thaksin received from the lower - middle class emphasized the idea that the lower middle class were not capable of making good judgement. This reflected the disposition and belief of the Thai middle class embodied within the moral community.

Meanwhile, the elite class reconsidered their role in the contemporary Thai political conflict after the rise of Sondhi fever (Pasuk & Chris, 2009), General Prem Tinsulanonda, the president of the Privy Council, gave a metaphor statement to 950 cadets at the lecture in Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy (CRMA) on 14 July 2006 that “In horse racing, horse owners hire jockeys to ride the horses. The jockeys do not own the horses. They just ride them. A government is like a jockey. It supervises soldiers but the real owners are the country and the King. The government supervises and employs us in compliance with the policy declared to parliament ... What I mean is that we are the country's soldiers. Governments come and go” (Sutthichai, 2006).

The statement reminded the role of the military while referring to the government as a caretaker of Thaksin's government. The statement was criticized from many scholars because after this statement in July 2006, the military coup took place right after in September 2006. Some scholars viewed that the military coup in 2006 signified the conflict between Thaksin and the network monarchy. Pavin (2014) explained that the network monarchy comprised of the monarchy, the military, the judges, and their defenders has played a large part in instigating and deepen the political conflict after the coup in 2006. This network had functioned both as a powerful interest group and a separate political identity outside the parliamentary system while being supported by the military. The network wanted to maintain their power position although their behaviour severely deepened in the political crisis (Pavin, 2014, p.5).

Even though the conflict between Thaksin and the elites in the network monarchy was unclearly justified by supporting evidence, the military coup in 2006 seemingly showed in solidarity with the monarchy. The military coup was launched by the Council for Democratic Reform under Constitutional Monarchy (CDRM) on 19 September 2006. They introduced a temporary constitution in 2006 and appointed General Surayut Guranon, a member of the Privy Council, as Prime Minister. Simultaneously, the People Alliance for Democracy employed the royal-nationalism discourse and moral politics ideal as their political movement strategies and after the military coup of 2006, they changed their political role to the People's Assembly for Political Reform (PAPR) to support for the CDRM in the hope to reform the political system and overthrow the Thaksin regime, at the same time, to criticize any other anti-military coup movements.

The political conflicts which emerged during and after Thaksin's government appeared to have the same formation as the earlier political conflicts in Thai history where moral political discourse and royal democracy were the centre of attention. The military coup of 2006 claimed that their action was to protect the monarchy institution and to bring peace and harmony back to Thai society. This showed the essence value and belief of the Thai moral community that the normal of Thai society is depended on the stability of monarchy. Meanwhile, it clearly showed a stark contrast between the moral politics ideal and the elected democracy. The crucial problem was that the political legitimacy and the formation of Thai state, political and social order were grounded in the moral community where the King is the only source of legitimacy power and centre of symbolic unity in Thai political culture. The idea of liberal democracy that focused on the efficiency and authority of elected democracy government was evidently not well supported in Thailand. Since the 1970s, Thai democracy has developed under the realm of royal democracy with a strong belief in sacred and merit power of the King.

2.7.2 The Rising of the Red Shirts: The Challenge of Moral Community

After the military coup in 2006, the Constitutional Court decided to dissolve the Thai Rak Thai Party on 30 May 2007, ruling 111 members of the party committee to be removed from politics.¹ Consequently, the result of the election held on 2 April 2006 was invalid as it contravened constitutional law. Thaksin then announced that he would not take up the position of Prime Minister again in order to elicit sympathy from the people and his supporters.

The Constitutional Court's actions and the Thai justice procedure in general dismayed Thaksin's supporters who sympathized with his circumstance. Subsequent questions were

¹ It needs to be mentioned that the members of Constitutional Court had supported the military coup in 2006. The Constitutional Court was thus criticized for being a political instrument of the anti-Thaksin alliance. When the 1997 Constitution was nullified, the military coup committee announced a temporary constitution of 2006, in order to legitimize its political authority and place the work of the court under its direct supervision via the Constitutional Court Committee. The aims of this move were to erode Thaksin's political role and power. In addition, the King's speech, given to members of the Administrative Court on 24 May 2007, had a crucial impact on the nation, as afterwards the Constitutional Court decided to dissolve the Thai Rak Thai Party, on 30 May 2007. For details concerning criticism of the role of the Constitutional Court and the King, please see the Thai language article by Tanai Ketwongkot, 2010 ("The Role of the Constitutional Court Institute and judicialization", Retrieved May 20, 2016 from <http://www.pub-law.net/publaw/view.aspx?id=1462>).

asked as to the role of the Constitutional Court in Thai society. A conflict in political ideas between those from the anti-Thaksin, anti-military coup, pro-Thaksin, and pro-democracy groups was triggered. The escalation in political conflicts within Thai society arose from social and political groups demanding the constitution to be amended and from the conflict that took place between the yellow shirt and red shirt groups.

The red shirts group was led by the Democratic Alliance Against Dictatorship (DAAD) or the United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) at the present. The DAAD was established on 15 June 2007. The group consisted of Thaksin's supporters, pro-democracy activists against the yellow shirt movements, the anti-the military coup group (Sopranzetti, 2012, p.24). The UDD Red Shirts was led by the secretary, Jatuphorn Prompan, and other leaders, Nattawut Saikua, Veera Musikapong, Charan Ditthaphachai and Weng Tojirakarn. They aimed to restore a democratic system where everybody had a fair chance.

After the new constitution was promulgated, a general election was held on 23 December 2007. Nevertheless, The People's Power Party (originally the Thai Rak Thai Party, which was dissolved by the Constitutional Court) won a majority of seats (226 of the 480 seats) and set up the six-party coalition government on 6 February 2008, with Samak Suntharavaj as the Prime Minister (Terwiel, 2011, p. 300). However, Samak's government was considered as a proxy for Thaksin. When Samak attempted to amend the new constitution, the PAD moved against Samak and seized Government House to pressure Samak to resign.

At the same time, the UDD Red Shirts launched a counter – movement to defend the right of Samak as the elected government. The PAD's protest escalated after the Constitution Court found Samak guilty of hosting a television cooking show and accepting payment from the show's sponsors. The People's Power Party then chose Somchai Wongsawat, Thaksin's brother in – law, as the new Prime Minister. This led to a huge discontent and it escalated to another protest. These conflicts led to discriminatory opinions among Thai people in society and triggered violence between the two groups. The political propaganda was generated by each group to help mobilize people to fight against each other, resulting in severe social disparity and conflicts. For instance, the PAD announced the political propaganda “the People Revolution” (Prachapiwat) on 14 September 2008

to motivate people to act against the corruption in order to protect the nation and monarchy. The aim of People Revolution was to reform Thai politics and morality of Thai society through social revolution. It led to a violent crackdown on 7 October 2008 when thousands of the PAD supporters surrounded Parliament to prevent Somchai from announcing his government's policies to the Parliament as mandated by the Constitution. In contrast, this situation was intensified by the anger of red shirt protestors and it led to a violent confrontation between the two groups in several parts of Thailand. In Chiang Mai, for example, a confrontation between the red shirt protestors of Chiang Mai 51 group and the yellow shirt protestors of PAD on 26 November 2008 resulted in a tragic death of one yellow shirt supporter (Prachathai, 2013). At the same time, the red shirt protestors confronted the yellow shirt protestors at Vibhavadi soi 3 on 25 November 2008. The incident caused eleven people injured, three motorcycles and one public telephone booth burned (OKnation, 2008).

Then, the PAD's sieges and the protests ended after the Constitutional Court dissolved The People's Power Party, Chart Thai Party, and Mashimathipatai Party on 2 December, 2008. Somchai's Government was dissolved and the PAD ended its protests. After the PAD announced their victory and ended their movements, the political situations in Thailand have never gone smoothly and the conflicts have never disappeared. When Abhisit Vejjajiva became the 27th prime minister and formed the coalition government with the Bhumjaithai party led by Newin Chidchob and other three minor parties, a series of negotiation behind the scenes occurred on 17 December 2008 (Terwiel, 2011, p. 299).

The red shirt movement opposed Apisit's government in return. They viewed that Abhisit had tricked the system and had overruled the wish of the majority of the people and they felt this government was illegitimate and undemocratic by the support of the military coup. The red shirts organized the political rally in Bangkok and occupied the Ratchaprasong intersection and Silom business area in order to pressure the government and call for justice and election. The red shirt protest held a long demonstration from April 2009 to May 2010. They organized the large demonstration on 12 March 2010 to pressure Abhisit to dissolve the parliament. However, Abhisit responded to the protestors by using the internal security act in Bangkok and surrounding provinces during 11 to 23 March 2010, and by setting up the Centre for Resolution of Emergency Situation (CRES) headed by Suthep Thaugsuban, the vice - prime minister of security at the 11th Infantry

Regiment King's Bodyguard in Bangkok. Then, the red shirt protestors moved to the 11th Infantry Regiment King's Bodyguard to further pressure the government. After that, they drew more than 3,000 cc. of blood and poured it at the front of the Democrat party and Abhisit's house for their symbolic ritual. The government eventually organized a negotiation between the UDD leaders and the government representatives at the King Prajadhipok's Institute on 28 March 2010. Nevertheless, the negotiation between them was unsuccessful. The UDD red shirt called for the mass demonstration again on 3 April 2010. Even though Abhisit declared that he intended to dissolve the parliament on 6 December 2010 and promised for the early election on 23 January 2011, there was no confirmation from the government. Meanwhile, the violent situations occurred repeatedly, particularly the military violent crackdown on 10 April 2010 at Ratchadamnoen road which resulted in 21 deaths and more than 22 injuries from this event. After that, the several violent events continued to occur such as the M79 bombing at Silom and Sala Deang on 22 April 2010 (Bandit et. al., 2011, p. 3). It was followed by the assassination of General Khattiya Sawatdiphol, known as the moniker Sae Daeng, by the sniper shot on 17 May 2010. The military ordered a crackdown again on 19 May 2010 after the protestors set fire to many buildings and Central World shopping mall. UDD leaders were arrested while 94 protestors were dead and around 2,000 were injured (Nelson, 2012).



Figure 2.3 The front cover of “khon sia deang” newspaper on 13 May 2010. It showed the deaths of 21 red shirt protestors during the military violent suppression on 10 April 2010. *Source:* khon sia deang newspaper, 13 May 2010, 2 (13), front cover page.

The aftermath of May 2010 greatly divided Thailand into the yellow shirts and the red shirts. The government accused the red shirts of Thaksin's followers who wanted to create a new Thai state. The government reported that there was the secret army called "the men in black" who orchestrated the violence since the 10 April violent suppression. Additionally, the government used the term "terrorist" to identify the group of people who used the violent actions during the protests while insisting that the military did not harm the people (Bandit et al., 2008, p.3). The government also claimed that Thaksin played a crucial role in escalating violence or in any alleged the UDD master plan to topple the government and anti-monarchy (Askew, 2010, p.310-317). Thus, Thaksin and the red shirts became the new enemy of the state that threatened to the security of Thai nation-with-monarchy.

Meanwhile, the red shirts had grown more independently and separated themselves from the UDD Red Shirt group after the May 2010. Many people were disappointed with the leading role of the UDD Red Shirt leaders during the protest while the experience they gained from taking part in this prolonged protest helped them develop further ideology such as justice and equality and have a clearer vision of how to improve their organizational structure. This led to several splinter groups with somewhat different ideologies, strategies and tactics. These groups were not part of the UDD but remained under the larger umbrella of the red shirts (Nostitz, 2014, p.181).

The emergence of the red shirt movement's independent organization structures in several regions of the country led to the construction of a new social relationship and community network as well as the political perception and consciousness that did not integrate well with the socio-cultural structure and political order of the Thai moral community with the King at its centre. The dissemination of information within this group of communities, particularly on media and in political learning during the long protests, was very important for a construction of new political ideology and consciousness that deviated from the ideology and belief in moral community. Therefore, the development of the red shirts reflected changes in power relations, political perception and consciousness within rural Thai society, especially the new paradigm of the democratic system and ideal. Rural people had a better understanding of the democratic system; they knew they could negotiate and deal with state-government power. This was seen during Thaksin's

government where rural subsidy policies were successfully launched. Subsequently, the red shirt communities emerged as the new challenge to the order of moral community. These communities have differed by the diversification of beliefs, ideologies, emotions, values and interests according to the differences of experiences and positions of individuals, social classes and groups.

Meanwhile, the ambiguous and unspeakable truth behind the military coup of 2006 and the military's violent suppression of the red shirt protests in 2010, accompanied by further suppression through the use of the Article 112 of Thai Criminal Code, led to a rapid loss of faith in the monarchy and to more questions arising within the hidden transcript of the *ta sawanng* ('knowing the truth') community of the red shirts. Thongchai (2014) stated that *ta sawanng* communities were widespread across the country, especially among those from the lower income classes. These communities have continued to use anti-monarchy rhetoric, but using metaphors, codes, metonymical insinuation and a large number of allusions, those only understood by the communities themselves, and which do not cross into illegality under the *lèse-majesté* law (Thongchai, 2014, p. 90 - 98).

The red shirt protests defended political society's direct transactions with power in all its regular and irregular forms, rejecting the view that economic development and other matters of state should be guided by the elite – members of which believe they are the embodiment of virtuous power – located in the nation's capital (Walker, 2012, p. 210-213). According to them, their calls for justice and social equality were simply reflecting the word of democracy (Sapranzetti, 2012).

On the one hand, after Abhisit dissolved the parliament on 9 May 2011 and took effect on 10 May 2011. The new election was held on 3 July 2011 with the hope that the new election would solve the political crisis. Nonetheless, the Pheu Thai party led by Yingluck Shinawatra, the younger sister of Thaksin won the majority votes in the new election with 265 seats while the Democrat obtained 159 seats. Again, Thailand was struck with polarization between the Thaksin camp with the PAD protests since the end of 2005 and the anti-Thaksin camp and where the Democrats were on firm ground as an anti-Thaksin camp (Nelson, 2012).

Yingluck's government was heavily criticized. Yingluck was accused of being Thaksin's clone. When Yingluck's government proposed the blanket Amnesty Bill and amending

the constitution, it triggered the anti-Thaksin protest. After a draft amnesty bill had been debated and approved by the House of Representative, the Democrat Party's politicians moved out and then organized the street protest led by Suthep Thaugsuban, the prominent leader of the Democrat Party. At first, they called the protest the "People's Democratic Force to Overthrow Thaksinism". Then, the name was changed to the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) with the King as the head of the state and began marching to several government offices in Bangkok on 25 November 2013. Protests were also organized in the other provincial capital cities by the PDRC group supported by the local Democrat party's politicians. Moreover, they were also joined by the other groups such as the group of Buddha Issara, the middle class and elites who were anti-Thaksin and wanted to protect the monarchy, some of the yellow shirt supporters and so on. The PDRC wanted to remove Yingluck from office and aimed to destroy the Thaksin regime and reform the political system. At the same time, the red shirts moved against the PDRC. The violent crackdown between two protester groups happened again until Yingluck dissolved the parliament and announced the new election in February 2014. However, the election was obstructed by the PDRC protestors. Then, the constitutional court nullified the election on 21 March 2014 and removed Yingluck and other senior ministers from office. So, Yingluck became a caretaker prime minister while the protest was still going on. After that, the military intervened in the political conflicts by organizing a coup on 16 June 2014. The PDRC stopped their movement and the military coup (National Peace and Order Maintaining Council) established the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). The NCPO repealed the 2007 constitution and declared the martial law. Then, they appointed Prayut Chan-o-cha as Prime Minister to govern the country and prepare for the political reform, drafting the new constitution and organizing the next election. Nevertheless, the uncertain political future under the government junta unsettled Thailand, while the deeply divided political conflict still exists under the national peace order campaign of the military government. Notably, the PDRC movement and the military coup of 2014 showed their political ideals, desires and actions in according to the order of Thai moral community. It became the reason why Thailand has faced with the unending conflicts and polarization after the military coup of 2006 and 2014.

2.8 Conclusion

To sum up, since 1932 Thailand had remained in a cycle of democracy development, political conflicts and military coup. However, it is the first time that political conflicts had expanded throughout the country when the yellow shirts and the red shirts were joined by many groups of people from every part of the society and the groups continued to grow independently, especially after the military coup of 2006 and the military violent crackdown on 19 May 2010. Power relations within Thai society changed tremendously during and after Thaksin government and eventually led to a change of people's perception toward the politics, a social and economic system, the state, and monarchy. Meanwhile, the military coup of 2006 and 2014, and the conflicts between the red shirts and yellow shirts had broken the unity and political consensus within the Thai society. In particular, the differences between moral politics and royal-democracy which was centred by the monarchy and democracy which focused on justice, rights and equality had been intensified by several social and political groups during the political conflicts from 2005 to 2014.

It is possible to say that these were the results of the formation of moral community with the Thai political and social order. The strong belief in the nature of royal power in *barami* (charisma) and sacred (*saksit*) of the monarchy justified the moral hierarchy structure where the king was the top and became the sources of legitimate power in Thai political culture. The power and status of the monarchy were considered the significant part of Thai political society and situated above the politics in the perceptions and emotions of many Thais. The 1932 revolution was seen as the failed revolution as it did not change power and status of the monarchy in Thai political culture as well as eliminate the moral community which regarded as the basis foundation of Thai political and social order and cultural identity. On the other hand, the failed revolution provoked conflicts over political legitimacy until 1957.

After the Sarit coup in 1957, the monarchy had reinstituted to the highest status and become a symbol of Thai political culture. Political legitimacy was based on the moral power of the King, who was regarded as the great man. This perception was promoted by the networks associated with the monarchy. As a result, the King (Rama IX) became the most popular King, who was situated in the highest revered of Thai people. The monarchy

existed alongside the democratic system, showing the stability of the country as well as the sentiments of Thai nationalism, especially after the 14 October 1973 incident. This restated the status of the monarchy being situated at the top of the realm of normal politics and having superior moral authority in Thai political culture. Political consensus and new political consciousness in democracy had never been fully developed in Thai society. Since the sources of political ideology and legitimacy were based upon the moral power (or merit power) of the monarchy, Thai morality and the state governance were always linked to the status of the King. Democracy in Thailand was rather seen as royal democracy and Thammarat was at the heart of the country's administration, where the King was the centre of moral superiority, played the key role in guiding the democracy as well as solving the national crisis.

The absolute order of moral community in Thai politics and political culture appeared to be in contrast to the elected democracy system and democracy ideal which was based on human equality and rights. This absolutism of a moral community was manifested as the illusion in Thai political culture because it concealed and suppressed the diversity of thoughts and other moral decision values of many groups of people in society while it needed totalisation of belief and emotion of people to support and maintain its righteousness and reality in Thai political culture. This concept did not align with the new consciousness and reality faced by most Thai people in their everyday lives of the new social contexts (Nidhi, 2012).

This incompatibility between Thai moral politics and the new consciousness of many Thais increased during Thaksin Shinawatra's government periods and in globalization contexts. Changes in economic, political and socio-cultural structure during the past few decades of Thai society created the new consciousness and perceptions of many groups within the Thai moral community. This new consciousness occurred in various social sub-groups who joined political protests during the past decade. As several social scientists explained, the yellow shirts and the red shirts political movements were comprised of a wide range of social sub-groups and various social sections and networks (Pinkeaw, 2013; Kuhonta & Aim, 2014; Naruemon 2016). In particular, the red shirt groups developed into several small red shirts groups with different ideologies, desires, identities and strategies after the prolonged protests between two political groups (the yellow shirts and the red shirts) (Nidhi 2010; Taylor 2012; Nostitz, 2014). The challenges

to Thai moral community during the contemporary Thai political conflicts were essentially based on the legitimate power of the King and Thai polity.

Hence, the important issues to be considered are how to understand these changes of people's perceptions, consciousness and emotions to the moral community of Thai politics, what the significant effects of the moral community within Thai politics and political culture are, and what impact it has made to political and social divisions in Thailand. In this regard, more focus has to be drawn on the differences of cultural forces of emotion that linked to the diversification of social backgrounds in experiences on cultural learning, perceptions and classes of several social sub-groups inside the yellow shirts and the red shirts.

As the following chapter, I will demonstrate the differences of cultural forces of emotion of those who had joined the yellow shirt and red shirt protests from Chiang Mai, Udon Thani, Bangkok and Hat Yai. The aims are: to reflect the diversity of thoughts, perceptions, beliefs and cultural emotions among the yellow shirt and red shirt protestors during the contemporary Thai political conflicts; and to further illustrate the embeddedness of the moral community in belief, emotion and thought of Thais as well as in Thai politics and political culture, and its challenges from the new political ideals and social values.

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CHAPTER 3

The Differences of Cultural Forces of Emotions within Thailand Divided Conflicts and Polarization

As previously mentioned, the Thai moral community is frequently faced with the power struggles. In particular, the uprising of the red shirt protests reflected the new challenge to a moral community. This challenge has expanded and developed throughout the country especially after the military coup of 2006 and military violent suppression on May 2010. Meanwhile, the red shirt communities were differed by the diversity of thoughts, ideologies, emotions and values as well as the conflict issues. Similarly, the yellow shirt protests were also comprised with the diverse social and political groups, individuals and networks inside the movement. Therefore, I argue that both groups had never really been internally unified, as they were comprised of a wide diversity of sub-groups who shared different desires, demands and thoughts. Besides, Thai political conflicts cannot be fully comprehended simply by contrasting between two political ideologies: conservative royal-nationalism and liberal democracy. I propose that we should consider and understand more on the diverse backgrounds in experiences, perceptions, emotions and social classes of social actors inside the yellow shirt and red shirt groups. This could be examined through the differences of cultural forces of emotions, which refers to the intense feelings and experiences of learning within the context of social actors' position (Rosaldo, 1989, p. 2). The cultural forces of emotions could reflect the political realities and emotional realities of social actors as they perceived and experienced within their contexts and positions, and as the way that they shared to the others in society. Notably, the differences of cultural emotions could manifest the complexity of Thai political conflicts through the diversity of thoughts, beliefs, emotions and conflict issues within the binary conflicts between the yellow shirts and red shirts in Thailand. In addition, it also shows the embeddedness of moral community as the Thai social and political order and sociocultural forces in the cultural

identity and disposition of many Thais. These made the current Thai political conflicts and polarization more complicated and deep divided than earlier political conflicts in the past of Thai society.

Consequently, this chapter demonstrate the differences of cultural forces of emotions of those who had joined in the yellow shirt and red shirt protests from Chiang Mai, Udon Thani, Bangkok and Hat Yai district in Songkhla. Most of the key informants were between 60 to 70 years old and came from various professions such as a university lecturer, businessman, retired civil servant, vendor, agriculturalist, and NGO worker. The differences of cultural forces of emotions reflected diversity of emotional realities, political realities, thoughts and beliefs among these social actors in each geography location. These geography locations were expressed not only the centre of the yellow shirt and red shirt protests in each region of Thailand, but also illustrated the specific cultural context and subjective position of the social actors as well as the background of experiences of subjectivity. It means the cultural emotions are culturally constructed and it varies from culture to culture (Solomon, 1984).

To fully understand the diverse backgrounds in experiences and perceptions of these social actors, this research employed the interpretative understanding method on the common-sense of experience and perception that the social actors shared. It also included their beliefs, expectations, thoughts and the ways that they understood the social and political realities within their contexts and positions. Those are meaningful to their ideas and values and became the cultural forces to their emotions, social actions and the way that they connected to others in society.

In sum, the aims of this chapter are to show how the differences of cultural forces of emotions reflect the diversity of thoughts, perceptions, beliefs, values, emotional and political realities as well as the underlying causes of conflicts among the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters, as it showed the complexity of Thai socio-political conflicts which lie within the seemingly binary conflicts between the yellow shirt and the red shirt groups. Significantly, the different meanings of politics, democracy and justice among the yellow shirts and red shirts illustrated the complexity of divided conflicts and polarization in Thai society. These further shows the new challenge to the moral community of Thai political and social order centred on the monarchy. Subsequently, the chapter is presented by the

sub-topics on cultural forces of emotions, the political colour groups in different geographic locations, and different meanings of politics and values: 1) Moral Politics: Fear, Disgust and Hate of the Yellow Shirts Middle Class in Bangkok and Udon Thani; 2) Justice: Anger and Fear of the Yellow Shirts in Hat Yai, Songkla; 3) Loyalty: Love and Anger of the Yellow Shirts in Chiang Mai; 4) Love and Anger: Justice and Hope of the Red Shirts in Chiang Mai and Bangkok; 5) Justice: Hope and Feeling of Loss and Fear of the Red Shirts in Udon Thani; 6) Truth and Justice of the Red Shirts in Hat Yai, Songkla.

3.1 Moral Politics: Fear, Hate and Disgust of the Yellow Shirts Middle Class in Bangkok and Udon Thani

Several academicians defined most of the yellow shirt protesters as the established-middle class according to their economic and social status (Nidhi, 2010; Apichat et al., 2013). The changing of economic and social structure during the past few decades of Thai society, and the influence of royal-nationalism discourse encouraged many established-middle class to join with the yellow shirt protests. In their views, Thaksin regime was regarded as a threat for them, the nation and monarchy because they believed that Thaksin wanted to exploit the country through his crony capitalism while he gained the tremendous support from the rural voters as well as the red shirt protests. In addition, they were disappointed with the elected political system that failed to prevent the Thaksin regime from governing the country. The yellow shirt protestors believed that if the Thaksin regime was destroyed, Thai politics and society would be brought back to the normal principles of social order and moral order with the monarchy in the center of this order. In other words, it is nostalgia of the middle class to the traditional social order in a hierarchy structure with the King at the top of this structure (Nidhi, 2010).

However, I argue that these explanations are insufficient to understand the middle class groups who joined the yellow shirt protests. I believe that these people exhibited the common-sense of experiences in their own meanings. That is to say, the middle class joined the yellow shirt demonstration with their good sense and sound judgment to those social and political realities backed by their experiences, perceptions and beliefs formed by their cultural contexts. Furthermore, this common-sense of experiences was also derived from their class-specific experiences of socialization, which Bourdieu called

“habitus” referring to the mental structure of disposition of people as a product of internalization of the division into the social classes in society (Bourdieu, 1997, p.173). It means what they perceived as truth or reality in their sense, thinking and belief was the results of their experiences of socialization within the social class positions. It is part of their disposition that led to distinction between them and other social classes in a society.

This thesis defined the middle class (and also the rural/new middle-class) from the backgrounds of their common-sense of experiences, perceptions, emotions and beliefs rather than the economic class. As E.P. Thompson (1963) mentioned the formation of class was a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), emotions and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and/or opposed to) theirs. Thus, class can be defined by an outcome of experience, while class consciousness is the way in which these experiences are coped in cultural terms as the shared beliefs, values and ideals (William H., 1986). As this thesis focused on the common-sense of experiences of the middle class to understand how they perceived and recognized themselves as the middle class, and how they shared their ideals, beliefs and values among them and the others in society. This is very important to understand how they understand the political and social realities and separate themselves from the other classes in society. In the meantime, the common-sense of experiences and perceptions of the middle class could reflect the embeddedness of moral community which showed in a belief and emotion into the Thai social and political order based on morality (in religion) and charismatic power. It means the common-sense of experiences and perceptions of the middle class actually showed the sense of class and beliefs in morality and power which were cultivated and socialized within the moral hierarchy structure. It appears in the perceptions of social and political realities and expresses in the class bias sense, and a feeling of disgust to the other fellow-men in a society, such as anti-vote buying, anti-corruption and anti-the rural class as uneducated and uncivilized people, as well as lack of good moral due to their easily brought votes and being easily deceived by the politicians (Thongchai, 2008). In the meantime, it became their cultural forces of emotions and reasons as well as their intuition why they supported the power of the traditional institutions like the monarchy, and expressed their feelings in the ultra-royalism to protect the monarchy including their fear and hate of Thaksin. Then, they decided to join the political protests, challenge the election in 2006

and 2014, and support the military coups in 2006 and 2014 to destroy the Thaksin regime. These cultural forces were expressed across the boundary of geographic locations. It also showed that the division between the red shirt and yellow shirt groups depended on their cultural contexts rather than geographic areas.

3.1.1 The yellow shirt middle-class in Bangkok

Most of the yellow shirts in Bangkok are the urban middle class who have good economic and social status and good education. Most of them were retirees and came from several occupations such as civil servants, academicians, and business owners. Although the yellow shirt movements represented the royal-nationalism discourse, their most influential political force was the ideal in moral politics discourse which shows the moral superiority in anti-corruption. It is the ideal that was based on the belief in the nature of the royal power in charismatic (merit/goodness) and morality in Buddhism.

The urban middle class's political discourse was an evidence of bias against the rural class (Thongchai, 2008). It was an expression of hate, fear and disgust towards the rural class, which was expressed by many urban middle class who joined or supported the yellow shirt protests. It occurred along with a moral politics discourse promoted by the yellow shirt movements which claimed that their political strategy was to remove Thaksin's government and the Thaksin regime. It was also a consequence of the moral politics discourse to promote the roles of the King and the elites in the network monarchy since the late 1970s and early 1980s. It emerged alongside the trend of anti-money and vote-buying politics among the urban middle class. When the politicians were corrupt and became the threat of nation and country, the urban middle class believed that the only way to fight back and solve the corruption issues was to promote morals and ethics in every sector of Thai society (Ibid., p. 24). For instance, the taken role of General Prem Tinsulanonda in arguing that corruption was a threat to the nation and the rise of Sondhi fever in Bangkok during 2005 (Pasuk & Chris, 2012), helped encourage the moral politics ideal in anti-the corruption and corrupted politicians among the people who joined the Sondhi demonstrations.

In the meantime, the ideal was also linked to their prior experiences and cultural learning in the discourse of moral politics with royal-nationalism, and the sense of class, in which they believed that the middle class had a crucial role in promoting the democracy as well

as goodness in Thai society. Subsequently, the utterly moral politics and extreme royalism of the yellow shirt supporters manifested the view of good man (khon dee) which was also considered as the good Thai citizen. The term “good man” is based on the belief in morality and in the nature of the royal power in barami (merit/charisma) of the monarchy, where the King was regarded as the highest good man in the moral hierarchy structure. Thus, the good man is one who acts according to morality in the Buddhist doctrines. They also relate the idea of a good man to the good or goodness as opposed to evil forces (Buddhadasa, 1986). Nevertheless, the highest goodness of Thai morality is performed by the King who was regarded as the highest good man or the great man with his superior barami. The Hindu-Buddhism has been served to justify the charismatic power of the King and the reality of morality since the Siamese state and society formation. The belief in charismatic power has been harmonized with the beliefs in supernatural power, magic power and mysterious power of Thais. Therefore, a good man expressed a belief in charismatic power. Meanwhile, the monarchy cannot be separated from morality and morality is involved with power. It became the reason why the good man or good Thais should show loyalty to the monarchy, religion and the nation, which are the main pillars of Thai society. It is strongly believed that a good man must be promoted to govern the country. Good men also have a duty to follow the royal guidance of the King with their faith (love and loyal) and to take possession of morality. These beliefs became the cultural forces of emotions and the ideal in moral politics professed by the middle class who joined the yellow shirt protests. Simultaneously, it showed how the moral community embedded in their belief, cultural identity and disposition.

San (pseudonym), the anti-Thaksin academician and one of the PDRC (People's Democratic Reform Committee) leaders in Bangkok, explained that “.....Democracy should be governed by a good man. However, the problem is the villagers are not capable in deciding who is good for the country. They don't have enough knowledge on democracy. They usually say that they do not accept money in exchange for their votes, but they actually do. Vote buying allows politicians to abuse their positions for their own interests. In developed countries, the shape of society is like a trapezoid where the middle class is the main force of society, but Thai society is like a triangle where the poor is the largest group of the society and the politicians are at the top of society.....Actually, the politicians are a cause of political conflicts in Thai society because they have accumulated

their personal interests for a long time.... The problem is a moral disorder in votes - buying and corruption. Politics is not only about election but it also concerns power. If the villagers were aware of this, they would not have been so poor. Meanwhile, Thai society cannot be separated from the monarchy. We have to think that the monarchy has done a lot of goodness to our society for a long time. For me, the monarchy is an indispensable institution for Thai society. We have the country today because of the King. We have the strong leaders in the past that why we have a nation today. In our country, those who violated the article 112 are bad people. A good man does not have any problem with this law... Goodness is a universal ideal. For me, it is clear that a good man is not corrupt....” (San, personal interview, June 19, 2016).

San’s statement reflected the belief in a good man which is based on goodness in morality and the nature of the royal power in *barami* (merit/goodness) of the King. It showed that Thai politics cannot be separated from the monarchy and morality in Buddhism. Meanwhile, democracy is defined by morality where the monarchy and the elite establishments played the leading role in guiding and promoting the concept of democracy under the moral politics discourse. It is a reason why Thai democracy is classified as the moral democracy which should be governed by a good man, while the King performs as the exemplary center of goodness with his *barami* (charisma) power. The moral democracy shows in stark contrast to the elected democracy which is viewed as the inefficiency political system and governed by corrupt politicians, the major issue of Thai politics and society.

Similarly, “Pa. Kan” (pseudonym), a retired government official who actively took part in the yellow shirt demonstrations during 2005 to 2010, addressed that the Thaksin regime caused political troubles in Thai society and created corrupt politicians. Pa Kan stated that “Thaksin combined politics and businesses together and caused many corruption issues, especially his populist policies. Thaksin spent the state funds for his own interests. It was unfair and he deceived his people. Politics should to serve the public interests, not personal interests.’ This is the main reason why she supported the yellow shirts. She also claimed that ‘I hate cheating and I cannot tolerate the Thaksin regime. I want to do something for society and I devote myself to the people. I decided to be part of the yellow shirt group because I believe in righteousness of the yellow shirt protests. The beliefs of the yellow shirts completely contrasted with the red shirts due to the differences in

knowledges and backgrounds... For me, I had inspected Thaksin for a long time since he worked with Chamlong Srimuang. He is greedy and has tried to take advantage of this country for his own interests and his cronies.... Democracy is important to us, but electoral democracy is not the only system we can use. Democracy should create justice and righteousness in the society. It should not corruption like what happened during Thaksin's government. Meanwhile, monarchy plays an important role in supporting justice and morality in Thai society.... If you ask me whether I love the King. Of course, I love the King and not Thaksin. I trust the monarchy and Thai society should accept that we have a monarchy institution.... I supported the military coup because I was concerned about the crisis in Thai society and it was better than having the Thaksin regime. No one can destroy Thaksin without using the military force'. When asked what justice meant for her, Pa Kan replied 'it is respect to each other. It's when people don't cheat and don't use a power for their own interests and partisans' (Pa Kan (pseudonym), personal interview, May 18, 2016).

This, again, reflected the ideal of moral democracy which was hoped to create justice and righteousness in Thai politics and society. Nevertheless, Pa Kan's meanings of justice and righteousness are heavily based on morality. The idea of justice for her is embedded with a desire to get rid of corruption and corrupt politicians like Thaksin. Her reasons for joining yellow shirt protests and supported the military coup in 2006 were both a cultural force of emotions in opposing to the Thaksin regime and the desire to protect the monarchy. On the other hand, it manifested the embeddedness of the moral community in the illusion of power relations between the monarchy and people in society, especially the feeling of relevance to the beloved King. It is very important in cultivating the belief in the role and position of the monarchy above the politics where the monarchy is situated at the top of the realm of normal politics and with superiority of moral authority in Thai political culture although the monarchy, in fact, played an active role as the political power bloc during Thai modern political history and established the royal-democracy after the mid-1970s (Thongchai, 2016). It also helped justify the power in charisma (barami) of the monarchy, and the status of the King as the highest revered and beloved person in Thai public understanding.

The discourse of moral politics had been integrated with a democracy ideal and royal nationalism. Hence, the discourse of moral politics and the good man are both the cultural

forces of emotions and political ideal in moral democracy because it is a merit and a dharma-based idea of righteousness. In the meantime, the monarchy (and the King) is situated as the highest moral righteousness and charismatic power. The merit and charismatic power of the King (Rama 9) was used to compare with Thaksin's characteristics. While the King has a merit (goodness or bun in Thai language) which he has accumulated throughout his life, Thaksin Shinawatra attempted to act like a King and tried to control the country. It is obvious to many Thais that Thaksin did not have enough merit (bun) to be equal to the King. Hence, Thaksin was considered as a threat to the monarchy (Jem (pseudonym), personal communication, February 20, 2017).

Thaksin was also criticized for many corruption issues and violation of royal prerogatives by Sondhi Limthongkul, one of the PAD leaders and his alliances during 2005 and 2006. Violation of royal prerogatives has frequently been used to question the legitimate power of Thaksin and to create Thaksin as a threat to the monarchy. A book subjected "Kam Khon Lom Chao" (The karma of the royal traitor) by Mho Noi was published in 2010 to promote the discourse of "lom chao" (overthrow the royal) during Abhisit's government before the military violent suppression on the red shirt protests took place during 13-19 May 2010. The book accused Thaksin and his alliance of an attempt to challenge the monarchy. It said Thaksin treated himself as equal to the royal (Tee Ton Sa-mer Chao) while his supporters attempted to create the belief that Thaksin was King Taksin (the king during Thonburi period) in his past life. Therefore, Thaksin's intention to act as equal to the King and the royal family was a bad karma to himself and his family (Mho Noi, 2010, p.152-158).

The belief in karma plays a crucial role in cultivating the feeling of hate, fear and disgust to Thaksin and his supporters, who were portrayed as the evil people. Additionally, Thaksin was also considered as a demerit and immoral person due to his bad karmas. Therefore, the karma in Buddhism, which means an action or deed in the moral causation, became a moral reason and moral judgment of the yellow shirt supporters. Karma also reflected a belief in the moral hierarchy structure. Thus, when Thaksin tried to act as equal to the royal without enough merit (goodness) accumulated, it resulted in the bad karmas for him and his illegitimacy in the politics. So, the moral righteousness justified the feeling of hate to Thaksin and his supporters, the red shirts, because they were considered a threat to the monarchy and an evil force in Thai morality.

This moral righteousness was used by the yellow shirt's protestors, who claimed that their fight against Thaksin's government and the Thaksin regime as a fight against evil. Sak (pseudonym), who was one of the PAD leaders explained that '....If we see something wrong, we should not neglect it. Human should not surrender for the evil such as corruption. It should not be in our culture anymore. Evil can devalue the significant quality of human. Human is better than animals because we have morals. Without morals, you lack a quality of a human being.... (Sak, personal communication, July 23, 2016).

Buddhist morality is clearly integrated with the politics. Thus, righteousness is judged by morality, and Thai political legitimacy is based on the moral power rather than the political consensus in a democratic system. As a result, political legitimacy in Thai elected democracy was questioned. Meanwhile, the moral politics was also used to support the military coup on 19 September 2006, which aimed to remove Thaksin's government and to reform Thai politics by restoring morality and peace as well as protecting the monarchy. The military coup was considered legitimate by the moral politics ideal and the charismatic power of the King when the political consensus of Thai people and the rule of democracy could not uphold the morality of the country's leader.

The moral politics contributed to feelings of hate, fear and anxiety by many yellow shirt supporters because it had been emphasized that Thaksin would assume control of the country and overthrow the monarchy. Thaksin became the enemy or threat of the nation and the King while corruption had been the central problem of Thai politics. In this regard, the yellow shirt supporters did not join the political protests because they were only forced by the royal-nationalism discourse which extremely promoted the loyalty to the King. They joined the protests because they were forced by the moral politics discourse which is based on the belief in morality in the Hindu-Buddhism and in the nature of the royal power in charisma or barami (merit/goodness) of the monarchy. They wanted to protect the monarchy in order to maintain the normal (prakati) of Thai social order and moral order as the true value (khā) of morality. They hoped that this would enable Thai society and people to live in peace and harmony although this moral order is based on the moral hierarchy structure.

In addition, the yellow shirt supporters wanted to preserve their status and prestige of the middle class in the moral hierarchy structure, and to protect the legitimate power of their

belief. This was regarded as the symbolic interests rather than the economic interests. The middle class's discourse of moral politics showed their superior status over the red shirt supporters most of whom were in the lower middle class or the rural class. They perceived themselves as the middle class who more educated and concerned with morality in the politics rather than the lower class. Thus, the moral politics discourse helped justify their social status and maintain the power relations within Thai moral hierarchy structure. The middle class's fear and hate of Thaksin and the red shirts concerned their interests which was beyond the economic interests. Consequently, this fear and hate were a result of the cultural force while their feeling of disgust was a moral reaction to the politicians' corruption and greed. This feeling also extended to a reaction against the rural class who were considered as uncivilized naive in politics because they supported a bad man as Thaksin. Therefore, the moral politics ideal and the feelings of disgust, hate and fear of the yellow shirt middle class in Bangkok clearly expressed the embeddedness of moral community in Thai political and social order and the sense of class in the cultural emotions and identity of many Thai middle class.

3.1.2 The yellow shirt middle-class in Udon Thani

While Udon Thani was regarded as a red shirt province, our attention was drawn to the urban middle class in the province. The yellow shirts in the city of Udon Thani and Kudjab district (suburban of Udon Thani) were a small group of people. This group of the yellow shirts showed that this political division was not simply determined by geographical regions. These people were divided because of their common-sense of experience, perception and the cultural forces. Most of the yellow shirt supporters in Udon Thani are the urban middle class aged between 37 and 75 years old. Some moved from Bangkok to settle in Udon Thani while some had studied and lived in Bangkok before moving back to their hometown. This group consisted of the local businessmen (most of them are the Sino-Thai businessmen), the university lecturers in Udon Thani Rajabhat University, shop owners, doctors, nurses, public health administrators and government officers. Most of their political opinions and perceptions were inspired by the ASTV news and weekly manager media presented by Sondhi Limthongkul (one of the PAD leaders). They believed in the ability and knowledge of the middle class in analysing information and news from the media although they had never took part in any political protest before.

Joe (pseudonym), a motorcycle repair shop owner in Kudjab district, said that “we received more information than the rural villagers. Thus, the middle class do not have the same mindset as the villagers. We have seen many corrupt politicians and corruption in the bureaucratic system, especially, the corruption occurred during Thaksin’s government. For instance, Thaksin’s family sold shares in Telecommunication Company Shin Corp to Singapore’s Temasek Holding on 23 January 2006. This is the worst abuse of entrusted power for private gain and the worst culture for Thai politics and society. It is the money politics. So, we hate Thaksin for this reason” (Joe (pseudonym), personal communication, March 20, 2016).

For them, the rural villagers were unsophisticated and naive because they only received information from their leaders. The villagers wanted only money from Thaksin because they were poor and desperate. It is believed that this was the main reason why the rural class submit to their politicians (Nhong (pseudonym), personal communication, March 20, 2016). Meanwhile, it is said that Isan villagers believed in returning the favour (tob tan bhun khun). That is to say, if someone has done a good deed to them and they have to give a good deed back to those people. Thus, if a politician gives them some money, they have to return their kindness by voting for them. If they do not vote for them, they conduct a bad deed. It is a belief in “karma”. On the contrary, educated people are believed to have better judgement and they can differentiate between good deeds and bad deeds. Therefore, they were disgusted by votes-buying (Anan (pseudonym), personal communication, March 20, 2016).

On the one hand, we need to consider the issue on the conflict of interests between Thaksin’s government and the urban middle class. As we can see, Thaksin populist policies had reshaped the rural economy as well as the local politics since he recruited the local politicians and vote canvassers who had their own electoral networks in place to join the network of Thai Rak Thai party. These people were able to motivate the rural villagers through their local networks and the local radio stations, for instance, the Chomrom Khon Rak Udon 97.5 MHz” (the FM 97.5 Udon Lovers) which was organized by Kwanchai Praipana, a Thai folk songs DJ who later became a prominent red shirt leader in Udon Thani. He had a crucial role in encouraging many local villagers in Udon Thani to support Thaksin and his party as well as the UDD (the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship) movements in Bangkok. He also played a big role in

organising the red shirt protests in Udon Thani. This movement occurred alongside the success of Thaksin's populism policies in many rural subsidy projects which directly responded to the real demands of many rural villagers. The rural villagers became more "urbanized villagers" due to the changes of economic development and modernization during a past few decades of Thailand.

Conversely, the urban middle class felt it was unfair that the rural villagers gained more benefits from Thaksin government's populism policies. They also felt overlooked by Thaksin since he was more attentive to the interests of the rural supporters. Thaksin's populism policies had also affected their local businesses and benefits from having a good connection with the local government offices, schools, hospitals and other local business factions, especially the businesses about education and pharmacy. For instance, the pharmacy and medical businesses were badly impacted by the 30-baht universal healthcare policy introduced by Thaksin's government. The policy affected the financial viability of hospitals and led to poor budget management of many local hospitals. This is why the PAD (People Alliance for Democracy) in Udon Thani was also supported by the doctors, nurses and public health administrators who were dissatisfied with the 30-baht scheme of Thaksin government (Ti (pseudonym), personal communication, June 7, 2017). According to the research of Chokchai et al. (2005) which studied the opinions and the management approaches of the 30-baht scheme projects operators from 59 hospitals in Thailand during September to December 2003, it was found that almost all of project operators (83.1%) agreed that this project might affect the financial management of the hospitals (Chokchai et al., 2005, p. 4).

Many urban middle class in the city of Udon Thani felt that they lost their economic and political interests during Thaksin's government. They also felt insecure because Thaksin was a threat to them and to the monarchy. They were dissatisfied with his populism policies and corruption while more concerns were raised on the mass uprising protests of the red shirts in Udon Thani.

However, this research findings might be inconsistent with the study of Wasana (2017), which found that the ethnic Chinese business community in Udon Thani were most likely to support Thaksin Shinawatra and the red shirts because they gained prominence in the national and regional economic arena after the Thai Constitution of 1997 was

promulgated together with the expansion of global capitalism. It allowed the rise of the Chinese elite in North-eastern region of Thailand despite not having close ties with the central power of the conservative elite in Bangkok. Furthermore, Wasana's study compared the presentations between the Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre and the Udon Thani Thai-Chinese Cultural Centre. The study found that while the exhibitions of Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre were explicitly embodied the sense of loyalty towards the monarchy and the royal family, this is hardly observable in the presentation of the Udon Thani Thai-Chinese Cultural Centre (Wasana, 2017, p.18 - 23).

It cannot be confidently concluded that all the middle class in Udon Thani (also in Bangkok) are supporters of the yellow shirts or the red shirts. We have to consider the conflicts in several dimensions. In case of Udon Thani, we need to consider the conflict of interests among the urban middle class (not only the Sino-Thai businessmen), the rural class, and the political and economic impacts of Thaksin's government. Most of the urban middle class who lived in the city and semi-urban areas of Udon Thani were likely to support the yellow shirts because their local businesses, especially the small and medium-sized businesses such as a pharmacy, were badly affected by Thaksin's populist policies while the local elite gained benefits from the rise in economic power of Udon Thani from expansion of trade, investment and industry in the ASEAN regions. The urban middle class feared that Thaksin crony capitalism would monopolise the whole country. Concurrently, they had the strong feeling of relevance to the King. Some Sino-Thai businessmen who supported the yellow shirt protests in the city of Udon Thani were in tears when they talked about their loyalty and sympathy to King Bhumibol. It is noted that several Sino-Thai businessmen moved from Bangkok to settle in Udon Thani. Although they had lived in Udon Thani for more than 20 years, they still had families and relatives in Bangkok. Hence, they developed close ties with the central power in Bangkok and the relevance to the monarchy.

A comparative study of the presentations between the Yaowarat Chinatown Heritage Centre and the Udon Thani Thai-Chinese Cultural Centre mentioned in Wasana's study alone cannot be concluded that the Thai-Chinese in Udon Thani did not have loyalty to the monarchy. The Sino-Thai businessmen in Udon Thani were fully assimilated as Thais and had embodied the monarchy as much as the Thai-Chinese community in Bangkok. It can be argued that the assimilation of Thai-Chinese community into Thai culture should

not be superficially judged by their business presentation. On the other hand, their feeling to the monarchy should be taken into account. In particular, most of the Sino-Thai businessmen who supported the yellow shirt protests in Udon Thani were 60 years old or over. They grew up in the reign of King Bhumibol (Rama 9) and had been in the long cultural learning processes with the King as the centre of Thai public understanding. This formed a strong feeling of relevance to the King. Lung Phee (pseudonym), a 73-year-old pharmacy owner in the city of Udon Thani, was from Bangkok. He used to live near Chitralada Palace. He had seen many royal family parades. However, his loyalty to King was gradually built up from formal education in school, the images and stories of the King from television and other forms of media.

Therefore, many factors have to be taken into accounts to determine why the urban middle class in Udon Thani are likely to support the yellow shirts rather than the red shirts including the conflict of economic interests, the feeling in relevance to the King, a motivation to uphold the ideal of moral politics of the PAD movements, and the sense of duty of the middle class.

3.1.3 Conclusion

In sum, it is possible to say that the sense of bias of the middle class and feeling of fear, hate and disgust are the cultural forces motivated by the sense of morality. The feeling of disgust was a moral reaction to an action or behaviour that violated normative standards in the moral politics discourse (Rozin et al., 1993, p.588). The meaning of democracy and politics from the yellow shirt middle class's perspectives signified moral community and the sense of class in the moral hierarchy structure of Thai political culture. As well as their desires for preserving their interests, their actions had been shaped and motivated by their cultural emotions, perceptions and conflict of interests among the urban middle class, rural class and Thaksin's government. As a result, it cultivated the culture of fear and hate of Thaksin and the red shirts that they would topple the monarchy and destroy the nation and Thai society.

In my view, they hated Thaksin because his actions violated the normative moral standards, the order of moral community and threatened their political and economic interests. Significantly, he violated the moral superiority and tried to replace the charismatic power of the King and the monarchy with the illegitimate power in their

common-sense of experience and perception. That is to say, the middle class viewed Thaksin as a demerit person (without a goodness or merit accumulated) when compared to the King (Rama 9). Thaksin was, therefore, considered illegitimate in the politics and became as a threat for the monarchy and the nation. This reflected the embeddedness of the moral community in Thai political order in which the legitimate power in politics is based on the charismatic power of the monarchy in Thai cultural politics. Meanwhile, the feeling of hate and disgust were formed by the class bias sense within the Thai moral hierarchy structure, after they perceived themselves as the middle class who has a moral superiority and knowledge than the lower class. This ultimately led to a division between the middle class and the lower class, and a division between the urban group and rural group. Consequently, many urban middle class wanted the moral democracy which is based on the morality in Buddhism (and the charismatic power) in merit and goodness (where the King) in personal (is the highest and a standard of righteousness). This can be argued that the urban middle class did not disregard democracy and an election in a democratic system as claimed by some scholars such as Tamada Yoshifumi (2013) (and Surachart Bamrongsuk (2015). (However, they wanted the country to adopt the moral democracy which is legitimized by goodness and supported by the charismatic power of the monarchy.

3.2 Justice: Anger and Hate of the Yellow Shirts in Hat Yai, Songkla

The yellow shirt supporters in Hat Yai of Songkla in the Southern region of Thailand expressed a different cultural force of emotions in their hate and anger. This reflected different thoughts and beliefs of the groups of people in the yellow shirt demonstration. In particular, the political culture and disposition of the traditional Southerners had been shaped by the culture of “authoritarianism” and “nak leng”, which is the belief in charisma (barami) and influence (ithipol) in Thai political culture.

The yellow shirt group in Hat Yai of Songkla consisted of the social activist groups, NGOs, academicians, artists, local intellectuals, businessmen, vendors in Hat Yai market, and villagers. Their movement started in the late 2005 after Muang Thai Rai Subda TV Program was closed by Thaksin’s government on 15 September 2005. Then, Sondthi Limthongkul, who was the moderator of this television program, began to organize “Muang Thai Rai Subda” public talks in different venues. At first, it was held at

Thammasart University's Conference Hall on 23 September 2005 and broadcasted live through ASTV News satellite and other TV channels owned by the Manager Groups. After that, a talk was organized at the Lumpini Park. Sondthi, together with his provocative character and eloquent words strategy, attracted thousands of people to attend his show and to fight against Thaksin's government and his policies. In particular, after Thaksin sold his shares of Telecommunication Company Shin Corp to the Singapore's Temasek Holding on 23 January 2006, the number of allies increased drastically as people strongly disagreed with transferring state's property to an overseas company. The talks had been transformed into the "Sondthi fever event", where mass of people came to join and follow Sondthi's daily Hyde Park. Sondthi became the leader of anti – Thaksin's government group and launched a campaign to dismiss Thaksin from his power. The People's Alliances for Democracy or the Yellow Shirts movement was then formally set up on 9 February 2006.

The Sondthi fever was also admired by many Southerners. In the South, the Manager Groups office was set up since 1995 broadcasting news and events in the southern regions. While Sondthi was giving a talk in Bangkok, his Muang Thai Rai Sabda program was broadcast every Friday at the Prince of Songkla University. Thus, many Southerners received the news and information from the Manager Media. People were extremely dissatisfied when Muang Thai Rai Subda program was closed down by Thaksin's government because the freedom of press was violated. Hence, many Southerners joined the social activist groups and developed "the network of Songkla's citizens" or the "Pantamit Ku Chart Ku Prachathipatai Songkla" (The Songkla Alliance to Save the Nation and Democracy) on February 2006 in order to fight against Thaksin's government and to call for the political reform. The group cooperated with the PAD in Bangkok. They viewed the elected democracy during Thaksin's government as being illegitimate because it was actually dominated by Thaksin crony capitalism rather than democracy. The Pantamit Songkla (Songkla Alliance) used an orange-black flag as their symbol. In the middle of the flag, it reads "Pantamit Songkla" (Eak (pseudonym), personal communication, January 20, 2016).



Figure 3.1 The flag of the Songkla Alliance to Save the Nation and Democracy. *Source:* Thaiday, n.d., Retrieved May 30, 2017 from <http://www.thaiday.com/asp-bin/Image.aspx?ID=1073426>

People in Songkla had participated in political activities long before the Songkla Alliance (Pantamit Songkla) was set up in 2006. In 1992, the roles of social and political activists in Songkla began when students took part in the demonstration on Black May event. The student activists were inspired by the ideology of student leaders in the event on 14 October 1973. Many of them believed in justice, which refers to righteousness, and wanted to fight for justice in a society. People in Songkla were also involved in a drafting of Thailand constitution of 1997. At that time, they organized “The Assembly of Songkla Alliance for Political Reform” in order to monitor political and social policies. The alliance included the networks from the Prince of Songkla University, Thaksin University, Rajabhat Songkla University, folk song bands, people sectors, and NGOs. Between 2001 and 2005, the alliance scrutinized the Malaysia – Thai gas pipeline project and other social issues in Songkla. Then, they organized a “Friday University” using a classroom in the Prince of Songkla University as a learning space for people. The group started to fight against Thaksin’s government in the case of freedom of press violations such as Matichon media and Muang Thai Rai Sanda TV Program in 2005 (Eak, personal communication, January 20, 2016).

Social activists had divided political opinions. Some supported the red shirt group. However, for the yellow shirts, the main issue they disagreed with Thaksin’s government was corruption. Additionally, the Southerners who supported the yellow shirts believed that Thaksin wanted to topple the monarchy and viewed Thaksin as the illegitimate

authority. They believed that Thaksin's government was unjust and immoral because Thaksin did not only commit corruption but he also offended the King (Rama 9), the person that people admired (with love and faith) and General Prem Tinsulanonda, the Head of the Privy Council and a Southern born politician. Thaksin made them angry. This is also particularly related to Southerners yellow shirts who were 60 years old or over. In traditional Southern culture, a person with honesty and righteousness was highly admired. In other words, they admired and believed in a good man who had a charisma like King Bhumibol and General Prem. This image totally contrasted to Thaksin Shinawatra who was viewed as a disloyal and dishonest person who attempted to overthrow the monarchy. In their view, Thaksin did not have a charisma which is the significant power of the governor or authority. For the Southerners, Thaksin did not come across being generous and fair, which is a characteristic that they called "jai nak leng", which is a character of an influential person whose generosity makes him popular and respected. Thaksin was not popular among the Southerners and he usually portrayed himself as the prime minister of the Northern people. He focused and mainly on the voters in the North and Northeastern regions. He was perceived as being unfair and he was illegitimate because he offended the King and General Prem (Yun (pseudonym), personal communication, January 20, 2016).

According to Anusorn Unno (2011), "jai nak leng" is the main characteristic of Southerners. It shows collaboration, self-confidence, companionship, love of freedom, ingenuity, cunning, and independence. However, this characteristic might not determine the political decision making of the Southerners and might not be related to the Democrat Party, which was perceived as the party of the Southerners (Anusorn, 2011). Nevertheless, the old Southerners usually preferred the ruler or governor who had large family connections and who were highly reliable, which were the characteristics of "nak leng". These qualifications were very important for the local elections and politics of the South before 1994. After that the local elections were more closely linked to the national political parties. Nonetheless, the local political groups tried to express themselves that they were not involved with the national political parties, especially the Thai Rak Thai party because Thaksin and the Thai Rak Thai party were badly presented after Thaksin's downfall and the political conflicts in Thai society. Hence, the local political groups frequently manifested themselves as "nak leng". It is possible to say that the characteristic

of “nak leng” helped legitimate the charismatic power of local politicians in the South (Nathapol et. al., 2015, p.121-123) although it also showed the characteristics of violence and authoritarianism in the local politics of the South. This political culture became the Southerners’, especially the traditional Southerners’, cultural force in expressing the feeling of dissatisfaction, anger and hate of Thaksin.

In addition, many Southerners supported the Democrat Party, particularly Chuan Leekpai, the ex-prime minister and former head of the Democrat Party. Chuan was perceived as being an eloquent and honest gentleman. Meanwhile, the Democrat Party represented themselves as the political party of the Southerners. Hence, the villagers who believed in the Democrat Party and Chuan tended to hate a person who was opposed to the Democrat Party. However, not all Southerners hated Thaksin and loved Chuan. In contrast, many of them disliked the Democrat Party because they believed that the party had never done anything to benefit people in the South and to the country. In fact, they hated the corruption and injustice. They also believed that Thaksin was illegitimate because he did not have a charisma and he offended the King. Thus, the yellow shirt supporters in the South hated Thaksin because of their personal belief rather than a political ideology (Yun, personal communication, January 20, 2016).

Chuan expressed his opinion about Thaksin by saying “Even though I don’t have any political space to play, those who are in power and abuse the power they have should be aware of himself that they would not have a land (pandin) to live” (oknation, 2008). This eloquent word impressed many people, especially those who believed in Chuan and the Democrat party. Chuan’s statement implied the significant meaning of legitimate power in Thai political culture which was based on righteousness in morality and power legitimacy of the monarchy. Hence, if Thaksin used his power in politics without any respect to the monarchy, he would lose his power legitimacy. Consequently, he would not have the land (pandin) to live since most Thais believed that the monarchy had legitimate ownership of the country and the King was the lord of the land (prachao pandin). Thus, if Thaksin became the enemy to the King, he could not live in the land of the King. This clearly suggested that the true power in Thai politics was not based on the legitimacy in a democratic system, but it was truly in the hands of monarchy.

Therefore, the royal-nationalism discourse cannot totally explain the cultural force of emotions and political thoughts of the Southerners who joined the yellow shirt protests. On the other hand, we have to understand their cultural contexts that formed their common-sense of experiences and perceptions to the politics. Notably, the cultural politics of the Southerners manifested the “authoritarianism” culture which was based on the moral community in charismatic power of the monarchy in Thai political culture. This authoritarianism culture was related to the culture of “jai nak leng”, which shows the charismatic power (barami) and influence power (ithipol).

Traditional Southerners favoured and respected an influential person who was generous, collaborative, popular and had a charisma rather than a wealthy person or businessman like Thaksin. They created a strong social connection among peers (Phakpuak or Gler in the Southern dialect) to protect their power and interests (Sam (pseudonym), personal communication, February 28, 2017). It is the reason why they supported the King and General Prem rather than Thaksin and wanted to destroy the Thaksin regime. Additionally, the Southerners believed that the King was above the politics. For them, the King was situated in the different status from the state power and government. Hence, the Southerners did not express their opinions in politics because they wanted to oppose the state power, but they wanted to protect the monarchy which was the center of charismatic power or righteous power and they wanted to end the illegitimate power or authority of the Thaksin regime (Yun, personal communication, February 28, 2017).

According to Thongchai Winichakul (2016), this perception of the Southerners reflected the belief of most Thais that the monarchy was truly above politics. Although the Thai state attempted to maintain the monarchy as constitutional monarchy with limited power in politics, the monarchy had been actively involved in politics throughout the modern history, characterized by the unstable political fortunes which helped establishing a royal democracy in the mid-1970s (Thongchai, 2016).

This complexity of power was embedded in Thai political culture and the culture of the Southerners. Their emotions of hate and anger were eventually forced by a belief in charismatic power which was based on merit and goodness. This became both of their emotional reality and the meaning of justice in their common-sense. In the meantime, it also reflected the embodiment of moral community with the cultural identity and

disposition of the Southerners. This obviously expressed in their perceptions to the political realities, the meanings of politics and justice, and their political actions in the yellow shirt protests.

For them, justice was the righteousness based upon the charismatic power and morality where the King was the centre. Justice was not based on the state power. Thus, injustice referred to illegitimacy in this sense. That is to say, illegitimacy was related to a lack of moral righteousness which was actually not based on Buddhist doctrine, but which was based on the charismatic power (barami) in political culture. Hence, legitimacy was justified by moral or charismatic power in public understanding as the King (Rama 9) and General Prem represented in the supreme of charismatic power. In this regard, justice was based on goodness or merit as the charismatic power in the concept of moral community. It was not based on the rule of law or equality in a political system. Thus, legitimate power and morality could not be separated from each other. These concepts of power legitimacy and justice had been stimulated by the expansion of communication and technology of the new media, such as the ASTV News and the Manager Online. It created both of political learning, common perceptions, experiences, and emotions among the yellow shirt supporters in the widening scope of the yellow shirt protests.

According to the study of Arunee Kasayanon (2012), which examined the influence of the ASTV and Asia Update satellite television in forming the political communication and political learning among a popular in the level of perception, understanding, attitude, analysis and political participation, both medias could stimulate the common emotions, beliefs and popular thinking in the politics. They could intensify common emotions, perceptions and experiences among the protestors during the political conflict. They also helped develop political networks and created political participation and political learning (Arunee, 2012).

In sum, the political culture in “authoritarianism” and “nak leng” formed political perception, political actions and disposition of the Southerners, especially the belief in power legitimacy in charismatic power and in the moral hierarchy structure. In fact, these beliefs and thoughts showed the characteristic of Thai political leadership which was legitimized by the charismatic power of the monarchy in Thai politics. Meanwhile, it expressed how the moral community functioned and articulated with the political

perception, political culture and disposition of local Southerners in the cultural dimension. Hence, the cultural force of emotions reflected the specific of cultural politics, moral values as well as beliefs and thoughts by virtue of the Southerners. The increasing roles of new technologies and medias had shaped and changed people's thoughts, beliefs, and emotions within the changing political and social contexts. Their cultural context and social structure had formed and shaped their subjective disposition and perception toward the political and social realities in their own terms.

3.3 Loyalty: Love and Anger of the Yellow Shirts in Chiang Mai

Although the royal-nationalism cannot totally be used to explain the cultural force of emotions and thoughts of all the yellow shirt groups, it can be used to understand the intense feeling of love to the King and the monarchy of many yellow shirt supporters. As I previously discussed in the chapter two, the significant consequence of the moral community is a deep feeling of relevance to the King of many Thais. This feeling has been cultivated with a belief in the charismatic power of monarchy through the process of Thainess and royal-democracy discourse especially since the 1970s.

According to Thongchai (2014), the success of royalist democracy was not simply a result of politics and opportunism, but rested more on social and cultural capital, where no other political groups were able to match. The royalist democracy discourse also proliferated through commodified, visual representations of the royal family (Jackson, 2010). These processes can be called "commodified fetishism", which means a fetish in the royal images and emotions to the King which has been produced as commodification through media operations, products, projects in schools, royal projects, the actions of government officials, and in everyday activities of Thai people, based on the standard but total view of royal-nationalism. It is the economy which has been commodified as an intrinsic trend, to generate stories regarding the monarchy which are in high-demand, and that stimulate—through versions of the truth—people's emotions (Krittikarn, 2010). As a result, the King was portrayed as a dedicated person to his people and the country, who was righteous and generous, and a protector of Thai society. This belief arose from a faith which was the result of a long-term reproduction of 'Thainess' as a national identity, and the process of commodification of fetish in the King's image. It was not known what the total economic cost of producing and reproducing the King's and the monarchy's image was within the

everyday commodifying process, but the real social cost was total faith (sattha). The consequences of this complete faith were very powerful in terms of the emotional force generated by a majority of yellow shirt protestors, those who utterly loved and had a total faith in the King; who came out to protect the monarchy and its institutions, as though it was their duty to do as good members of Thai society, or ‘lukkhangpor’ (literally, ‘child of the father’). It was also a consequence of the shared love and sense of union felt for por (father or the King). The PAD leaders exploited and stimulated these powerful feelings as part of a strategy to support their political movement and to criticize scholars who did not agree with their ideal. Understanding these emotions is very important if one wants to understand those people (mostly from the middle class) who joined the yellow shirt protests and People’s Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) movements.

Royal democracy, as well as Thainess, was also integrated into the everyday life of Thai people while the Buddhist doctrine was used as a tool of Thai state to support the royal-democratic nationalism. Consequently, it created the feeling of relevance to the King of many Thais, especially the feelings of love and faith (with loyal) to the monarchy. These feelings were embedded in cognition and consciousness of the people and became the standard of the moral emotion.

According to Klima (2004), love or rak in Thai has a complex and contradictory meaning in Thai society. Love is a highly valued sentiment within the family and in romantic relationships, but within Buddhist doctrine it can also involve desire or attachment (tanhā) and lust/passion. As a result, it can be a direct antagonist of generosity (mettā), which is the highest form of love for all without discrimination, and can be antagonized by love for particular people— especially those who have lust. However, love is certainly valued within the wider realms of practice in Thai society, which is not oriented toward Buddhist enlightenment alone (Klima, 2004).

One consequence of this love is a feeling of protection and security; of offering protection to a person they love. This feeling is powerful enough to force people into action; to protect the monarchy. In my view, in the social and cultural construction of morality within Thai-style democracy or Thai royal-democracy and ‘Thainess’, love means love for the nation and the monarchy. Hence, in the Thai context, love is not purely a feeling of romance, family and companionship, but is also comprised of other emotions such as

fear and anxiety, including passion to protect our beloved people. Consequently, love has conditions and consequences of cultural forces within a range of relationships between the state and society, including at the social relations level among people, and tends to be comprised of a number of emotions and feelings such as fear and hate. This is the consequences of symbolic construction of meaning of morality in Thai historical contexts, in particular, during the reign of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, and the controversy in the contemporary political conflicts.

In case of the yellow shirt groups in Chiang Mai, the movement was led by the People Alliance for Democracy of Chiang Mai and it was comprised of various social groups and individuals such as Santi Asoke group, Vihok Radio, Democrat party, NGOs, university lecturers, doctors, and business owners. It was also connected to the People Alliance for Democracy (PAD) in Bangkok with Moo (pseudonym) acting as the coordinator of the PAD in the Northern region. Most of the yellow shirt supporters were the urban middle class. They had frequently organized the social activities and joined the royal celebration in Chiang Mai as well as invited other people to join them. Besides, they also played the key roles for the PAD network expansion in Chiang Mai by distributing news and information, sharing the broadcasting of PAD, and providing food and accommodation for those attending the events.

The yellow shirts group represented both of the royalist groups and volunteer activists, especially royal celebration activities. Several of them were members of “We love Thai King”, Chiang Mai Association (Chomrom Khon Rak Nai Ruang). They joined the yellow shirts group in Chiang Mai after they listened and watched the ASTV satellite news organized by Sondhi Limthongkul, the PAD leader in Bangkok. Most of them believed that Sondhi’s speech provided them truth and it made them “Ta Sawang” or awakening, especially information related to the corruption issues of Thaksin’s government (Nit (pseudonym), personal communication, October 19, 2015).



Figure 3.2 The demonstration of Vote No campaign in July, 2011 of the People's Alliance for Democracy of Chiang Mai.

Source: Manager, 2011, Retrieved May 20, 2017 from <http://imgads.manager.co.th/aspbin/viewgallery.aspx?newsid=9540000074517&imageid=1928808>.

This so-called truth motivated them to join the yellow shirt movements in Bangkok although they had never taken part in the political demonstrations before. After that, they decided to organize their own groups and activities of the PAD in Chiang Mai. Donations were made by the members to support the running of the activities. The ultimate aim of these groups was to protect the monarchy as one yellow shirt supporter explained, “It is not beyond our means. I don’t want anyone to harm our King” (Ta (pseudonym), personal communication, 30 June, 2016).

The yellow shirts expressed their love and loyalty to the monarchy, to the King and the nation, based on their discourse in royal-nationalism. Their actions were a result of a feeling of bonding with the King. As I previously mentioned, the images and stories about the King had been integrated as part of people’s everyday lives. It is the everyday process of commodification of fetish that resulted in the belief, faith and a deep sentiment in relevance of people to the King. This process produced and reproduced for a long time. Consequently, Thai people perceived the King as the centre of everything in their lives and as the most important part of Thai society and the central pillar of the nation. It became very common for people to burst into tears when they saw the King, talked about him, listened to his stories or saw his pictures. This cultural force of emotion motivated

the majority of yellow shirt protestors who came out to protect the King and the monarchy with their utterly love and faith to the King (Rama 9). This, in turn, showed the order of Thai moral community which formed and maintained by shared beliefs and emotions of people into the common community, while the belonging into the moral community also respond to the desires and demands in politics and emotions of people who adhered in the community.

On the other hand, this cultural force could turn into emotions such as anger and hate if people felt they were violated. For instance, when Jirawat Pathumthong, a teenager from Chonburi province, made a negative comment on King Bhumibol on social media after he passed away, Jirawat was beaten by a mob of the loyal and grieving citizens. Jirawat was forced to apologize to a portrait of the Majesty King Bhumibol while he was being kicked and forced to kneel down (Khaosod, 2016). This is an example of cultural forces of emotions that motivated certain social actions. It is resonant with the Ilongot men in the Philippines who cut off the human heads to express their anger and grief (Rosaldo, 1989). That is to say, the cultural force of love can motivate the feelings of anger and hate if other people do not share the same emotion or if they feel their emotion is violated. Many Thais was in tremendous grief after the King passed away and when the Chonburi man violated their love to the King, they wanted to replace the grief with anger through violent actions.

ลิขสิทธิ์มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่
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Figure 3.3 Jirawat Pathumthong being kicked and forced to kneel down to apologize to a portrait of His Majesty the King Bhumibol for allegedly posting content defaming the monarchy on social media in Chonburi province.

<http://www.khaosodenglish.com/news/crimecourtsclamity/2016/10/18/chonburi-man-beaten-mob-royal-defamation/>

This feeling of anger also appeared in many yellow shirt supporters in Chiang Mai and in several places of Thailand. Their intense feelings were stimulated by both the political and social situations. Buddhist doctrine views anger as a hindrance to realization and purifying ourselves of anger is essential to Buddhist practice. There is no such as righteous or justifiable anger (O'Brien, 2017). Therefore, Thai people generally try to avoid showing anger. However, the emotion of anger (also hate and disgust) can be justified as a moral reaction to the wrongness or evil and in this particular circumstance it expressed courage and sacrifice in royal-nationalism discourse. This is the paradox of emotions in Thai cultural context. The righteous anger and hate can occur from the consequence of love in royal-nationalism. For the members of the yellow shirt groups, they loved and they were loyal to King Rama 9, who represented moral righteousness. Therefore, they felt that anyone who threatened or wished to harm or disrespected the King, especially Thaksin Shinawatra and the red shirts, was a threat to the monarchy and they deserved to be hated. They were the objects of disgust as they had poor moral judgement. Hence, anger was embodied in the yellow shirts' desire to take care of and protect the King. It was a result of love with passion to protect the person that they loved. Anger can be intensified and turned into hate and disgust, for instance, when someone

offended the King. This could encourage protective actions which were seen to be righteous because these actions were driven by the intention to protect the monarchy.

Thus, the moral foundation of Thainess supported righteous anger when anyone violated the moral standards set by the yellow shirts, and this is why anger was usually accompanied by feelings of disgust and hate. On the other hand, the feeling of love and anger were also accompanied by the feeling of fear and anxiety that the monarchy would be demolished. They also feared that without the monarchy, Thai society would lack morals, especially among the younger generations. In short, the yellow shirt supporters and those who defined themselves as the loyalists justified their actions by love, anger, and fear of the national security as their emotional realities. The cultural emotions in love, anger, hate, fear and disgust often occur together, and what has really divided people in Thai society is the emotions and disparities seen within the political and cultural arenas. These explicitly expressed in the different of perceptions to the political and emotional realities among Thai people. Meanwhile, the socio-cultural and political order of Thailand is strongly linked to the moral community and cultural emotions felt by Thai people, so one cannot separate morals, ideologies, beliefs and emotions when judging other Thai people and the groups they belong to.

3.4 Love and Anger: Justice and Hope of the Red Shirts in Chiang Mai and Bangkok

3.4.1 The red shirts in Chiang Mai

In contrast to the yellow shirts, members of the red shirt groups represented people (mostly lower middle class or the grassroots class) who professed to love and support Thaksin Shinawatra and his sister Yingluck Shinawatra. Several scholars noted that during the red shirt protests, most participants were the lower middle class people (Walker, 2012; Apichat et. al., 2013; Pinkeaw, 2013). The red shirt movements contained a wide variety of characteristics in terms of its members, groups and networks (Nidhi, 2010; Nostitz, 2014; Naruemon 2016). As a result, it cannot be said for certain that all red shirt members were people who loved and admired Thaksin and they were not poor. In fact, most of them were the new middle class and rural class who demanded and desired for the new values and opportunities in politics and economy in order to improve the better life of them. However, this thesis understands the red shirt groups from the diverse

backgrounds of their experiences, perceptions, emotions, beliefs and thoughts within their contexts and positions rather than the economic class. Meanwhile, the emotion of love among the red shirts emanated from several sources as it showed the different backgrounds in their experiences and perceptions in the specific contexts and positions. For instance, the red shirt members loved their communities and their companionship; they empathized with each other, felt appreciated and also wished to find the truth, righteousness, justice and democracy. This love emanated from the stories, experiences, feelings and actions they shared, and especially those combative experiences gained as part of the protest movement. All this made many of the members love being part of the red shirt community.

Nevertheless, the feeling of love among the red shirt supporters involved their common-sense of experiences and socio-cultural backgrounds that formed their emotions, perceptions and identity, including the influence of the new media which effected their social cognitions. Hence, the red shirt sub-groups who joined the red shirt movements, especially during the political conflicts from 2008 to 2014, were from different backgrounds and had different social and political agendas.

In this sense, I would like to demonstrate the emotion of love and anger of the red shirt groups in Chiang Mai and Bangkok. In Chiang Mai, I went to interview several red shirt groups such as the Rak Chiang Mai 51 (Love Chiang Mai 51); the UDD Red Shirts Chiang Mai; the red shirts group in San Kamphaeng district (San Kamphaeng Love Democracy group); and Chom Rom Khon Rak Fang- Mae Ai- Chai Prakarn 93.00 MHz (the Red Shirt Lover Fang-Mae Ai-Chai Prakan group) in Fang district. Even though the red shirts in Chiang Mai stopped their political movement, a number of independent red shirt groups and individuals in Chiang Mai still existed. They were divided by different political opinions and conflicts inside their groups. I chose these red shirt groups because they had different desires, strategies and goals in joining the red shirt protests.

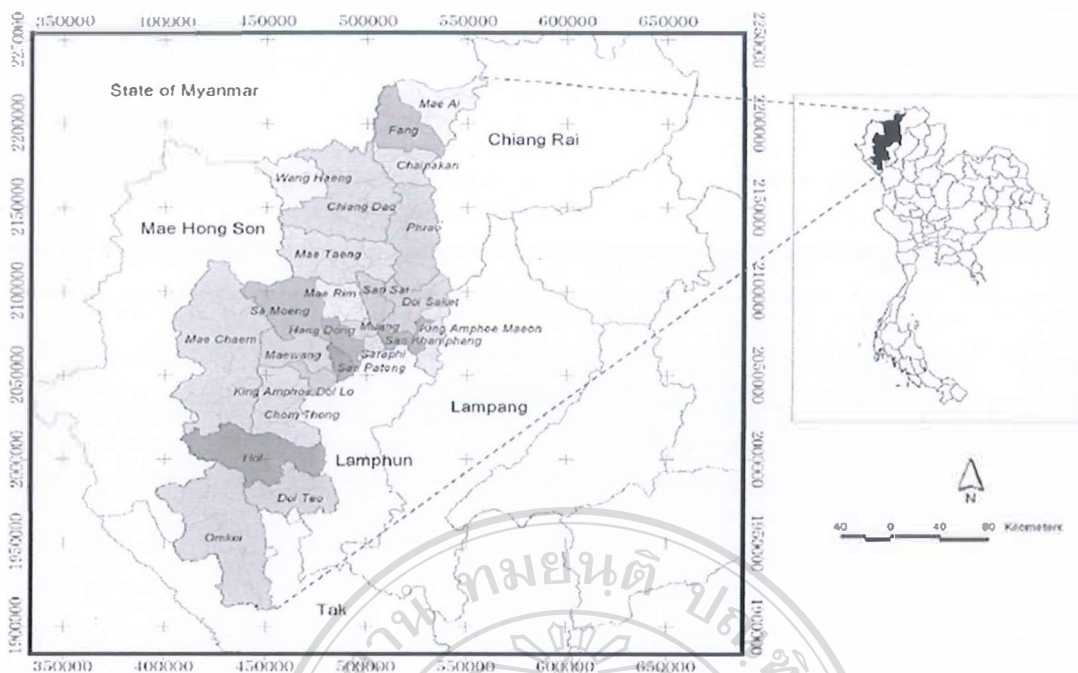


Figure 3.4 A map of districts in Chiang Mai.

Source: Supachai et. al. (2012). *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 9 (11): 3824-3842, Retrieved June 3, 2017 from <http://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/9/11/3824/htm>

According to Pinkeaw (2013), the red shirts group in Chiang Mai was formed since the military coup in 2006. It was initiated by a political activity at Tha Pae Gate in the city of Chiang Mai on 17 June 2007. The political movement at Tha Pae Gate was commonly known as the first movement of the red shirts in Chiang Mai. Then, it expanded across several districts of Chiang Mai under the name of “The Federation of Northern People who Love Democracy” (Samaphan Khon Nuea Rak Prachathipatai). The group believed in the elected democracy, where they have an equal right and opportunity to participate in the democratic system. It is not a democracy controlled by the military junta. Most of them were the middle class in Chiang Mai who came from various occupations such as university lecturers and businessmen from 12 business networks. The group disagreed with the military coup in 2006. They were also driven by the economic instability after the coup. On the other hand, the Chiang Mai 51 group was formed on 26 August 2008. It was led by Petchawat Watthanaphongsirikul, who was the owner of Warorot Grand Palace and Head of the local radio station 92.5 MHz. The group aimed to counterattack the yellow shirt movements in Bangkok. The political activities of the Chiang Mai 51 group inspired a development of the red shirt groups in several districts and an establishment of many local radio stations. After that, the UDD red shirt Chiang Mai was

organized in 2009 and played an active role during 2009 and 2010. This group separated themselves from the Chiang Mai 51 group and connected with many red shirt groups in several districts of Chiang Mai as well as coordinating with the UDD red shirts in Bangkok (Pinkeaw, 2013, p. 33-43).

However, after the violent crackdown in Bangkok on May 2010, the red shirts in Chiang Mai disintegrated and many of them stopped their political movement. They felt disappointed and defeated in the protest at Ratchaprasong in Bangkok. Nevertheless, they insisted in fighting for democracy and justice. Especially, they wanted fairness in the legal procedure. This was a different meaning of justice from the yellow shirt groups. They did not focus or talk about Thaksin for a long time after the military violent suppressed on the red shirt protests on May 2010 (Keng (pseudonym), personal communication, October 18, 2015). So, the red shirts in Chiang Mai developed their own political ideology and consciousness after they experienced in a long term political protests. The experiences changed their perceptions to the political system. All they wanted was democracy and justice which was not under the rule of military and the elite. Nevertheless, they did not aim to oppose the military power and monarchy, but they believed that the monarchy and the elite should not involve in politics. Thaksin became an example of the social injustice in which the villagers could identify with as they themselves had the same experience before. Therefore, gaining justice for Thaksin meant they would gain justice for themselves too (Pit (pseudonym), personal communication, March 30, 2015).

Many of those who joined the red shirt protests had new political consciousness. They were dissatisfied with Sondhi Limthongkul, the key leader of the People Alliance for Democracy who heavily criticized Thaksin Shinawatra, the ex-prime minister. They loved and admired Thaksin as their hero. This was due to a good relationship between Thaksin and people in Chiang Mai, in particular, in San Kamphaeng district, which is Thaksin's birthplace. Furthermore, the red shirt supporters felt and believed that Thaksin did not do anything wrong prior to being overthrown by the military coup in 2006; the economy was doing well and their lives had hugely improved from his policies such as the 30 Baht universal health care program, One Tambon One Product (OTOP) program, and the village fund initiatives. Thaksin's the global economy and government policies did not only improve the lives of the poor, but they also benefit the wider community (Noppol, 2013). Thus, without Thaksin as the country's leader, they felt their lives and

their future were facing uncertainty. They wanted a democratic system which ensured that people were provided with enough food (The edible democracy or Prachatippatai Kindai), eradicate poverty and improve people's quality of lives (Pa Pan (pseudonym), personal communication, October 13, 2015).

They wanted a democratic system that could respond to their demands and desires in capitalism as well as providing the opportunities for people to access the capitalist markets. Thus, the “edible democracy” is related to the rural transformation within Thai society during the past few decades. It was also encouraged by the rural economy development policies during Thaksin's government. As one can see, many of rural red shirt protesters had never been interested in politics prior to this event, but they had joined the red shirt protests in Bangkok for several times. It was because they felt and recognized the impact politics had to their life. In particular, the “edible democracy” reflected the political desire in capitalism of many rural people. In this view, democracy is not only the political ideology, but it also defines as their hopes, lives and new values of Thai society. Democracy should come with equality and justice in the society while morality of Thai society should be based on fairness in the legal system. However, since the military coup in 2006 took place, their hopes, desires and opportunities in capitalist were destroyed as they were separated from their beloved leaders like Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra (Sopranzetti, 2012). This made them angry and dissatisfied with the military coup and they wanted to protect the person that they loved. Thus, their hope for the “edible democracy” that responded their capitalist desires and enhanced equality and justice within Thai society, and their passion to protect their beloved Thaksin forced them to take part in the red shirt protests and form the independent red shirt groups in Chiang Mai. The desire for justice in the legal and political procedures, and hope for changes of political and social system in Thailand also stimulated the political actions and consciousness of some radical red shirt groups.

For instance, the red shirt group in San Kamphaeng district, which mostly consisted of the vendors in the San Kamphaeng market, was from since 2008. Some of the members were former members of the “Love Thaksin Club” (Chomrom Khon Rak Thaksin) in Chiang Mai in 2005 and worked with the “Love Chiang Mai 51 Group” (Krum Khon Rak Chiang Mai 51) in the city of Chiang Mai in 2008. The group members were vendors in San Kamphaeng market, local intellectuals, local businessmen, and retirees. Then, they

developed their activities and expanded the connection with the “UDD Red Shirts Chiang Mai” and other red shirt groups in several districts of Chiang Mai such as Mae On and Doi Saket in 2009 and 2010. They also attended the red shirt protests in Bangkok (Noppol, 2013, p. 86).



Figure 3.5 The San Khampheang market. Source: Photo of the author taken in 2016.

The intense feelings that forced them into the political protests were the feeling of love and anger. The red shirts in San Kamphaeng loved and admired Thaksin because they sympathized with Thaksin. They saw Thaksin as one of their own (*khon khong lao*). Some emotions which were seen a lot was when people were tearful as they saw Thaksin or Yingluck (Thaksin’s younger sister) suffered political repression. As a result, they went to Bangkok with anger and wanted to protect Thaksin, one of their own (Pa Care and Pa Pan (pseudonym), personal communication, October 13, 2015). People in San Kamphaeng community, in particular, had a very strong relationship with Thaksin Shinawatra and his family. This strong feeling of love to Thaksin and his family was not only because Thaksin was born and lived in San Kamphaeng, but it was also because of a good relationship with local people that Thaksin and the Shinawatra family had forged for a long time. As Pa Care (pseudonym) explained: ‘Yingluck is very lovely. I have seen her since she was young and when she was a prime minister, she was still as lovely as she had ever been.’ Pa Care talked with me with a smile on her face. Some of the Shinawatra family usually came to the San Kamphaeng market and often had a chat with the vendors.

Thaksin's family home was near the market and one of their family members was a major shareholder of the market.

In addition, female vendors in San Kamphaeng market learned and developed their new political ideas from their experiences in political protests. As their lifestyles and world-views had been connected with capitalism in the past few decades, they had more understanding how their life, economy and politics were related, especially during Thaksin's government. Thaksin's economic and political policies improved their lives and allowed them to develop new political ideas. They understood more how their voices were valued in the national election and government policies should to serve the needs of people from all backgrounds. Modern technology and media also played an important role in shaping a new political perception among this group of people while an opportunity to travel abroad also expose them to wider experiences. These had changed their perceptions and ideas to Thai political and social system.

The red shirt supporters in San Kamphaeng felt deeply frustrated when their beloved Thaksin and Yingluck were treated unfairly in the legal procedure and from the military government. This perception and emotion were shared with the other red shirt groups. They saw the justice system as having double-standards (*song martathan*), especially unfair prejudgement in the cases of Thaksin, Yingluck and the red shirt protests. This clearly indicates inequalities of wealth, power, and opportunities in Thai political and society (Pasuk & Chris, 2012). This double standards created the resentment towards the government as the red shirts felt they suffered inequalities in Thai society. Notably, the red shirts felt they were affected by the issues of social and political inequalities as they perceived themselves as the grassroots class who were frequently exploited while their opportunities and rights were oppressed within the economic and social structure of Thai society. Thus, since Thaksin had been overthrown by the military coup in 2006 and ousted by the People Alliance for Democracy (the yellow shirts), which were mainly supported by the middle class and the elite class, they viewed this action as an oppression of social classes. This political repression brought an end to their hope for a better quality of lives with the "edible democracy" that Thaksin promised. The injustice made them feel extremely angry.

Hence, the cultural force of emotions of many red shirt people in Chiang Mai was derived from the experiences of injustice with the feeling of love and angry. Notably, they felt unfair when their capitalist desires had been disregarded and their beloved leader had been treated unfairly. Also, the military coup of 2006 and state violent suppression to the red shirt protests had intensified their emotions and political resistances to the state. This cultural force of emotion also made several red shirt protestors, such as the group in Fang District, feel that the monarchy and royalist elites were not fit for purpose. The red shirt in Fang was seen as a radical red shirts group. It was because they developed their political consciousness against the power of the monarchy and they lost faith in the monarchy after the military coup in 2006 and the violent crackdown in Bangkok on April and May 2010. Many of them believed that the monarchy was behind the military coup in 2006 and several violent incidents especially after they saw the news of the Queen attending the funeral of Nong Bo, one of the two PAD protestors who died on 7th October 2008 during the yellow shirt protests (Nostitz, 2014, p.181). This formed a feeling of hate to the monarchy. Many questions were also raised regarding the role of the monarchy in Thai politics. The red shirts also felt that they were “ta sawanng” (awakening or knowing the truth) after they were exposed to the anti-monarchy rhetoric and gossips about the King and the royal family (Thongchai, 2008 and 2014). The excessive and exaggerated ultra-royal-nationalism displayed during protests and events, and integrated into people’s everyday lives might have counteracted the feeling of the red shirt groups. It led to the emergence of an anti-monarchy sense of several red shirt groups. In particular, they felt that the royal projects and government projects in sufficiency economy which adopted the King’s philosophy were in contrast to the “edible democracy” ideal of many rural people. It manifested the discrepancies between the royalist elite’s ideals and the rural ideals and aspires in economy (Rossi, 2012).

Lung Kheaw (pseudonym), the former Communist member and the key red shirts leader in Fang district, explained, “the sufficiency economy is the slave theory. It cannot be applied to the real life of rural villagers. It needs a large amount of funds and lands as well as technology to achieve the outcomes. Rural villagers don’t have enough money and land. In fact, it is not like what they showed us in the television. On the other hand, Thaksin’s economic policy provides the funds for the villages. Thus, the villagers can access it and use it to improve their lives. This is the edible democracy. It is real for us

and we can access it.” (Lung Kheaw (pseudonym), personal communication, September 21, 2016). Hence, the sufficiency economy is considered the elite fantasy for many rural villagers. The sense of anti-monarchy also increased when Article 112 of the Criminal Code— also known as the Lèse-Majesté law² was introduced to suppress and control public discourse on the monarchy. This resulted in an increase in political resistance of the rural class people to the power of the state which attempted to dominate and oppress them in forms of knowledge, ideology, government projects and policies. For instance, they keep criticizing the sufficiency economy ideal and gossips about the royal family within their community. This showed the constant struggle for power of the rural class in their everyday lives. It implied the angry sense of injustice from the socially devastating loss of political and social position as it is loss of opportunities and rights in socio-politics and economic structure. Hence, they attempted to ask for justice.

It is what James C. Scott (1985) called “the everyday resistant in form of the hidden transcripts” because it showed in the hidden forms of communication which did not openly or directly attack the monarchy using gossips and parodies related to the King and the royal family. They also used alias, metaphor, code and graffiti to talk about the monarchy to ensure that they were not charged with regard to the article 112. In this sense, it showed a concealed attack to the monarchy of the red shirt protestors in form of the hidden transcripts. The “ta sawanng” term was not used to explain an attempt to overthrow the monarchy. In fact, they wanted to communicate with the state that they did not accept the ideological domination where everything was centred around the monarchy and that they were opposed to the overuse of the article 112 in Thailand. Ultimately, they wanted to see a change in Thai social structure to provide more opportunities to the rural class and they wanted to see Thailand becoming a more equal society.

3.4.2 The red shirt in Bangkok

Many red shirt protestors felt they were part of a brotherhood. It occurred from during the protests; they shared food, stories and feelings, and carried out activities together. They

² The Article 112 of Thailand's criminal code noted “anyone who defames, insults or threatens the king, the queen, the heir-apparent or the regent will be punished with up to 15 years in prison”. After the military coup of 2014, there were at least 73 persons charged by the article 112 and the 11 persons cannot apply for bail. Sources: ilaw freedom, 2017, Retrieved January 15, 2017 from <https://freedom.ilaw.or.th/blog>.

felt a level of friendship and sincerity with the other members, with no hidden agendas or interests. These are the reasons why they stayed at the protest sites for several days or even months, even after it became uncomfortable and dangerous. Some even chose to stay permanently or return after finishing work. This is the second form of love which constituted from the feelings of sympathy among red shirt members. This love was clearly expressed in the red shirt groups in Bangkok.

The red shirts in Bangkok were comprised of wide diversity of independently social sub-groups and networks. They were in a set of loose networks and horizontal organizations structure (Naruemon, 2016). Besides, they also expressed their social relations in the multi-social class relations (Pinkeaw, 2013). In Bangkok, the red shirts protestors came from various professions such as teachers, university lecturers, businessmen, street vendors, and taxi drivers. It is difficult to say that most of them were the lower middle class. Hence, we should understand the red shirts in Bangkok from the diversification of their backgrounds in experience and perception rather than the economic class. Moreover, the red shirts in Bangkok were not all the pro-Thaksin groups. Several groups and individuals joined the red shirts with their own will and different desires, but they had the common ideal in justice and democracy while several groups developed their own ideologies after fighting for Thaksin and depending on the UDD.

Additionally, I found that the feeling of love in their community and their companionship mostly motivated them to the protests. This feeling of love has been rarely mentioned by the scholars who studied the red shirts. This kind of feeling came from empathy, appreciation, and wish to find the truth, righteousness, justice and democracy. This love emanated from the stories, experiences, feelings and actions they shared, and especially those combative experiences gained as part of the protest movement. The feelings became a cultural force that made them part of the red shirt community like a brotherhood and a family. The development of independent red shirt groups were supported by the new social media such as Line and Facebook.³ In particular, Line was used as a new

³ Line is the social media for communication. It provides a group chat function for friends, family and people with common interests to share the same virtual space. Users can send audio and video clips, massages, and varieties of stickers. These functions are free of charge. Facebook is a free social networking website and service where users can share and post comments, video, photographs, and links to news or other website contents, and even stream live video. Facebook messenger allows users to have a private live chat with each other and the users can create the close and open groups on the

communication channel for the sub-red shirt groups, it is easy to create the via its user-friendly live chat function. So, the new social media became a new free political space of people to share information among each other. Meanwhile, the role of the local radio, the red shirt news and television have gradually been reduced among the red shirt members, especially in Bangkok because they needed a lot of financial support and they could be easily banned by the military government. However, some of the red shirt groups in Chiang Mai such as the Chiang Mai 51 group and the red shirts group in Fang district still used the local radio as the main channel for communication rather than using a new social media. The decision to use different types of media might depend on an area size, a number of people, and access to the internet. Occupations and lifestyles of people also affect the choice of technology they used. The urban red shirt supporters, for example, tended to use new technology and social media to communicate with each other and expand their networks. After the violent crackdown event on May 2010, the UDD Red Shirts in Bangkok were disintegrated because of the conflicts inside the red shirt groups and the development of different political ideas, strategies and goals of several sub-red shirt groups. The structure of the red shirt network had become horizontal organizations and networks rather than a unity organization.

The expansion and development of the sub-red shirt groups in Bangkok demonstrated the difference of desires, identities, interests and socio-political ideas of the groups of people. For instance, the members of red shirt group TV24 hours organized a public cremation service association, volunteer networks and career support group to support their economy and promote a connection among the sub-red shirt groups and individuals. While they still focused on fighting for truth and justice in Thai society, they did not aim to oppose the government and the state power. They wanted the government to provide reliable justice system and equality for all people. Significantly, the red shirt supporters in Bangkok fought for recognition in their identity, prestige and truth as well as righteousness (based on the legal system not morality) in Thai society (P.Nee (pseudonym), personal communication, February 16, 2017). This reflected the struggle

Facebook website. Hence, Line and Facebook became the free social space for communication among the red shirt protestors where they could share news, information, video clips, and pictures related to political situations, the red shirt movements, gossips and sarcasm to their political opponents, such as the yellow shirts and PDRC, military government and so on within their groups.

for the symbolic power of the red shirts in Thai society which also defined as their social value. It showed the struggle for power in the politics of their everyday life.

Meanwhile, love was also reflected the social capital of the red shirts. The red shirts were alienated and oppressed by the socio-political and economic structure of Thai society. It had been exacerbated by the double-standards practice of Thai society that was considered as the cause of injustice issues perceived by many red shirt supporters. Tum (pseudonym) who was the key red shirt leader metaphorically described, “We received an unequal love from this Thai family. In fact, we love our family and we are their children, but our father and mother do not come out to protect us.” The red shirt supporters felt the monarchy did not come out to protect their lives during the military violent suppressions. Actually, many red shirt protestors did not want to overthrow the monarchy and they believed that the monarchy was the main pillar of Thai society and they regarded the monarchy as the protector of the society. However, the monarchy, as well, exercised the legitimate power of double-standards practice in Thai society. They exercised injustice and inequality. As a result, they were disappointed with the persons they loved. Love had also become a new social capital for them and it also created the economic capital among the sub-red shirt groups such as the career support association.

3.4.3 Conclusion

In sum, the perception shared by the red shirt communities and groups was the injustice in Thai society which was heavily based on inequality and unfairness in the justice procedure. Therefore, they struggled for justice and equality. To them justice meant universal justice that was based on the rule of law and equality was referred to the belief that all human beings were equal and respected each other (Pat (pseudonym), personal communication, October 19, 2015). Notably, they fought for a social recognition within Thai society that was meaningful to their life. Thus, the reason why some people still remained red shirt supporters was not only because of ideology; for they sincerely hoped and believed that one day the truth and justice (also democracy) would prevail in Thai society. They would fight for their political ideal, with or without the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), Thaksin Shinawatra and Pheu Thai party.

In addition, the fear of state suppression, and especially the application of Article 112 of Thailand's Criminal Code, forced many red shirts to go underground. The Red shirt

communities used metaphors, codes, whispering conversations and restricted group communications on social media to share their opinions about the royal family and criticize the sensitive or prohibited political issues. The red shirts were called by those who did not share their ideology as khwai daeng, or the red buffalo, which means a stupid person who foolishly supported Thaksin. Some of the more ‘radical’ red shirts hoped that changes in Thailand’s social and political structure would occur while some hoped Thaksin would return after the political situation changed.

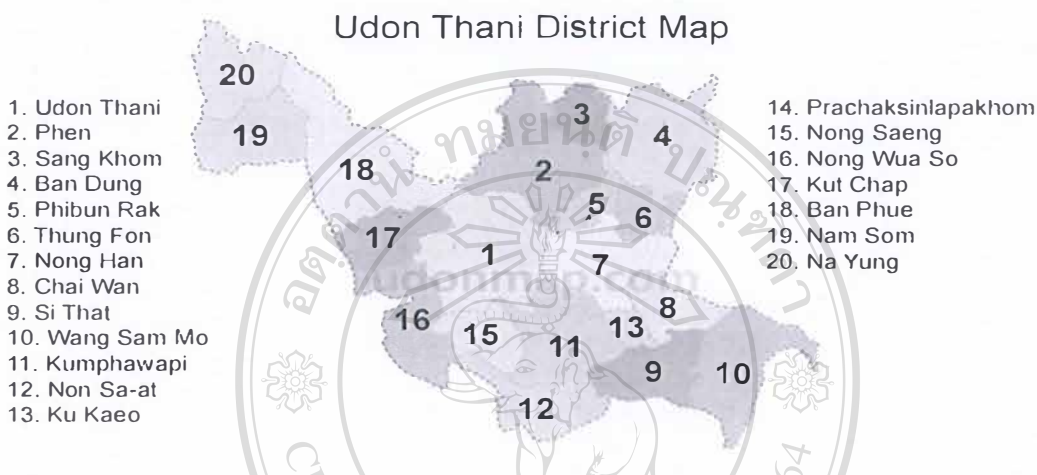


Figure 3.6 Udon Thani district map. The city of Udon Thani is number 1 and Nong Wua So district is number 16.

Source: Udonmap, 2009, Retrieved June 20, 2017 from <http://www.udonmap.com/udon-thani/udon-thani-province.html>

Thus, the love felt by the red shirts had different meanings, and was embodied with other emotions and feelings, such as fear, dissatisfaction, anger and hope. The power of love can be seen in their passion to protect their political ideal, their struggle to be loved and for happiness, and their desire to be recognized and hope for the better life and capitalist demands. This can be seen as the struggle for a symbolic capital of the red shirt supporters. However, differences in the meanings of politics and values associated with their love led to a disintegration of their moral righteousness. When their communities have belonged to the different political and social realities contrast to the realities of the yellow shirt supporters and moral community, so their love and communities have been seen as wrong. This has become one of the primary driving factors of the political conflicts in Thailand. Concurrently, the conflict of interests in economic demands and

desires with the bias sense and violent suppressions of the state and society to the red shirt protests also exacerbated the conflicts to become more divided.

3.5 Justice: Hope and Feeling of Loss and Fear of the Red Shirts in Udon Thani

I went to Udon Thani province in the Northeastern region of Thailand to interview the red shirt protestors at “Chomrom Khon Rak Udon 97.5 MHz” (the FM 97.5 Udon Lovers) in the city and Nong Wua So district, which was the centre of red shirt protestors. Udon Thani was commonly known as the province of the red shirts in Isan (Northeastern). There were as many red shirt groups as in Chiang Mai. In Nong Wua, the villagers supported the red shirts group and organized their own group since 2008. Most of them worked in agriculture and had a small mushrooms farm on their home plots. They identified themselves as the grassroots class. They were not economically deprived. Their economic status was not the factor that motivated them to become the red shirts as several social scientists found that poverty was not the main factor of political conflicts, but it was rather the injustice and disparity issues that embedded in Thai society (Hewison, 2010; Nidhi, 2010; Apichat et al., 2013).

According to the historical background of Northeastern and rural villagers in Udon Thani, the area used to be the Communist insurgency. The locals saw the Communists as their friends (sahai), not the enemy of the state. As Ladda (a 74-year-old female red shirt supporter) explained, ‘sahai (Communist) were honest, sincere and fair people. They got along well with Isan’s values in honesty and fairness. During that time, many Communist members were killed by the police and military. On the other hand, the Communist killed people who were corrupt. We saw many violent incidents in this area. Some of our family members joined the Communist because they wanted to fight for justice and fight against the misused of power and corrupted government officers...’ (Ladda (pseudonym), personal communication, March 22, 2016).

This reflected the villagers’ negative perception to the government power. Most of the red shirt supporters here were 60 years old or over. In their views, Isan villagers had been suffering with social and political injustice. This power struggle emerged since the Communist expansion and continued to the age of the red shirts uprising. They believed that Thai government, the elite and urban middle class in Bangkok identified Northeasterners as being unsophisticated, uneducated, poor, and backward. Therefore,

legitimate desire and voice in the politics of the Northeasterners had been disregarded. In fact, new generations of the Northeasterners had been exposed to education, media and travel as Charles Keyes (2014) called “cosmopolitan villagers” who had sophisticated understanding of the global economy and the society of the nation that they lived and worked (Keyes, 2014).

Keyes and some scholars explained that the Bangkokians compared the Northeasterners as unsophisticated Laos, a country bumpkin, and a stupid buffalo who were uneducated and easily fooled by crooked politicians. These scholars believed that this attitude towards the Northeasterners led them to the feeling of grievance which was intensified into a political conflict (Keyes, 2012; Pasuk & Chris, 2012; Apichat et al., 2013). However, I do not share these scholars’ belief. The Isan rural villagers lived their lives with great pride. Many of them became successful and famous such as superstars or sports persons. They had been aware that they were looked down by the urban middle class. However, what brought them to political protest on May 2010 was not class division but social and political injustice (Mai (pseudonym), personal communication, March 22, 2016).

That the idea of injustice had embedded in their emotional experience, perception and consciousness for a long time. This included the violent incidents that occurred during the military violent suppression at Khok Wua intersection on April 2010 and at Ratchaprasong intersection in Bangkok on May 2010. 94 deaths of the red shirt protestors during the military violent suppressions were unrecognized by many Thais. Most of them were from the Northeastern region. These cultivated the social memory and feeling of loss, being powerless and hurt. Besides, 22 red shirt protestors were arrested in Udon Thani and charged with mischief for burning down the provincial hall (three of them have been jailed until now) (Prachathai, 2014). After that, Kwanchai Praipana, the key red shirts leader of Udon Thani was shot by unknown attackers at his home in Udon Thani on 22 January 2014.



Figure 3.7 Kwanchai Praipana, Head of “Chomrom Khon Rak Udon 97.5 MHz” and the key red shirt leader of Udon Thani.

Source: Thai Tribune, 2016, Retrieved 30 June, 2017 from http://thaitribune.org/contents/detail/330?content_id=21107&rand=1479581007

More red shirt protestors were charged with violation of the article 44 and the article 112 during the military rule. Hence, the rural red shirt protestors' feeling of fear and distrust in government and military were intensified. The main cultural force of emotions of the rural red shirt protestors in Udon Thani was, in fact, injustice and was not social inferiority as many scholars claimed. They joined in the red shirt protests because they wanted justice. This justice was based on fairness in the legal system. They believed that the people who were in power should not have a right to decide what is right or wrong in Thai society. This refers to the moral power in Thai society. The crucial problem of justice in Thai society is that it has never been solely based on the rule of law. The legitimate power in morality where the King is the centre was usually brought into justify political actions. The red shirts had no desire to fight with the monarchy or the government power. They just hoped that justice would happen someday in Thai society. Meanwhile, those who fought for Thaksin Shinawatra believed that he had improved lives of rural people. In their view, democracy should be the government of people, by the people and for the people.

Consequently, their meaning of politics was the politics for people based on justice in the rule of law. However, the political structure of Thai society did not support people but it

suppressed them by the politics of fear of the state. The state of fear appeared in a complex network of forces and strategies that tried to shape and reshape the rural Isan people under the conduct of government practices and the state goals (Torfing, 2009, p.114). The state of fear also implied with a class bias. It showed in the conducts of the state and perception towards the Isan rural red shirts. Significantly, the model of a sufficiency economy village was applied to the rural villages which were suspected as the red shirt rural landscape. According to Amalia Rossi (2012), the sufficiency economy became an instrument of conservative forces to dominate the rural development economy and attempted to change the rural people to accept hegemonic ideology under the rural development discourse (Rossi, 2012, p. 275-291). Meanwhile, it was used to in the rural red shirt landscape to fight against the capitalist desires of rural people and Thaksin economic ideals to a certain extent. This is similar to a comment made by the red shirts in Fang, Chiang Mai that the sufficiency economy project actually manifested the elite and urban fantasies. It also showed the discrepancy between the state and elite royalists aspires and rural aspires in economy. Ultimately, it showed a class fracture between the elite, the urban middle class, and the rural class under the fantasies and perceptions in rural economic development and royal sufficiency economy.



Figure 3.8 The model sufficiency economy village in Nong Wua So district.
Source: Photo of the author taken in 2016.

In conclusion, the sufficiency economy reflected the state exercises of power control over people. It was based on the moral power which was legitimated by the charismatic power of the King (Rama 9). It implied the class bias sense and fear of the state. The state forces

were used with the red shirt protestors. The red shirt protestors were sent to court to stand trial having been accused of breaching Article 112 (anti-monarchy – lèse majesté) and of causing terrorism. In addition, a class bias was used to create a negative image of the red shirts. For instance, they were usually seen being held in prison and were depicted as invaders in Bangkok. Furthermore, a campaign to clean-up the streets of Bangkok after the violent event on May 2010 also claimed that Bangkok was soiled by the red shirts. This representation encouraged an urban bias against the grassroots red shirts, and left the red shirt movement feeling less like citizens of the wider community; less than genuine human beings (Chairat, 2012, p.89). As a result, the state suppression and domination over people increased disparity between the urban class bias towards the rural class as well as the division of conflicts in Thai society. The urban yellow shirt supporters (including the PDRC protestors)'s feelings of fear, disgust, and hate towards the grassroots red shirt protestors was cultivated and intensified. On the other hand, the Isan rural red shirts developed the feeling of injustice, loss, hurt and fear from the state suppression they experienced. This is "injustice" in their own term. Therefore, the meanings of politics, democracy and justice of the red shirt supporters in Udon Thani have derived from their perceptions in the specific experiences of their contexts and position.

3.6 Truth and Justice of the Red Shirts in Hat Yai, Songkla

I went to Hat Yai city of Songkla province in the Southern region to interview both the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters. Hat Yai is the largest city in Songkla province. It is a commercial centre of Southern Thailand and Malaysia border areas, and it is a transportation hub of the Southern region of Thailand. Hat Yai has become the economic centre of the lower South where the residents have good quality of lives. Economic disparities in the region compared with Bangkok were small unlike the disparities in the North and Northeast. The red shirts supporters which I interviewed were the urban middle class. Some were business owners in Hat Yai for more than ten years. Some were social activists in Songkla. Several of them used to be the members of Communist party in the South. They were 60 years old and over like the red shirt supporters in Udon Thani. It seemed that the red shirt supporters tended to come from an older generation who had experienced and witnessed several violent incidents and injustice issues in Thai society, especially in their local areas in their lifetime. In the meantime, it supported my argument

that the division between the yellow shirt and red shirt groups cannot only be defined in terms of political ideology, socio-economic class, and geographic location.

Most the Southerners were believed to support the yellow shirts and the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) movement because the South had always been a voter-base of the Democrat Party and they were perceived as being loyal to the monarchy. Anusorn (2017) noted that the identity of Southerners had been tied with loyalty to the monarchy since Thailand had been in a process of cultivating loyalty to the monarchy at the national level for more than five decades. In addition, this was also related to a process of creating a political identity of the Southerners which was closely related to the political strategies of the Democrat Party. The Democrat Party frequently promoted their political image as being loyal to the monarchy. The image of General Prem Tinsulanonda (the Chair of Privy Council) had been portrayed along with the Southerners and the Democrat Party. He was also highly regarded for his loyalty to the monarchy. Therefore, Southerners were often seen as the loyalists (Anusorn, 2017, p. 127).

However, I found that there were several independent red shirt groups in the Southern region of Thailand. Some were not exactly the pro-Thaksin groups and they did not directly support the red shirts group in Bangkok, but they presented themselves under the name of the red shirts to manifest their own identity, political ideology and desire.

In case of Hat Yai, several red shirt supporters used to be in the Communist party. They were inspired by the roles of student leaders in the event of 14 October 1973 and the consequences of the violent event during on 6 October 1976 in Bangkok. In their views, injustice was a main problem in Thai society. They received information about injustice issues and violent suppression events in Thailand from the Communist party. They believed that the elite were behind the Thammasat University massacre on 6 October and several injustice issues emerged from the abuse of power of the government officers such as "Tang Deang" (the red barrel) incident where at least 3,008 villagers in Patthalung province who were suspected as the communists were killed and burned in the red petrol barrels during 1965 to 1991. Until today, those people who killed the students and villagers had never been arrested and the actual numbers of people who were killed during

6 October, 1976 had never been identified. This is the crucial problem of justice in Thailand (Sam (pseudonym), personal communication, May 10, 2016).

The consequences of the 6 October event affected their new political consciousness. At the same time, many groups of people felt uncertain about the roles of the monarchy and the elite in Thai society, especially in the event of the royal cremation ceremony for the village scouts. The monarchy appeared to play a part in the communist suppression and in the 6 October event. However, after the Communist party declined in 1983, the power and status of the King was restored and the King was seen as the divine status in many Thai people's perception. It was due to state rituals that created the King as the symbol of unity and the nation (Bowie, 1997).

Many people who supported the red shirt groups in Hat Yai wanted to fight against the power of elite establishment. They rejected the democracy that was dominated by the elite power. On the other hand, they did not love or admire Thaksin Shinawatra. They might have sympathy for Thaksin Shinawatra. Sam explained, "we sees Thaksin as a friend who also faced with the injustice in Thai society like us. He was in the same situation as us. For us, Thaksin had a political legitimacy when he was the prime minister. However, we did not agree with Thaksin for his actions such as the human rights violation and corruption...." (Sam, personal communication, May 10, 2016).

Similarly, Lung Pai (pseudonym - aged 62 years old) who was the owner of a local restaurant in Hat Yai also shared his experience about injustice in Thai society. In the past, he and his family used to live in the area near Hat Yai International Airport. At that time, the government wanted to construct the airport. So, they asked the villagers to move out of the area and promised to pay a compensation for the villagers. Nevertheless, after they decided to move, they never received any compensation. Hence, many villagers, especially the youth, were very angry and decided to join the Communist party. Lung Pai did not join the Communist party. At the time, several violent incidents occurred in the areas and many villagers as well as the government officers died. Finally, a village (commonly known as "Moo Ban Kai Nao") which was located in the Wing Division 56 Air Division 4 close to the Hat Yai international airport had disappeared because most villagers died in the violent incidents. The story had never been disclosed. Currently, the villagers who used to join the Communist party and used to live in the Hat Yai

International Airport area had moved to settle in Khlong Hoi Khong district, Hat Yai (Lung Pai, personal communication, February 27, 2017).

They also felt that the justice system in Thailand was not reliable while double standards practice was often used with the case of the yellow shirts and the red shirts, and how the group members were treated in light of their respective protests. They felt the truth needed to be disclosed. In their view, politics of forgiveness needed to be employed to resolve the injustice troubles within Thai society.



Figure 3.9 The memory monument of People's Liberation Army at Khlong Hoi Khong district, Hat Yai. *Source:* Photo of the author taken in 2017.

Injustice and state violence seem to be the main problem of Thai society and politics. It is based upon the abuse of power of the state and government. At the same time, many truths have been concealed by the state suppressions. Many violent suppressions and abuse of power of the state to their people have never been recorded in Thai political history. This enhanced the feeling of injustice for the red shirt supporters in Hat Yai. It increased their feelings of grievance with anger. It was what they had been struggling for many years.

While Anusorn (2017) claimed that the Southerners admired the traditions of Thai master or the elite and authority and loyalty to the monarchy was a political culture that was harmonized with the culture of Southerners (Anusorn, 2017, p. 128), I believe that not all

the Southerners surrendered to the central state power. In contrast, it was evident that the Southerners had frequently struggled with the state power. Meanwhile, the state violent suppressions appeared to be the main issue of injustice for the local Southerners. However, as I previously mentioned, the Southerners adhered to the local political culture in 'jai nak leng' and 'authoritarianism', which were consistent with the political culture and order of Thai state in a moral community, which emphasizes on the nature of the royal power in barami (charisma) of the monarchy. Therefore, many Southerners supported the yellow shirts because they believed in the nature of royal power in barami as the sources of political legitimacy and authority in their cultural contexts. They did not directly support the state power although the state power showed a close connection with the monarchy's power in Thai politics.

3.7 Conclusion

The cultural forces of emotions are related to the diversity of common-sense experiences and perceptions in socio-cultural contexts of social actors. In this regard, we can interpret and understand the cultural forces of emotions in the intersubjective term of social meanings. This reflects the diversity of meanings and perceptions of social actors towards the social and political realities. As one can see, the truth of the yellow shirts and red shirts are diverse based on the meanings that they gave to the social and political realities. It depends on what they perceived as truth and how it is meaningful to their lives and social actions. This is also related to the long cultural and social learning of experiences of the social actors. It is very important to understand the diversity of thoughts of the groups of people in the contemporary socio-political conflicts of Thai society.

The middle class expressed their emotions of hate, disgust and anger as well as love in the political and social conflicts. These emotions were forced by the morality ideal and experiences of cultural learning which was based on a belief in the moral community. Meanwhile, the beliefs in Hindu-Buddhism, supernatural power and mystical power of Thais were always used to justify the power of monarchy in charismatic and sacred power as well as to justify the power relations in the moral hierarchy structure of Thai society. Hence, morality has intertwined with power and it has never been based on equality. At the same time, the emotions of anger, hate and disgust were justified by the moral politics discourse and they are treated as the moral emotions when they are used to counteract an

immoral person or an evil force like the Thaksin regime and the red shirts. Although these emotions are negative emotions and are considered sinful according to the Buddhist doctrines, they are justified by the righteousness in morality.

These cultural forces of emotions reflected the structure of state power which finally justified the practices of the government over people. In particular, it is a conduct in the disposition of people (or called habitus) and power relations in society. Hence, the cultural forces of emotions are always linked to a social class or social classification in Thai society. The feeling of disgust implies a sense of class in the moral hierarchy structure of Thai cultural politics while the state of fear shows a class bias towards a certain group of people in the society such as the rural red shirts in Udon Thani.

Therefore, justice was differently perceived by different social sub-groups who were involved in Thai political conflicts. It was also supported by the prior experiences or common-sense experiences and perceptions of the social actors within their positions and contexts. In particular, the state violent suppression has formed and shaped different emotional experiences and perceptions of people. Finally, it became their cultural forces of emotions in the feelings of injustice. For instance, the red shirt protestors in Udon Thani experienced many violent incidents in their areas from the Communist expansion periods to the violent suppressions on April and May 2010. The injustice intensified their emotions of anger, loss, and fear of the state suppressions even though they never gave up fighting for justice and truth. The feeling of injustice was also forced by the new experiences and perceptions toward the social and political realities of the red shirts through the new forms of media and technology and their participation in the long protests of the red shirt groups. It created a common experience and social memory among them. Ultimately, it made them reconsider the power relations within Thai society as evident in the double-standards issue, ta-sawang discourse and Phrai-Ammart metaphor reflecting their understanding and experience of “injustice” and “inequality”.

The cultural forces of emotions are closely related to the sense of class which are derived from specific experiences in a socialization process and socio-political and cultural learning within Thai society. Notably, the cultural forces of emotions reflect a class conflict within Thai society. This issue has rarely mentioned by the scholars. This can also be seen in the conflict of interests among the socio-political groups. For instance,

some yellow shirt groups felt the economic policies during Thaksin's government was unfair because the rural class was benefited hugely from the policies. At the same time, they felt Thaksin wanted to monopolise the country and he became a threat to the monarchy. This social bias became the feeling of hate and fear. The feeling of bias and envy reflected the class conflicts. However, the conflict of interests was not only about the economic interests. It also included the conflict of symbolic interests such as the legitimate power of recognition and a belief by virtue. In this regard, the conflict showed in the struggle for recognition and righteousness in the politics and society. As a result, it has led to alienation among groups of people in Thai society. For instance, the red shirt protestors were not treated as Thais because they supported Thaksin who was seen as evil and disloyal person to the King and the country and the corrupted politicians who were portrayed as a national disaster and a threat to the nation. This cultivated the feeling of fear, disgust and hate among Thai people who live in the society where moral politics has been heavily promoted.

In contrast, the red shirts were forced by the emotional of love and anger. This cultural force of emotions depended on their experiences and perceptions in politics and society. Also, the disparities in economic and political desires and emotions have provoked the conflict between the yellow shirts and red shirts to become more divided and expanded throughout the country. Hence, several sub-red shirt groups in several parts of Thailand were developed. As we can see, the red shirt group in San Khampheang was formed by their desires for capitalist and feelings of love and sympathy to Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra as one of their own. Meanwhile, this feeling turned into anger, hate and fear. This also involved the political and social contexts that intensified the cultural force of emotions. Some radical red shirt groups wanted to fight for justice and equality. Their struggle was derived from the common experiences, emotions, and memories in the issues on state violent suppression and injustice in Thai legal procedure. In addition, they felt unequal in Thai society.

Thus, the cultural forces of emotions can be changeable and tend to be related to the social class positions of subjectivity within the socio-cultural contexts. The cultural forces of emotions reflected the power of state domination and resistance as well as a struggle for power among the social sub-groups in Thai society. Meanwhile, the crucial problem is the conflicts in political meanings and values in politics, democracy and justice. In

particular, the justice which one is based on the rule of law and another justice which is based on morality or goodness (in religion). In addition, the illusion of moral community suppressed the diversity of moral values and thoughts and it divided people by its righteousness. People do not question the idea of righteousness when it is linked with the legitimate power of monarchy. This is the reason why several red shirt groups do not share the same ideal and emotion with the radical red shirt groups. Therefore, it is not easy to determine that people are simply divided because of their political ideology or their belief in religion. We need to consider different cultural forces to be able to determine people's stance among the political conflicts.

In chapter 4, I will classify the groups inside both the yellow shirt and red shirt protests which expressed through different cultural forces of emotions, beliefs, thoughts and conflict issues in order to explain the complexity of Thai socio-political conflicts, in particular, the different meanings in politics, justice and democracy shaped by cultural forces of emotions found as the significant issue of Thai political conflicts and polarization.

The seal of Chiang Mai University is a circular emblem. In the center is a detailed illustration of an elephant standing and facing left. Above the elephant is a five-pointed star. The entire emblem is encircled by a border containing the text 'CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY 1964'.

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CHAPTER 4

The Complexity of Thai socio-political conflicts

This chapter focuses on the complexity of Thai political conflicts and polarization through examination of the differences of thoughts, beliefs, emotions and conflict issues among sub-groups of yellow shirt and red shirt supporters. As previously mentioned, both the yellow shirts and red shirts have never been united, they are actually comprised of various social sub-groups joined in the movements with their own wills, desires, demands, and thoughts. Notably, the diverse meanings of politics, democracy and justice they hold reflect the complexity of Thai socio-political conflicts more fully than the view of a binary conflict between the yellow shirts and red shirts. The main problem is the gap in understanding these political meanings in terms of their cultural emotions and perceptions, and the actions they take on the basis of these emotions and perceptions.

Therefore, this chapter aims to explain the complexity of Thai socio-political conflicts through a series of matrix models of sub-groups, meanings of politics, ideologies/beliefs/values, cultural emotions and the conflictual issues between two political groups. In each model, the heterogeneous groups inside the yellow shirt and the red shirt groups are distinguished from one another. This heterogeneity illustrates the implications of the argument about the different meanings of politics, democracy and justice, as it shows the underlying causes and complexity of Thai socio-political conflicts. These meanings have been interpreted through the different cultural emotions based on the diverse background of people's experiences of learning within their contexts and positions. Taken together, this demonstrates that the conflicts between the yellow shirts and red shirts cannot be understood in terms of a binary conflict between two political groups and representations: the pro-Thaksin group versus the anti-Thaksin group and/or the pro-monarchy group.

The kinds of sources used for supporting this interpretation are drawn from data analysis of fieldwork including publications, newspapers, public statements, and memos of the yellow and red shirt groups after the military coup of 2006. These sources reflected the experiences, emotions, perceptions and thoughts among the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters during the context of Thai political conflicts. They reflect how they created the meanings of politics, democracy and justice according to their social backgrounds in experiences and the context of Thai political conflicts.

Subsequently, another matrix model shows the diverse meanings of politics, emotions, ideologies and sub-groups within the conflict between the yellow shirts and red shirts. This illustrates how the meanings of politics and values shaped by different cultural emotions were contested among the social sub-groups and comprised the underlying causes of conflicts.

Accordingly, it illustrates my argument that emotions not only motivate human action, but also help to maintain the social and political order in society. The emotions and meanings of politics support the maintenance of the social and political order based on a moral community, and show the underlying causes of conflict in Thai society such as those of class and interests, and the issues of violence and injustice. Significantly, it represents the emotional and political realities among the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters, as they were expressed in their cultural emotions and political meanings. Meanwhile, the existing heterogeneity among the yellow and red shirts reflects the problem of Thai political meaning and the contestation to social and political order based on the moral community.

4.1 The Yellow Shirt Groups

In this section, I categorize the yellow shirt protestors into two groups: the first group is the “conservative yellow shirts” who believe in and support the royal power in barami (charisma) and saksit (sacrality) of the monarchy as well as the moral hierarchy structure including the royalist elites, intellectuals, and the old middle class. This group professed their desires and demands to preserve the traditional order of Thai society and nation centered on the monarchy, while they showed the superiority of their morality over other people as a political ideology and social norm. The second group is the “yellow shirts” who supported the yellow shirt protests because they wanted to oust Thaksin, agreed with

the PAD protests or the PAD leaders, and wished to protect the monarchy and nation. Many expressed extreme royal-nationalist ideals during the yellow shirt protests. The distinct categories of these groups help to explain the different meanings of politics, democracy, and justice shaped by cultural emotions as well as the political ideologies and conflictual issues inside the yellow shirt movement. Also, it showed the overlap of ideals, beliefs and emotions among them. All these groups are illustrated in the matrix models below:

Table 4.1 The Matrix Model of Politics, Emotions, Beliefs/Ideologies and Values, and the Conflict Issues of the Yellow Shirt Groups

Emotions	Fear (and Anxiety)	Hate	Disgust	Love	Anger	Hope	Beliefs- Ideologies and Values
Politics							
Moral Politics	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts Yellow Shirts	-Morality (in religion) - Charismatic power - Royal-democracy - Royal-nationalism – The ideals of a good man and returning the favour to the motherland -Authoritarianism
Moral Democracy	Conservative Yellow Shirts					Conservative Yellow Shirts	-Moral Politics -Royal- Democracy -Morality (in religion) -A Good man -Authoritarianism
Royal- Nationalism	Conservative Yellow Shirts Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts		-Merit-making -Moral Politics -Royal-Democracy- Royal Nationalism - The ideals of a good man and returning the favour to the motherland
Justice	Conservative Yellow Shirts Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts Yellow Shirts				-Dhamma or Truth -Righteousness (in morality) -Fairness in distribution of valued resources
Conflict issues	-Thaksin regime -Sense of the middle class -The disorder of Thai society and nation (feeling of instability in something making society in abnormal (maj praketh) - The monarchy would be destroyed.	-Conflicts of interests and classes - Feeling of unfairness in distribution of valued resources and capitals -Corruption issues of Thaksin's government and the violation of royal prerogative of Thaksin.	-Sense of the middle class in hierarchy structure	-Feeling of protection to the nation and monarchy -Thaksin and the red shirts offended the king and monarchy (as a threat to the nation and monarchy) - To harmonize the political interests and purposes of alliance in the yellow shirt movements under the political achievement in overthrow the Thaksin regime.		- The disorder of Thai nation and society. -The stability of the monarchy.	

From the matrix model, the most influential cultural force of the conservative yellow shirt supporters is the moral politics ideal based on beliefs and thoughts in morality (in

religion) and the charismatic power (merit and sacred power) of the monarchy in the moral hierarchy structure. A moral political discourse shapes their emotional reality of fear, hate and disgust towards Thaksin and red shirt protestors. Meanwhile, it shows the superiority of morality as the social norm and political order. Therefore, moral politics became equated with good politics for yellow shirt supporters and helped preserve the power of the monarchy and the status of the King above politics. These moral politics were integrated with ideals of democracy and royal-nationalism, with King (Bhumibol), who is adored for his superior charisma by most Thais, regarded as the highest moral figure. The discourse was utilised by the yellow shirt movement as a political strategy against the Thaksin government.

Concurrently, the royalist elite also supported and cultivated a moral-political ideal with royal-nationalism. This affected many Thais, especially the old middle class. Indeed, it is linked to the prior experiences of those who had participated in the political movements during the 14th October 1973. The middle class did not develop their own political ideology and political culture that fully deviated from the ideals of the moral community and royal-nationalism and they have been socialized within the ideals of moral politics and royal-democracy for a long time, especially those who lived in Bangkok. In addition, after the uprising of the urban middle class in 1992, many took on the role of protecting democracy, promoting political reform and drafting a new constitution. They believed that corrupt politicians were the central problem in Thai politics and the lower and rural classes were unable to select good men for politics (Ockey, 2004). This became the political and social reality for many members of the middle-class. This was the reason why they supported the yellow shirt movement: they feared that the Thaksin regime would take over the whole country and the Thai nation would be disordered by corrupt politicians and an uprising by a poor and unsophisticated rural class.

As one can see, many middle-class Bangkokians think and feel that they are the middle class who are educated and more developed than the rural class or red shirt protestors. This resulted from the socialization of class culture in the hierarchy structure of the moral community in which the king is placed at the top. This point of view has been found in interviews with Pa Kan (pseudonym) and other yellow shirt protestors in Bangkok. Most of them are educated and consider themselves to be middle-class. Most had experienced in politics since 14th October 1973. Therefore, that is why most people in this group were

elderly and age 60 to 70 years old or over. For instance, Pa Kan (60 years old) had joined the student movements in 1973 during her undergraduate study at Mahidol University in Bangkok. After she graduated, she worked for the government for several years. Pa Kan believed that her knowledge and experiences have supported her critical thinking and she possesses much consideration in deciding what is right and wrong in Thai society. She supported the yellow shirts because the actions and ideas of this group was right in her mind (Pa Kan, personal interview, May 18, 2015).

Similarly, Pa Nok (pseudonym, 70 years old) was born in a middle-class family and graduated from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Like Pa Kan, Pa Nok had experience as a civil servant because she worked for the local government in Surat Thani province for several years. Due to her work experiences, she supported the yellow shirt group and mentioned that “I saw many corruptions in Thai bureaucracy and political systems. So, I decided to support the yellow shirts to reform Thai politics and eliminate corruption. I wanted to see clean politics in Thai society. That means no corruption in politics”. Furthermore, she considered herself to be a middle-class person and tax payer. She was interested the most in the basis of civil rights. Her expectation was that the politicians and government must use people’s taxes for public interests. Pa Nok also found that Thaksin used tax revenue for his own interests, while he avoided paying taxes himself. This was extremely unfair to her and many middle-class people. She said that “Everyone pays their taxes and a middle-class concern involves paying taxes every year. It is a basic justice of Thai society. However, Thaksin did not pay his taxes and he is still rich. That is why it is unfair for people” (Pa Nok, personal communication, March 31, 2016).

Thus, the sense of righteousness of many middle-class yellow shirts relates to the class specific-experiences which have shaped their perceptions, emotions and political perspectives. Many of them were fully aware of themselves as ordinary tax-payers and middle-class people. They think they are educated and able to think more critically than red shirt protestors. This is the self-perception formed by the class experiences of the middle class in cultural contexts, it is not formed by the economic relations. Accordingly, the class experience is significant in Thai society. E.P. Thompson (1963) mentions that class consciousness is not only determined by the productive relations as in classical Marxism, it can also be determined by the class experiences which handled in cultural

terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, beliefs and institutional forms. This class consciousness lies in the vast, multiple and contradictory realm of experience, not in the unidirectional process of class struggle in economic determinism of classical Marxism (William, 1986).

Similarly, the old middle-class in Udon Thani has a similar mindset to the old middle-class in Bangkok. As Lung Phee (pseudonym), a local businessman who has lived in the city of Udon Thani for more than 25 years, told me that “Thaksin did not care much with the middle class because he gain the majority of votes from the grassroots class. That’s why he launched many subsidy projects for the rural people. It was unfair for the middle class due to Thaksin used taxes to serve for his own interests” (Lung Phee, personal communication, June 6, 2017).

This showed both the sense of middle-class identity and the conflicts of class and interests that emerged from the perceptions formed by the class experiences of social actors. This resulted in social division and conflict between the middle class and the rural class as well as the struggle for power of the old middle class in Thai politics. As we can see, the politics that the old middle class wanted is a moral democracy which is based on the ideals of moral politics and royal-democracy where the king is the center of the state and nation, and the significant part of Thai democracy.

This, in turn, reflected the embeddedness of the moral community in the perception, disposition and sense of social class of many Thais. In the meantime, the roles of royalist elites, government, intellectuals and institutions also supported and cultivated their political ideals, beliefs, emotions and perceptions embodied within the moral community such as the statement of Prem Tinsulanonda (the Chair of Privy Council), the role of the Gratitude to Motherland Association, the books of Apichat Dumdee (a famous orator) and Prawet Wasi (a famous intellectual). They emphasized the moral politics ideal as the ultimate purpose of the Thai state and political order, and the moral standard and values for all Thais.

For instance, General Prem Tinsulanonda, who is a royalist elite usually promotes the concept of good man (khon dee) with the royal-nationalism discourse as the moral politics ideal of Thai society and moral value for all Thais. The good man refers to people who follow the royal goodness of the king; return the favour to the motherland (pandin); and

act according to the moral code of Buddhism. The concepts of a good man and gratitude to the motherland have been promoted as Thai morality and virtue by General Prem especially since the military coup in 2006. The discourse of the good man justified the political legitimacy of General Surayud Chulanont, ex-prime minister during the military junta of 2006. Prem described him in the following terms: “Surayud Chulanont was a good man and he heavily devoted himself for country and his works”. He also proclaimed that if Thais want a good government, they should promote a good man to govern the country (Manager, 2010). Admiration for a good man is the way to show gratitude to the motherland or country (tob tan bun khun pandin), a morality that should be applied to all Thais (The National Identity Office, 2003, p.143).

This meaning of a good man has been promoted by “The Gratitude to Motherland Association”, headed by Police Major General Amporn Lipai and supported by many intellectuals, government, yellow shirt supporters and the People’s Democratic Reform Committee protestors. The Gratitude to Motherland Association was established on 26th August 2013 in Hat Yai district, Songkla. It aims to be the center for recruitment of good men and promotes all Thais to be good men (Manager, 2013). Moreover, the music video “ked ma tong tob tan bun khun pandin” (born to gratitude to the motherland) sung by the Carabao band (a famous Thai rock band), books, newsletters and medias related to promoting the ideal of gratitude to the motherland have been produced and disseminated. As a result, the corruption and corrupt politicians are portrayed as a national disaster, while the way to resolve this problem is promoting a good man to govern the country. Apparently, the concept of a good man reflected the concept of the great man or the highest good man of the Thai moral community in which the king is represented as the exemplary center.



Figure 4.1 The cover of official audio song “ked ma tong tob tan bun khun pandin” of the Carabao band.

Source: YouTube, 2016, Retrieved July 30, 2017 from
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyioTdeLMTA>

In addition, a book was published by the King Prajadhipok Institution titled “The Buddhist Doctrines and Promoting the Way of Democracy” (2006) written by Apichat Dumdee, a famous Thai orator and yellow shirt supporter. In this book, Apichat combined the concept of morality in Buddhist doctrine with the concepts of good man and democracy. He ascribed that a good man is a person who acts according to the Buddhist doctrines such as the ‘kusullakammabod’ (Dasa Kusala) or ten moral actions. The good ruler should to practice in ‘thospitrajadhamma’ (Dasa-Raja-Dhamma) or ten principles of the righteous king such as charity and toleration. This definition of a good man is different from that of Prem because it concentrated on the Buddhist doctrines rather than a royal nationalist discourse. Apichat claimed that Buddhism could support democracy because it focuses on individual rights, freedom and equality of people. Buddhism is concerned with the majority of votes and the rule of law as the way to solve the problems of country. Importantly, the Buddhist doctrine is related to the law of life and the law of nature. Hence, it can get along well with the concept of democracy (Apichat, 2006).

As previously mentioned, the Thai morality in the Hindu-Buddhism frame is involved with power and served to justify the legitimate power of monarchy. Subsequently, morality became the ultimate purpose of the Thai state and helped to create the concept of “moral democracy” that means democracy governed by morality and a good man. Therefore, a moral democracy served to maintain a royal-democracy which is democracy guided by the monarchy and royalist elites. The combination between morality and royal-

democracy is expressed through a belief in the nature of royal power and royal-nationalist sentiment among the yellow shirt supporters.

Similarly, Prawet Wasi who is the senior people and public health scholar also supported the ideal of moral politics and moral democracy as the social norm and political order of Thai society. He noted that “morality is righteousness”. Morality can bring peace and happiness into society. Therefore, morality should be situated above the politics and laws. Meanwhile, Thais should recognize and promote morality as a power of the land (palang khong pandin). Thais should respect the first command of King Bhumibol on his coronation day that “we shall reign by Dhamma for the benefit and happiness of all Thais.” This statement means morality is a power of the land (pandin) and is not a power of capital (which is immoral). The power of capital is always opposed to religion and monarchy. Although the power of capital can control political power, it cannot disregard the charismatic power of monarchy. Power of capital is immoral and considered as threat to the monarchy. Prawet claimed that morality (sila-dhamma) can eliminate the immoral power of capital. He proposed the idea of Buddhasada Bhikku in ‘atammayata’ which means ‘unconditionability’ or it is a spiritual equilibrium to oppose the immoral power of capital. Nevertheless, Prawet used the term ‘atammayata’ in the sense of “ku mai ao kab mung ik laeo voy!” (I’m done with it!), as the eloquent words to fight against immoral power of Thaksin crony capitalism (Prawet, 2006, p. 134, 148, 208). In this regard, justice can be referred to as righteousness according to morality, as it can enable society to live in peace and harmony or be normal (prakati).

This meaning of justice is based on “dhamma” or “truth” in Buddhism. According to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1986), ‘dhamma’ or ‘truth’ is the normal (prakati or si-la) of nature or nature as its norm. It aims to make a society normal (prakati). That brings about the state of morality (sila-dhamma) in a society. In other words, it is bringing about the natural balance of things (prakati) in society. Accordingly, the normality (prakati) of society can occur from people living together in peace and harmony according to the norms of nature and society (Buddhadasa, 1986, p.77 and 124). This even includes Thai social norms found within the moral hierarchy structure with the king situated at the top.

On the other hand, justice can also refer to fairness in the distribution of valued resources in the social, politics and economic system such as political opportunities and capital. As

earlier mentioned in Chapter 3, a feeling of injustice of the conservative yellow shirt supporters especially the old middle class in Bangkok, Udon Thani and Hat Yai occurred from the conflict of interests and feeling of unfairness in the distribution of valued resources and capitals during the Thaksin's government. Likewise, Yun (pseudonym), who is a retired university lecturer in Hat Yai mentioned that the Southerners who supported the yellow shirt protests hate Thaksin because he treated Southerners unfairly and was uninterested in them. He frequently said that he was the prime minister of the Northern people and he paid much attention to his voters in the Northeastern and Northern regions of Thailand. He never focused on solving the social and economic issues in the South or was concerned with the Southerners' demands. He helped and cared only for those who chose him as the prime minister. This is injustice for the Southerners" (Yun, personal communication, January 20, 2016).

This reflected the conflict of interests among the old middle-class who supported the yellow shirts, the rural class and Thaksin's government. The conflict had been understood in terms of injustice for the yellow shirt supporters. In the meantime, this issue had been combined with the moral politics ideal and royal-nationalism discourse in anti-corruption and protecting the monarchy. The Thaksin regime became regarded as a threat to the nation and monarchy due to his troubles in corruption and violation of royal prerogative. As a result, it became the political strategy of the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) in motivating the collective emotion and consciousness among the yellow shirt protestors who wanted to oust Thaksin and protect the monarchy.

As one can see, Bundit Pinmongkolkul, who was a moderator of the "Dhamma Talk" program of the PAD protests, refers to the ideals and emotions of yellow shirt protestors. He proclaimed that "all the PAD protestors felt appreciated in the royal grace of the King because we were born under his Majesty's bounty (phraborom phothisomphan). So, we fight for our beloved institution" (Supranee, 2009, p. 377). He also claimed that "this fighting is a duty of Thais to return the favour to the land (pandin) and it is a merit making (tam bun)" (Ibid). From his statement, merit making in Buddhism has been intertwined with royal nationalist discourse. He expressed a desire for an ideal society whereby morality can help Thai society become 'normal' (prakati) with peace and harmony.

Significantly, many yellow shirt supporters believed that Thaksin did not have enough merit accumulated to be equal to the king. However, he tried to act like the king such as sitting on the chair in the same position of the king and royal family in Wat Pra Keaw (Wat Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram or the Temple of the Emerald Buddha) in Bangkok (Lung Phee, personal communication, June 6, 2017). This issue encouraged the royal-nationalist sentiment of many Thais to become anti-Thaksin and agree with the yellow shirt movement. Therefore, the yellow shirt supporters were motivated by royal-nationalism and the moral politics ideal. This provoked their emotions of anger and hate to Thaksin, while it stimulated the feelings of love, faith and loyalty to the king as the collective emotion and value among Thais. This helps to explain why many people joined and supported the yellow shirt protests; they were angry and hated Thaksin and the red shirt protestors, who came to be seen as offensive to the king and then became a threat to the monarchy. This emotional reaction was expressed in their extreme desires and actions in protecting the monarchy and nation during the yellow shirt protests.

As one member of the yellow shirt movement who also joined the PDRC protests in Bangkok said “What did the king do wrong? The king is a good man and the highest revered person. I don’t want Thaksin and the red shirts to destroy our king” (Jek (pseudonym), September 30, 2015). Another said, “people who criticize the king cannot do like the king did” (San (pseudonym), personal communication, June 19, 2015).

One consequence of this love is a feeling of protection and security; of offering protection to a person they love. This feeling is powerful enough to force people into the political protests; to protect the monarchy as their emotional and political reality. However, this feeling is accompanied by fear and anxiety that the monarchy will be destroyed, that the King will fall ill, and that there is disorder in Thai society. This reflects that the cultural emotions of many Thais are embodied within the moral community where the monarchy is regarded as the established part of the Thai social order and the source of stability for the Thai nation and country. Therefore, the cultural emotions of fear and anxiety occurred from a feeling of instability in something making the society ‘abnormal’ (mai-prakati) or disordered. Meanwhile, the cultural emotion of love (also faith and loyalty) can motivate the emotions of fear and anger together as well as it can support violence within Thai society.

As we shall see, there were several cases of social violence which occurred to people whom insulted King Bhumibol. For instance, Umaporn Sarasat, the owner of a travel business in Samui Island, was forced by a mob of angry people to apologize in front of His Majesty the King's portrait, after she posted the insulting words about King Bhumibol on her Facebook page. She was the victim of the mob even though she was in police custody at that time (Thairat, 2016). This anger was intensified by the feelings of love and loyalty (also the tremendous grief) held toward the king (Bhumibol) under the royal-nationalist ideology.

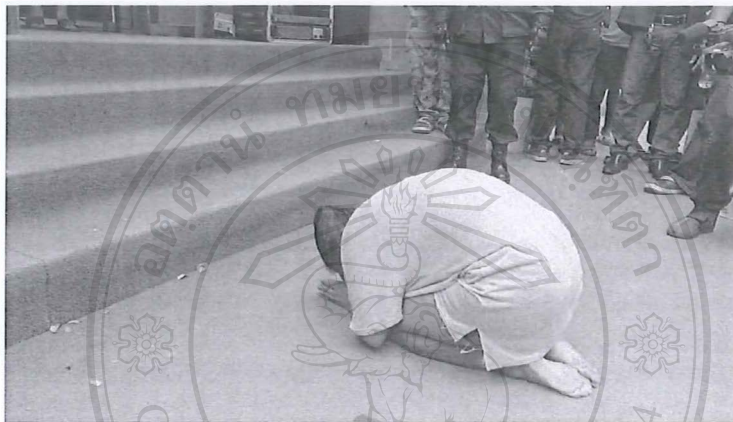


Figure 4.2 Umaporn Sarasat had been forced by the mob in Samui Island to apologize at the front of the royal portrait of His Majesty King Bhumibol.

Source: Thairath, 2016, Retrieved July 30, 2017 from <https://www.thairath.co.th/content/755717>

Consequently, the emotions of fear, disgust, hate, love and anger of the conservative yellow shirts and yellow shirts helped to maintain the traditional social and political order as a moral community as well as the state ideological domination in royal-nationalism and moral democracy. These reflected emotions not only motivate human action, but also help to maintain the social and political order in society. Accordingly, I argue that Thai old middle-class and elites were not only concerned with their socio-economic interests within the traditional social and political structures as several scholars mentioned (Kasian, 2010; Nidhi, 2010; Uchen, 2013; Pasoot, 2015), but they were most concerned with the future of Thai society and moral deterioration without the King at the center. It was important for them because it linked their cultural emotions, the sense of class and the future of their life together. Their anxieties emerged once they saw Thaksin use his power

immoderately and attempt to extend his political power. Moreover, they also saw Thaksin as a greedy and immoral person. Further, he was supported by many pro-Thaksin groups and red shirt supporters. Hence, the yellow shirts were concerned that Thai society would be changed and social and moral order would be degraded. Similarly, the monarchy would be toppled by Thaksin and red shirt supporters. All this was expressed as their political and emotional realities. It became the reason why they supported and desired moral politics and moral democracy because it can bring Thai society to be 'prakati' or 'normal' with peace and harmony, as the truly meaning and value of justice (Dhamma) of Thai moral community in their perception and consciousness.

Even though, the meaning of moral democracy was actually presented in the royal-democracy. That is a democracy and/or governance guided by the royalist elites and monarchy. It means that Thai democracy is not truly liberal democracy. It is rather authoritarian rule governed by the central power of state and legitimized by the charismatic power of monarchy and royalist elites. As a result, the elected democracy and elected authority do not have substantive power since true power remains in the hands of elites and the monarchy in Thai politics (Thongchai, 2016).

In addition, these meanings of politics, democracy and justice as well as the cultural emotions of the yellow shirts supported authoritarianism because it is based on the belief in charisma and morality in religion. This belief occurred through processes of sacralization such as the special rituals and ceremonies for the monarchy, and the process of institutionalization with support from allies of the network monarchy. As we can see, the royal development projects played an important role in enhancing the charismatic power and feeling of relevance to the king of Thais. This role was supported by the direct patronage relationship among the monarchy, intellectuals, government officers, technocrats and Sino-Thai businessmen, and included individuals and organizations both inside and outside the network of monarchy (Chanida, 2011). This network helped to protect and promote the role and status of the king. Meanwhile, the king's image and royal guidance have been reproduced through mass media under the control of government and the private sector. As a result, King (Bhumibol) became a sacred and virtuous king, and became the primary source of political legitimacy. Besides, the king was also regarded as the founder of Thai democracy and the national protector who frequently solved national crises. All these precisely expressed the embodiment of moral

community in the Thai political and socio-cultural order as well as the cultural disposition of Thais.

As many yellow shirt protestors believed that the king was truly above politics and he should not get involved in any conflicts in their commonsense experiences and perceptions. Nevertheless, this issue resulted in conflicts inside the yellow shirt movements when the PAD leaders agreed to propose the invocation of Article 7 of the 1997 Constitution of Thailand

⁴ to ask for the direct intervention of the king to solve a national crisis and called for a royally-appointed new prime minister to replace Thaksin Shinawatra.

However, King Bhumibol refused to interfere in the political conflicts and replied: *“I am very concerned that whenever a problem arises, people call for a royally appointed prime minister, which would not be democratic. If you cite Section 7 of the Constitution, it is an incorrect citation. Section 7 cannot be cited. Section 7 has only two lines which says that whenever no provision under this Constitution is applicable to any case, it shall be decided in accordance with the constitutional practice in a democratic regime with the King as Head of State. But asking for a royally appointed prime minister is undemocratic. [I] affirm that Section 7 does not empower the King to do anything he wishes”* (quoted from Merieau, 2014, para. 22).

According to Michael Connors (2008), the call for royal intervention to replace Thaksin Shinawatra from prime minister was supported by both the PAD and the Democrat Party. In fact, Article 7 of 1997 Constitution was introduced by the conservative royalists before the constitution was promulgated, but after public hearings were completed. Even though the king refused to act according to Article 7 and the plea of the PAD movement, he called on the judiciary to intervene following the annulled 2006 election and then the military coup on 19th September 2006 (Connors, 2008).

⁴ Article 7 of Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 1997 stipulates that “Whenever no provision under this Constitution is applicable to any case, it shall be decided in accordance with the constitutional practice in the democratic regime of government with the King as Head of the State”. (The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 1997, Retrieved December 27, 2017 from <http://www.asianlii.org/th/legis/const/1997/1.html>).

Accordingly, the conflict emerged within the PAD movement because they argued about the interpretation of Article 7 of 1997 Constitution. Members of the alliance who did not conform to the call for royal intervention withdrew themselves from the PAD movement, such as the anti-FTA group and the urban poor group. However, their supporters remained with the PAD movement. Meanwhile, the conflict was resolved after the alliance and supporters agreed on the common purpose and mission to discharge Thaksin from the office of the prime minister and overthrow the Thaksin regime. Thus, Article 7 of Thai Constitution became a political strategy used by the yellow shirt movement to overcome Thaksin (Thong (pseudonym), personal communication, October 13, 2015).

It was obvious that the royal-nationalist discourse was used as a political strategy by the PAD to justify their political actions and to serve the political purposes and interests of their alliance. For instance, the alliance from the 16 provinces in Southern region wanted to oust Thaksin because they dissatisfied with the Thaksin government and demanded for a better life in the Thai economy as well as resolution of the agricultural issues in the South such as the prices of palm and pineapple farms. Meanwhile, the PAD also used sympathetic media outlets to mobilize support, such as the ASTV satellite station, newspapers and local radio stations. Also, banners and posters, and new social media forms such as Facebook, Twitter, manager online and web blogs were used. The activities of the PAD were broadcast live for 24 hours each day through the ASTV satellite station, so the audience could follow protests live at home, as though they were watching a reality television show. Subsequently, the media sector had a big influence on people's perceptions and created the political and emotional realities of yellow shirt protestors that they were fighting against the evil forces and conducting a sacred mission to save the nation and monarchy. This also responded to the individualized forces of personal needs, beliefs and sentiments which were embodied within the moral community of many Thais.

On the other hand, the perception, belief and feeling of relevance to the king of many yellow shirt supporters justified and provided a reason to support the military coup in 2006 (also the military coup in 2014) which they claimed was to protect the monarchy institution and to bring peace and harmony back to Thai society. The military leaders argued that the key problem within Thai politics is a lack of morality, which has arisen in large part from a preoccupation with economic growth at both the local and national

levels, but especially during the implementation of Thaksin's populist economic programs (Walker 2012:261).

According to the military government, political issues have had an adverse impact on the morals and ethics held by Thai people, and the only way to resolve the problem is to bring the country back on course, following the 'sufficiency economy' philosophy and the royal guidance introduced by the Thai king as part of the country's development strategy and political reform. The sufficiency economy is considered as a key characteristic of a Thai royal-democracy, as it links governance and monarchy together. The various military regimes and coups that have taken place over the last century have been legitimized based on this concept of Thai royal-democracy as the political order and political culture of Thai moral community. This concept helps to ensure that Thai people retain confidence in their life, benefits, government and country, which is ruled by a good man rather than politicians, who normally govern on behalf of their own interests. Therefore, Thai political legitimacy is heavily based upon the belief in charismatic power and morality which justified the authoritarian rule and royal-democracy in Thai politics and political culture. Meanwhile, the meanings of politics, democracy and justice of the yellow shirts cannot be separated from the monarchy and morality as well as the cultural emotions and belief embodied within the moral community.

4.2 The red shirt groups

In contrast, the red shirt groups expressed the diverse of meanings of politics and justice forced by different experiences of cultural learning within their contexts and positions. Accordingly, I categorized the red shirts into three groups. The first, "the red shirts," refers to the red shirt protestors whom joined the red shirt protests with their anger and dissatisfaction with the PAD movements, the military coup of 2006, and their passion with love to protect their people and beloved leaders such as Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra. Also, they wanted to ask for edible democracy and electoral democracy in order to gain their rights and opportunities in the economic and political system. In their view, political legitimacy should be derived from an elected democratic system. The second group is the "progressive red shirts," who are those who struggle for justice, equality and democracy as well as a social recognition in truth and righteousness of the red shirt protestors. They hoped and demanded political legitimacy and justice based on

the rule of law; The third is the “radical red shirts,” who were groups of people desiring social and political reforms aligned with radical left-wing ideals. Some were former members of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). Their political ideologies and desires for democracy, justice and equality were derived from feelings of loss, hurt and disappointment, experienced through red shirt protests. The distinct categories of these red shirt groups represented both the diversity of thoughts, beliefs and emotions among the red shirts, and the development of the red shirt groups in Thai political contexts. All these are illustrated in the matrix model of politics, emotions, the conflict issues and sub-groups inside the red shirt movement.

Table 4.2 The Matrix Model of Politics, Emotions, Beliefs/Ideologies and Values, and the Conflict Issues of the Red Shirt Groups

Emotions	Love	Anger	Hurt Loss	Fear	Hope	Hate	Beliefs Ideologies and Values
Politics							
Edible Democracy	Red Shirts	Red Shirts			Red Shirts		Democracy that can improve the better life of people and respond to the capitalist desires.
Electoral Democracy	Red Shirts	Red Shirts			Red Shirts		- Edible Democracy - Political instrument for people
Liberal Democracy	Progressive Red Shirts	Progressive Red Shirts			Progressive Red Shirts		- Justice, Freedom, equality and rights - Government of people, for people and by people
					Red Shirts		
					Radical Red Shirts		Reforming Thai social and Political structure through the people revolution with the ideology of leftist.
Justice	Progressive Red Shirts	Progressive Red Shirts	Progressive Red Shirts	Progressive Red Shirts	Progressive Red Shirts		- Truth - Rule of law and equality in the legal process - A desire for social recognition and acceptance
	Radical Red Shirts	Radical Red Shirts	Radical Red Shirts		Radical Red Shirts	Radical Red Shirts	- Anti-the monarchy and the article 112 - Reforming Thai social and Political structure through the people revolution with the ideology of leftist.
Conflict Issues	- The overthrow of Thaksin government	Democracy had been destroyed by the military coup of 2006. Thaksin treated unfairly in the legal procedure The yellow shirt movement - The state violent suppression and injustice issues. - The disadvantaged in the power relations - Unfairly treated in the legal process and charged by the article 112. - Defeated in the protest on May 2010. - Felt unfairly treated in Thai society.		- Unfairly treated in the legal process and charge of the article 112 - The state violent suppression	- Legal threats and lack of the rule of law - The state violent suppressions - Defeated in the political protests - Felt unfairly treated in Thai society - The state suppression and domination with fear and bias sense to the red shirts.		

According to data analysis in Chapter 3, most of the red shirt protestors were the lower middle class or the grassroots class who professed their love and supported Thaksin Shinawatra (and also Yingluck Shinawatra), and desired edible democracy, which refers to democracy that can improve the better lives of people. It can respond to the benefits and capitalist desires of people, while it opens the opportunities for people to possess and access for capitalists. In fact, the ideal and desire for edible democracy emerged before and after the Thaksin's government. It occurred along with the rapid rural transformation during Thai economic growth from the 1980s to 1990s.

During the 1980s to 1990s, Thailand appeared to be rushing toward becoming one of the newly industrialized countries attractive for foreign investments. The rapid expansion of the Thai economy generated a dramatic increase in jobs, especially in Bangkok. First, for construction and transportation workers and for maids and nursemaids in the expanding number of wealthy urban households, and then the factory workers and workers in much enlarged commercial service sector. This led to the rural transformation during the past few decades of Thai society into an urbanized society from traditional rice farming and rural life-style. This also included the changing of the rural economy such that most of the rural incomes came from outside the village and non-farming activities. This was a process of transformation from a rural agrarian society primarily economically based on agriculture into an increasingly urbanized one that relies on industrial production and services (Drahmoune, 2013).

In addition, it led to the emergence of new middle-class groups within Thai society such as the urbanized villagers (Naruemon & Duncan, 2011), and cosmopolitan villagers (Keyes, 2012 and 2014). According to Naruemon and Duncan (2011), they defined the "urbanized villagers" as the groups of people who live in between urban and rural sites with the lower middle-income levels and seeking for capitalist desires in economy as the middle-class people who lives in the urban areas (Naruemon & Duncan, 2011). Simultaneously, Charles Keyes (2012) identified the "cosmopolitan villagers" as the groups of people who have a sophisticated understanding of the global economy and the society of the nation in which they live and work, while they still have the strong bonds between migrant workers and their families in their home villages. The rural villages have

become more urbanized through rural economic development and the expansion of technologies and communications. This has led to increasing connections among rural communities that were previously rather isolated from broader global networks of communication and interaction. Meanwhile, the migrant rural villagers have more experience in the global economy and world outside their villages. Since they have travelled and worked in Bangkok, urban towns and foreign countries (Keyes, 2012). So, that's why they are defined as the lower or new middle class or the grassroots class. Even though many of them lived and worked in the rural sites and engaged in agriculture such as the red shirt supporters in Chiang Mai, their lives and economies were closely linked to the global market economy and their life-styles changed to more modern and consumptions.

As found in research on social equality and health in the rural villages of Udon Thani in 2013, most of rural households use around 25-45% of household income for food expenses per month, and used around 34.9% of their total income for car expenses. It means there was an increase of consumption costs in the rural sites, while the rural life-style in consumption had changed (Santiparp, 2013). In this sense, the rural life-style and livelihood are not self-sufficient. In fact, they demand for materialist consumption and access to capitalism. It is what Nidhi (2010) described Thailand as a 'post-peasant' society that most of Thai population is now modern and market-oriented, while the distinction between urban and rural has become very blurred because many rural people actually work in urban areas and share similar outlooks to those living in large towns (Naruemon & Duncan, 2011).

Moreover, these members of the new middle class and rural class were not poor, but their opportunities and capabilities such as education and skills, were lower than the old middle-class people. Much of their income was derived from both formal and informal sectors as well as the non-farming sector. Thus, they needed the support from government policies and public services which could improve their lives and economic opportunities (Apichat et al., 2013).

Hence, this became the reason why they desired and demanded for an edible democracy which could improve their lives. Meanwhile, the populist economic policies of Thaksin's government can respond to the economic demands and aspirations of these new middle

and rural classes. Then, it formed their perception that the edible democracy is better provided in the electoral democracy because it is more responsive to the dynamic demands of people than the authoritarianism and inefficient bureaucracy. As Thongchai (2016) mentioned, the electoral democracy is “edible,” for it brings concrete benefits, opportunities and improvements in material life, especially to the rural and semi-urban classes who make up the majority of the country’s population (Thongchai, 2016). Subsequently, the edible democracy showed the desires and demands for capitalist and electoral democracy of many rural and new middle classes who joined the red shirt protests.

On the other hand, the rise of Thaksin’s political power and his success in launching many rural economic projects had led to a change of people’s perceptions of politics and the economic system. Also, it affected the leading roles of monarchy and the elites in guiding royal-democracy and rural development. For instance, the sufficiency economy ethic which promotes small-scale subsistence farming as the rural means of defense against globalization’s market forces and materialistic values (Drahmoune, 2013). It showed totally contrasted to the lived realities, demands and aspires in economy of many rural and new middle classes. Hence, the sufficiency economy obviously manifested the discrepancies in economic ideals and aspirations between the royalist elite and the rural class in economic and sustainable development (Rossi, 2012).

Meanwhile, many rural villagers changed their perceptions of the political system in which the electoral democracy became as the political instrument for people to bargain a power with politicians and political leaders. Politics can response to their demands in realities of lives, and can improve their social and economic status. It is a politics in term of politics of life. Therefore, the edible democracy did not mean only a desire for capitalism, but it is a hope for people’s lives and desire for the good politics of many rural people.

Nevertheless, their hopes and desires for these good politics and capitalism were destroyed when the uprising of the yellow shirt movement occurred in Bangkok and the 2006 election was annulled and followed with a military coup. All these happened as a reaction to destroy Thaksin’s political power and disregard the political voices of the rural class. Notably, the military coup of 2006 showed the sodality with the ideals of moral

politics and royal-nationalism of the yellow shirts, while it was seemingly to preserve and protect the political power of monarchy and elites in Thai politics. This stirred up the emotion of anger of many people who like and love Thaksin Shinawatra, and supported the Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT) in the election. This motivated them to join the red shirt protests. Likewise, Pa Nai (pseudonym) who lives in San Khampheang, Chiang Mai, joined the red shirt protests in Chiang Mai and Bangkok because she angry with the yellow shirts and military coup. She wanted democracy to return to the country while she loves Thaksin because his policies improved the economy, giving people such as them a better life. In her view, every government cheats in some respects, but not all administer well, as Thaksin had been able to do (Pa Nai, personal communication, October 12, 2015).

Many of the red shirt protestors, especially those from the lower middle class and rural class, appreciated Thaksin's policies, as they helped give them a better life and improved their well-being. So, the villagers love Thaksin because of these factors; feeling that the military coup hurt a person they love, something they could not tolerate and had to come out and protest about.

On the other hand, their desires and demands for the edible democracy and electoral democracy were seemingly contrasted with the moral politics and moral democracy of the yellow shirt groups. Also, many rural villagers do not have the same perception and understanding on the issue of corruption as the urban or old middle class. That is to say, they don't understand the meaning of corruption of the urban middle class who supported the yellow shirt protests. In their view, every government has a problem with corruption, but not all governments provide the policies to help the rural villagers as Thaksin's government did (Wang (pseudonym), personal communication, September 12, 2015). This clearly showed the differences of class experiences between the rural class and middle class in Thai society. As a result, it represented in the different perceptions to the social and political realities and conflicts in the meaning (understanding) of politics among Thais, while this conflict took form in the binary conflicts between the yellow shirts and red shirts.

Meanwhile, the problem is the illusion of the moral politics ideal which showed its beliefs and ideals in opposition to the electoral democracy as an inefficient political system governed by the corrupt politicians. Besides, it created the belief for many Thais that

political power of the elected political leaders cannot be compared to the legitimate power of monarchy in Thai political culture because the monarchy is situated above politics with the highest revered position and moral superiority. In this regard, the moral politics had never accepted the power legitimacy that is derived from a political consensus of Thai people in the democratic system as well as the ideal of citizenship rights and human equality in liberal democracy.

This problem was stimulated by the military coup of 2006 (and the military coup of 2014), and was also exacerbated by the extreme promotion of royal-nationalist discourse by the yellow shirt protests and the integration of royal-nationalism into the everyday lives of Thai people. Besides, the state controls on public opinions and restriction of Lèse-Majesté law (Article 112) eventually led to anti-monarchy radical movements as well as progressive movements in Thai society. It is possible to say that the red shirt protestors developed their political ideologies, consciousness and groups from their experiences and perceptions after the military coup of 2006 and the violent military suppressions on April and May 2010.

For the progressive red shirts, they were the groups of people who wanted to fight for democracy, freedom, equality and justice as well as were opposed to the military government and Article 112 of the Thai Criminal Code, since it has led to the abuse of human rights in Thai society. This group comprised non-formal groups and networks in loose organizations such as a network of academics, members of a progressive democracy, Red Sunday, Prakai Fai group, We Change, and the 24 June Democracy. They mobilized after the events of May 2010 in order to preserve the political space of red shirts amid an environment of fear and anger (Janjiira, 2015, p.173).

Therefore, it is possible to say that the progressive red shirts developed their political ideals and consciousness after they experienced the long combative protests and were educated by academics and activists. This related to their prior experiences of social and cultural learning within their contexts and positions. As a result, it cultivated the political learning of many red shirt supporters and developed their ideals and values in liberal democracy, justice and equality as the new political meaning and value of Thai politics and for all Thais. In particular, justice became a hope and value in their everyday lives.



Figure 4.3 The symbolic movement of the Red Sunday group led by Sombat Boonngamanong on 19th September 2010. They released the red balloons which wrote “jod mai thung bon fa” (the letter to the sky), and shout “hia sang kha” (the monitor lizard ordered the killings), and draw many graffiti on the walls and roads.⁴
Source: Special report, (2010). *Red Power*, 1 (4): 1-2.

However, justice has different meanings related to the cultural forces of their emotions and background of experiences. First, the meaning of justice is derived through experiences of state violence and disadvantage in the power relations between government officials and the people. For instance, red shirt supporters in Hat Yai joined the red shirt movements because they wanted to oppose democracy under the elite's domination. They believed that the monarchy and the elites were responsible for scenes of several state suppressions in Thai society, especially the violent Thammasat University massacre on 6 October 1976, and the military crackdown in April and May 2010. Nevertheless, the truths about state violence have never been revealed. This is the meaning of injustice for them. They struggle for justice, which means truth.

In their view, Thai political history has concealed many truths within Thai society, while they tried to integrate all the social sub-factions into the common community of the

⁵ Their actions reflected the feelings of anger, grievance, hurt and loss of the red shirt protestors toward the state violent suppressions on April and May 2010. They wanted to communicate with the monarchy and royalist elites as they mean anyone on the sky or fa (by using the symbols because they believed that the monarchy and elites were behind the scene of these military violent suppressions

Siamese/Thai state centered by the king. As the history of the Songkla community, they did not have a position of “Jao” (the king) in their community, they had only “Jao Muang” (master) or the influential persons who were respected and admired by people, and possessed most of the land in the community. It was not like “Jao Muang” (master) mandated by the king of Siam. However, Jao Muang of Songkla had disappeared since Siam integrated the South as part of the Siamese modern-nation state. But the political culture of the Southerners persisted, such as admiration for “Jao Muang” and “Nak Leng” or influential persons, while the local Southerners in Songkla, Chumporn, Trang and Pattalung were often resistant to government power because they did not believe in the power of the Siamese/Thai state. Hence, there were many political struggles in the South, but the Thai state was successful in controlling and dominating the South after the Communist period through their forces and ideological domination (Yun, personal communication, May 10, 2016).

This reflected that the Thai moral community had never been united and was frequently faced with the contestations from the power struggles of social sub-functions. Also, it supported my argument that the Southerners did not totally surrender to central state power and admired the tradition of Thai or royal masters as Anusorn (2017) mentioned. By contrast, there were many power struggles in the South, but they have been concealed by state power and domination. Therefore, the struggle for power of the red shirts might respond to the ideologies and desires of many leftists and local Southerners who wanted to disclose the truths and oppose state power which was dominated by the elites as they defined the terms of the struggle for justice.

Simultaneously, the red shirts in Udon Thani felt hurt and angry after defeat in the May 2010 protests in Bangkok. They feared unfair treatment in the legal process and of being charged under Article 112. This became the second meaning of justice, as defined by most progressive red shirts who wanted to fight against the abuse of human rights in Thailand. It is an understanding of justice based on the rule of law and equality, especially justice in the legal process. The term rule of law means the state should be governed based on the principles of law, not governed by those who dominate state power. The state and government should act according to law, while equality means all men are created equal and they should respect each other. Especially, they wanted equality under the law and in

the legal process. It is possible to say that these meanings of justice and equality were derived from their experiences and political learning in the red shirt demonstrations.

For instance, Lung Thep (pseudonym) told to me that he joined the red shirt protests in Bangkok because he wanted justice in the legal system. He said “many red shirt protestors were judged unfairly in the legal process. His friend was sentenced in jail more than 8 years, it was unfair for him and many red shirt protestors. The government (Abhisit’s government) portrayed the red shirts as the terrorists especially the case of burning the provincial hall in Udon Thani. It was not committed by the red shirt protestors. They accused us like the enemy of nation as it had ever happened in the Communist period. In addition, we were also charged with Article 112 of the Thai Criminal Code. In contrast, members of the yellow shirt movement were not arrested or charged with terrorism, even though they took over and occupied Don Muang and Savannaphumi airports for several days (over the period 24 November to 3 December, 2008), plus forced their way into Government House using a tank. The members of the yellow shirts movement were always portrayed as good people, and were protected by those in power. Even those who went on trial had their cases dismissed by the Thai courts. This was unfair for the red shirts and the Thai legal process was disrespected” (Lung Thep, personal communication, March 24, 2016).

This became the reason why many red shirt protestors have still insisted on their struggle for justice as their political ideology and hope until this day. In the meantime, they wanted justice in truths within Thai society similar to the red shirts in Hat Yai. For instance, 94 deaths of the red shirt protestors in Bangkok were unrecognized by many Thais. This is the reason why the red shirts tried to engage the stories of red shirt protests with the significant political events in Thailand, such as the 14th October 1973⁵ and 6th October

⁶ The 14th October 1973 event was the populist uprising in Thailand. It was led by university students and joined by half a million demonstrators who gathered at Thammasat University and took to the streets on 13th October 1973. On 14th October violent incidents happened. In this event, the King appeared on television and urged the students and others to return home. After that Thanom Kittikachon resigned as prime minister and fled the country with Praphat Charusathien, his deputy and also Narong Kittikachon, his son. The result led to the end of the military dictatorship of Thanom Kittikachon. Then, the King appointed Sanya Thammasak to head a new government and prepare for new elections. The 14th October 1973 event was considered as inaugurating a new era of Thai democracy (Terwiel, 2011, p.279-280.)

1976.⁶ This reflected the redefining of politics and political history by people, and expressed a desire and hope for a social recognition and acceptance in the red shirt's identity and prestige. It was because their identity and image had displayed as a threat to the monarchy, while they were regarded as a barbarian and stupid protestors.

Therefore, the meanings of justice had derived from the experiences of learning in contexts and positions of the red shirt protestors. Meanwhile, the meaning of injustice was heavily based on the state violent suppression and lack of the rule of law in Thai society. Accordingly, they wanted politics in the ideal of liberal democracy that concerns on justice, equality, rights and freedom of people. Government should come from an election by people and treat people fairly and equally. It is a government in terms of government of people, by people and for people. Nevertheless, the significant problem is the state suppression and domination with fear and bias towards the red shirt people as if they are a threat to the country and national security. This can be seen in the overuse of Article 112, the visiting by the military to the houses of local red shirt leaders or the main supporters, and the reshaping of the red shirt rural landscapes through the sufficiency economy projects launched by the state bureaucratic officials and military, especially in the North and Northeastern regions of Thailand. These expressed the state bias towards and violent suppression of rural red shirt supporters.

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7 The massacre on 6th October 1976 happened as the significant political transition in Thai. This event emerged after Thanom returned from exile and the students gathered inside the Thammasat University to protest his return to Thailand. Nonetheless, on 5th October 1976, several Thai newspapers published a report accompanied by a photograph showing that Thammasat students had staged a mock hanging of a figure that bore the likeness of the crown-prince. This had provoked a violent reaction among the rightists who opposed the students such as the village scouts and the Red Gaur. They viewed the students as the leftist movements supported for the expansion of Communist in Thailand. Then, they joined in a violent massacre in Thammasat campus with police and military on 6th October 1976 (Terwiel, 2011, p.280-282.)



Figure 4.4 The pictures showed the stories of red shirt movements with the significant political events in Thailand. It displayed on the walls of the red shirt station at 5th floor in the Imperial World Ladprao, Bangkok.⁷

Source: Photo of the author taken in 2017.

As a result, the violent situations and unfair treatment in the legal process forced some red shirt protests to the underground radical red shirt movement. The radical red shirts are closely linked to the Red Siam group of Surachai Sae Dan⁸, the political activist and former member of the Communist Party of Thailand. Surachai was charged under Article

⁸ The shopping mall Imperial World Lad Phrao is located in Wang Thonglang district, Bangkok. The top floor 5th floors had commonly known as ‘the center of the red shirt protestors’. It was the central of the UDD red shirt, the People Channel Station (PTV), the TV24 people station, and the red shirt shops. These pictures with the names of places presented the red shirt movements in significant locations of Bangkok. Importantly, these showed the political movements of people who struggle for democracy in Thailand. These movements should be recognized as the significant political movements in Thailand, likewise the 14th October 1973 event and other political movements.

⁹ Surachai Sae Dan or Surachai Danwattananusorn is an anti-government activist and the key leader of Red Siam group. He was the last political prisoner in the Communist offense of Thailand. He was born in Nakorn Si Thammarat province. He became well known after 6th October 1976, as a key member of the Communist Party in Thailand. Surachai was a member of ‘Khwaam Wang Mai Party’ (the New Hope Party) of General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, and worked for the Thai Rak Thai Party (the Thai Love Thai Party) of Thaksin Shinawatra in Nakorn Si Thammarat province. He joined with the UDD Red Shirts in 2007, before separating himself from the leaders of UDD and organizing ‘the Red Siam’ group with Jakrapop Penkair (Red Power, 2011). Jakrapop is an activist for democracy in exile. He was a government spokesman and worked with Thaksin Shinawatra in Thai Rak Thai Party. He was charged using the lèse majesté law after sharing his views on patronage system in Thailand with foreign journalists. After that, he played a crucial role in establishing the Democratic Alliance Against Dictatorship (DAAD) before he was involved in the United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD). He undertook self-imposed exile in 2009. Currently, he remains abroad (Prachathai English, 2015).

112 for speeches he made at public rallies on 15th December 2008 and on 18th December 2010 during a red-shirt event “The 2nd Eye Opening Talk” at the Imperial Mall, Lad Phrao. He joined the anti-coup movement in 2006, and went on to form Red Siam in 2009, separating from UDD and mainstream red shirt demonstrations from March to May 2010. His group was joined by others accused of lèse majesté, such as Jakrapop Penkair, a former minister of Thaksin Shinawatra and famous spokesman in Thailand. He was accused of lèse majesté due to a talk at Bangkok’s Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Thailand (FCCT) on 29th August 2007 (Political Prisoners in Thailand, 2017).



Figure 4.5 Surachai Saedan (on the left side) and Jakrapop Penkair (on the right side). *Sources:* Chaoprayanews, 2016, Retrieved July 30, 2017 from <http://www.chaoprayanews.com>.

In addition, the development of radical red shirt groups was related to emergence of the “Ta Sawang” (the eyes opening or means knowing the truth) of the red shirt protestors. It was expressed in anti-monarchy sentiments and reactions. This expression has been encouraged by the emotions of hate and anger with disappointment, and loss and hurt from the experience of defeat during the red shirt demonstrations in Bangkok, including feeling that they have been unfairly treated in Thai society. Especially, they felt disappointed with unfairness from the Queen’s attendance at the funeral of Nong Bo, one of the two PAD protestors who had died on 7th October 2008 during the yellow shirt protests. The Queen reportedly described Nong Bo as a good girl who had helped to protect the country and the monarchy. This had led to the perception among the red shirt

protestors that they were up against overwhelming forces, those that would never accept their electoral victories (Nostitz, 2014).

At this time, these red shirt groups withdrew from Thai society, with its members becoming second-class citizens. Moreover, since that time they have continued to suffer state suppression in the form of violent military crackdowns, legal threats such as charges of lèse majesté law, involvement in alleged anti-monarchy movements, and/or vigorous and misguided campaigns on behalf of a distorted national unity ideology, one supported by the misrepresentations of the Bangkok media. Then, it contributed to the reaction of the radical red shirts with an anti-monarchy sentiment as well as anti-the lèse majesté law with their anger and hate, while they also feared being charged with Article 112. This made them hope for reforming the Thai social and political structure through a people's revolution, as it could change Thai society to be a liberal democracy (Sarachai, 23 May 2016).

It is possible to say that their hope for a people's revolution has been influenced by the leftist ideal of Communism, and the strong desire in fighting for justice and righteousness in Thai society of many those who had joined the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and the alliance movement between students, workers, and farmers (or the three links) after the student uprising in 1973 (Haberkorn, 2007). It was because the state violence of force and suppression had wrecked the movements of people revolution due to its fear in the expansion of Communism in Thailand. However, their political ideology and consciousness in struggle for justice have remained until this day and are expressed in the red shirt movements.

As Lung Kheaw, a red shirt leader in Fang district of Chiang Mai and a former member of the Communist Party of Thailand, insisted to me that he believed in the Communist ideal of a people's revolution as it could change Thai society to become more just and equal. Nevertheless, he found it difficult to inspire the political consciousness of many Thais during the Communist insurgency. It was only after the military coup of 2006 that many rural villagers gained more awareness of politics. This was because Thaksin's policies effected their lives and they felt angry and unfair with the overthrow of his government. Lung Kheaw found this a good opportunity to communicate with villagers

about the ideal of revolution and organized a red shirt group in Fang district, Chiang Mai (Lung Kheaw, personal communication, September 21, 2015).

Red shirt groups saw an interaction of political ideals between revolutionary Communist ideology and a new rural ideology of democracy and justice. Not all red shirts were pro-Thaksin and they did not share an identical common ideology, desires and demands. In my view, the development of red shirt groups manifests issues of state violent suppression and justice in Thailand. Different backgrounds and experiences brought a diversity of thoughts, perceptions and political meanings to red shirt groups.

As a result, it has led to the problem of social disintegration in the meaning of Thai politics and political legitimacy based on a moral community. The Thai political conflicts and polarization have become more complex after the conflicts became implicated with the contestations of political meanings and values shaped by the different cultural emotions among social sub-groups within Thai society and the underlying causes of conflicts inside the two political movements. These issues will be discussed further in the following section of this chapter.

4.3 The Complexity of Thai Political Conflicts and Polarization

The politically divided conflicts found within the contestation of meanings of politics, democracy and justice among the groups of people who had joined in the yellow shirt and red shirt movements are complex. This illustrated the underlying causes of conflicts between the yellow shirts and red shirts. Meanwhile, it supported my argument that the conflicts between these political groups cannot simply be understood as a contrast between political ideologies. Apparently, the diverse meaning of politics and values reflected the social disintegration and contestation of Thai political meaning and the political legitimacy of a moral community. Accordingly, the third matrix model illustrated the different meanings of politics, emotions, beliefs/ideologies and values, and sub-groups inside the yellow shirt and red shirt protests.

Table 4.3 The Matrix Model of Politics, Emotions, Beliefs/Ideologies and Values, and Sub-Groups inside the Yellow Shirt and Red Shirt Groups

Emotions	Fear (and Anxiety)	Hate	Disgust	Love	Anger	Hope	Hurt/Loss	Beliefs/ Ideologies and Values
Politics								
Moral Politics	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts		-Morality (in religion) - Charismatic power - Royal-democracy - Royal-nationalism - The ideals of a good man and returning the favour to the motherland -Authoritarianism
		Yellow Shirts				Yellow Shirts		
Edible Democracy				Red Shirts	Red Shirts	Red Shirts		Democracy that can improve the better life of people and respond to the capitalist desires.
Moral Democracy	Conservative Yellow Shirts					Conservative Yellow Shirts		-Moral Politics -Royal- Democracy -Morality (in religion) -A Good man -Authoritarianism
Electoral Democracy				Red Shirts	Red Shirts	Red Shirts		- Edible Democracy -Political instrument for people
Royal- Nationalism	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts			-Merit-making -Moral Politics -Royal-Democracy -Royal Nationalism - The ideals of a good man and returning the favour to the motherland
	Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts					
Liberal Democracy				Progressive Red Shirts	Progressive Red Shirts	Progressive Red Shirts		-Justice, Freedom, equality and rights -Government of people, for people and by people -Reforming Thai social and Political structure through the people revolution with the ideology of leftist
						Red Shirts		
						Radical Red Shirts		
Justice	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts	Conservative Yellow Shirts					-Dhamma or Truth -Righteousness (in morality) -Fairness in distribution of valued resources
	Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts	Yellow Shirts					
	Progressive Red Shirts			Progressive Red Shirts	Progressive Red Shirts	Progressive Red Shirts	Progressive Red Shirts	-Truth -Rule of law and equality in the legal process -A desire for social recognition and acceptance
		Radical Red Shirts		Radical Red Shirts	Radical Red Shirts	Radical Red Shirts	Radical Red Shirts	-Anti-the monarchy and the article 112 - Reforming Thai social and Political structure through the people revolution with the ideology of leftist

For the yellow shirts, the meaning of politics refers to the moral politics shaped by beliefs and emotions in the charismatic power of monarchy and morality in the Hindu-Buddhism.

This became their political ideology and desire for the moral democracy based on the concepts of a good man and returning the favour to the motherland which actually reflected the ideal of royal-democracy and royal-nationalism in Thai political culture. For the conservative yellow shirts, they believed that the Thai democracy should be governed by morality and a good man, because it is righteousness and it can bring society to live in normal (prakati) with peace and harmony. For the yellow shirts, the goodness justifies the political legitimacy and becomes as the moral standard for all Thais.

In the meantime, the moral democracy also justified the authoritarian rule in Thai politics which frequently claims on the ideals of moral politics and royal-nationalism. From this point of view, it supported my argument that the Thai moral community is involved with power and morality, and it cannot be separated from the concepts of monarchy, nation and state.

Subsequently, the meaning of justice can refer to righteousness and truth according to morality in the Hindu-Buddhist doctrine especially the karma law. For the yellow shirts, if Thai people and society have a justice which means 'Dhamma' (truth) according to morality, it can bring society to live in peace and harmony or normal (prakati). Therefore, the good politics is a moral politics based on the concepts and beliefs in charismatic power and morality. All these had implied with the conflict between the old middle-class and the rural and new middle-classes in the struggles for power of valued resources and capitals in economic, politics and socio-cultural system. These struggles for power formed by the differences of class experiences and perceptions to social and political realities as well as the emotional realities of the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters.

As it expressed in the diverse meanings of politics, democracy and justice defined by the red shirt supporters, these meanings were derived from their cultural emotions and background of experiences. As we shall see, the edible democracy represented the capitalist desires and hope for a better life of the rural and new middle-classes who supported the red shirt protests. They defined politics as it is closely linked to their everyday lives. The consequences of political learning and shared experiences and emotions among the red shirt protestors, had resulted in defining the meaning of politics in liberal democracy based on the rule of law, equality, justice and freedom. For the progressive red shirts, the government and state should be governed by the rule of law

and acts in according to law. It is significant for them because it can bring justice and equality as well as harmony into Thai society. Meanwhile, the radical red shirts desired for the liberal democracy through the people revolution, as it could totally change Thai political and social order which dominated by the elites and monarchy.

In the meantime, the red shirts defined justice in different meanings: first is a justice in the power relations between people and government; second is a justice in the legal process based on the rule of law and truth; and third is a justice in terms of all human beings are equal in dignity and rights. The several meanings of justice have been defined differently by the cultural forces of emotions, ideologies and the conflict issues within the contexts and positions of the red shirt supporters. For instance, the experiences with hurt and loss from defeated during the combative protests on April and May 2010 in Bangkok, has led to the struggles for justice in legal process and social recognition in truths of the progressive and radical red shirt groups without a support from the UDD red shirts, Thaksin, and Pheu Thai party.

In addition, the state has suppressed rights among its political opponents through its use of Article 112 of the Thai Criminal Code, and this has led to an escalation of anti-monarchy sentiment among the red shirts groups. This situation has also adversely affected such people's belief in the authority and legitimacy of the Thai government, and also the charismatic legitimacy of Thai politics and society, which has seen the Thai King as the centre of moral righteousness, the sources of legitimacy and the highest revered person above politics for a long time. The development of red shirt groups reflected a changing of people's perceptions to Thai political system and political legitimacy centered on the monarchy. In particular, the state violent suppression and injustice issues were most motivated many red shirt protestor to become and support the progressive and radical red shirts. Their political actions and ideals were shaped by the emotions of hurt, loss, hate, fear and anger with their specific experiences and positions in the contexts of politics, society, economic and culture.

On the other hand, the meanings of politics, democracy and justice became as their hope and value in everyday lives, and it motivated them to join in the political protests with their cultural forces of emotions and ideologies. The red shirts viewed the Thai political legitimacy should come from the rule of law, a political consensus of people and an

election in democratic system. These political meanings and sources of political legitimacy were contrasted to the political legitimacy of Thai political order based on the moral community.

Consequently, Thai politics faced with the problems of social disintegration in the meaning or understanding in the reality of politics and political legitimacy, as it could no longer create the common belief, emotion and ideology in the reality and legitimacy of a moral community in Thai political and social order. This found within the contestation of meanings of politics, democracy and justice shaped by different cultural emotions and the conflict issues among the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters, as the underlying conflicts of Thai politics and society. The crucial problem is the gap in understanding these political meanings, emotions, ideologies and actions that the yellow and red shirt demonstrators have applied during the contexts of political conflicts.

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the contestation of meanings of politics, democracy and justice reflected the underlying conflicts within the seemingly binary conflicts between the yellow and red shirts. Even though I separated the analysis into two sides, the meanings of politics and emotions reflected the diversity of thoughts, beliefs, ideologies, the conflict issues and sub-groups inside both political movements. These showed both of two political movements had never been united and they cannot be divided by the different political ideologies.

Significantly, the different meanings of democracy and justice reflected the conflict of thoughts, beliefs, ideologies and emotions among the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters. As one can see, the conservative yellow shirts defined their politics in term of moral politics based on a belief in royal power and a moral hierarchy. This supported my argument that the royal-nationalist discourse cannot totally explain the political actions and emotions of the yellow shirt protestors. In the meantime, the middle class yellow shirts did not reject the democracy and election. They wanted and hoped for the moral democracy. Meanwhile, the moral democracy helped to maintain the royal democracy that means democracy guided by the royalist elites and monarchy. In this sense, the royal democracy is not truly a democracy in the Western ideal. It is rather the authoritarian rule governed by the central power of state and legitimized by a charismatic power of

monarchy. Therefore, the Thai democracy had never been based on the rule of law and equality as well as the political legitimacy had never derived from the political consensus of all Thais. In this regard, the contestation for political meanings and values among the yellow shirts and red shirts, manifested a problem of Thai political legitimacy and political meaning, as it cannot create the collective consciousness and belief in the reality of politics and legitimate power among Thais.

In addition, the conflicts showed the conflicts of interests and inequality among social classes in possess for valued resources within sociocultural, economic and political system. Especially, the symbolic resources as power and emotion became a valued resource for struggle. According to Turner (2011), emotions can reflect the class stratification and the social problem in unequal distribution of valued resources. That is to say, the higher social class is more likely to possess surplus valued resources which make them possess a positive emotional energy such as happiness and pride. By contrast, the lower class rarely possesses valued resources. Hence, they were more likely to feel higher levels of negative emotional energy such as anger and shame. The positive emotions considered as the highly valued resources because they give people pleasure and the confidence to secure additional types of resources such as money, power, influence, prestige, or just (Turner, 2011).

Similarly, the rural and new middle classes red shirts can be compared as the lower class who infrequently possess for valued resources in sociopolitical and economic system. Thus, they were likely to feel in negative emotions such as anger, hate, and loss. This is the reason why they hope and struggle for the symbolic interests as a social prestige and social recognition, because it can make them possess for positive emotions such as happiness and pride. In the meantime, emotion of love among the red shirt groups could be regarded as creating a social capital among them. Love can lead to a social bond and social consensus as well as a cooperation among the red shirt supporters. These assisted them from disadvantaged and alienated in the process of distribution of valued resources in Thai society.

By contrast, the yellow shirts who possess for the highly value resources in Thai social structure, they have to preserve their social status and prestige as their symbolic interests. Also, they have to protect their economic interests after Thaksin's economic policies

affected to the interests of many local businessmen such as businessmen in Udon Thani. Besides, the increasing of Thaksin monopoly power had threatened social and political status of some conservative yellow shirts such as the royalist elite. Even the yellow shirts were likely to possess the higher value resources, but it did not mean that they always possess the positive emotional energy as Turner mentioned. Conversely, the desire for protection of interests was actually led to their negative emotions such as hate, fear and disgust. In the meantime, this negative emotion expressed their moral reactions.

Consequently, the social classification and conflicts of interests can emerge from emotions. The moral emotions can lead to a moral judgment and dividing of groups among people. As we can see, the moral judgment is usually accompanied by emotions such as anger, hate and disgust, as it showed moral reactions and a gut feeling to something wrong or evil of many Thais. For instance, a feeling of disgust and hate to the rural red shirt protestors of the middle class yellow shirts occurred from their gut feeling motivated by cultural force of morality and experiences in the positionality of urban middle class. This reflected both of the social classification by cultural emotions and conflict of interests. Since the urban middle class had feared and worried that their social and economic status would threaten by the rising of the lower middle and rural classes in Thai politics, economic and social structure during the Thaksin's government. Hence, they supported the yellow shirt protests in order to protect their interests, while they served for maintain the social and political order of a moral community. Therefore, the moral emotions had been formed by the cultural forces and experiences within a position and cultural context of social classes and groups. In this sense, it supported my argument that emotion is the bi-directional mediators between social action and social order. It means emotions not only help to motivate social action, but also maintain the social order.

In sum, what have really divided people in Thai society into polarization are the emotions, perceptions, beliefs and ideals in the political and social realities, and the conflict issues seen within the political, economic and cultural arenas, within the division of conflicts between the yellow shirts and red shirts. The main problem is the gap in understanding that exists among these socio-political groups in terms of emotions, political meanings and actions from a cultural perspective, a gap which has made the social and political conflict highly dynamic. Importantly, the conflict in meanings of politics, democracy and

justice has been found as the significant problem of a cleavage in Thai socio-political conflicts.

In the chapter 5, I will provide the conclusion of study and discuss the comprehensive analysis with the theoretical groundwork in the issues on Thai political conflicts and polarization, as well as the problem of Thai politics during the contexts of political transition. Furthermore, the chapter proposes for redefining the meaning of Thai politics. Finally, the chapter provides the recommendations for the further study about Thai political conflicts.



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CHAPTER 5

Thailand: The Complex State and Society

This chapter provides a conclusion to my analysis of Thai political conflicts and polarization after the military coup of 2006. As mentioned earlier, the complexity of Thai socio-political conflicts is generated by the contestation of meanings of politics, democracy and justice that are shaped by the different cultural emotions among the yellow shirt and red shirt supporters. Analysis of these contested political meanings showed the underlying causes of conflicts within the yellow shirt and red shirt movements such as the issues of state violent suppression and injustice in Thai society. This supported the central argument of this thesis that the political conflict between the yellow shirts and red shirts cannot be understood simply as a contrast of different political ideologies as several scholars have argued. The different backgrounds and experiences in social and cultural learning within the contexts and positions of those who joined the yellow shirt and red shirt protests reflect the diversity of thoughts, beliefs and perceptions of political realities as well as the emotional realities of social actors. This clearly indicated that the Thai moral community has never been unified and has been frequently faced with challenges from the power struggles within the state and society. These power struggles are expressed in the contestation for political meanings and values of social sub-functions as the struggle for their social and political realities, legitimacy and values. As a result, this has led to problems of Thai political meaning and legitimacy, since the reality and legitimacy of the power of the moral community and its order can no longer create the collective consciousness and consent within Thai society due to the changes in people's perceptions and beliefs after the military coup of 2006.

This situation reflected that the power of Thai state is actually pluralistic and can be contested, especially after the military coup of 2006. It means that the state power is fragmented and contentious. The state is considered in this thesis as a field of power struggle among the social sub-systems (Migdal, 2004), as is shown in the struggle for

power among the yellow shirt and the red shirt supporters in defining the meanings of politics and actions in political movements and promoting their political meanings to search for collective action and belief among people in society. Therefore, the current Thai political conflict also illustrates the conflicts over power and interests, especially the symbolic capital as legitimacy, which is also treated as a political instrument for domination over other social classes and groups in society. This has resulted in social and political conflicts and polarization within Thai society while the Thai state has become an arena of power struggle among social sub-functions. All of this demonstrates how Thailand has become as a complex state and society with conflicts and power struggles.

In the following sections, I discuss why Thai society has become more conflictual and polarized since the military coup of 2006. The aim is to explain the problem of Thai politics and political culture based on the order of moral community as it has faced additional challenges from social sub-functions during the context of political transition. The term “social sub-functions” refers to the social forces that try to struggle for power in the meanings of politics and values within Thai society. My argument is that the formation of these social forces into social and political groups was not dependent on the sharing of a common political ideal among them. However, it was rather their beliefs and emotions that committed them into the same values, perceptions and communities. This has provoked social disintegration within Thai society and politics. Therefore, this chapter will discuss this issue further to show the problems of meaning and legitimacy in Thai politics. Subsequently, the thesis proposes the meaning of politics in everyday life to harmonize with the diversity of thought and meanings of politics and moral values of many Thais. That is to say, if the meaning of Thai politics are redefined in consonance with the diversities of thoughts, values and cultural emotions of people, it can harmonize with the new political meanings, social values and realities of lives of many Thais. Meanwhile, the Thai harmony will be more concerned with equality and justice among people as generated through the meaning of politics in everyday life. Finally, this chapter provides further recommendations for future research about Thai political conflicts.

5.1 The Problems of Thai Unending Conflicts and Polarization

In this part, I offer concluding thoughts on why Thailand has faced more conflicts and polarization in society especially after the military coup of 2006. As mentioned earlier,

the primary issue of divisive conflicts and polarization was from conflicts over the meanings of politics, democracy and justice among the yellow shirt and the red shirt supporters. It was because they had never been based on any common thoughts, perceptions or beliefs. For instance, justice for the yellow shirts means righteousness (dhamma) according to the norms of social order and moral order. Conversely, justice for the red shirts refers to equality of people in rights, opportunities, power and emotions; justice in the legal process; and justice based on the rule of law and truth. These two definitions of justice are differentiated by disagreement between justice in terms of morality in religion and justice in terms of legality and equality. This conflict over the meanings of justice has posed challenges to the Thai political and social order based upon a moral community, as it did not align with the new perceptions and political consciousness of many people in society. Justice based on the meaning of morality cannot be used as the social and political judgment because it is involved with peoples' beliefs, emotions and values. Therefore, it cannot provide a standard of justice in terms of rationale, equality and legality and it cannot provide validity for its legitimacy within the context of modern society. This has resulted in a controversy over justice within Thai society because it failed to create a trust in the legal procedure for all Thais. This became a problem of justice and intensified the struggle for justice of many social sub-groups and individuals who joined with the red shirt protests.

Furthermore, the struggles to determine meanings of politics and justice among yellow shirt and red shirt supporters reflected the struggles for power and interests (including but not only limited to economic interests) among them. This demonstrated that social forces have the capability to exercise power by themselves. This is the reason why I proposed that Thai state power is actually pluralistic and can be contested. This is why, as noted above, the Thai state can be understood as a field of power struggles among the social sub-functions (Migdal, 2004). This is because the diverse social sub-functions can create a justification for their own political legitimacy and political movements. In the meantime, they can motivate and gather people in groups to protest the state and opponents, and also to achieve their political demands. The visibility of this phenomenon can be found within the congregation and movements of the red shirt and yellow shirt supporters in each region of Thailand, where these political groups (the yellow shirts and the red shirts) were not actually united, but they were comprised of several social and

political groups joined in the movements. This is the reason why I claimed that Thai political conflicts cannot be viewed as a contrast between two political ideologies — the conflict is among many different political ideologies, beliefs and emotions which nonetheless are often grouped into two main divisions. As a result, the struggle for power in the meanings of politics, justice and democracy among the yellow shirt and red shirt groups manifested the contestation for power and interests among them, especially for symbolic capital, or legitimacy. This symbolic capital can be understood through the concept of symbolic capital of Bourdieu's ideal. According to Bourdieu (1990), capital is not an object in commodity production of the capitalist, but it is a form of power. He classifies capital into four kinds of capital: first is economic capital (money and property); second is cultural capital (cultural goods and services including educational credentials); third is social capital (acquaintances and networks); and forth is symbolic capital (legitimation). Nevertheless, he was mostly focused on symbolic capital as the form of capital denied sufficient analysis because it is a form of power that is usually not perceived as such. Symbolic capital is the power of legitimation in the vein of Max Weber's concept of charismatic authority. This power of symbolic capital is generated through the possession of power relations through recognition and the belief by virtue of people in legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1990).

The importance of symbolic power is not in terms of its existence as a form of power, but also because it serves as an instrument of domination. This power can lead to integration of the yellow shirt and red shirt groups as well as the distinction and hierarchies of group levels among them (Swartz, 1997). Accordingly, the struggles for political meanings and values among social sub-groups manifested in the struggles for symbolic capital, as it could legitimize their exercise of power such as organizing political protests and defining new political meanings. This has resulted in the integration of social sub-groups as well as a distinction among them in politics and society.

The moral politics ideal of the yellow shirt supporters was not only the political ideal that justified their political actions and moral judgment to their opponents, i.e., Thaksin and the red shirts. The moral politics ideal became their political instrument for domination because it helped to legitimize their social status and prestige as the middle-class in the Thai social hierarchy. Conversely, the rural red shirt supporters attempted to struggle for their truth, democracy and justice in society as well as social recognition in their identity

and prestige. This reflected their struggle for symbolic power in terms of politics and social values. Eventually, this resulted in the development of red shirt communities and groups in several parts of the country and the divided conflicts between the yellow shirt and the red shirt groups.

Nevertheless, I found that there is a significant form of capital that is closely linked to the legitimacy of domination. That is what I term 'emotional capital,' which is a valued resource which can operate alongside and interchangeably with other forms of capital such as a social, economic and symbolic capital. For instance, love among the red shirt protestors can be turned into social capital and economic capital. As one can see, love contributed to developing fraternal and familial feelings among them. This was in sharp contrast to the alienation and sense of discrimination they felt from the bias and disgust of the state and urban middle-class yellow shirts. This resulted in the congregation among the red shirts in groups, communities and networks for support. In the meantime, this emotion separated them from the other parts of Thai society and justified the political legitimacy and identity of the red shirt protests. Therefore, the emotional capital can be compared with other forms of capital as a valued resource for struggle and can contribute to the social division and divisive conflict among social classes and groups in society. This, in turn, reflected the emotional realities of red shirt communities which contested to the emotional reality of the Thai moral community.

In this regard, the contestation for meanings of politics, democracy and justice among the yellow shirt and red shirt groups manifested in their perceptions and understandings of political and social realities. These meanings are perceived as meaningful to their political actions and lives. It is what I referred to in this thesis as "the phenomenology of politics in everyday life" which represented understandings of the political and social realities of social actors through the expression of their political meanings. Hence, the meanings of politics can be understood through the interpretative understanding in the intersubjective meanings of social actors as in the Weber's concept of understanding (*Verstehen*). In the meantime, it indicated that the Thai moral community has never been unified; it has often been contested by power struggles from social sub-functions. This can be seen from the formation and transformation of the moral community throughout Thai history.

The problem is that the Thai moral community can no longer create the collective belief, emotion and consciousness among Thais through claim on the universal ideal of morality (in religion) and charismatic power of the monarchy especially after the military coup of 2006. This was due to the changing of people's perception and emotion to the reality and power of moral community as well as the communal relationships between the monarchy and many Thais. Notably, moral politics as the political meaning and ideal of Thai moral community cannot respond to the lived realities, demands, values and aspires of many Thai people in politics and economy. Therefore, morality in religion cannot become a social fact and create a common understanding or belief that constitutes social solidarity, as mentioned in Durkheim's concept of moral community (Cotterrell, 1999).

Meanwhile, Thai socio-political conflicts are located within the illusion of moral community, especially the belief of charismatic power and emotion of relevance to the King. This was a consequence of legitimate domination that was closely linked to the belief and emotion of followers of and into the personal charismatic leader. Likewise, many Thais are compelled by the charismatic power of King (Bhumibol). This occurred in the social relationship directly involved with a belief in charismatic personality and emotion of communal relationship to the charismatic person. As Charles Lindholm (1990) noted, charisma is about a mutual relationship among the inner selves of the leader and followers (Lindholm, 1990).

However, the problem is the belief and emotion for the charismatic person has actually led to a division among people through the charismatic community, by which I mean the community based on an emotional form of communal relationship between the followers and the charismatic person. It is because this kind of relationship emerged from the followers' belief and feeling of relevance to the charismatic person formed by the specific experiences in cultural context (Weber, 1978, p. 243). It means people could have different cultural forces of emotions and beliefs that differed by their cultural contexts in societies. Hence, the charismatic community has never been united by common beliefs and emotions. The belief in charismatic legitimacy is irrational and it depends on a personal belief and emotion. The charismatic authority is derived from the extraordinary qualities or specifically exceptional powers of the charismatic persons (Ibid., p.241-246). These has led to a problem of the source of legitimacy itself due to charisma being dependent on the personality of charismatic leaders as well as the belief and emotion of

the followers to the charismatic persons. As a result, the belief and emotion in charisma cannot be the social standard of moral judgment because people cannot believe and feel the same way, while the belief in legitimacy cannot decide what is right or wrong in a society. Legitimacy is about the value judgments, beliefs and emotions of people (Thanet, 2016).

Therefore, I argue that morality cannot promote for the collective consciousness and unified society as Durkheim mentioned in his concept of moral community. Morality (in religion) is involved merely in the individual's consciences, emotions and beliefs. In fact, there is a diversity of beliefs and emotions that are derived from the different backgrounds in experiences and contexts of people. So, the political legitimacy and authority cannot claim morality as the standard of righteousness and judgment in law.

However, the problem is Thai political legitimacy used belief and emotion in morality and charismatic power to justify the social and political order, the standard of righteousness as well as to suppress the diversity of thought, belief, emotion and other moral values of many Thai people. Subsequently, this has encouraged the resistance of those who do not believe in the charisma and those who are opposed to the ideal of moral politics, such as the radical red shirts and progressive red shirts.

In addition, Thai morality provided a justification for state and social violence by fostering the moral emotions such as hate, fear, anger and disgust. For instance, the yellow shirt supporters feared that the monarchy would be destroyed and the Thai social order would be disordered after the increase of Thaksin's political power and the rise of his supporters, the red shirts, throughout the country. Concurrently, the Thai government, the PAD movement, and the Bangkok media frequently portrayed the images of Thaksin and the red shirt protestors as a threat to the monarchy and country. The red shirts were cast as foolish and immoral because they were easily deceived by politicians and sold their votes. This image and perception created by the sense of bias with disgust for rural red shirt supporters by yellow shirt supporters in Bangkok and other urban areas. This was expressed the characteristics of violence in Thai society. This violence took the form of social discrimination and the use of violence to control and dominate those who oppose or disregard Thai social order and political order based on the moral community. For instance, the case of Umaporn Sarasat and Jirawat Pathumthong as described in the

chapter 3 and 4. Also, the occurrence of ‘witch-hunting’ culture in Thai society, which refers to acts of vigilantism against those accused of *lèse majesté* or those who do not comply with nationwide mourning regulations pertaining to King Bhumibol. Vigilantism ranges from posting images of people not dressed in black to harassing *lèse majesté* suspects in public. This social violence happened in several parts of the country such as Phuket and Surat Thani (Prachathai, 2016).

Additionally, the overuse of Article 112 of the Criminal Code by the government shows the use of violence by the Thai state to dominate and control their political opponents. For instance, the case of ‘Pai Dao Din’ or Jatupat Boonpattaraksa¹, a student activist from Khon Kaen University who was arrested and charged under Article 112 or the *lèse majesté* law on 3 December 2016 after he shared the BBC Thai biography of the new king (King Rama X) on his Facebook page. He has sentenced to two years and six months for this crime. This represents the state domination with fear and violence by using the legal system and the *lèse majesté* law to control their opponents without concern for the standards of legal process. The state also portrayed those who are accused under the *lèse majesté* law or Article 112 as disloyal persons and a threat to the monarchy and state rather than normal criminal offenders.

The social and state violence has actually led to more criticism of the Thai legal process from many progressive intellectuals and social groups as well as the anti-monarchy movements both in Thailand and abroad. Meanwhile, it is possible to say that this social and state violence is justified by the belief in the moral community and moral emotions of many Thais, while it serves to maintain Thai political and social order. This supports my argument that emotions not only motivate human action, but also help to maintain the

¹ Jatupat Boonpattaraksa or commonly known as ‘Pai Dao Din’, is a member of community rights group ‘Dao Din’ in Khon Kaen province. Jatupat is a law student in the Faculty of Law at Khon Kaen University. He and his group have strongly criticized the military junta since the coup in 2014. He was arrested and accused of committing *lèse majesté* under Article 112 of the Thai Criminal Code for sharing a BBC article on 3 December 2016. He has been held in jail since 22 December 2016. His case has led to much criticism of the judicial procedures of the Thai criminal court as well as the movements of several progressive groups opposed to inappropriate uses of Article 112 by the military government, as it has violated human rights within Thai society. Recently, Jatupat won the Gwangju Prize for Human Rights awarded by South Korea’s May 18 Memorial Foundation on 18 May 2017, although the Thai Embassy in Seoul wrote a letter to the Foundation to register objection to the award. Source: Thai nation, August 16, 2017, Retrieved October 1, 2017 from <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/detail/politics/30323916>

social and political structure. As Prinz (2007) noted, emotions are central to morality or it is the emotional construction of morals. Moral judgments are usually accompanied by emotions such as anger, hate and disgust. Hence, emotions actually influence our moral judgment, while morality justified our righteous mind to judge other people or groups and explain to ourselves why we are so right and they are so wrong.

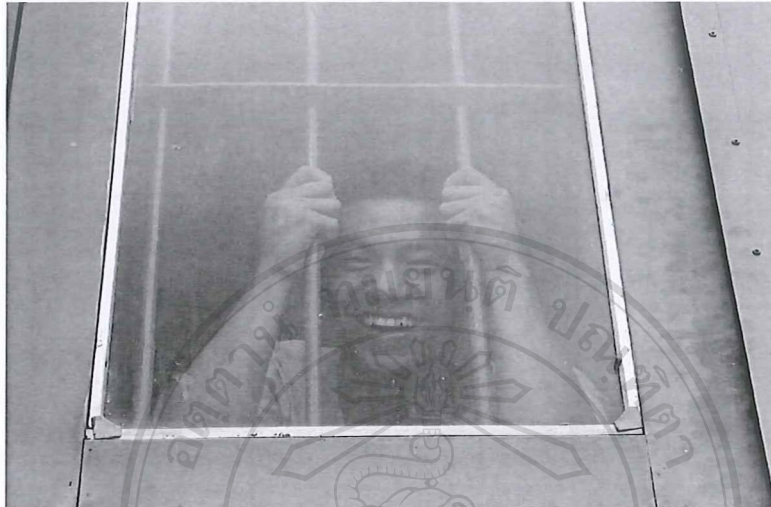


Figure 5.1 Jatupat Boonpattaraksa, the student activist who was accused and charged by the lèse majesté law.

Source: The Nation, 2017, Retrieved October 1, 2017 from <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/detail/politics/30323916>

In this sense, our minds were designed for a group of righteousness and our deeply intuition drive the gut feeling with search for our strategic moral reasoning to judgment other people and convince people to our group of the same moral thinking (Haidt, 2012). This divides us from others and shows the interrelationship between morals and emotions. Emotions play a crucial role as bi-directional mediators between social structure and social action (Scheve, 2013). The social structure of Thailand is strongly linked to the morals held by and emotions felt by Thai people, so one cannot separate morals and emotions when judging other Thai people and the groups to which they belong.

My argument is that the formation of the political and social groups and the politically divided conflicts does not depend on the formation of groups of people who shared common political ideals. Notably, emotions and beliefs have committed them into the same values, communities and social orders, those in which a moral community is embodied at the emotional level and perception. This, in turn, reflects the embeddedness

of moral community in the social construction of Thai society as a whole, which has never been unified. This issue needs to be explored, as it represents the breaking-point for the socio-cultural order of Thai moral community and politics.

Thai moral community has been formed by creating charisma as part of its established socio-cultural and political order and Thai cultural identity. As a result, the belief in charismatic power is not only personal belief, but it became the permanent structures, traditions and cultural forms as well as the disposition of Thais. This happened through the processes of routinization and institutionalization of charisma that formed charisma as essential quality for Thai personal leadership and authority as well as being part of the established social order and political order. Ultimately, this means that Thai politics cannot be separated from the religious charisma that derives power from transcendental claims to authoritative leadership (Tambiah, 1984). Therefore, Thai political structure and social structure have long been based on the belief and emotion in charismatic power. Meanwhile, Thai bureaucracy and institutions have served charismatic domination in the processes of routinization and institutionalization of charisma rather than promoting legal and rational authority.

The image, projects, stories of the King have been promoted and produced as commodification of fetishism through government projects, medias, products, events and ceremonies related to celebrate the loyalty to the institution of the monarchy. This has included the sacred rituals that link charismatic authority with the belief in the supernatural mystical power of most Thais. Subsequently, all Thais have been recruited into the charismatic community whereby they experienced and perceived the charisma of the King in terms of mystical power/sacred power (saksit) and perfection/virtue (barami) as a subjective truth in their everyday lives. However, this process was not uniformly successful throughout the country. As previously stated, the Thai moral community appears as a form of “internal colonialism” which the internal structure of the Siamese/Thai state formed in absolutism and governed in a hierarchical structure centered on Bangkok and the monarchy (Chaiyan, 1994). Therefore, it cannot ensure that the absolute power of the central state has integrated all the state sub-functions into uniformity. The evidence of this issue can be seen from the state uprisings in several regions of Thailand especially since the Communist expansion period as the power struggles to the order of moral community.

Nevertheless, the attempt of the state to dominate and control all challenges has led to violent suppression by the state and produced the fetish and state ideology engaged into the everyday lives of Thai people. Meanwhile, people are subjected to a sovereign power based on the centralized authority and power of the state. This is the exercise of state power though shaping the freedom of the people on the basis of institutional goals (Torfing, 2009).

As a result, morality became as the state ideology and purpose as well as the goals for all Thais and institutions. The charismatic power became part of the Thai political and social order. These have led to problems in Thai politics because morality in the religious ends and means cannot achieve in the realities of politics. In the context of the modern state, politics and religion should be separated from each other because giving morality as a political purpose produces a social ideal which cannot achieve its end (Thanet, 2016, p. 81). In this regard, I agreed with the opinion of Surapot Taweesak (2016) that the problem of Thai democracy is applying morality in religion to support for democracy. In his view, morality had never focused on the doctrines of freedom, democracy and human rights. By contrast, it is always used as the political instrument for domination of authoritarian rule. Thus, morality cannot lead to democracy (Surapot, Matichon Weekly, 2017, p.32).

From my point of view, morality in religion is based on belief and emotion in charismatic legitimacy. It cannot search for a validity to justify its legitimacy in the context of liberalism where people make greater demands to rights, equality, justice and freedom. Therefore, I argue to the ideal of Durkheim that morality cannot be combined with the law to be the central of public life and meaning of politics. Morality cannot create the collective consciousness as the shared beliefs, emotions and understandings in the particular context of modern society (Cotterrell, 1999). In my view, politics and the form of the state cannot be determined by moral principles. Even though religion can create belief in legitimacy for domination, the effective belief in legitimacy should be explicitly based on a rational validity. This rational validity of belief in legitimacy can be tested and criticized independently. That is to say, the justification and belief in legitimacy should be an object of investigation according to the ideal of Jürgen Habermas (1988). Also, the belief in legitimacy could motivate rationale and effect in mind of people. Hence, the belief in legitimacy could be justified and criticized by a rational validity (Habermas, 1988, p. 98-100).

The legitimate power of the Thai state should not be sustained and governed only by charismatic power and morality. Morality based on Buddhism and belief in charismatic power can only be sanctioned through the inner authority of human conscience and citizenship embedded in a universality such as a goodness or karma law (Ibid). It cannot create a common consciousness and shared belief and perception for the social realities of Thailand, while it cannot justify the law to create the social solidarity as Durkheim's concept in the moral foundation of modern law (Cotterrell, 1999). The legitimation of universal morality is justified differently from the legitimation of legal norms and the rule of law. This is the problem in justifying political legitimacy in the Thai modern state. That is to say, a justification of morality is provided through the notion of religion rather than a rational legal system.

Therefore, the Thai modern state should recreate their sources of legitimate power to match new social contexts, and new political meanings and values. Importantly, the Thai state can no longer monopolize the process of legitimation by using physical force as a means of domination to control their social sub-functions because state power is actually fragmented and can be contested. The state should become more of an arena to accommodate social forces rather than the source for major societal change (Migdal, 2004). Indeed, the state should play a central role in accommodating social forces at local, regional, and national levels within the web of bargaining and exchange of political, economic, and social resources. It is both an adjustment of state roles and recreation of the sources of legitimate power through greater concern with the mutually constitutive relationship between the state and society. Hence, the sources of legitimacy should come from the micro-power of legitimation among social forces who try to struggle for legitimate power for domination within Thai society, in order to create mass consensus and consent into the political legitimacy (Ibid).

To sum up, the things that deeply divide Thai people the most, both in terms of the society and the political framework – as represented by the symbolic colors of red and yellow – are the differences of political meanings, political ideologies, beliefs and cultural emotions. This reflected the diversity of political realities and emotional realities among Thai which do not more integrate with the reality and order of moral community. Even though the Thai moral community continues to influence its members' minds, consciousness, ideas and behavior, as supported by state propaganda over projects and

commodities linked to the monarchy, morality and Thai identity. However, this propaganda cannot entirely restrain the changes taking place in Thai society, those influenced by new contexts of modern society and the changing economic and political structures of the country before and while Thaksin was in charge and since. Rural economic development in Thailand has led to the emergence of a new social class inhabited by the lower-middle class, and members of this class have new political and economic demands and aspirations, which differ from the elite establishment, military government's and its supporters.

The four key events which led to the divisions that exist in Thai society today are as follows: (1) the military coups of 2006 and 2014; (2) the conflicts in the meanings of politics, democracy and justice; (3) the illusion of Thai moral community in forms of belief and emotion into the creation of charismatic legitimacy; and (4) state and social violence that has created injustice within Thai society. These events have altered both the Thai people's mindset and the power and social structures that exist in the country, which for a long time have been under the control of an elite network closely linked to the legitimizing power of monarchy. The change in power relations during Thaksin's government, as well as the emergence of new forms of desire and hope and new political meanings and values within the political, social and economic sectors, means that Thai society cannot return to its former position prior to the Thaksin era, as this will likely lead to a disintegration of the Thai moral community, its ideals, order and legitimacy. Since the political and emotional realities of many Thais can no longer integrate with the reality, ideal and emotion of moral community. Added to this is the crucial issue of the new succession because the Thai moral community has depended on personal charisma rather than support for the institution. The charisma is closely related to belief and emotion of the followers. In particular, emotion in the feeling of the relationship between the charismatic person and follower is the critical factor that committed people into the same charismatic community in which morality is structurally embodied. Therefore, this supports my argument that the absolute power and social construction of Thai moral community has never been unified. All these have resulted in the social disintegration of Thai moral community and its political meanings and ideals, and the unending conflicts and polarization in Thailand especially after the military coup of 2006.

Accordingly, I propose that the meaning of politics should to be redefined according to the context of Thai modern state and society. The new meaning of politics could resolve the problem of Thai political meaning and legitimacy and harmonize with the new meanings of politics and values that exist in Thai society, as this could gain a recognition and consent from the social sub-functions. In a following section, I discuss this issue further and provide suggestions for redefining Thai political meaning in terms of politics of everyday life.

5.2 Redefining Thai Political Meaning

“... If there are no more good men in the future, we can have no hope for Siam.”
(King’s Prajadhipok’s memorandum, July 32rd, 1926)

In regard to ‘the Problems of Siam’ written by King Prajadhipok in his letter of memorandum to Francis B. Sayre (Phya Kalyan Maitri), who was Siam’s foreign affairs advisor at that time, King Prajadhipok expressed his concern about the problems of Siam during the political transitions of his reign. The problems included the issues of the constitution; the powers of the King; the supreme council; the representative government and the cabinet; and the legislative council. The statement above is quoted from his memorandum regarding the problem of the Supreme Council. He was concerned that the Supreme Council, which derived its approval from the personalities of the Councillors, would be replaced by others and the Council would not have the confidence of people. Hence, he worried that there would be no more good men in the future, and there would be no hope for Siam’s political future (Batson, 1974).

The problems of Siam’s political future mentioned by King Prajadhipok are resonant with the problems of Thai’s political future during the late reign of King Bhumibol. The problem of Thai modern politics is mostly related to the issues of the meaning of a good man, corruption and deterioration of the Thai social and moral order rather than being a democracy. Even though, Thailand changed to a democratic system after the Siamese Revolution of 1932, Thai politics had never changed to an actual democracy. As previously mentioned, Thai democracy was expressed in the royal – democracy which was ruled and guided by the elites and monarchy especially after 1973. This means Thai democracy was not truly a democracy in the sense of a liberal democracy. Notably, what elites call Thai democracy is actually authoritarian rule governed by a central state power

and legitimized by the charismatic power of monarchy and royalist elites. Therefore, democracy became a hegemonic work while people are governed as subjects within the democratic community which is exactly an imaginary governing of hegemony (Connors, 2007). Many Thais might feel that they are subjects or citizen of Thai democracy, in which the monarchy and religion are part of the established structure of democracy. This illustrates the meaning of democracy in terms of “royal-democracy” which is ruled and guided by the royalist elites and monarchy, while Buddhism formed the central values of Thai democracy and politics.

This was the consequence of moral community which has been integrated as part of Thai state and society since the primordial period. As a result, the Thai social and political order has been based on charisma and morality in the beliefs of Hindu-Buddhism, magical power, supernatural beings and supernatural mystical power. This concept supports ‘the great man’ as the characteristic of Thai political leadership in which the king is considered to be the exemplary center of the state with his superior barami (moral power/ power derived from merit). Meanwhile, Buddhism is used as a tool by the state for integration of all the state sub-functions into the moral community of the Thai state, while it served to justify charisma and the moral hierarchy structure in which the king is situated at the top. Thai people have been committed and united into the collective belief and sentiment rooted in the moral community. Thus, Thai politics and society cannot be separated from the charismatic legitimacy and morality in religion.

This has resulted in the meaning of Thai politics and democracy defined in terms of moral politics and moral democracy by conservative elites, intellectuals and many yellow shirt supporters, as it reflected their social and political reality. Both political terms were based on the belief in the nature of the royal power in charismatic (merit/goodness) and morality in Buddhism. Hence, these political meanings supported the concept of ‘the great man’ of moral community, as it is expressed in the political ideal and political propaganda for promoting a good man to govern the country. These ideals and political meanings helped to maintain the royal-democracy and status of the king as above politics and as the political legitimizer.

A significant problem has emerged because these meanings of politics and democracy no longer align with the new political consciousness of many Thai people, while morality

integrated with law and politics cannot respond to the realities of the lives of people. As one can see, the new meaning of politics defined by the red shirt supporters reflected the new demands and desires in politics and economy of many rural and new middle- classes in Thai society. For instance, the edible democracy defined the meaning of politics as very closely linked to the lives of the people. This showed the new political perception of many Thais toward the political system. This new meaning of politics became founded on peoples' hopes and the new moral values of Thai society separated from the meaning of politics in religion. According to the political meaning in terms of morality showed a stark contrast to the capitalist and economic forces. Also, electoral democracy is often portrayed as an inefficiency politics that fails to bring the benefit and prosperity for all Thais, while the elected politicians are considered as bad and selfish persons. Subsequently, Thai politics has long been defined as uninvolved with people's lives. The way to resolve the problem of Thai politics and democracy was to promote morality and ethics throughout the country, and apply Buddhist doctrines as the way of to develop democracy.

According to Thanet (2016), politics developed from religion cannot lead to political achievements in terms of political realities. Due to the aim of morality in politics being merely social ideals, it cannot reach to the end of political goals such as democracy (Thanet, 2016). As previously mentioned, the aims of morality in Buddhism are to enable individuals to make their minds 'prakati' (normal) and to enable societies to be prakati as its norms or nature, in order to live together in peace and harmony (Buddhadasa, 1986). This aim is a social ideal which cannot be achieved in the realities of people's lives and politics. Actually, politics can be contested and power can exist and emerge in various ways, in a multi - relationship and in dynamic of society. Therefore, there is no power superiority in the political reality. Power is distributed pluralistically in society and politics (Lukes, 2005). Hence, we need to revise our understanding of the nature of power and political meaning in Thai politics.

Apparently, politics and morality in religion should be separated from each other because they cannot have the same purpose. The political purpose should respond to the real demands and realities of lives of people in society. Meanwhile, morality should be used as a tool to criticize politics, not the end and means of politics. Besides, the Thai state

should define morality according to the new social and moral values of many people, such as justice under the law and human equality.

In this regard, I agreed with Nidhi Eoseewong (2016) that we should define the meaning of morality outside of arena of religion and the state in order to create new social morality such as gender rights and civil rights (Nidhi, Matichon Weekly, 2017, p.37-38). This could help redefine the meaning of Thai politics according to the new political meanings and moral values of many people in society. Meanwhile, it could create mass consensus and reasoned value-judgments among Thais in politics.

Notably, the meaning of harmony should be redefined separate from the domination of state power and morality in religion in order to gain recognition from most Thais. As one can see the meaning of harmony promoted by the conservative elites, monarchy and military government means harmony in the patronage relationship of moral hierarchy in which the King is situated at the top of this structure. This relationship is shaped by the cultural emotions and morality such as love, loyalty and gratitude. For example, a good Thais should follow the royal guidance and gratitude to the royal grace of the Kings and monarchy with their love and loyalty as well as respect and gratitude to the seniors. In the meantime, the seniors should to help or support the juniors with their kindness. This meaning of harmony became an essential value of Thai morality and the way of returning the favour back to the motherland (pandin). This expressed the purpose of morality in Buddhism that aims for making a society that is normal (prakati), in order to live together with peace and harmony (Buddhadasa, 1986). Even though, this harmony is not a moral value based on an equal relationship, it is rather harmony within the moral hierarchy structure.

Therefore, the problem is how to define the meaning of politics separate from morality in religion and power of Thai political and social order. As mentioned earlier, charisma has become part of the established social and political structure of Thailand. This was also linked to the belief in a supernatural mystical power and emotion of relevance to the charismatic person of most Thais. The recognition in politics of many Thais is related to belief, perception and emotion into charismatic legitimacy. However, the personal charisma usually has the problem of succession and the belief in charismatic legitimacy is specifically irrational and based on an emotional form of communal relationship

(Weber, 1978, p. 243-244). That is to say, if the belief in charisma and emotion in communal relationships between the followers and charismatic person changes, it would alter the perception and recognition in politics of most Thais that had been based on a moral community for a long time.

After the long reign of King Bhumibol, people would need a new political meaning and legitimacy that could respond to their real political demands and aspirations. Significantly, the new political meaning should be responsive to the new perceptions, beliefs, emotions and realities of life in politics of many people in the society. This is the reason why I propose that Thai political meaning should be redefined according to the lives of people and the new social and moral values of Thai society. Importantly, the meaning of politics should be described in term of the politics of everyday life, which can come from everywhere around us. From this point of view, I agreed with Haberkorn (2007) that politics are very personal issues and linked to people's lives. Politics are everywhere around us (Haberkorn, 2007, p.165-199). This meaning of politics actually motivated many people to join the yellow shirt and the red shirt protests with a strong determination and to struggle for power and meanings of politics, democracy and justice.

On the other hand, the role of the Thai state should be changed to support this new political meaning and enhance the value-judgment in rationale among people in politics. This might create the new belief and consent of Thai people into political legitimacy. Meanwhile, the validity of social and political order is necessary for the modern state. According to Habermas (1988), the belief in legitimacy of the modern state needs recognition and justification for its legitimacy. This belief could be provided in validity and be open for contestation and independent criticism. For Habermas, the modern state cannot only justify its legitimacy from reason and belief in legality as in Weber's concept of legitimacy. Due to the belief in legality, it can be justified only when it is grounded on the boundary of the institution of legal form. However, the relation of legitimacy to truth demands recognition and justification in the belief of legitimacy. As mentioned earlier, this belief in legitimacy should be based on a rational validity and be an object of investigation (Habermas, 1988).

Consequently, the term of the politics of everyday life can provide for the value-judgment in rational and criticism. It is the political meaning that can be contested and defined

independently according to the diversity of thought, beliefs, emotions and values of people in society. Also, this political meaning can provide the opportunity for people to participate and express their opinion in the politics. In the meantime, this meaning of politics could align with the ideal of liberal democracy that focuses on rights, freedom and equality of people. Finally, the politics of everyday life could create mass consensus and consent in political legitimacy of Thailand.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This research attempted to understand the underlying conflicts and diversity of thoughts and beliefs of people within the seemingly binary conflicts between the yellow shirts and red shirts. This research intended to provide a better understanding of Thai socio-political conflicts and polarization after the military coup of 2006. The thesis argued that the conflicts between the yellow shirt and red shirt groups cannot be understood simply through the contrast between political ideologies and the conflicts between two political groups. This is the reason why this research attempted to study the diversity of social backgrounds in experiences, perceptions, beliefs and emotions of those who had joined in the yellow shirt and red shirt protests. This is expressed in the diverse political realities and emotional realities of these people in the context of Thai political conflicts and polarization. However, this research did not study the groups of people and individuals who had joined and supported the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) movements during the 2014. Therefore, the further research should be conducted on the diversity of thoughts, perceptions, emotions and beliefs of those who joined in the PDRC protests, in order to understand why Thai society has still yet further conflictual after the general election in 2011.

Significantly, further research should also focus on the background in social class experiences of those who joined the PDRC movements, as this could aid in understanding the complexity and underlying causes of conflicts after the yellow shirt and red shirt movements. Also, further research should concentrate on the role of major institutions in the political conflict, such as political parties, military and monks, as these institutions have been involved in politics through providing support and engaging in interference in political protests and conflicts. The roles of these institutions are critical for understanding the complexities of conflicts and polarization in Thailand. Thus, these

major institutions should be investigated in new ways through an approach that attends to cultural emotions and how they implicate and are implicated in politics.



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