

Master's Thesis

The Existence of 'Communist Ghost Discourse' in Creating Royal Nationalism Under Prayut Chan-O-Cha's Administration

by

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Certification Page

I, WARIT Wongworakul (51119001) hereby declare that the contents of this Master's Thesis / Research Report are original and true, and have not been submitted at any other university or educational institution for the award of degree or diploma.
All the information derived from other published or unpublished sources has been cited and acknowledged appropriately.

WARIT Wongworakul
2020/12/03

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Honestly speaking, I have no idea what to address here. I believe because there are so many things in my mind, or perhaps the process of writing this thesis has been rather overwhelming for me. I could not have successfully crafted this piece without an immense amount of guidance from my supervisor Professor Iguchi. It has been a highly challenging experience in a graduate school in APU, and your supports throughout two years have been greatly appreciated.

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Last but not least... I dedicated my work for the democratisation of Thailand. For those who fight on the streets. At homes. In schoolyards. Even in the prisons. Some inside Thailand and some overseas. No one should be made an enemy of their beloved nation solely for acting against the injustice that hinders civic liberty and prosperity.

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Summary

General Prayut Chan-O-Cha faced two key challenges following his seizure of power in 2014. First, to stabilise national order from the prolonged political turmoil, and proved himself against pro-democracy advocates. During his premiership, he saw a decline of royal nationalism, of which many Thai people became more critical regarding the monarch's affairs. To restore royal nationalism, he allowed harsher law enforcement and surveillance against the critics, of which the regime adopts Communist Ghost discourse from the 70s to their doing. The discourse dehumanises Communists of being anti-monarchy, which in Thailand is a serious crime. Prayut's regime projected themselves as the guardian of the monarch on behalf of the majority royalists to preserve royal nationalism, while their critics have been propagated as evil Communists.

The study uses textual analysis to study the regime's formation of royal nationalism through the conducts of Communist Ghost. The selected materials for analysis are the official documents and statements, for instance government's gazettes and Prime Minister's statements released between 2014 to 2020. Of which the contents of the materials concise of the creation of the monarch's enemy. The study neither criticise nor deny the concept of royal nationalism in Thailand. Rather, the study elaborates and criticises the method in which Prayut Chan-O-Cha adopted to strengthen royal nationalism. Communist Ghost discourse is not an instrument to achieve peace, but it is a mean of political polarisation. The discourse provides the rationales to arrest, harass and assault anyone simply for expressing opinions against the regime, as well as against the monarchy.

Keywords: Communist Ghost, Royal Nationalism, Prayut Chan-O-Cha, Dehumanisation, Thailand.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The discourse Communist Ghost was constructed to dehumanise university students and the protesters who were going against the military regime during the 1970s Thailand (Puey, 1974, p. 269). The discourse was first introduced by Phra Kittiwutho Bhikkhu, a Buddhist monk who said that ‘Those who intend to harm Buddhism, the King and the nation are not human. We are not killing humans, but we are killing devils; this is the responsibility that all Thais should follow’ (Prajak, 2016, p. 39). The quote later has been shortened into ‘Killing the Communists are not sinful’, which later provoked the military and the ultra-royalist groups such as Nawapol, The Red Gaurs Movement (*Kha-Buan-Karn-Kra-Ting-Dang*) and the Village Scouts (*Look-Suer-Chao-Barn*) into attacking and killing the university students and Thai civilians that were protesting inside Thammasat University in the morning on October 6th 1976. The construction of ‘Communist Ghosts,’ and the dehumanisation of the protesters created the belief among Thai people that killing these protesters was a morally good reaction in order to protect the nation and the monarchy, thus violence against the ‘Communist’ was legitimate (Handley, 2006, p. 223 - 232).

After 43 years since 1976, the rise of the military regime under prime minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha in 2014, and the general election in 2019 saw the return of the discourse ‘Communist Ghosts.’ The Commander in Chief of the Royal Thai Army Apirat Kongsompong recently stated in his speech on October 11, 2019, at the army conference saying that ‘Communism has shaped those people (the protesters in 1976) to become Communism oriented politicians and scholars today, even though the Communist Insurgency surrendered in 1988, but do not forget that these people still exist. The ideology still exists’ (Matichon TV, 2019). Though the historical context may differ from the 70s, but the meaning behind the said ‘Communism’ remains the same. That Communism is seen as the enemy to the kingdom of Thailand, Buddhism and the monarchy (Thongchai, 1994, p.169).

Referring to the commander in chief Apirat's speech, an assumption can be made that the regime wholeheartedly believes in the existence of Communism threats against Thailand and the monarch. The modern-day Communists whom the regime asserts that disguised themselves as students, scholars, activists, and the public demanding democratic, constitutional and monarchial reform. The clear evidence of such perception could be noticed from the enactment of Article 44, under the Interim Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2557 (2014) which was implemented by general Prayut Chan-O-Cha's National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), right after the military coup d'état in July 2014. Article 44 gave general Prayut, as the leader of NCPO and the prime minister of Thailand an absolute control over legislative, executive and judicial branches, which allowed him to give order to 'enhance unity and harmony' among Thai people in any means necessary to protect national security, the monarchy, the national economy and state affairs (Interim Constitution of Thailand B.E. 2557, 2014).

According to Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (2019) between 22nd May 2017 and 22nd May 2018, an estimated of 106 people were arrested for violating Article 112, which prosecute those who criticise and defame the members of the monarchy. At the same time, around 121 people were prosecuted under Article 116 for 'inciting the public against national security,' meanwhile, around 144 people were arrested under Computer Crime Act for criticising the junta on social media (p.7 - 10). These people were arrested and convicted because the ruling elites saw them as threats to national security, whose 'attitudes must be adjusted' by the military personnel so that they would become good citizens according to Thai nationalism. The examples above excluded several hundred other people who were accused of being 'Nations Haters, Traitors and Anti Monarchy' by the ruling elites, the accusation in which the definition parallel to Communist Ghost discourse in the 70s, that Nation Haters are also the enemy of the nation, religion (Buddhism), and the monarchy (Prajak, 2016, p.39 - 75).

Upon the established knowledge stated earlier, the writer aims to further explore the conduct of the discourse Communist Ghost beyond the 70s, particularly between 2014 - 2020. The analysis will be focused on the way the pre-existed cultural and symbolic elements, as well as knowledge of Communist Ghost in 70s Thailand have been reused by general Prayut's regime to legitimate state suppression, arrest and violence against the public and the opposition to protect Thai nationhood, that is the nation, Buddhism and the monarchy.

1.2 Research Objectives

This thesis aims to examine the formation of Thai nationalism through the making of an immanent enemy to arouse nationalistic sentiment under General Prayut Chan-O-Cha's premiership. This inner enemy according to the premier shared similar characteristics to the Communist insurgents in 70s Thailand, which at the time, threatened the security of the monarchy. These enemies were portrayed as the 'Communist Ghosts' to signify them as the devilish being that ghostly exist within Thai society against sovereignty. Despite the Communist insurgents' surrender in the 80s, Communist Ghosts have been revived by Prayut's regime to legitimise his leadership as well as to strengthen Thai nationalism for the same reason that the military dictatorship once did during the 1970s.

1.3 Research Questions

To properly study the conduct of Communist Ghost discourse under Prayut's regime, the writer proposes to cover two critical questions in which this research attempt to seek answers for as follows:

- 1) What is Thai Nationhood (*Kwampenthai*) according to Prayut's regime?
- 2) How has the pre-existed knowledge and symbolic elements of Communist Ghost from the 70s been adopted by general Prayut Chan-O-Cha's regime to strengthen Thai nationhood?

The writer seeks to clarify Thai nationhood and nationalism according to Prayut Chan-O-Cha, in order to suitably study why Communist Ghost discourse was selected and how it has been used by the military regime to strengthen Thai nationalism.

1.4 Hypothesis

The writer assumes that Thai Nationhood, according to Prayut Chan-O-Cha's regime, revolves around the loyalty to the monarch. Regardless of the religion each individual hold or ethnicity they are, the loyalty to the throne has always been an essential element of Prayut's nationalism. This category of nationalism is called 'Royal Nationalism' which centred around the power of the monarch as the unifying figure of a nation.

Due to the questionable entrance to power through a military coup in 2014, Prayut Chan-O-Cha had to legitimate his premiership. Consequently, by being a faithful

devotee of the throne, and assist the king to maintain his living godhood as the unifying figure of Thai people, both inside the kingdom and beyond. The writer believes that Prayut's promotion of royalist nationalist ideology are identical, if not similar to the propaganda under Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat and Thanom Kittikachorn's premierships through anti-Communist sentiment in the 70s. Hence, the writer speculates that Prayut Chan-O-Cha as the leader of NCPO and as the embodiment of Thai conservatism has been aspiring to establish royal nationalism through the adaptation of the pre-existed tactics and knowledge of Communist Ghost from the 70s to conceptualise the enemy of the monarch and Thailand.

1.5 Significance of Study

This research shall provide an analysis and discussion of Communist Ghost discourse beyond the 70s. The writer will focus on its conduct under general Prayut Chan-O-Cha's leadership from 2014 - 2020. Highlighting on how the regime adopted the pre-existed knowledge and symbolic elements of Thai Communism to suppress and harass the critics and opposition of general Prayut's regime to achieve his version of Thai nationalism.

The studies surrounding the event of Thammasat University Massacre 1976 are often focused on the cultural, economic and political effects of the incident in Thailand. Although Communist Ghost discourse was one of the most important instruments that the right-wing used against the students, protestors and the alleged Communists, very few studies put the discourse as the central object for analysis. The discourse is rather mentioned as a minor aspect of the bigger stories. Most importantly, the available studies of the discourse are often pinpoint on its existence in the 70s but not beyond the timespan, in which the writer aspired to further the discussion to cover its conduct today.

There have been questionable attempts to re-establish royal nationalism and ultimately, absolutism under Prayut Chan-O-Cha's leadership. The regime's attempts became even more public and aggressive after king Vajiralongkorn's coronation in 2016. Due to Prayut's illegitimate entrance to prime ministership through the military coup in 2014 and the suspicious victory in the 2019 general election, followed by cases of human rights violations, abductions of activists, and inability to reverse the economic downfall caused a massive influx of public outcry, and disapproval against

the regime. An assumption could be made that the national enemy which existed during the Cold War has been brought back to legitimise the regime's governance.

The chief of the Royal Thai Army's accusation in October 2019 that people who criticised Prayut's regime, the military and the monarch are traces of Communists insurgents that survived the eradication in the 70s. The accusation served as a reasonable presupposition that there are similarities between the Thai nationalism discourses under Prayut's regime from 2014 to 2020 with the nationalist discourse in the 70s. The similarities which the writer believes is worth studying.

Thus, this angle of approaching the study of post-October 6, 1976, of which focus on its conduct in the contemporary environment would offer an interesting and unique area of study on anti-Communism discourse in Thai political history.

1.6 Methodology

The writer will conduct a qualitative study using textual analysis as a central approach, which highlights on the ways in which the messages are being produced and interpreted through a convergence of printed texts and transcripts of spoken verbal interactions (Fairclough, 2003, p.3 - 12). Textual analysis will be applied in close correlation with social science theories such as ethno-symbolism, geo-body and discursive formation to achieve the objectives of this research. The latter theories will be further elaborated in the following sections.

Hence, the attention of the research shall be given towards how Thai nationalism under Prayut's regime has been promoted through the adoption of pre-existed Communist Ghost discourse, as seen in government official's speeches, legal records against the critics and Royal Thai Government Gazettes from 2014 - 2020.

Discursive Formation

For Michel Foucault, knowledge is produced through discourses, mediated by language (Hall, 1997, p.44). Hence, discourse is a system of representation which has the power to construct reality by dictating meanings of objects of all kinds.

The complexity to study the formation of discourse is its dispersion of statements and practices that constitute the discourse. Everything can be considered parts of the discourse. In *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault states that to analyse a discourse, we must be able to grasp the interstices that separate the groups of these dispersed statements (Foucault, 1972, p.33). Thus, the focus should be laid upon the

interplay between these statements that compose representation of a particular object. For Foucault, a discourse is not a fixed set of knowledge, as the knowledge itself is never completed, but rather something which is based on continuous transformations (ibid, p.32).

Our body as the products of the discourse on sexuality, according to Sara Mills, are always subject to change, and can never be regarded as natural (Mills, 2003, p.83). The bodies, despite it belonging to us, are being deliberately regulated by discourses beyond our control (ibid, p.94). Communist Ghost discourse as well, has determined the identities of the political oppressors under the military regimes in both eras. The bodies of the oppressors were regulated upon by the state as the enemies of Thailand, which have been sustained and reconstructed as seen in the right-wing media, and through violence and prosecution against the so-called Communist Ghosts.

Foucault's Discursive Formation provides a rational ground to analyse the formation of Communist Ghost discourse, in constructing antagonistic identities of those who oppose Prayut's nationalism, the regime as well as the monarch. Discursive Formation is not a framework to study the discourse itself, but rather to study the process or the strategy in which the discourse is constituted. The writer shall apply this framework to focus on the interplay of the groups of statements and practices that altogether signify the oppressors as the enemies of Thailand.

Materials for analysis

The materials for analysis in the dissertation will be separated into three categories, which consist of 'speeches, cases of criminal offences to the national security of Thailand and The Royal Thai Government Gazettes.' The three categories shall be elaborated and analysed under three distinct sections, which are divided into 'materials to define Prayut Chan-O-Cha's Thai nationalism' and 'Communist Ghost in the 70s and the ghost under Prayut's regime.'

The discussion of these materials will be done in sequential order, and will be connected to the hypothesis of Prayut Chan-O-Cha's Thai nationalism presented in chapter 4. Prayut Chan-O-Cha's Thai nationalism discussed in Chapter 4, will be used as a rational ground to appropriately analyse how the discourse Communist Ghost from the 70s would later come into play during Prayut's leadership in Chapter 5. The selection of the materials for analysis is based on relevancy to the antagonisation of

the political opposition through legal prosecution, constitution and the public speeches by Prayut's regime. The materials are as follow:

Table 2 Communist Ghost discourse from 2014 - 2020 under Prayut Chan-O-Cha's regime

	Name of the material	Year
1	Dimension 1: The Protection and Devotion of the Monarchy of The Cabinet's Policy Statements B.E. 2557 (2014)	2014
2	<i>Soo Phuer Pan Din</i> (Fight for the Nation) a patriotic song composed by Prayut Chan-O-Cha	2018
3	Royal Thai Army Chief Apirat Kongsompong's speech (on October 11th 2019)	2019
4	Announcement of Emergency Decree in Bangkok Metropolitan (on October 15th 2020)	2020
5	Prayut Chan-O-Cha's speech (on October 15th 2020)	2020
6	Prime Minister's Statement on November 19, B.E. 2563	2020

The writer framed the discussion points of each material into four dimensions that the writer believes to be essential aspects which formalise Communist Ghost discourse by Prayut's regime. The dimensions are as follows:

1. Portray the regime as the monarch's guardian
2. Legitimise intimidation and violence against the oppressors and the critics
3. Favour the monarchy's power
4. Enforce royal nationalism

The four dimensions may not be presented in all of the materials, though at least two dimensions would be visible in the production and the conduct of the modern Communist Ghost. The discussion will be organised in a chronological order to understand the formation of the discourse under Prayut's premiership.

Chapter 2

Theories

The definition of nationalism is rather vague as there are many conceptions attached to the term. However, nationalism can be summarily described as a solidary sentiment towards a territory, and a sense of kinship with the population residing within the same territory. Hence, the territory is the basic element of nationalism, as a sense of brotherhood would be impossible to emerge without an attachment to a place that truly belongs to the people (Smith, 1979, p.3). Consequently, nationalism is a sense of political legitimacy within a specific boundary of a given state, and not beyond it (Gellner, 1983, p.1 - 2).

In this chapter, two major schools of thought regarding nationalism, which are primordialism and modernism will be elaborated and contested, both theories of which offer different perceptions to the formation of nationalism.

2.1 Primordialist Nationalism

Primordialism regards a notion of an extended kinship as a critical element to the emergence of a nation (Hale, 2004, p.460). Primordialism, thus, views nations as something which were formed naturally within human-conditions which has been transcended since the beginning of time, and something that is subject to change like any organism (Smith, 2009, p.8).

A notable scholar of primordialism is Pieter van den Berghe, who offers a sociobiological view to support primordialism, that nation as a community emerged as a necessary condition to our biological survival (Van den Berghe, 1981, p.11). Within the primitive societies, territories were dispersed based on ethnicity, and within each territory, the ethnies may be separated into even smaller communities in the form of tribes. Each ethnie is characterised by having a common line of ancestry, traditions and appearances, of which its ethnic purity was achieved through endogamy and territoriality (p.24). The human nature of interaction changed during the emergence of urbanisation, which each ethnie was forced into adaptation to the changing environment (p.25).

Ethnicity consists of biological feature which genetically transmitted from the past generations, and cultural features such as clothing, tattooing, language and social norms (p.29). It is clear that for van den Berghe, the physical characteristics is an essential

feature for human societies to comprehend a notion of kinship (p.31). Like other species, human societies are tied together by kinship, whose societal territory is specifically defined, defended, and is subjected to compete with other societies for resources, advantages and ultimately for its own survival.

Hence, nation as a concept of human society emerges as a natural phenomenon, associated with a notion of kinship that encoded within human's genetics, and transcended to its descendants, that eventually transformed our society from tribal communities into nations.

Primordialism was challenged critically by the rise of modernism, the view which supports the idea that nation is a product of modernity, and the societies existed prior the 18th century cannot be considered as nations, and ignore the importance of ethnicity in nation formation. Primordialism later became irrelevant in the study of nationalism, however, it is still an important school of thought which is worth understanding about. Hence, this dissertation shall focus on modernism as a more suitable approach to examine Thai nationalism, modernist's view of nationalism shall be thoroughly examined and compared.

2.2 Modernist Nationalism

Modernist views nation and nationalism as something recent and novel, and as products of modernisation (Smith, 2009, p.6). Modernist perspective argues that nations and nationalism emerged from social phenomena such as industrialisation, rapid urbanisation, labour migration in the 18th century Europe (Gellner, 1983, p.42).

The following sections will examine the central arguments of Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Anthony D. Smith's theories of nationalism, then further analyse among these theories will be made.

Ernest Gellner's Modernism

Gellner's theory suggests that nationalism is a product of modernity. In *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), Gellner claims that nationalism emerged during the transition from an agrarian society to industrial society in the 18th century Europe. Urbanisation and the explosion of population caused by industrialisation forced the communities to adopt egalitarianism to satisfy its thirst for economic growth (p.24 - 25). Communities are no longer politically, and culturally secluded like the agrarian societies, instead, they become more unified (p.23). Seeking of perpetual growth becomes the central cause of the

emergence of nationalism according to Gellner's argument. To compete economically in the industrial world, standardised education which prepares its labours with basic training and asserts on shared qualifications such as social skills, literacy and numeracy skills was introduced (p.28). A new centralised socio-organisation structure is urgently needed to replace the old system to ensure the unity and longevity of the community, thereby nationalism emerged.

For Gellner, nationalism was achieved by centralised education within industrialisation. The centralised education in this sense aims to unify the population, strengthen individuals labouring skills, and normalise social norms such as language, cultures and customs, something which Gellner labelled as 'high cultures' (p.48).

He compared the affirmation of high cultures upon the population with garden cultivation. Some prominent traditions during the agrarian age would be valued and sustained through time by literacy to become dominant practices and belief. These traditions and values are 'cultivated' to become a high culture in the newly industrialised world, and uses national education to reaffirm its cultural dominance on the population (p.50). Nationalism thus is a human invention, particularly by the ruling elites who presupposes high cultures upon the population by establishing national education and communication (p.51 - 52).

In summary, nationalism, according to Gellner, is an effect of modernisation and industrialisation to ensure the congruence of culture and polity (p.43). Industrialism influenced the state to propagate homogenous high cultures upon the population, to maintain its solidarity. Encouraging the individuals to become prideful to the said high cultures, develop national sentiments with the fellow population, and preserve the harmony of the nation. However, Gellner's explanation does not include the antagonistic nature of nationalism which is the focus of this thesis. Perhaps because the differentiation of one's community from the others is not the cause to the emergence of nationalism in accordance to Ernest Gellner. Rather, nationalism emerged as a human's attempt to create unity of the growing population within a specific territory to preserve the longevity of the polity and culture.

Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities

To understand Benedict Anderson's argument on nationalism, we must understand that Anderson sees nation, nationality, and nationalism as 'cultural artefacts' (Anderson,

1983, p.4). He asserts that ‘nation is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign’ (ibid, p.6).

For Anderson, ‘nation is imagined as limited because even the largest nations, the members are able to imagine the artificial border which differentiates them from those of other nations.’ A nation is imagined as having its limit, in terms of its territories, and citizenry boundaries. We may not know every member that belongs to the common nation, but consciously we know that there is a limit to what constitute our people and our nation and other nations.

Nation is ‘imagined as sovereign because the nationalism was born in the age of Enlightenment and Revolution, which at the time were destroying the legitimacy of the hierarchical dynastic realm.’ The notion of nation-state becomes a legitimate organisation to ordain society instead of pre-modern religious and dynastic rules.

Lastly, ‘nation is imagined as a community because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation, a nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship’ (p.7). Nation emerged despite internal conflicts and flaws within the society, a sense of kinship and brotherhood persisted, which is powerful enough to encourage the population to come together and safeguard their community, that is the nation.

For Anderson, the imagination of such deep comradeship, which led to the birth of nationalism was made possible because of language and publications which he termed as print-capitalism (p.44). According to Anderson’s elaboration in *Imagined Communities* (1983), he argues that print-language laid the bases that made possible the imagination of national consciousness. Print-languages such as English or Thai, provides a unified field of exchange and communication where speakers of various languages can converse with one another via prints and papers (ibid, 44). The widespread of the prints stretches across and within political boundaries in which thousands or even millions of people become capable of imagining that they belong to the same community under a commonly spoken language.

The interplay between capitalism, technology, and languages made the imagination possible. Anderson claims that these three are the basic morphology which set the stage for the modern nation (p.46). The achievement of industrial capitalism such as steamships, railways, motor transport and aviation — which ignited an enormous increase in physical mobility and allowed its people to move around within their national territory helped them grasp a better awareness of their own space (p.115).

The key characteristic of nationalism, according to Anderson is how it inspires self-sacrificing love for the nation that one belongs to (p.141). Anderson highlights the way in which language is used to encourage the population to imagine a sense of kinship and that of a home through poetry, books, music and arts. For instance, the use of the term 'motherland' to describe one's territory and how the members are signified as it's sons and daughters. Through the consistent manipulation and dissemination of such language would eventually have the members to imagine their relations with the fellow compatriots as well as the nation. In this sense, nationalism according to Anderson does not contain the antagonistic element against the otherness, but functions as an imagined societal network that arouses its member to love, protect and even sacrifice themselves for their territory.

Memories which are mediated by language and technology are also key components to the birth of national consciousness, according to Anderson (p.204). He compared the narrative of national history as the biography of nations, since it is impossible to fully remember our past, then such crucial memories of the community must be narrated (ibid. p.204). Though, memories are essential for the continuity of national identity, yet some memories which endanger the existing narratives are left forgotten. Anderson provides an example of how the young Americans were obliged to remember and forget the American Civil War, as a conflict between 'brothers' rather than between two sovereign nation-states (p.201).

The nation as a cultural artefact, to imagine nations as limited and sovereign communities, mediated by print-capitalism, industrialisation and common languages are central arguments of Anderson's nationalism. National sentiment could only be emerged during the age of modernisation, in which technology was advanced enough for the information to be disseminated throughout the national territory, hence nationalism is developed, and fellowships are imagined.

Anthony D. Smith's Ethno-Symbolism

Smith argues that contemporary nations cannot be understood without taking pre-existing symbolic contents and myths of the ethnies into account (Smith, 1986, p.13 - 14). Although Smith acknowledges that nation and nationalism are products of modernity, he argues that the rise of nationalism according to modernists are too radical. He accepts primordialist view that despite the changes in the sentiments within collective units, these changes occurred within the pre-existed framework of collective loyalties and identities

(ibid, p.13). He shifts his focus of analysis of nationalism on what he termed the 'myth-symbol' complex of the ethnic polity. In this sense, modernisation of pre-modern ethnies is the bases to the emergence of nations and nationalism, according to Smith's claims (Smith, 2009, p.24).

Smith develops an approach to studying nationalism called Ethno-Symbolism, which examines the symbolic resources and cultural elements of the pre-modern ethnies such as myth, symbol, memory and value as the central analysis of nations and nationalism (ibid, p.25). The essential features of Ethno-Symbolism will be elaborated further in Chapter 3.

According to Smith, traditions and modernity are cultural constructs similar to the nation formation itself (ibid, p.154). Thus, for the nations to emerge, dominant ethnies politicised themselves by using pre-existed myths of descent, historical memories, a territorial association and a sense of solidarity to claim its territorial dominance in the state arena. Nation-building thus is a process of self-preservation of the ethnies (ibid, p.154 - 156).

One of the issues that Smith has with modernism is the conception that pre-modern nations are not nations. The complete rejection of pre-existed ethnic symbolic and cultural resources, means nations can be forged or invented over a short time-spans (Smith, 2009, p.16 - 17). Instead, Smith argues that to study the nation-formation, we must study the long-term process in which he termed as 'la longue durée' (Smith, 2009, p.16). Smith points out that through an analysis of a long-term process development of a nation, we can trace great number of cases of which symbolic and cultural resources of ethnic groups were applied to in the nation-forming activities (ibid, p.18).

Smith also sees nation formation as a constant process of conflict and reinterpretation of cultural symbols, which occurred in the interplay between the elites and the masses. Smith argues that for Ethno-Symbolist like himself, the focus on social and symbolic conflicts either within and between nations was missing in modernist's view of nationalism. Hence, the long-term process of the reinterpretation of national identities, in which ethnic symbolic and cultural elements were selected, debated and contested by the elites to mobilise nationalism, and in turn, how the masses responded to the projected messages are key approach to understand the emergence of nationalism according to Smith (ibid, p.18 - 20).

Thereby, ethnies and ethnic symbolic and cultural resources such as myth, value, traditions and customs are the essential elements to the birth of nation and nationalism

according to Smith. He agrees that nations are a modern phenomenon, however, we must focus on the long-term historical process of which ethnic symbolic and cultural elements were adopted, contested and reinterpreted between the elites and the masses, in order to understand the emergence of nations and nationalism.

For Gellner, nation formation was necessary to address the problems regarding the explosion of population, and highly competitive global economy and industrialisation (Gellner, 1983, p.26). The labour division requires a centralised education which insists on imposing standardised qualifications such as literacy, numeracy, social skills and familiarity with basic technical skills (ibid, p.28). Nationalism thus emerged as a product of modernisation.

On the one hand, Anderson argues that nationalism emerged through the distribution of publications to which he termed printed capitalism (Anderson, 1983, p.45). Anderson believes that language and publications played an important role which made possible the imagination of national identity. Modernist perspective, according to Gellner and Anderson disagrees with primordialism, as they view nationalism as an outcome of modernity. Anthony D. Smith claims that Gellner's theory of modernisation eroded traditional societies and replaced them with language and culture for the earlier ties of kinship and tribal roles (Smith, 2009, p.5).

While Smith agrees with the modernists that nations are recent and novel, he does not reject the roles of the pre-modern cultures and societies in the emergence of nationalism. In fact, he sees the persistence and reinterpretations of the ethno-cultural resources over the course of history to create a solitary community, would help us to better understand the formation of national identity, which is the roots of nation and nationalism (Smith, 2009, p.21). For Smith, pre-modern ethnies and their ethnic symbolic elements are at the centre of his analysis of the emergence of nationalism.

Modernist thinker such as Gellner sees nationalism as an elite projected socio-organisational structure, which was created to maintain the legitimacy and power of the ruling elites. Nation and nationalism are constructed and imagined for such purpose, thanks to the industrialisation and technology advancement in the 18th century. The elites construct collective myth and values, then disseminate to the population using industrialised technology such as prints and modern style education. In this respect, pre-existed cultural and symbolic elements of the pre-modern ethnies do not matter for modernists. In some cases, the pre-modern ethnies and their cultural resources were completely ignored. However, Smith sees nationalism differently from Gellner and

Anderson. For Smith, the elites play an important role in projecting national sentiments on the masses, but they alone cannot give birth to nationalism.

The contest for interpretation of national sentiment which composed of pre-existed cultural elements such as myth, value, tradition and symbol between the elites and the people over a specific span of time in history, contributed to the formation of national consciousness. In the case of Siam or Thailand, the survival from European imperialism through the leadership of King Chulalongkorn in the 19th century ensured the continuity of the pre-modern ethnic cultural and symbolic elements such as absolutism, Buddhism, and the perseverance of the dominance of Tai ethnicity. Thereby, pre-modern ethnies, particularly their symbolic and cultural elements which are placed at the central point of Smith's argument regarding the origin of nation and nationalism, seem most applicable to study the reinterpretation of Thai nationalism under Prayut Chan-O-Cha's regime through anti-communist discourse.

2.3 Geo-Body of a nation

Geo-body of a nation, according to Thongchai Winichakul (1994), is a notion of artificial territory which conveys and enforces ideas, values and cultures of those belong within the said nation. As Thongchai states that 'it is a source of pride, loyalty, love, passion, bias, reason, unreason' whereby geography is used as a mediator to conceptualise national identity. Hence, Geo-body is a crucial instrument which constituted nationhood (p.17 - 18).

In *Siam Mapped* (Thongchai, 1994), Geo-body of Siam (Thailand) emerged during the territorial contest among Siam, France and Britain (p.129 - 131). Siam, once a sparsely separated into small chiefdoms, was forced by the imperialism to be united under a single sovereign. These chiefdoms were conquered, their sovereignty and indigenous knowledge lost. They were integrated into the new political space (p.129).

Hence, Geo-body embodies not only geographical and spatial values of the nation's territory but also the cultural values of a nation. Geo-body is never fixed, but actively generating new identities on top of the previous values, or completely introduce a new set of culture (Thongchai, 1994. p.137). The identification of Thainess has always been actively contested under different leaderships. Geo-body acts as the artificial border which dictates we-self, as opposed to otherness (ibid, p.164). Otherness serves as the negative identification of one's nation, thus, the external dichotomy is vital in identifying we-self, one of which is achieved and discursively sustained through Geo-body.

Thongchai says that ‘the creation of the otherness is necessary to justify the existing political and social control against rivals from without as well as from within’ (p.167). Meaning the otherness represents the evil enemy to signify our cultural, economic or political superiority to develop national unity and identity. For instance, in the case of Thai discourse, Communism is conceptualised as the enemy of the monarch and the nation, hence being made external to Thainess. The anti-Communist discourse was created not only to antagonise Communism but to unify Thai people to protect the essences of Thai nationhood which consists of monarchism, Buddhism and the nation.

It is clear that according to Thongchai Winichakul, the concept of Geo-body must always be present in the interpretation of nationhood and the formation of nationalism of each administration. Communist Ghost discourse also has been forged and sustained under the Geo-body of Thailand, to which Communism has been treated as the otherness beyond the border of Thainess. The writer wishes to apply this theory to analyse how the artificial border of Thailand, that is termed beneath Thongchai’s Geo-body comes into action under Prayut’s adoption of Communist Ghost discourse in achieving his vision of Thai nationhood.

2.4 Somsak Jeamteerasakul’s Mass Monarchy

Mass Monarchy in Thailand truly emerged during the expansion of the bourgeoisie in the 90s, especially during the financial crisis of which is known in Thailand as Tom Yum Going Crisis. In the midst of the crisis, king Bhumibol personally formulated and introduced his popular Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), as a solution for Thai people to survive the financial meltdown.

It was the first time of which Thai monarch truly had the people’s loyalty (Somsak, 2013, p.112). ‘Long Live the King’ discourse surfaced during this time, as the people and private sectors wrote songs and organise events to express their loyalty to the throne. Mass Monarchy behaves as an institution to unite the masses under the common charismatic figure, that is the monarch.

The interesting point of Thai Mass Monarchy is that there is an element of law enforcement and public pressure to instils people’s loyalty to the throne (Somsak, 2013, p.114). For instance, the enactment of Article 112 to silence the monarch’s critics, the compulsory royal historical narrative in Thai education, and the royal anthem that plays in the beginning of every public event, all have been parts of the government’s efforts in strengthening and sustaining royalism.

Mass Monarchy locates at the centre of Thai nationalism discourse. The monarch is the central and most important figure of Thainess, the figure in which all Thais must worship. Upon the writer's assumption, the monarch is the crucial element in prime minister Prayut's royal nationalism.

Social sanctions that seem violent and sinister, but due to the devotion to the monarch would be considered appropriate. The state impunity to those who conduct violence in the name of the monarch and the suppression of information regards to anti-monarchy activities, or simply to question the monarch's behaviours, are disturbing evidences that the monarch is a powerful symbol under Prayut's regime to justifies such actions against the political oppressors.

Hence, Mass Monarchy as a concept will be used to analyse Prayut's formation of royal nationalism through the conduct of Communist Ghost discourse.

2.5 Prajak Kongkirati's binary opposition chart of the symbolic of good citizens between PDRC and the Red Shirt supporters during the 2014 political conflict Thailand.

In 2014 Thailand, the world saw the aggressive political clash between two groups of protestors, the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) and the Red Shirts, altogether with prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra's administration. The clash ended with the twelfth military coup in Thai history, whereby general Prayut Chan-O-Cha seized the administrative power to restore law and order, and to reform the corrupted political system (Ram, 20016, p.104). PDRC, the anti-government group led by Suthep Thaugsuban, condemned the corrupted political system so-called 'Thaksin's Regime' of being evil, the wicked system which must be overthrown (International Crisis Group, 2014, p.14). The notion of evil could be seen throughout the PDRC's speeches in the public rallies, and among the royalist's media. For PDRC, this was not a typical political conflict, but rather the battle to compel the devils (Prajak, 2016, p.53).

The creation of otherness, particularly in the context of politics is not new in Thailand. PDRC orchestrated the concept of moral and good citizens to justify their oppression against Yingluck's government, as well as rationalise dehumanisation, and violence against the Red Shirts.

Prajak Kongkirati, the political science professor at Thammasat University, outlined the symbolic representation of PDRC in contrast to Yingluck's government and the Red Shirts. He argues that the process of dehumanising the others to signify Thainess

has never been disappeared from Thai discourse. Some of the representations against the Red Shirts were adopted from the anti-Communist discourse in the October 6th massacre (Prajak, 2016, p.42). The chart separates into multiple dimensions characteristics of the supporters on either side. The dimensions were based on speeches, posters, songs, stage backdrops, texts on social media, publications and public announcements that aided PDRC and Suthep's efforts to overthrow the government.

The figure provides the foundation to the symbolic representation of the otherness under Thai nationalism discourse under PDRC, the representation which was continued even after the military coup by NCPO and general Prayut Chan-O-Cha himself. The dimensions from the binary-opposition chart will be adapted to fit the political context from 2014 to 2020, to properly analyse the conduct of Communist Ghost discourse to legitimise Prayut's Thai nationalism.

Chapter 3

Contests for Thai Nationalism

Kwampenthai is the local term for Thai nationhood, a virtue that all Thais should be well aware of, and the essences of Thainess that has been preserved for a long time. As Thongchai Winichakul (1994, p.171) states; nationhood is a product of the conjugation of multiple discourses, which ultimately produces rich and powerful symbolic elements of a nation.

Thainess has never been specifically defined because of the constant processes of reinterpretation. Thai nationhood which began to emerge during formation of Siamese nation-state under King Chulalongkorn's reign in the nineteenth century, with the growing pressures from the European empires. Despite the contest for its interpretation over the years, the central elements of Thainess that consist of 'nation, religion (Buddhism) and the monarchy' known as the Holy Trinity of Thainess often remain unchanged. If not, there would only be slight differences in the interpretations amongst these three elements. This chapter shall elaborate on the formation of '*kwampenthai*' or Thai nationhood under different leaderships in genealogical order. The writer shall use Siam instead of Thailand for the name of the country before the administrative, and monarchical reforms during Plaek Phibunsongkram's regime in 1938. This chapter will be divided into four key significance phases to the formation of Thai nationalism, which includes 1) Absolutism, 2) Khana Ratsadon's Era, 3) Counterinsurgency Period and 4) Age of Hyper-Royalism

Absolutism

3.1 Siamese Nationhood under King Chulalongkorn's reign (1868 – 1910)

National consciousness of Siam was not properly established, not until the British imperialism in Burma during King Mongkhut's reign in 1824 (Thongchai, 1994, p.62). At the time, Siam was governed under Sakdina state which is understood as Thai pre-modern system (Kullada, 2004, p.10). Power distribution in Sakdina state was widely separated among powerful lords and outlying centres. The administrative powers were at the hands of the noblemen, while the king acted as a living deity for worship. The governance was independent to the local lord to handle their own bureaucracy. The lord of each client state was expected to pay tributaries (*suai*) to the Siamese king for

protection against foreign threats (ibid, p. 11 - 12). The European imperialism, and the fragmentation of power under the Sakdina system were the major problems, which became the causes of the formation of Siamese nation-state, and roots of Thai nationhood.

When king Chulalongkorn ascended the throne in 1868 at the age of 15, Siam was losing its territories to the French empire, and was politically and economically suppressed by the British (Sachchidanand, 2003, p.23 - 25). Despite the ascension to the throne, the king was too young to rule the kingdom according to the Palace Law of Succession, thus Somdet Chaophraya Sri Suriwongse, a member of the great Bunnag family, served as a regent for five years until 1873 (ibid). During the regency, the young king visited Java, Singapore and India to observe and study the British and Dutch styles of governance, and administrations (ibid, p.43 - 44). When the king reached the age of 20, his first initiative was to modernise Siam to compete against the influence of the Siamese noblemen, via fiscal, educational, military and administrative reforms. The transition from the Sakdina system to absolutism, would have helped consolidate wealth and administrative power at the king (Kullada, 2004, p.41). The declining noble families' influence granted the king's direct power over the people, slowly allowing him to become the central figure of Siam (Charnvit, 2000, p.27).

King Chulalongkorn's methods of modernising Siam were inspired by European bureaucracy and knowledge, which the king learned from his visits to British ruled Singapore and India. Europe became a signifier in the discourse on *siwilai* or 'civilisation' in English term that Siam desired to progress towards modernity (Thongchai, 2000, p.538). The king utilised western knowledge and adapted to suit the societal context of Siam. During this time, centralised taxation system was introduced in Thailand, a system which was modelled after the ministries of finances in the western society (Kullada, 2004, p.52). At the same time, king Chulalongkorn established the Council of State, that adopted from Napoleon Bonaparte's Conseil d'État (ibid, p.54). Followed by the abolition of slavery (*Phrai - Thart system*) and began freeing the existing slaves when they reached the age of twenty-one (ibid, p.57). Furthermore, western-style military was also introduced in Siam, to improve its defence capability against foreign threats, as well as for peacekeeping within Siam (HRH Prince Chula Chakrabongse, 2015, p.235 - 236). The cause to the westernisation of Siamese military is highlighted at the French naval blockade of Chao Phraya River in Bangkok in 1893, this event is known among Thais as '*Ror Sor 112 incident*' (Thongchai, 1994, p.95).

Though administrative, military and fiscal reforms were necessary for king Chulalongkorn to assert his power over the noble families, these were not enough to abolish the Sakdina system. The centralised education system and mass education were introduced in Siam to mobilise modern style bureaucracy, install unitary sentiments and assert the king's power upon the mass.

Education during the reign of king Chulalongkorn's reign attempted to centralise royal power, legitimise absolutism rule, and increase work efficiency and literacy of the peasantry, to transform barbaric Siam to civilisation. The king established two schools during his reign as an attempt to modernise Siam, and insert patriotic sentiments. Ratchakumarn School for the royalties and the elites, while Suan Kularb School for sons of state officials and merchants (HRH Prince Chula Chakrabongse, 2015, p.234 - 235). The graduates from both schools were guaranteed careers in the state administration; in this way, the importance of education was greatly emphasised (Kullada, 2004, p.73). For the peasantry, mass education took place in the Buddhist temples across Siam, in which the king insisted that the graduates would lose their 'peasantry status (*Phrai*)'. This was possible because the monasteries at the time had always been centres of intellectual among the Siamese elites and the royalties (ibid, 2004, p.74 - 76). The lessons in the original textbooks in the monastery schools were mostly about virtue as seen in the 6 volumes of *Thammachariya* series, which focused on educating Siamese people of the modernised virtue as well as asserting national sentiment (Chaophraya Thammasakmontri, 1902). *Thammachariya* conveys the state's expectation of the people to perform for the society, thus insists on social norms upon the individuals.

Absolutism granted King Chulalongkorn complete control over the state. Consequently, the status of the king which had been worshipped as a living deity was expanded immensely under absolutism more than the previous rulers (Thongchai, 2014, p.83). The king as the centre of the administration, and the soul of Siamese people, thus became the essence of Siamese nationalism which the Siamese people should respect. King Chulalongkorn's modernisation schemes during his reign established the foundation to the transformation of Siam from a feudal kingdom to a modern nation-state. Following the King Chulalongkorn's death, his son, Crown Prince Vajiravudh succeeded the throne in 1911, continuing his late father's vision of modernising Siam under absolutism rule.

3.2 ‘Nation, Religion, and King’ as the Essences of Siam under King Vajiravudh (1911 - 1925)

King Vajiravudh saw the loyalty to the nation, religion and the King as necessary components of uniting and progressing Siam to become a modern state (Vella, 2019, p.62). To achieve such vision, the King established *Kong Suer Pa* or the Wild Tiger Corps in 1911 to disseminate the principles amongst the Siamese officials (Copeland, 1993, p.34 – 35). The Wild Tigers mainly consisted of the King’s close associates and bureaucrats, which were tasked to assist the local authority to maintain public order, perform humanitarian duties and encourage the public’s loyalty to the Three Pillars. Within the same year, the Boy Scout was established as a junior organisation of the adult’s Wild Tiger Corps (Vella, 2019, p.44).

The King visualised his nationalistic sentiment with the creation of the tricolour flag, which became known as *Tong Trai Rong*, the name to the national flag of Thailand. The flag was introduced in 1917, which colours were chosen based on Siam’s allies in the First World War (Sturm, 2006, p.143). White represents the purity of Buddhism, red for the blood of those who sacrificed for the nation, and blue for the monarchy (Peleggi, 2007, p.119).

The significance of King Vajiravudh’s conceptualisation of Thai nationalism into the loyalty to the nation, religion and the monarchy became the groundwork for the Thai nationalistic sentiment to this very day.

Khana Ratsadon’s Era

3.3 Contested Siamese Nationhood by the People’s Party’s coup against the monarch (1932)

For decades, absolutism has helped secure the king’s absolute administrative power over the state affairs, and ensured his divine position as the father of Siamese people. The survival from European colonialism since king Mongkut’s reign had helped the monarch to sustain its power over the people. Furthermore, the monarch was able to retain its power through the historical narratives which portrayed the kings as wise and charismatic leaders, who saved Siam from foreign threats, and led the nation toward modernisation.

Such perception of the monarch, particularly the king had never been properly contested. Thus, the monarch had always been at the centre of Siamese administrative power prior to *Khana Ratsadon* or People’s Party’s coup against king Prajadhipok in 1932; the coup was so significant that it ended absolutism, and paved ways for

commoners to engage in politics. This section shall elaborate the people's resistance against the monarch, and the reinterpretation of Siamese nationhood, as well as the historical transition from absolutism to the parliamentary system.

On the morning of June 24th, 1932, the People's Party made an announcement of coup d'état against Thai monarch, particularly against king Prajadhipok and his government (Batson, 2004, p.339 - 340). *Khana Ratsadon* or People's Party consisted of the combination of 102 military personnel and civilians, which dreamt of abolishing absolutism and reforming the monarchy to be under the constitution (Charnwit, 2000, p. 10). The members of the People's Party then took over the administrative power of Siam from the king, greatly emphasising the power of the people as the legitimate rulers of the nation. The revolution had opened up a vast opportunity for commoners to participate in politics, and was regarded as the first chapter of Thai democracy (Thongchai, 2014, p.83). Siamese Revolution in 1932 by the People's Party truly started the formation of Siam as a nation-state, a state which can be referred as 'New Siam or *Sayam Mai*' (Nakarin, 1992, p.2). This is because the establishments of the constitution, parliamentary system, modern style ministries and bureaucracy during People's Party's administration, laid foundations to the formation of the nation-state (ibid).

Prior to 1932, Siam's administrative legitimacy had always been revolved around the monarch's power, which reached its peak after the transition from the Sakdina system to absolutism during king Chulalongkorn's reign. People's Party aggressively accused the monarch of abusing power upon the citizens, and exploiting tax for their personal affairs (Chai-Anan & Chaowana, 2013, p. 1 - 3). The signing of Bowring Treaty in 1855, which monopolised free trade between Siamese elites and the British Empire is said to be the major economic factor that ignited the people's anger against the monarch (Charnwit, 2000, p.28). During this time, land became a valuable resource for the Siamese elites to exploit from the growing trades between Siam and the European empires, not just British. The Siamese elites and the monarch started purchasing lands for speculation, meanwhile, the commoners were losing lands for agriculture, either for their own consumption or commerce.

The rapid expansion of economy led to the consistent growth of the wealth of the elites, which in its process produced 'Middle Class' people in Siam. Economic inequality in Siam led to the change in the social hierarchy of Siamese society from the Monarch-Noble-Peasants-Slaves to the Monarch-Officials-Civilians, while the newly formed Middle Class fits in-between (ibid, p.30 - 32). Charnwit Kasetsiri argues that these Middle

Class were parts of the modernised Siamese military and bureaucracy, even though the merchants later become the prominent figures that mobilised administrative and monarchical amendments in 1932 (ibid, p.34 -35). Upon these reasons, a group of civilians and military personnel was formed under the name of People's Party, with objectives of asserting the governing legitimacy of the Siamese people, and reforming the monarch's political influence and power.

In the announcement of the coup on June 24th, 1932, People's Party proposed 'Six Promises' to the Siamese people. The proposal promised to free Siamese people from 'slavery' of the monarch's influence, to ensure social, education and economic equality, and to safeguard the liberty of Siam (Chai-Anan & Chaowana, 2013, p. 1 - 3). However, despite the devilish portrayal of the monarch in the announcement, People's Party had no interests neither in seizing the monarch's treasuries, nor abolishing the monarch. The monarch had to be under the parliament and the constitution's influence, and only positioned as public figures (ibid).

The significance of the announcement is that it was the first time in Siam that commoners had the opportunity to 'govern' themselves, not by the monarch. During this point in time, the king and the royalty were no longer the centre of Siam. People's Party's visions and promises of New Siam were contested and strengthened throughout the years until the fall of Plaek Phibunsongkram's regime in 1957. The most striking countermeasure against the People's Party's rule was the event of *Baworadej rebellion* in 1933, led by Prince Baworadej to overthrow the people's government, and reestablish monarch's influence in Siam. Fortunately, the rebellion surrendered; the leaders were either dead or fled to Saigon (Batson, 2004, p. 355). The victory of People's Party, saw the rise in the popularity of then Lieutenant-Colonel Plaek Phibunsongkram, who led the army against the rebellion, which in a five years later, paved his ways to become the prime minister of Siam.

3.4 From Siamese Nationhood to Thai Nationhood, becoming Thailand under marshal Plaek Phibunsongkram's regime (1938 – 1944, 1948 - 1957)

Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkram or Phibun in short, rose to the administrative power as a prime minister of Siam amidst the global conflicts in 1938. Plaek Phibunsongkram was the longest-serving prime minister in Thailand from 1938 to 1957, in which under his leadership, the Siamese cultures and society were revolutionised dramatically.

Charnwit Kasetsirit suggests that Siam entered the age of ‘nation-formation’ during Phibun regime (Charnwit, 2001, p.351).

During Plaek Phibunsongkram’s first term as a prime minister in 1938, he envisioned Siam of being a nation independent from foreign influences; this vision started the transition from Siam to Thailand. The foreign influence in this context was referred to China, due to the growing influence of the Chinese merchants and settlers in Siam at the time. According to Phibun’s eyes, Chinese people were exploiting Thailand and Thai people economically (Yoshikawa, 1985, p.6). The growing intensity of the Second World War, and the foreign influence in Siam provided legitimate reasons for Phibun to favour nationalism and militarism. Furthermore, the strengths of fascist regimes in Germany, Italy and Japan, which allowed the premier an absolute administrative power encouraged Phibun to adopt such ideology to materialise his visions during his rule in Siam (Charnwit, p. 2001, 353). Thus, to minimise the ‘foreign influence’ in Siam, and under the legitimisation of fascist rule, Phibun initiated Pan-Thai Movement, a chauvinistic effort to unify Tai people under a common flag, and reclaim the lost territories from the French and the British (Central Intelligence Agency, 1953). The first step to strengthen Siam and unify ‘Tai’ people started from the commemoration of the date of the Siamese Revolution on 24 June as Thai National Day starting from 1939 (Barmé, 1989, p.119).

A key figure behind the mobilisation of Phibun’s hyper-nationalism scheme was Luang Wichit Wathakan (Barmé, 1989, p.1). Luang Wichit prior to the event of Siamese Revolution in 1932, was one of the most prolific writers in the history of Thai print industry (ibid, p.40). During his studies in France in the 1920s, he became acquaintances of Pridi Banomyong, and Plaek Phibunsongkram, both of whom became prominent members of People’s Party that overthrew absolute monarchy in 1932. Luang Wichit was invited by Plaek Phibunsongkram to utilise his talents as a writer and a historian to formulate state conventions (*Ratthaniyom*) to assist Phibun’s regime in modernising Siam. Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture and the National Council on Culture were formally established to oversee and develop the cultural mandates (Chai-Anan, 2002, p.70).

State Conventions or *Ratthaniyom*, were a series of twelve cultural mandates issued by Phibun regime between 1939 and 1942 which aimed at the uplifting of national sentiment, instilling ‘modern’ moral code and prescribed civic duties in the new Siam (Wyatt, 1984, p.255). With Luang Wichit’s help, the first issue of State Convention was issued to change the name of Siam to Thailand (*Prathet-Thai*) in 1939. According to

Wyatt, the name changes signified that the nation belongs to ‘Thai people’ as opposed to the economically dominant Chinese (ibid, p.253). However, the name change can also be perceived as a symbolic progression to a new era of the country. Luang Wichit argued that the name Siam carried no relation to the actual inhabitants within the territory (Barmé, 1989, p.129). While the lack of ethnic connotation was one thing, the other was that Phibun saw Siam as the synonym for the ‘monarchical rule’, meanwhile Thailand can be interpreted either as ‘Land of the Free’ (*Thai* means free in Thai language) or ‘Land of Tai people’ (Sturm, 2006, p.171). Furthermore, the term Thailand signifies the notion that the country belongs to Tai ethnic communities both inside Thailand, and in the ‘lost territories’ in neighbouring countries, which contributed to the progression of Phibun’s Pan-Thai Movement (Yoshikawa, 1985, p.7).

As seen above, the twelve cultural mandates demanded Thai citizens to behave and obey civic virtue in accordance with the regime’s vision of modernity. Thais are required to use Thai as an official language as opposed to the local dialects, foreign languages or indigenous languages, and honour the national flag and national anthem at specific hours during the day. The people were encouraged to work hard for the betterment of the nation, have not more than four meals a day, and live their lives appropriately and healthily (Wyatt, 1984, p. 255). Phibun’s attempts to become the central administrative power of Thailand, as well as spiritually among the people became apparent in his speech in 1942 amidst the Japanese invasion of Southeast Asia. Phibun claimed, ‘While the Japanese Empire had the emperor to unite the people, but we [Thailand] had none. The Thai nation is not officially formed, the king [king Ananda Mahidol] is only a child, and the constitution is merely a book. When the nation is in crisis, we have nothing to hold onto. Thereby, I want you to follow the prime minister [himself]’ (Charnwit, 2001, p. 363 - 364).

Phibun was actively seeking ways to assert his influence in order to replace the king as the administrative and spiritual figure of the nation. Phibun confiscated private processions of the former king Prajadhipok, arrested Thai royalists, and performed royal ceremonies instead of the new King Ananda Mahidol (Sturm, 2006, p.165 - 166). Chakri dynasty was severely humiliated, and the people were losing faith in the monarch, due to the absence of the royalties in administrative positions. On 16 September 1957, Phibun was overthrown in a coup d’état led by royalist supported Field marshal Sarit Thanarat. The coup ended People’s Party’s visions of Siam, and saw the rise of royalism, and the return of the monarch’s influence in Thailand.

Counterinsurgency Period

3.5 The revival of the monarch's power and the rise of Royal Nationalism under Sarit Thanarat and Thanom Kittikachorn (1957 - 1973)

Field marshal Sarit Thanarat believed Phibun's failed administration could not mobilise Thailand to the progressive direction. Thereby, to reform the economy and the political structure, Sarit believed that a revolution was necessary (Apinya & Wiwat, 2004, p. 38). The coup which appointed Sarit Thanarat as the new prime minister of Thailand, saw an immense effort to the revival of the monarchy's roles in Thai political system (Chai-Anan, 2002 p.92). Furthermore, Sarit also attempted to overthrow the entire system inherited from the 1932 coup by the People's Party (ibid). The significance of the new political system under the Sarit's regime, laid foundations to the rise of royal nationalism as the new form of Thai nationhood.

According to Somsak Jeamteerasakul, Sarit's biggest achievement was the re-centralisation of the monarch's position in Thai social hierarchy for the first time after the Siamese Revolution in 1932 (Somsak, 2001, p.36). To revive the power of the monarchy, it was necessary to reshape the public memories of the People's Party as illegitimate (Thanavi, 2016, p.118). Sarit restored numerous traditional royal ceremonies that were prohibited during Phibun's regime such as the Royal Ploughing Ceremony, and the Royal Kathin Ceremony (ibid, p.37). The restoration of the monarch's power ensured that Sarit would have the power he wanted (Handley, 2006, p.140). Furthermore, royal nationalism was needed to strengthen the position of the government in the midst of the increasingly intensified Cold War in Southeast Asia (Sturm 2006, p.186). Since King Bhumibol became the head of the military under Sarit's regime, the soldiers had to swear allegiance to the throne (Handley, 2006, p.143). Sarit moved the date of the National Day from June 24, the day of 1932 Siamese Revolution to December 5, King Bhumibol's birthday to signify the King, or the monarchy as equivalent to Thai nation itself. This was one of the royalists' attempt to delete the memory of the abolition of absolutism from Thai history, and revive the monarch's power (ibid).

Sarit's rule is considered as a dictatorship, as a benevolent despotism and as military rule (Chai-Anan, 2002 p.92). The combination of militarism and royal nationalism ideologies helped Sarit succeeded in establishing a complete militaristic state. Following Sarit's death in 1963, his close associate, a minister of defence Thanom Kittikachorn continued Sarit's visions as a prime minister of Thailand, and commander in chief of the

army (Surachart, 2015, p.34). According to Suthachai Yimprasert, royal nationalism under Sarit and Thanom's regimes was greatly endorsed by the United States government, as they saw Thai monarch as an important figure against Communism in Thailand (Suthachai, 2013, p.6). Since Phibun's regime, Communism has been seen as the enemy of Thainess, as the first issue of Thailand's Anti-Communism Act in 1952 (Royal Thai Government Gazette, 1952). Communism was signified as the number one enemy of Thainess, the enemy of the nation, religion and the monarch (Thongchai, 1994, p. 169).

As the Cold War in Southeast Asia escalated up to the emergence of the Vietnam War, the need for national unity was intensified. However, the withdrawal of the US troops from Thailand after Richard Nixon won the presidency in 1968, made Thailand vulnerable to the communist threats from North Vietnam (Handley, 2006, p.197). Thereby, Thanom initiated aggressive countermeasures against Communist insurgency and socialist-minded scholars in Thailand. One of the most violent counterinsurgency acts was the *Thang Daeng* or Red Drum in Phatthalung province in 1972, where an estimated three thousand civilians and students were killed as alleged communists (Haberhorn, 2013, p.185-186).

A distinct effect of the Vietnam War in Thailand was the inflation in 1968, which caused vast unemployment rates and violence in the country. The regime's inability to reverse the economic downfall, corruption within the administration and authoritarianism rule, later ignited the civilians' mobilisation against Thanom's regime (Charnwit, 2006, p.9). This led to the popular uprising of 14 October 1973, which overthrew Thanom Kittikachorn's regime, and reestablished a democratic government (Cui, 2017, p.3). Vice prime minister and the army commander, Praphas Charusathien ordered shooting against the unarmed protesters (Grey, 1991, p.54). King Bhumibol intervened the shooting against civilians, then suggested Thanom, Praphas and Thanom's son, Narong Kittikachorn to flee the country (ibid). Sanya Dhammasakdi, chancellor of Thammasat University became an interim prime minister under king Bhumibol's command. According to Thanavi Chotpradit, the king's intervention established the political imagination among the public that the monarch became the guardian of democracy (Thanavi, 2016 p.129). Democracy and freedom prospered during the post-October 1973 era under Sanya's liberal government at least for three years until Thammasat University's massacre in October 1976 (Anderson, 1977, p.18).

The monarch became politically active in Thailand again under Sarit Thanarat's regime, and continued throughout Thanom Kittikachorn's regime. Despite the fall of the

military's regimes after October 14, 1973, the loyalty to the monarch has been deeply rooted at the centre of Thai nationhood for decades under the incoming authoritarian and democratic administrations.

3.6 Communism in Thailand as the enemy of Thainess

Communist Party of Siam (CPS - later become Communist Party of Thailand [CPT] after the transition from Siam to Thailand in 1939) was established by a group of Vietnamese and Chinese residences in Siam in 1930 (Murashima, 2012, p.3). Apparently, one of the founding members of CPS was Ho Chi Minh, the Vietnamese national hero. The Vietnamese wanted to free their nation from French's colonialism, meanwhile, the Chinese Communists were heavily suppressed by Chiang Kai Shek (ibid, p.57). Both groups resided in Siam to prepare plans to fight in each of their own battle within their respective territory. The Vietnamese and Chinese Communists in Siam, thereby formally united in 1930 under the name Communist Party of Siam (ibid, p.63). According to Eiji Murashima, there was not a single Siamese member in CPS during the initial establishment of the party (ibid).

CPT's (previously CPS) influence was becoming known among Thai labour class during the Greater East Asia War, especially when Japan invaded Southeast Asia (Flood, 1975, p.58). The war helped CPT to conceal their movement under the government's radar, by helping the people's resistance against the Japanese soldiers. During this time, CPT slowly received supports and memberships from Thai people, particularly the labours and farmers in the rural provinces.

Despite the party's secrecy within Thai society, the People's Party's government in 1933 actually perceived Communism as the enemy to the nation. This became apparent from the government's enactment of Anti-Communist Act B.E. 2476, which states that Communism would bring catastrophe to the people and the nation if let loose (Royal Thai Government Gazette, 1933). The sentence for the alleged Communist was up to ten years in prison, with a possible fine of five thousand baht. The law, however, was enacted not to attack Communism itself, but rather to suppress socialism ideology which was becoming popular among Thai scholars at the time (Rasamee, 1976, p.51). In the same year, King Prajadhipok once openly accused Luang Pradit Manutham [*Pridi Banomyong*] of being a Communist, after he submitted the Draft National Economic Development Plan or the Yellow Cover Dossier. The allegation of Pridi being a Communist in 1933 was the first act of state aggression against Communism (Somsak, 2001, p.11).

The state's aggression towards CPT became even more aggravated after the victory of Communism in China in 1949 (Chai-Anan, 2002, p.167). Phibun's regime at the time was strengthening Thai nationalism, by using China as the symbol of the otherness from Thainess to signify national unity. The xenophobic sentiment against China took place long before Phibun's premiership, as there is evidence that King Vajiravudh once criticised the Chinese as 'Jews of the East' (Jit Phumisak, 1976, p.361). During Phibun's premiership, Maoism became a central revolutionary ideology which CPT adopted to overthrow the government. Maoist Revolution focused on protracted warfare by the peasantry in the rural provinces (Prasit, 1975, p.39 - 41). CPT's armed struggle began in 1965, in which the party launched their first guerrilla attack against the security forces in Nakhon Phanom Province (Cui, 2017, p.29).

Thai government established Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) in 1965 to fight against the growing influence of CPT (Bergin, 2016, p.26). This followed by brutal military assaults under the legitimacy of the martial law, and Anti-Communist Act B.E. 2495 (Nakarin, 2016, p.3). The state's hostility against communists forced CPT to take an offensive position against the Thai government (ibid). People's Liberation Army of Thailand (PLAT) was formally established in 1969 to overthrow the government and cleanse Thailand from American imperialism (Rasamee, 1976, p.89). The insurgents spread violently in the rural provinces across the country. CPT declared that an armed struggled and protracted war should be the sole necessary method to overthrow sovereign (ibid). To counter the spread of CPT, Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) was replaced CSOC under the new government after the overthrow of Thanom's regime in 1973 (Haberkorn, 2013, p.187). Counterinsurgency became even more brutal and sinister yet secretive under ISOC, in which both Communists and 'alleged Communists' were brutally assaulted (Puey, 1976, p.15).

In the beginning of Cold War, the U.S. began to invest a heavy amount of resources on psychological warfare upon Thai people, to encourage Thailand to collaborate with Washington against Communism in the region (Natthapon, 2013, p.291). Nawapol and Village Scouts were established under ISOC to commence psychological warfare for the Thai government (Puey, 1976, p.15). Tactics included state propaganda through public gatherings, publications and articles condemning Communism of being enemy of the monarch and Thailand, threatening civilians and even assassinations (ibid, p.16 - 17). One of the most apparent products of ISOC's propaganda was the dissemination of the famous

discourse ‘Killing Communists are not sinful’ to utilised Buddhist virtue to legitimise brutality against the Communists and the alleged.

3.7 Communist Ghost

According to Thongchai Winichakul, Communists in Thailand were not the enemy of capitalism, but the evil enemy of Thailand (Thongchai, 2016, p.6). This was achieved through a lengthy process of psychological warfare, which portrayed Communism as the evil otherness of Thainess. In this respect, ISOC’s propaganda was a success when Kittiwutho Bhikkhu, an ultra-rightwing Buddhist monk and Nawapol’s associate gave an interview, asserting that ‘killing Communists are not sinful’ and that the Communists and the leftists are not human but devils (Prajak, 2017, p.40). Puey Ungphakorn suggests that Kittiwutho Bhikkhu’s rationalisation gave a license to kill (Puey, 1977, p.12). He further declared that killing 50,000 Communist would bring merits for the 42 million other Thais (Handley, 2006, p.232).

The making of the Ghosts was more than spreading state propaganda against Communism through the media, leaflets and right-wing’s public gatherings, but also through the inhumane brutalities from the state and the extremist groups against both Communists and civilians. The authority staged Communist assault against civilians and burned down the entire village in Ban Na Sai in Nongkai province (Apinya & Wiwat, 2004, p.78). The assault took place in 1974, whereby 1,500 civilians were accused of being Communists, 276 households were destroyed, and 5 were killed. The authority attempted to persuade Sanya Dhammasakdi’s interim government to continue oppressing CPT (ibid).

On 28th February 1976, Dr. Boonsanong Punyodyana, one of the founding members and the leaders of the Socialist Party of Thailand (SPT) was assassinated, possibly due to political reason (Trocki, 1977, p.48). During his time as the secretary-general of SPT, he was the major activist by spending his time advocating socialism to Thai people, and beyond. Thai ruling elites saw him as a radical and a dangerous person, which led to the accusation of being a Communist (ibid). In the same year in the morning of October 6, the authority and the rightwing-vigilantes stormed Thammasat University and brutally assaulted the students who were protesting against the return of the former dictator Thanom Kittikachorn (Handley, 2006, p.235 - 237). The rightwing extremists accused the students of being Communists, infused with rage from the released photograph of the students’ mocked hanging of a person who resembles the crown prince

Vajiralongkorn, signalled how death to the 'Communists' seem to be an unavoidable solution (ibid). The anger led to the death of 41 students and civilians on that morning (Haberhorn, 2017, p.270). Their corpses were brutalised publicly by the rightwing extremists. The lifeless bodies of the students and protestors were lynched in the process which rejected their humanity, and transmitted messages to living Communists and the survivors (Puangthong & Thongchai, 2018, p.59 - 60). Some of the bodies were dragged across the field, hanged from the tree, and repeatedly hit by a chair and spiked by pikes.

The death of Wacharee Petchsoon on October 6, was arguably one of the most shameless murders by the right-wing. The extremists stripped her clothes off her lifeless body, then laid them next to her on the floor, while the crowd watched her naked corpse (Puangthong & Thongchai, 2018, p.62).

The brutalities, public humiliation and propaganda stated above are some of the few gruesome and disgusting treatments against Thai Communists, aiming to dehumanise or even demonise them under Communist Ghost discourse, which existed in the 70s. According to Thongchai Winichakul, Communism in Thai discourse has nothing to do with neither Marxism, Leninism, nor Socialism as political and economic ideology (Thongchai, 1994, p.168). Communism is simply the 'enemy' of the nation, religion and the monarch (ibid). Somsak Jeamteerasakul suggests that according to the monarch in the 70s, the fear towards Communism was neither of its threat against the constitution nor the parliament, but rather to the monarch itself (Somsak, 2001, p.12 - 13). Communism's threat is equivalent to a possible emergence of Republicanism (ibid). Republicanism would result in the complete abolition of the monarch, and replace the king with a presidency as the head of state. Republican sentiments emerged in three historical periods according to Giles Ungphakorn, the 1932 Siamese Revolution, the rise of CPT in the 70s, and today (Giles, 2010, p.99). The monarch and the royalists could not allow this to happen.

To ensure the continuity of the monarch, Communism, thus has been used to justify the state violence and suppression against its oppressors. The production of the devilish perception towards CPT and its members under Communist Ghost discourse resulted in aggressive, or often lethal countermeasures by the state, which the rightwing extremists and the state believed to be necessary and legitimate responses to safeguard the sovereign.

3.8 Thammasat University Massacre on October 6, 1976

Thammasat University Massacre or known as October 6th (*Hok-Too-La*), was a heavily censored historic day of Thai contemporary history, when an estimated of 5,000 university students across Bangkok gathered at the football field of Thammasat University to demonstrate against the return to Thailand of the former dictator Thanom Kittikachorn, who was politically exiled to Singapore after the event of October 14th, 1933 (Charnwit, 2006 p.125). The protesters were also furious of the deaths of the two activists who had been tortured and hanged by the authorities and the right-wing extremists for distributing the propaganda posters against the return of Thanom Kittikachorn (ibid).

During the protest inside Thammasat University, the students staged a mocked hanging of the two activists. However, the student at the end of the noose bore resemblances to prince Vajiralongkorn (Handley, 2006, p.235). The photograph was published by the rightwing newspaper *Dao Siam*, infused the rage among the radical rightists and the authority. The following day, the military, police and rightwing vigilantes started shooting at the unarmed university students and civilians by using military-grade firearms and tanks in the morning on October 6th 1976, under the accusation that the protestors were Communist insurgents. The military's strategies also involved various torture methods such as hanging the body from the tree, burning the body alive and rape, which were supported by the ultra-rightwing such as the Village Scouts (*Look-Suer-Chao-Barn*) and the Red Gaurs Movement (*Kha-Buan-Karn-Kra-Ting-Dang*) (Puey, 1996, p. 16 - 18).

Reports stated that around 41 people were killed, and some of the bodies were mutilated and burned (Haberkorn, 2017, p.270). Around 3,000 people were arrested that morning; many of the prisoners were brutally treated by the polices (Amnesty International, 1976). The aggressive and violent crackdown against the students, and civilians, particularly after Thammasat University massacre, forced the survivors to seek political shelter under CPT's protection (Thamrong, 1993, p.92 - 93). The military engaged in the ninth coup d'état of Thai history, in which Benedict Anderson sees the coup as 'the culmination of a two-year-long right-wing campaign of public intimidation, assault and assignation best symbolised by the orchestrated mob violence of October 6 itself' (Anderson, 1977, p. 13). Anderson states that the 1976 coup d'état was an attempt by the right-wing to return Thailand to normalcy after three years of unsuitable flirtation of democracy (ibid).

No compensations have been paid to the families of the victims, and no accountability was made against the perpetrators. The event of October 6th, 1976 or Thammasat University Massacre has been heavily censored in Thailand for over 42 years. The silence from the state was ensured by two Amnesty bills which were passed between 1976 and 1978 (Haberkorn, 2015), one of which pardon those who seized the government power on October 6th 1976, and the other which ended legal proceedings of the 18 students and activists, and pardon their ‘crimes’ for revolting, lèse-majesté and Communist activities (ibid, p.3 - 4). The prime minister, Kriangsak Chamanan asserted that the amnesty bill was passed upon king Bhumibol’s personal wish, thus the released inmates must be grateful to the king’s kindness (Thongchai, 2015, p.23).

Thongchai Winichakul regarded the event of October 6th as the ‘Moment of Silence’ due to the lack of testimonies provided by the survivors and the perpetrators, and the state surrounding the massacre (Thongchai, 2015, p. 10). The impunity caused by the absence of accountability and testimonies, ensured the anonymity of the perpetrators, and suppressed the public from learning about the massacre, and subsequently deleted the state murder on October 6th, 1976 off Thai history.

Following a decade of conflict with Communism, CPT came to the dissolution in 1985, resulted in the end of the counterinsurgency era, and later Cold War was over in 1991 (Chambers, 2013, p.12). Thailand’s victory over Communism was a significant milestone to the perseverance of royalist nationalist ideology, which has been remained as the heart and soul of Thai identity to this very day.

Age of Hyper Royalism

3.9 The 1997 Financial Crisis and the Assertion of Royal Wisdom to Everyday Life

In the post counterinsurgency era, Thailand saw a rapid economic growth and industrialisation prospered, and mass infrastructure developments were initiated across the country. Thailand liberalised its financial system to increase foreign conglomerates’ investments in the country (Baker and Pasuk, 2014, p.257). Thai Baht was attacked by foreign speculators, resulting in the weakening of the currency. The reserve bank attempted to maintain the currency, but was unable to endure the heavy amount of funds by these speculators. This forced the government to float the baht, which eventually had no choice but to seek IMF’s loans of 17.2 billion US dollars in 1997 (Hewison, 2011, p.146).

The financial crisis provided the monarch with an opportunity to lead the people out of the severe calamity. King Bhumibol introduced the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), which conceptualises a balanced way of living for self-reliance (Sasawan and Suwakitti, 2019, p.2). By a balanced way of living, it means a prudent and reasonable way of spending or consuming things within our capacity. The philosophy is applicable in the individual, community or even a national level (Prasopchoke, 2010, p.127).

King Bhumibol's SEP was utilised nationwide, and eventually, the King's wisdom became embedded in every corner of Thai society, from school textbooks to national policies. The attachment of SEP to the national policy, and to everyday of Thai's life has further rooted the monarch's influence amongst citizens. Criticism against SEP itself or the regime's applications of the philosophy would put the critics at risk of facing the *lèse-majesté* (Ivarsson, 2007, p.25). Giles Ungphakorn (2010) argues that SEP is 'a deadly serious conservative ideology, aimed at preventing redistribution of wealth and poverty alleviation' (p.102). This view, although may be an extreme opinion; however, the perception that the philosophy functions as a key component in maintaining the monarch's relevancy, and status as the intelligent leader of Thai people in time of crisis cannot be regarded as an exaggeration.

3.10 General Prayut Chan-O-Cha's Premiership (2014 - Present)

On 22nd May 2014, National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), led by General Prayut Chan-O-Cha seized the administrative power from the previously elected prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra (Prajak & Veerayooth, 2018, p.279). The twelfth coup d'état, which brought back authoritarian rule to Thailand, whereby the civic liberty was heavily restricted under the enactment of Martial Law during the first year of NCPO's rule. After a year, Martial Law was replaced by Article 44, which gave general Prayut Chan-O-Cha, as the prime minister of Thailand a legitimacy over legislative, executive and judicial branches to give the order to protect national security, the monarchy, the national economy and state affairs (Interim Constitution of Thailand B.E. 2557, 2014).

According to Tyrell Haberkorn, NCPO adopted several techniques that the previous dictators had used in the past to control the masses, one of which included the prosecution of civilians in military courts for crimes against the monarchy and the

state (Haberkorn, 2017, p.269). Furthermore, NCPO had utilised symbolic elements adopted from Communist Ghosts discourse from 70s Thailand to dehumanise its critics, pro-democratic activists and political opposition. Although NCPO never openly stated that the oppositions are the enemy, but the hundreds of cases of civilian prosecutions, harassments, and violence reflected the specific types of people that the regime perceived as the enemy.

The Interim Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2557 (2014) was promulgated by NCPO without the parliament's participation, but was written and approved by the National Legislative Assembly (NLA) in which the members were personally handpicked by general Prayut Chan-O-Cha. Within the first year of the administration, an estimated of 751 people were summoned by NCPO to have their 'attitudes adjusted' for being 'dangers to the security of Thailand'. According to iLaw (2020), the summon could be done without arrest warrants, witnesses, and investigations, because of the legitimacy of Article 44 under the 2014 Interim Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (p.3). This is because the junta sees the critics of the coup, military and the monarchy, as well as pro-democracy activists are threats to national security (Human Rights Watch, 2019, p. 3 - 6).

Although NCPO together with Article 44 was dissolved after the 2019 general election which general Prayut Chan-O-Cha won under the leader of Phalang Pracharat Party. The suppression of civic liberty from raising critics against the regime and the monarchy has been relatively unchanged, if not worse than NCPO's rules in the perception of the writer. The military aggressively called out the critics, and the activists as 'nation-haters' or '*Chang Chart*' then accused them of being an incurable disease in comparison to COVID-19 (Khaosod English, 2020). Up to this point, the characteristics of Prayut's political enemies were not precisely defined directly from Prayut himself, but rather loosely framed under the already existed Red Shirts or Nation Haters by his subordinates. Both names symbolise those who possess anti-*Sakdina* sentiment (Thai feudalism), which for the conservatives is equivalent to anti-monarchy, the heart and soul of Thailand.

Prayut Chan-O-Cha's nationalism has never been specifically defined, but like the previous Thai administrations, unity and loyalty to the monarch have always been essential elements of Thai nationalism. The quest to disclose Prayut's nationalism shall be done entirely in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Prayut Chan-O-Cha's Royal Nationalism

The concept of Thai nationalism began to take shapes during King Chulalongkorn's modernisation schemes and the establishment of absolutism. However, Siamese nationhood was not properly conceptualised at the time; it was not until during King Vajiravudh's reign, the 6th king of Chakri Dynasty, the successor of King Chulalongkorn that introduced the loyalties to the throne, religion and nation as the focal points of national sentiment of Siam (Sopha, 2004, p.34). Since then, the devotion to the three institutes known as Three Pillars of Thainess or the Holy Trinity of Thainess became the heart and soul of the nation and Thai discourse. The Pillars of Thainess was critically challenged by Khana Ratsadon, resulting in the 1932 Siamese Revolution, whereby the monarch's position became somewhat excluded from the Three Pillars, but was revived since Sarit Thanarat's premiership from 1957 and onwards.

To properly define Prayut Chan-O-Cha's nationalism requires a comprehension of the political and cultural contexts in Thailand during his premiership. The focus should be shifted towards understanding how and why he came to power as the prime minister of Thailand. The discussion for the rest of the chapter focuses on the examination of Prayut Chan-O-Cha's nationalism.

4.1 Thai Royal Nationalism

Royalist nationalist ideology is the formation of national consciousness and a condition in which the royal hegemony becomes the heart of the nation (Prin, 2013, p.1 - 2). Prin argues that Thai royal nationalism creates an imagination that the monarch is the symbolic representative figure of Thai people, that cannot be separated apart (ibid).

The production of royal nationalism took place in parallel to the re-establishment of royal hegemony during King Bhumibol's reign in the mid 1950s (Prin, 2013, p.3). Royal nationalism emerged as a top-down approach, with which the ruling elites aspired to legitimise the monarch's power over the commoners, benefit the serving royalist politicians and officials, and also antagonise the members of 1932 coup

(*Khana Ratsadon*) that overthrew absolute monarchy. The success to the establishment of royal hegemony in the mid 1950s led to the formation of Thai style royal nationalism called 'The Democratic Regime of Government with the King as Head of the State' (Kasian, 2016, p.226).

The attempts to merge nation and monarch into a single entity is the core essence of royal nationalism. The production of such perception relied heavily on the royal historical narratives, which signify the interminable relations between Tai ethnicity and the royal bloodline, and as the chosen representative figure of all Thai people (Prin, 2013, p.9). Such interpretation signifies that the monarch is an extended body of the identity of Tai ethnicity.

A key player that made possible the production of royal nationalism in the 1950s was the United States of America. Prin refers to Nattapon Jaijing's famous work on Washington's involvement, asserting that the US initiated anti-Communist policy in Thailand, under which the monarch was promoted as the unifying symbol of the country against Communism (Prin, 2013, p.7). Initially, the royal image of King Bhumibol was relatively weak due to the suppression of power by Plaek Phibunsongkram's republicanism ideology. Through the consistency of Thai royalists and Washington's close collaboration in spreading anti-Communist propaganda as the alarming threat of the monarch and Thailand, Phibun then allowed King Bhumibol to initiate royal visits to the rural provinces to increase his public appearance (Nattapon, 2016, p.331 - 332). This was the beginning of the establishment of royal hegemony which later becomes the foundation of royal nationalism in the following administrations.

Hence, royal nationalism according to Prin is the category of nation where the sovereign does not belong to the people, but rather to the monarch, the serving elites and the royalists (Prin, 2016, p.34). Within royal nationalist discourse, those who wish to separate nation and the monarch apart, thus becomes the enemy of Thailand, identical to the Communist Ghost.

4.2 Network Monarchy and the Production of Royal Hegemony

Royal nationalism is achieved through what Duncan McCargo called Network Monarchy, a system in which the monarch is placed at the centre of Thai political network, but a position in a rather novel mode of governance (McCargo, 2005, p.501). Namely, the constitutional king who supposedly above politics, in fact indirectly

governs the country, and spreads political influences through serving politicians, military or private sectors. McCargo adds that upon this mode of governance, the monarch would grant credits and appraisal for successes, while failures would be blamed upon his subordinates in the frontlines (McCargo, 2005, p.503).

McCargo asserts in *Network Monarchy* could run itself if it has the right ‘manager’ to manage the network (McCargo, 2005, p.505). Once the network could function itself, the monarch would only need to intervene personally if needed; in this way, the monarch’s operation would be seen by the public as being outside Thai political environment. Furthermore, McCargo also mentions that for the serving elites to be part of the monarchical network is considered beneficial to enhance their access to information and power (ibid).

In *Thailand’s Hyper Royalism* by Thongchai Winichakul, the monarchy has always been an active political player throughout the contemporary history of Thailand, until they eventually achieved royal hegemony called royal democracy in the 70s (Thongchai, 2016, p.3). One of the characteristics of Thai royalism in supplement to the function of Network Monarchy is that it is not a top-down state network of propaganda. Civic society and private businesses, as well as educational institutions and the media all voluntary, engage in the production and reproduction of royalism (Thongchai, 2016, p.9). Public sector becomes part of the network monarchy as McCargo concretised, by assisting the serving elites to establish royal hegemony.

A key aspect which allows the Network Monarchy to be eventually able to operate itself with little to zero criticism against is the obscurity surrounding the network. For McCargo, the control over language is essential for the royal family to assert their influence upon the public, from seemingly outside of the network (McCargo, 2005, p.506). Royal speeches given by His Majesty every year on his birthday, for instance, allowed the king to personally affirm royal wishes and royal messages to the people.

4.3 Lèse-majesté: Guardian of Royal Nationalism via Penal Code of Thailand

The notorious lèse-majesté in Thailand has been an important instrument by the royalist elites to safeguard the monarchy from criticism and accountability, simply by criminalising disloyal activities. Thongchai Winichakul asserts that the lèse-majesté, particularly the Article 112 is a measure to control the public culture regarding the monarchy by creating a boundary of what could be expressed and acted upon (Thongchai, 2016, p.10 - 11).

The history of *lèse-majesté* in Thailand perhaps stretched back to Sukhothai Kingdom in the early 13th century. But the modern Thai *lèse-majesté* law was first prescribed in Penal Code R.S. 127 (1908) of Siam during King Chulalongkorn's absolutism. Article 98 under the Offense Against the Monarchy and the Kingdom states that 'Whoever express hostility towards or defame the King, the Queen, Heir apparent or the Regent, are subject to imprisonment for up to 7 years and fine for 5,000 baht (Penal Code of Siam R.S. 127, 1908, p.239 - 230).' Article 98 became a foundation of Article 112 in the alteration of the Penal Code B.E. 2499 (1956). Since 1956, the offences relating to the monarch has been equivalent to the offences against the security of Thailand (Penal Code of Thailand B.E. 2499, 1956, p.65 - 68).

The latest update of *lèse-majesté* was made under the order number 41 of National Administrative Reform Council (NARC) led by Admiral Sangad Chaloryu on October 21 1976. NARC enhanced the punishment of Article 112 to a maximum of 15 years imprisonment. The regime claimed that the punishments relating to offences against the monarch in the previous Penal Code were not appropriate for the political context at the time, hence the penalties deserved improvement (Royal Thai Government Gazette B.E. 2519, 1976, p.46 - 47). The rationale behind the aggravation of *lèse-majesté* by NARC was the conflict with Communist insurgency, and the aftermath of assaults against Communist supported university students inside Thammasat University on October 6.

According to Sulak Sivaraksa, *lèse-majesté* has been heavily fetishised beyond its initial intention (Sulak, 2013, p.34). For Sulak, the law which intended to protect the sovereignty of the monarch has been in fact threatening the institution itself, by being resistant to change and potentially putting everyone at risk of being criminally charged under the law (ibid).

The most blatant element of *lèse-majesté* is that it assumes the lawbreakers of being terrorists against the nation, and those who demand the reform of the law are automatically anti-monarchy, hence anti-Thailand. The use of law to criminalise anti-monarchy sentiment in Thailand serves a condition in which Thai citizens are enforced to be royalists. Through strict law enforcement, royal nationalism has been allowed to persist unchallenged.

4.4 Laws criminalising anti-royalist sentiments

Royal nationalist ideology hasn't been preserved solely under the protection of strict *lèse-majesté* but supplemented by Article 116 of the Penal Code of Thailand, and Computer Crime Act B.E. 2560, both of which have been used to suppress and harass whoever expresses criticism against the monarch and the ruling royalists. Both laws shall be elaborated first, then the discussion of both laws will be made altogether later.

Article 116 of the Penal Code of Thailand

Article 116 states that 'Whoever makes an appearance by words, writings or any kind to the public which is not an act within the constitution or for expressing an honest opinion or criticism in order:

(1) To bring about a change in the laws of the country or the government through force or violence;

(2) To incite the public unrest and disaffection in a manner likely to cause a disturbance in the country; or

(3) To cause the people to transgress the laws of the Country, shall be penalised with a maximum imprisonment of seven years (Penal Code of Thailand B.E. 2499, 1952, p.69 - 70)'

Computer Crime Act B.E. 2550 (2007) and Amendment B.E. 2560 (2017)

Thailand Computer Crime Act provides the government's legitimacy to suppress free speech, enforce online censorship and surveillance, ultimately criminalise the critics of the military regime as well as the monarch. However, the act itself states the rationale behind the enactment was to prevent online criminal activities; for instance, hacking or publishing false information could be harmful to the economy, society, national security and threatening to the morality of Thai people (Computer Crime Act B.E. 2550, 2007, p.13).

Though the enactment of the law itself was well-intended, the law has been in fact abused by Prayut Chan-O-Cha's regime to suppress online criticism against themselves, due to the ambiguity to the interpretation of the law (Human Rights Watch, 2019, p.28). The obscure description of Article 14 in the Amendment B.E. 2560 states that:

'Section 14. Any person who commits any of the following offences shall be liable for imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or to a fine not exceeding one

hundred thousand Baht or to both:

(1) dishonestly or by deceit, bringing into a computer system a computer data which is distorted or fake, whether in whole or in part or a computer data which is false, in a manner likely to cause loss to the public, where it is not the commission of an offence of defamation under the Penal Code;

(2) bringing into a computer system a computer data which is false in a manner likely to cause loss to the maintenance of national security, public security, national economic security or an infrastructure involving national public interest or in a manner causing public anxiety;

(3) bringing into a computer system any computer data which constitutes an offence relating to the security of the Kingdom or an offence relating to terrorism under the Penal Code;

(4) bringing into a computer system any computer data of a pornographic nature, provided that such computer data is accessible by the general public;

(5) disseminating or forwarding computer data with the knowledge that it is a computer data under (1), (2), (3) or (4).

If the offence under paragraph one (1) is not committed against the public but is committed against any particular person, the perpetrator, the disseminator or the forwarder of such computer data shall be liable for imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or to a fine not exceeding sixty thousand Baht, or to both and the offence shall be a compoundable offence. (Computer Crime Act Amendment B.E. 2560, 2017, p.26 - 27).’

The provision of both laws in conjunction with lèse-majesté (Article 112)

Many cases of prosecution under lèse-majesté have often been accompanied either under Article 116 of the Penal Code or Computer Crime Act, or both (Amnesty International, 2020, p.15). Online criticism against the monarch is often seen by the royalist elites as a way of inciting public resistance against the sovereign, which endangers the security of the nation under the criminal offense under the Penal Code. Many cases of the abuse of Article 14 of the Computer Crime Act, particularly paragraph (2) together with lèse-majesté are often concerning the spread of information regarding the monarch, in opposite to the royal narratives propagated by Thai media and the government.

For instance, a case of Thanakorn Siripaiboon in 2015 who was charged under Article 112 or the *lèse-majesté* and Article 14 paragraph (3) of Computer Crime Act for mocking ‘Khun Thong Daeng’, the late King Bhumibol’s royal pet dog (Human Rights Watch, 2015). He was also charged with penal offense under Article 116 for sharing infographics of the scandalous Rajabhakti Park, which was under the public’s suspicion of multi-million baht of corruption by the military (Aljazeera, 2015). The charge against Thanakorn are interesting case of the dubious provision of *lèse-majesté* and penal offenses by the royalist elites. Firstly, according to the Penal Code of Thailand, Article 112 should not cover the royal pets, as there is no mention of them in the description of the law, hence *lèse-majesté* should not be in function. Secondly, the prosecution under Article 14 paragraph (3) of Computer Crime Act B.E. 2560 which concerns with cybercrimes relating to terrorism, indicates that mockery of the royal pet dog is an equal offense of terrorism against national security. Lastly, sharing of infographics which exposed the line of corruption surrounding the construction of the park, although supposed to be morally good contribution against corruption, became an act of sedition in the eyes of the state.

Another interesting case of *lèse-majesté* in Thailand is the arrest of Jatupat Boonpattaraksa, also known as Pai Dao Din in 2016. Jatupat was charged under Article 112 and Computer Crime Act after sharing a bibliography of King Vajiralongkorn published by BBC on his personal Facebook timeline (The International Federation for Human Rights, 2017, p.19). His release in 2019 was endorsed by the King after the passing of Royal Amnesty Decree B.E. 2562 (2019).

As of in the entire 2019, there was no report cases of prosecution and arrest under *lèse-majesté*. Instead, Article 116 of the Penal Code and Computer Crime Act both have been used excessively by the regime (Amnesty International, 2020, p.15 - 16).

4.5 Prayut Chan-O-Cha’s Royal Nationalism

The rationale behind Prayut’s entrance to premiership as the leader of NCPO in 2014 was straightforward; to end the bloody conflict between royalists ‘PDRC’ and the liberalists ‘the Red Shirts’, establish peace and unify Thai people after a decade of political polarisation. The people who wished to reform the corruptions that infested inside Thai political environment, welcomed Prayut Chan-O-Cha with immense confidence, that the premier is the right man at the right time clean the dirt which the PDRC claimed as ‘Thaksin Regime’ have left behind.

On the NCPO's Announcement No.1 regarding the Seizure of Administrative Power in 2014, apart from asserting the reasonings of the coup, for instance, to stop the killings and protect the safety of the state and private properties, in the process, also declared their unbreakable allegiance to protect and worship the monarch (NCPO's Announcement No.1/2557, 2014). NCPO was true to their devotion to the monarch right until its dissolution prior to the 2019 general election.

According to Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, an estimated number of 138 people were charged under Article 112 between 2014 to 2017 (Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, 2017, p.5 - 6). Around 55 of 93 cases were conducted under the military court system in Bangkok and others in the provincial military courts. Under the legitimacy of martial law between 2014 to 2015, the military court assumed jurisdiction to adjudicate criminal offences concerning the monarch and offences against national security from Article 113 to 118, as well as violations of NCPO's orders (Surangrat, 2014, p.1). Punishments regarding lèse-majesté under the military court system were considered more severe than civilian court (Layers' Rights Watch Canada, 2015, p.7). For instance, Siraphop Kornaroot, a writer and blogger under alias 'Roongsira' was arrested for posting poems and articles on his blog, criticising NCPO and the injustice that was happening (Human Rights Council, 2019, p.2). He also published poems that the authority interpreted as being offensive to King Bhumibol. He was charged under Article 14 of Computer Crime Act and lèse-majesté in 2014, while his first trial on November 13 2014, was banned from the public hearing by the direct order of the Bangkok Military Court (Human Rights Council, 2019, p.5). Siraphop's trial never reached to the verdict due to the consecutive delays by the Military Court until his release in 2019 through King Vajiralongkorn's endorsement of the Royal Amnesty Decree B.E. 2562.

Since Prayut Chan-O-Cha assumed premiership following the coup in 2014, there has been a consecutive increase to the budget surrounding the monarch. In 2015, the budget for organising mass events to worship and preserve the sovereignty of the monarch under the Office of Secretariat of the Prime Minister was 5,561,835,800 baht (Budget Expenditure Act B.E. 2558, 2015, p.3). An approximately of 1,746 million baht more than the budget under Yingluck Shinawatra's administration in 2014 (Budget Expenditure Act B.E. 2557, 2014, p.3). Prayut's regime increased the budget for the Bureau of the Royal Household, the royal office responsible for managing the royal affairs as well as the royal treasuries, to 3,327,055,300 baht in 2015, around a

hundred million baht more than the previous year (Budget Expenditure Act B.E. 2558, 2015, p.90).

In 2017, Prayut Chan-O-Cha passed a bill which increased the king's power by allowing the king to personally manage royal servants, serving officials and royal affairs at his will (Royal Service Administration Act B.E. 2560, 2017, p. 1 - 2). It was also highlighted that the revenue generated through royal affairs is no longer categorised as State Revenue. In Article 7 of the Royal Service Administration Act B.E. 2560, transferred the state officials under the Bureau of the Royal Household, Office of the Royal Police, Royal Thai Aide-de-Camp and Royal Security Command of the Ministry of Defence to royal officials, whereby the king possess a direct chain of command which excluded the parliament's participation entirely (Royal Service Administration Act B.E. 2560, 2017, p.2 - 3). The striking significance of this Act towards the establishment of royal nationalism was the expansion of the royal power that allowed the king to personally assert dominance over the citizens and remain a distance from the parliament to shelter the monarch from possible mass resistance and maintain the network monarchy.

These are some of the evidence of Prayut Chan-O-Cha's attempts to establish, maintain and perhaps aggravate royal nationalism since his succession to power. The following chapter will focus on the extensive examination and analysis of his methods of reusing 'Anti-Communist' sentiment to create royal nationalism.

Chapter 5

Modern Communist Ghost Under Prayut Chan-O-Cha's Premiership

This chapter shall examine how Communist Ghost discourse has been adopted by Prayut's regime to strengthen royal nationalism during his premiership from 2014 to 2020. The analysis of the items will be organised in a chronological order to better understand the process of creating royal nationalism through anti-Communist sentiment.

As stated earlier in Chapter 1, the writer framed the discussion points of each item into four perspectives that the writer believes to be essential aspects in the conducts of Communist Ghost discourse by Prayut's regime. The perspectives are as below:

- Portray the regime as the monarch's guardian
- Legitimise intimidation and violence against the oppressors and the critics
- Favour the monarchy's power
- Enforce royal nationalism

Each item of analysis features at least two of these four dimensions, upon which the writer shall use theories to form an analytical framework. Also, the political contexts during the time that each item was created will be briefly elaborated for the readers to have a better understanding of the reasoning behind each of them. Lastly, the writer shall make the connection between the materials and make a final analysis in conclusion.

The selected materials were produced by Prayut Chan-O-Cha's regime, which contains the messages concerning dehumanisation of the regime's opposition from 2014 to 2020. The writer aims to focus the analysis solely on the government produced materials. By doing this, the analysis would be concentrated on the regime's methods to strengthen royalist nationalist in Thailand by projecting anti-otherness sentiment, which Communism has been used to rationalise. The materials are as follows:

	Name of the material	Year
1	Category 1: The Protection and Devotion of the Monarchy of The Cabinet's Policy Statements B.E. 2557 (2014)	2014
2	<i>Soo Phuer Pan Din</i> (Fight for the Nation) a patriotic song composed by Prayut Chan-O-Cha	2018
3	Royal Thai Army Chief Apirat Kongsompong's speech (on October 11, 2019)	2019
4	Announcement of Emergency Decree in Bangkok Metropolitan (on October 15, 2020)	2020
5	Prayut Chan-O-Cha's speech (on October 15, 2020)	2020
6	Prime Minister's Statement on November 19, B.E. 2563	2020

5.1 Category 1: The Protection and Devotion of the Monarchy of The Cabinet's Policy Statement B.E. 2557 (2014)

Background

When NCPO seized administrative power from Yingluck Shinawatra on May 22 2014, the instant reaction from the coup was the abolition of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E.2550 (NCPO's Announcement No.5/2557, 2014). It was replaced with martial law and the Interim Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2557, which concentrated administrative power amongst the members of the coup, in particular, General Prayut Chan-O-Cha as the prime minister of Thailand.

As stated in the Interim Constitution, the seizure of power and the creation of administrative hegemony were necessary to quickly unify the people after months of political polarisation, improve the economy and re-establish the security of the nation before passing on to the following civilian administration (The Interim Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2557, 2014, p.2).

The National Assembly of Thailand, and the entire parliamentary system at the time were already dissolved following Yingluck Shinawatra's resignation. Hence, NCPO needed an interim government to properly establish peace, resolve existing social and political issues and to regain international confidence, and ultimately authorise Prayut Chan-O-Cha's legitimacy as the prime minister of Thailand.

National Legislative Assembly (NLA) was established and acted as the House of Representatives of Thailand, Senate of Thailand and National Assembly of Thailand

under the legitimacy of Article 6 of The Interim Constitution of Thailand B.E. 2557 (2014, p.3). The 220 members of NLA were personally appointed by NCPO to formally establish the oligarchy rule to better govern the country to establish ‘peace and unity’.

The Cabinet’s Policy Statement was given by Prayut Chan-O-Cha as the leader of NCPO and the Prime Minister of Thailand to NLA on September 12, 2014. The 23 pages of the statement consist of 11 categories of governing policy under NCPO’s rule until the general election. According to the statement, the policies were modelled after the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), a wisdom which educates the people to spend sufficiently and prudently in relevance to their earning to strengthen financial and life security (The Cabinet’s Policy Statement, 2014, p.2).

The Content

‘1. Protection and Devotion of the Monarchy

The monarchy as the essential component to the democratic governance according to the customs of Thai bureaucracy. The government holds utmost responsibilities to worship and protect the sovereignty with loyalty. By using legal procedures, sociopsychological tactics, communication and information technology upon those who acts impulsively and hostilely against the national symbol, without considering the sensitivity and integrity of the majority of the population. As well as spreading truth regarding the monarchy and the royal development projects, in the meantime, thoroughly support the monarch’s ongoing projects to the public... (The Cabinet’s Policy Statement, 2014, p.3).’

Discussion

The concept of nationalism according to Smith’s ethno-symbolism which implies ‘the role of using symbolic resources in motivating ideologies and collective actions’ (Smith, 2009, p.16) would be an appropriate framework in the attempt to understand Prayut’s promotion of royalist nationalist ideology as seen in the Policy Statement.

The sentence ‘By using legal procedures, sociopsychological tactics, communication and information technology upon those who acts impulsively and hostilely against the national symbol, without considering the sensitivity and integrity of the majority of the population’, signifies that the regime represents the majority of

Thai people that worship the monarch as the national symbol. Meanwhile, the people that the regime claimed to have ‘acted impulsively and hostilely against the monarch’ are portrayed as opposed to ideal Thai people, that the regime perceives to be royalists. The premier wanted to use the symbolism of the monarch as the unifying figure of Thainess for supporting his position of being the guardian of the sacred monarch as well as the nation to strengthen his legitimacy. To properly become a monarch’s guardian, he needed an enemy to justify his reasons to stay in power. Anyone who defames the national symbol that is the monarch would be treated as a national enemy.

The attachment of royalism to Thai nationalism by Prayut’s regime as seen in the Policy Statement is not new in Thai nationalist discourse, but rather adapted to fit with the current political context. The monarch has always existed as the sovereign in every phase of Thai historical periods, but their portrayal as the unifying figure of Thailand as a nation-state had only been romanticised since the mid 1950s during Sarit Thanarat and Thanom Kittikachorn’s premierships. Royalist nationalist discourse was promoted and sustained through strict law enforcement. To achieved royalist sentiment, perception towards Communism was manufactured to represent the otherness of Thailand. In the Article 3 of Anti-Communist Act B.E 2495 (1952), suggests that one of the Communism activities involve ‘putting an end to Democratic form of Government with the King as Head of State’ signifying that Communism’s goal is the destruction of the monarch entirely (p.2). Thanom Kittikachorn enforced even more aggressive anti-Communist countermeasures as seen in the Second Amendment of the Anti-Communist Act B.E. 2512 (1969). Article 20 of the Second Amendment provided the officials and the police within ‘Communist infiltrated areas’ the authority to search and arrest the alleged Communists at any given place and time (p.174). Such enforcement was also supplemented by the Penal Code of Thailand under the Offense Against the Monarchy.

It was possible to make Communism a real enemy in the 70s because the political contexts allowed to do so. The threat was real; the armed struggle was adopted to take control of Thailand, like what Mao did in China. Hence, Anti-Communist Acts can be interpreted as the official outcome of the transformation of Communism from a political ideology to an evil cult against Thailand.

However, Prayut could no longer use Communism as the enemy because the insurgency was abolished long before 2014. The people would not be easily convinced that Communist’s plot against the monarch truly exists. Furthermore, the Anti-

Communist Act had already been revoked in 2000, meaning Communist activities could no longer be prosecuted as criminal offences according to the law. But the people must be made believed in the existing conspiracies against the monarch and the nation, so the regime could legitimise prosecutions and arrests against their critics.

To achieve this, the regime simply had to intensify the orthodox narrative concerning the monarch as the pillar of Thai nation, and that any threats against the royal family would endanger the security of the nation. This has been made extremely clear in the penal code of Thailand, and has been deeply rooted within Thai people's minds since Sarit's regime in the mid 1950s. Simply speaking, or any expressions against the monarch would be declared as an act of treason against the throne, which is an action equivalent to the Communist insurgents in the 70s. This way, Thai people could become actively and consciously aware of such a threat without a direct mention of Communism, hence the 'Ghost' has been created.

We must keep in mind that this Policy Statement was given right at the beginning of Prayut's premiership, during which he had to legitimise his leadership following the military coup. The political enemy, according to NCPO during this time was not clearly specified as to who they truly are, except the vague descriptions of 'those acting impulsively and hostilely against the monarch.' However, the symbolism of the sacred monarch was used to signify the major characteristic of the enemy. Though, the writer believes that the significance of the Policy Statement is not about informing who the regime's enemy is. But it conveys the regime's visions of governing Thailand, and protecting the monarch from verbal and physical harms was their responsibility on behalf of the nation. Lastly, the Policy Statement can be perceived as the beginning of the process of the creation of the national enemy, which shall become clearer later in Prayut's premiership.

5.2 *Soo Phuer Pan Din* (Fight for the Nation) a patriotic song composed by Prayut Chan-O-Cha (2018)

Background

One of Prayut Chan-O-Cha's notable outputs as a Prime Minister of Thailand was the multiple releases of his self-composed patriotic songs. His first release was in 2014 with the song 'Returning Happiness to Thailand' which the lyrics concentrate on expressing the regime's promise to lead the nation out of the existing conflict, as well

as demanding the people to be patient of the regime's work to unify the country from political polarisation. The song features some lines, for instance:

All we ask of you is to trust and have faith in us
The land will be good soon
Let us return happiness to you, the people (Campbell, 2014).

Prayut released 10 singles throughout his premiership (Voice TV, 2019). The patriotic songs written by Prayut tend to convey the messages of national unity, patriotic sentiment, militarism and royalism. For instance, his latest release in 2019 'Thai March is Thai' which encourage loyalty to the monarch and that we should take pride in having the King as the heart of Thailand. Part of the lyrics goes:

We have Nation, His Majesty and Religion
Long prospered amongst the land and sky
Ancestors sacrificed their lives to protect the nation
Express our pride to the world (Nation TV, 2019).

One single, in particular, focuses on Prayut's resilience to criticism from the ungrateful citizens, expresses the commitment for the betterment of Thailand and directly antagonise the critics. The song '*Soo Phuer Pan Din*' or Fight for the Nation will be analysed in this section.

The Content

'*Soo Phuer Pan Din*' or Fight for the Nation – Lyrics composed by General Prayut Chan-O-Cha:

I dedicated myself for the nation
Yet they criticise
Everyday exhausted, had to keep it for myself
Because the sound of my heart tells me to keep fighting for the nation
* The way you look at me, my heart shall not falter
I shall not abandon you

** I have hope, that tomorrow will be better

What we have been aiming for since the day we started, holding hands together

Look forth with heart, with truth, we will see that it will be better

*** Pray to the sky and land to protect Thailand

One day the enemy will lose

Those who are lost, be awoken to the light

To join us, for our nation.

No longer far, look forward...everyday...shall be better (BBC News Thai, 2018).'

Discussion

With regards to the popularity of the song in the country, '*Soo Phuer Pan Din*' did not reach the level of Prayut's first single '*Keun Kwam Sook Hai Prathet Thai*' or Returning Happiness to Thailand. However, regardless of its popularity amongst the citizens, the lyrics itself carries an interesting patriotic sentiment that the premier wished to express to the public.

This song was released in 2018, the time when '*Pak Anakod Mai*' or Future Forward Party, the new political party began to receive immense support from youth, first-voters, young adults, Red Shirts and those who support democracies. Future Forward Party (FFP) has been portrayed by the royalists and the conservatives as republican party, as the direct threat to the Democratic form of Government with the King as Head of State, and the enemy of the ruling military, elites and the monarchy. The rationale behind the republican portrayal of FFP was due to their consistency to the criticism against the military ruling throughout the years. FFP was consistent to the ideas of anti-military ruling and monarchical reform, the sentiment which became popular amongst young people after the coronation of King Vajiralongkorn. FFP represented the victims of the regime's incompetency, suppression and harassment, hence the party used their political status to be the voice of those people to criticise Prayut's premiership.

The first verse of the song that goes 'I dedicated myself for the nation, yet they criticise' conveys a notion which refers the critics as being so blinded that they are unable to notice Prayut's dedication to prosper Thailand. Throughout the song, the

lyrics reflect the premier's emotion of feeling that has been hurt by criticism but has to remain composed because of his love for Thailand and that he cannot abandon his supporters behind.

Meanwhile, the last verse of the song blatantly antagonises those criticised as the enemies. The verse goes 'Pray to the sky and land to protect Thailand. One day the enemy will lose. Those who are lost, be awoken to the light. To join us, for our nation.' The enemy, according to the verse, obviously represents the critics of the regime. Interestingly, the song does not directly antagonise the critics for being 'Communists' or for being supportive of opposing political polity. Rather they were framed as the enemies solely for criticising the regime's ruling. In the song, Prayut specifically used the word '*Lhong Tarnng*' or 'Lost' to conceptualise the character of the regime's opposition. Prayut intended to express his hope that one day these 'Lost' people shall be awakened from their deep slumber and return to the light that is the positive direction that Prayut's regime has been progressing Thailand towards to.

Such portrayal of the critics as the enemy aligns with the production of Communist Ghosts in the 70s. The level of severity and violence are different, but the meaning of such representation remains. The university students who protested against Thanom's regime and were disobedient to the military would be framed to be the enemies of Thailand. Patriotic songs were heavily used during the 70s, a tactic which the writer believes Prayut adopted from. A notable anti-Communist song as a part of the collection of Thai patriotic song is '*Nhak Pan Din*' or Scum of the Earth. The song was released in 1975, during the height of Communist insurgency in Thailand. The example of the verses in the song is the following:

Whoever use Thai name, and their appearance seems Thai
They live on the King's golden land, yet they seek to destroy
Whoever sees Thai as slave, demeans the Thai race
Yet they depended and benefited from Thai people
And insult Thai people as their slaves
Scum of earth +1, these people are scums of the earth (Thairath, 2010).

During the 70s, the Communist threat was real, as they were armed and violently fought against the Thai government. However, the counterinsurgency by the ruling elites in the 70s also accused the university students who were protesting against

dictatorship as Communist supporters, even if the students were not part of the insurgency. Those who oppose the regime became ‘bad citizens’ in contrast to the ‘good citizens’ who were obedient to the ruling elites. This interpretation, thus is not too far-fetched from the context of the lyrics in *Soo Phue Pan Din*, which represents the opposition of being ‘Lost.’

Although *Soo Phue Pan Din* does not directly signify the enemy as a threat to the monarch, it conveys the message of what kind of people the regime sees as the enemy. Anyone who criticises the regime would be treated as the political enemy that hinders Thailand’s development under the guidance of Prayut Chan-O-Cha. The claim is similar to the Communist allegation against the dictator’s opposition in 1976, Thailand.

5.3 Royal Thai Army Chief Apirat Kongsompong’s speech on October 11 2019

Background

The significance of the speech made by the then Commander in Chief of RTA, Apirat Kongsompong was that it was the first time that the government official outright assumed the existence of the Communist’s conspiracies against the sovereign. Communist Ghosts from the 70s had been brought back to frame and accuse the regime’s political oppositions, as well as the critics for propagating anti-monarchy sentiments.

During the time of the speech in October 2019, Prayut Chan-O-Cha as the leader of Palang Pracharat Party, the embodiment of NCPO, had already won the general election despite the party having won fewer lower house seats than Phue Thai Party. Prayut’s victory has been questioned by the oppositions, critics and scholars nationwide, for instance, the 2016 Constitution which the military regime allowed the NCPO’s appointed 250 senators to vote in the election (Ellis-Petersen, 2019). Although Phue Thai Party won the most lower house seats, Sudarat Keyuraphan lost the election, because the 250 senators secured votes for Palang Pracharat Party. The election sparked public unrest, especially among the democratic and anti-NCPO activists. Nevertheless, the parliamentary system eventually returned to the country after 5 years of military rule.

Another important political event during the time was the court hearing of the popular Future Forward Party’s leader, Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, for possessing assets in a media company (Peck & Tassanee, 2019). The court ruled that Thanathorn be ousted from the parliament seat. The court’s verdict caused a

widespread outcry among Future Forward Party's supports and pro-democracy activists, which ignited numerous anti-government gatherings in Bangkok.

The one-and-a-half-hour speech by the Commander in Chief was delivered under the theme 'Our Territory upon National Security Perspective,' at the Royal Thai Army Headquarters in Bangkok. The speech features various points ranging from the role of the military in maintaining national order, the importance of the monarch in protecting Thailand from European colonisers in the past, the chief's military background, the active Communist's conspiracies against the security of Thailand, and the already happening 'hybrid-warfare' with Communist ideology.

Discussion

As the writer has already elaborated, Communism has been portrayed in Thailand as the enemy of the monarch, due to the classless stance of socialist ideology, as opposed to the sacred traditional Thai style social hierarchy, with the King at the top. For the royalists, especially the military would sacrifice their lives on behalf of the King, they would do anything possible to safeguard the sovereign that they perceive as an equivalent to the nation. The growing anti-military sentiment after the 2014 military coup, particularly the growing influence of Future Forward Party among younger generations since 2018 became the cause to the regime's reinforcement of royalist nationalist ideology to have more people support their political legitimacy.

The Army Chief, Apirat's speech on October 11, 2019 can be perceived in two different ways: First, as a method of declaring 'psychological warfare' against the regime's oppositions; Second, as a channel for the military and the ruling elites to personally inspire patriotism amongst the royalists and militarists against the growing enemy, the emergence of the new Communist insurgents.

The entire one-and-a-half-hour speech is packed of royalist nationalist ideology. Apirat highlighted the stories of Chakri Dynasty in protecting Siam/Thailand from European colonisers and neighbouring kingdoms during the first 20 minutes of the speech. The past Kings' heroism and intelligence were supported by the stories of courageous soldiers with the King as the commander of the Royal Thai Army against Communist insurgency in the 70s. These narratives were used to glorify militarism and monarchism, as well as maintain the evil portrayal of Communism. The regime acknowledged the decline of royalism that had begun since King Vajiralongkorn's coronation in 2016, due to the King's scandalous lifestyle during his reign. Perhaps

the military saw such decline as the weakening of Thai royal nationalism, which put national security at risk of mass resistance against the monarch and the nation. The military's attempts to restore the loyalty to the throne through the creation of the national enemy is clearly distinct in the following lines:

Minute 25.10: The monarchy, military and the people are inseparable. In the past, the King fought on the elephant alongside the soldiers in the field. The soldiers were civilians, men and women who volunteered their services and lives for the king.

Minute 26.08: During the counterinsurgency period against Communism in B.E. 2519 (1976). On November 5, King Rama 10, then a captain of Royal Thai Army and the Crown Prince made a royal visit to Dan Sai district in Loey Province to personally participated in the counterinsurgency. He slept and ate like an ordinary soldier. His presence was a huge inspiration to all of us. There were many more military operations until B.E. 2531 (1988), when Communist Party of Thailand finally surrendered, resulted in the end of Communist insurgency era. But do not forget. It is not yet over. The ideology still exists inside the heads of some people.

The Army Chief started off by affirming the unbreakable relations amongst the monarch, military and the civilians. He claimed that Thailand would not have maintained sovereignty as we are today, without the courage of the past Kings who had led the armies on the elephant's back against the enemy's invasions. The writer sees this expression as a way of attaching the monarch to every day's lives of Thai people. The land that we are living in, the language that we are speaking and liberty that we are having are now ours because of the monarchy's leadership, as well as the valour of our national ancestors who were the soldiers that fought alongside the Kings. Due to the immense criticism against King Vajiralongkorn since long before the coronation, Apirat's speech contains the glorification of the unpopular King, which highlighted by his attendance to the counterinsurgency in 1976. He did not thoroughly describe the then Crown Prince's participation in the military operation in detail, but assimilated his actions to ordinary soldiers. This signalled how the then Crown Prince, who has been criticised for being the richest King in the world ever since the

coronation, is in fact, a nobleman who at the time of crisis, would willingly and personally participate with the commoners to resolve the situation. Even so, despite the monarch's elitism and living-divinity status, he may eat, sleep and live a humble life like any of the commoners.

At around the Minute 27 of the speech, Apirat made an accusation that Communist ideology had persisted the military and political offences in the 70s. The anti-monarchy sentiment as the core essence of Communism still exists, despite their surrender in 1988. To arouse royal nationalism, Apirat had to make connections between Prayut's critics and political opposition with Communism, to highlight the regime's political legitimacy as the guardian of the monarch, and as the faithful advocates of royalism. 'It is not yet over,' he said. The writer believes that the Army Chief's quote was not merely an accusation against the regime's oppressors. Apirat, on behalf of the military and the royalists, truly believed in the so-called Communist's plots to overthrow the monarchy, and replace the sovereign.

He claimed that the Communist ideology still existed inside the minds of some people. These people are the Communists that survived the counterinsurgency, whom the Army Chief hinted that they now became scholars and politicians.

Minute 23.30: Is Mr. Sonthiyan here? You may speak with him on this matter. He was once blinded, but he then realised how evil Communist ideology was. Especially what kind of people the ideology teaches the followers to become. He had a change of heart after such realisation. But there are many of those who hasn't changed. They have transformed into politicians and scholars. Their brains are deeply rooted with Communist ideology like computer chips.

Mr. Sonthiyan was one of the members of Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), who fled to the forest during the military offence against Communism in the 70s. He was one of the audiences at the conference, and Apirat used him as an example of a once blinded man becoming enlightened of the mercifulness of the monarch. He claimed that behind the political movements, especially the youth movements against the regime have been conspired by the Communists politicians and scholars. The evil Communists have brainwashed young people to go against the monarch and the government.

The final half an hour of the speech, Apirat concentrated on the existing threats to national security, which he called Hybrid-Warfare against Thailand. There are six elements to the ongoing Hybrid-Warfare that the so-called Communist initiated against the nation. The most interesting parts of such accusation in his explanation of the fifth element of Hybrid-Warfare called 'Information Warfare Propaganda' quoted as follows:

Minute 60.09: Fifth, perhaps the most urgent issue in Thailand, Information warfare propaganda. I've said earlier that there are many Communists who haven't had a change of heart like Mr. Sonthiyan, and still maintain the aspiration to abolish the monarchy, and transform Thailand to become a Communist nation. How old are these people? Maybe they are the same age as me. But the older people in their mid 70s, may not be physically active, but they are the masterminds. Through being scholars and professors, they transmit their ideology to the younger generations. Being scholars and professors are not wrong. But if you only teach what you are supposed to teach, and refrain from spreading such wrongful ideology to your students repetitively, eventually they will obey you.

You have not followed your ethics. This is the combination between the traditional Communist ideology and far-left professors who studied in the countries that once attempt to colonise Thailand, spreading fake news and propaganda on social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

During this part of the speech, Apirat clearly criticises the scholars and professors who criticise militarism and monarchism of being unethical, and the masterminds of inciting the youths into protesting against the regime. The writer may be able to assume that the scholars that Apirat vaguely described are those who were accused of lèse-majesté and Article 116 of the Penal Code, and are now seeking asylum abroad. The prominent scholars that could be categorised under the Army Chief's accusation are Somsak Jeamteerasakul and Pavin Chachavalpongpun, both of whom have been the main vocals amongst the liberals against militarism and lèse-majesté, as well as being the advocacies of Thai democracy. Additionally, professors and scholars such as Thongchai Winichakul, Charnvit Kasetsiri, Prajak Kongkirati and Puangthong

Pawagapan who have been expressive against military rules might be perceived as Communist advocates by the regime as well.

According to the quote, Apirat claimed that these professors and scholars spread wrongful ideology, fake news and propaganda as opposed to the speakers of truth that is the royalist nationalist regime. Perhaps the most atrocious accusation that Apirat made in his speech; he claims that the spread of anti-military and monarchy sentiments among today's youths are the outcome of the cooperation between the Communists and far-left professors who studied in Western countries that had once attempted to colonise Thailand. Here is a notion of threat from outside of the country attached to Communist allegations against these scholars and professors, for advocating evil foreign ideology upon the naïve students and citizens. Communism is portrayed as a villainous cult, and the regime and the Royal Thai Army act as the guardian of the border of Thainess against the external threat.

In the conclusion of the speech, Apirat asked the audience on what kind of person they wish to have to resolve the existing issues concerning national security. The interesting aspect of the final part of the speech is that it is full of descriptions of the regime's political enemies. Ranging from 'the Communist scholars, selfish politicians and businesspeople.' The businesspeople that the Army Chief brought up may be a reference to the popular former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra who was ousted in 2008 following the mass Yellow Shirts protest due to the corruption allegation. Another businessperson might be the popular Future Forward Party's leader, Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, who has been the major political opponent of Prayut Chan-O-Cha's regime since 2018. Thaksin Shinawatra has been portrayed by the royalists as the corrupted figure of anti-monarchy and anti-nation sentiment, based on his populist policies and business activities with foreign conglomerates. Hence, he has been perceived as a selfish businessperson who would exploit the nation for self-benefits, which is different from the military that favour national interests.

At one point of the conclusion, Apirat antagonised 'Those who likes the number 2475' as the political enemies. The number 2475 signifies the Buddhist calendar year in which Khana Ratsadon or People's Party successfully overthrew absolute monarchy. The symbolism of 2475 (1932) is split into two major perceptions. For the liberals, it was the beginning of democracy. Meanwhile, for the royalists, 2475 is the symbol of treason against the throne, and the peak of anti-monarchy sentiment. Apirat argued that those who glorify Siamese Revolution B.E. 2475 (1932) are the people that want to

overthrow King Vajiralongkorn, with the aspiration which aligned with Communist ideology in the 1970s. Thus this part of the speech can be understood as an attempt for the military to glorify themselves as the right leader to stabilise public order from decades of political polarisation, caused by the selfish and corrupted businesspeople, politicians and scholars.

The writer believes that the entire speech is about declaring Cold War against the new wave of evil Communists who have been opposing against militarism and monarchism, under the masterminds of the surviving Communist insurgents from the 70s. Regardless of being factually accurate or not in terms of the anti-monarchy allegation made personally by the Commander-in-chief, the body and the conscious of the national enemy from the 70s had officially made its second introduction on October 11, 2019, to take over Thai sovereignty.

5.4 Declaration of Emergency Decree in Bangkok Metropolitan on October 15, 2020

Background

Since the court's dissolution of Future Forward Party in February 2020 and escalated by the news of the forced disappearance of pro-democratic activist, Wanchalerm Satsaksit and financial crisis caused by COVID-19 pandemic, a coalition of anti-government and pro-democracy advocates has been going against Prayut Chan-O-Cha's regime (Rasheed, 2020). The coalition came together under the name 'Khana Ratsadon B.E. 2563' the embodiment of the People's Party that founded democracy after overthrown absolutism. The new Khana Ratsadon proposed three demands to the government: First, Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha's resignation; Second, amendment of the Constitution and lastly, monarchical reform (Blake & Peck, 2020). However, the regime and the royalists perceive the three demands as an approach to eventually overthrow the monarchy.

Initially, the regime responded with toughening the martial law, which at the time had already been in power to control the spread of coronavirus and restrict mass gatherings (Macan-Markar, 2020). Followed by the monarch's massive amount of spending for his personal affairs in Germany, as the richest King in the world, the country faces financial and unemployment crisis from the spread of coronavirus (Kocha & Regan, 2020).

The only possible response for Khana Ratsadon against the ignorant regime was to intensify the protest, which led to a major mass protest on October 14, 2020, at the Democracy Monument on Ratchadamnoen Avenue in Bangkok. The choice of protesting on October 14 was to celebrate the 47-year anniversary of the Popular Uprising October 14, 1973, because of the similar political contexts between the 70s and 2020 Thailand.

During the ongoing protest on October 14, 2020, an unexpected royal motorcade carrying Queen Suthida and the Crown Prince Dipangkorn Rasmijoti intentionally passed through the protestors (Bangkok Post, 2020). The government claimed that the demonstrators disrupted royal motorcade, and threatened the security of the Queen and the Crown Prince; it was followed by the declaration of state of emergency in Bangkok Metropolitan on October 15, 2020 (Sky News, 2020).

The Content

Declaration of state of emergency in Bangkok Metropolitan

Due to the unlawful mass gatherings and seditions, which have been organised by many different groups in Bangkok Metropolitan by using numerous approaches to cause widespread disturbance and jeopardised public order. For instance, the disruption against the royal motorcade. This has led to the assumption that there were actions that threaten national security, and put public and private properties in danger. The agitated mass gatherings are not under the approval of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, moreover, the gatherings have directly violated the preventive measure against the spread of coronavirus 2019, that will have further consequences to the national economy, which is already in a fragile condition. An urgent response is needed to efficiently resolve the situation in a timely manner according to the law.

Under the legitimacy of Article 5 and Article 11 of the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situation B.E. 2548; hereby, the Prime Minister has now declared a state of emergency in Bangkok Metropolitan.

Begins from 15 October B.E. 2563 (2020) at 04.00 onwards

Announced on 15 October B.E. 2563

General Prayut Chan-O-Cha

Prime Minister

(Declaration of state of emergency in Bangkok Metropolitan, 2020).

Discussion

Whenever a royal motorcade passes by in any street in Thailand, there would be traffic police blocking the traffic at least 5 to 10 minutes prior. However, the procedure on October 14, 2020, was entirely different. The royal motorcade passed through without any notice, leaving the scene as if the protestors were intentionally disrupting the Queen and the Crown Prince. The supposedly peaceful demonstration was portrayed as a barbaric group, that plots against the monarchy by the royalist media.

The symbolism of the threat to the monarchy had been directly used by the regime to arouse royalist nationalist ideology amongst the royalists and sparked anger against the pro-democracy demonstrators. This tactic is an equivalent to the photo of the mocked hanging of a figure that had been edited to resemble the then Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn. The photo was used to eventually legitimise the killings of the alleged Communists in the event of Thammasat University Massacre in 1976.

By claiming that the demonstrators were the side that provoked violence against the beloved monarchy; the regime had the legitimacy to tighten the already strict *lèse-majesté*, and legitimised possible prosecutions, arrests and crackdowns against the protestors.

For the Thai royalists, Prayut's regime acts as a frontline defence against the demonstrators that aspired the destruction of the sacred monarch. The Declaration can also be seen as an official conceptualisation of the national enemy, which in this context are the pro-democracy protestors who threaten the security of the monarch.

The Declaration of State of Emergency, hence, had been used under the legitimacy of the constitution and the law, to directly antagonise and enforce legal actions against the regime's opposers, by which the disruption of the royal motorcade was used to rationalise the order. The monarch became physically involved in the production of the antagonistic interpretation of the demonstrators. The monarch is no longer a unifying symbol, but rather a symbolism of societal polarisation, in a way that is good or bad Thai citizens are separated by the spectrum of loyalty to the throne.

Thereby, following the announcement of the declaration, the creation of the enemy of Thailand, or the enemy of the royalist elites became somewhat completed, as the enemy was no longer a myth in the propaganda like the Army Chief's speech in 2019, but became physically visible in the eyes of the royalists.

5.5 Prayut Chan-O-Cha's Speech on October 16 2020

Background

The enactment of state of emergency in Bangkok on October 15 followed after the royal motorcade alleged blockade and sparked mass criticism on social media against the regime. Many saw the royal motorcade as an instrument to impose harsher laws against the protestors, which resulted in the emergency decree on the following day.

On the morning of October 16, Prayut made a public remark to the press to clarify the rationale of the Declaration of State of Emergency. On the same day, the police began shooting powerful stream of water infused with teargas and other chemical components against the protestors at night, and arrested 22 leaders, and at least 85 protestors were charged for illegal public assembly and some for sedition (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Discussion

According to the premier's remark, martial law was used to restrict public gatherings to contain the spread of coronavirus. The martial law was supposed to be in power for a month or less. But he claimed that the illegal protests had violated preventive measure against the spread of COVID-19; this forced the regime to prolong the martial law, and eventually led to the enactment of state of emergency on October 15, 2020.

Minute 2.25: It is not meant to harass any parties. But you have to understand the current context. Who has been hurt amidst of the ongoing disturbance? The officials have been the one getting hurt. Based on everything that had happened, we came to a conclusion that the situation is no longer normal. Everyone knows about the situation as it has been on the media every day. I ask for your cooperation to stabilise order of this nation. Is that possible or not?

During this part of the remark, Prayut justified the enactment of the emergency decree as well as rationalised warrants and arrests of the protestors by saying that the state officials have been the one that got engaged first. This created a notion that the regime positions itself as the peacekeeper as opposed to the barbaric protestors. This accusation has been reinforced with the pre-existed royalist's narrative that suggests

the pro-democracy protestors are anti-monarchists, as well as being Communist threat against the sovereign. The regime plays a victim role in this conflict with the protestors, which give them a reason to impose harsher laws and punishments against the protestors.

Minute 2.58: Most importantly, I worry about the safety of the innocents. You know who is or who is not innocent. I have assigned the Vice Prime Minister and the Commander of the Royal Thai Police to handle the situation. Remember that we are not using the Public Gathering Acts now, because the martial law covers everything including search and arrest. So, consider my warning. If you violate any law, then legal actions will be used against you like the procedure in any other countries.

Here the premier used the phrase ‘You know who is or who is not innocent’ which obviously implies that the regime is the innocent. From this point on, the regime transformed itself from being defensive to offensive through the legitimacy of the martial law.

Minute 6.33: Dear Thai citizens, please support the government's effort to resolve the situation. For the university students, the caretakers or the parents please take good care of them. I do not want any harmful consequences on them, because we do not know the real intention of hidden figures behind the protest. I think I know who it might be, though they have not yet disclosed their identities to public. So be careful not to be one of the suspects. Okay, don't consider my words as a threat.

Prayut used a notion of being an adult as a superior, being as opposed to the protestors, which mostly consisted of youngsters. He has been aware of the number of teenagers participating in the protest nationwide. Perhaps this is why the regime has been on a more defensive side as the use of force against the protests would harm these students, which would destroy Prayut's legitimacy as a premier in the global stage politics. Hence, this part of the remark is the direct warning to the protestors, especially the minors. Despite the protest's claim of being a leaderless movement, the regime seems to believe that there is a benefactor and a conspiracy supporting the 2020 Khana

Ratsadon's activities. This claim made by the regime is similar to the accusation of the students protesting against Thanom's return in 1976. The mass gathering inside Thammasat University was portrayed as a Communist's sponsored anti-dictatorship protest by the royalist. Connecting to the Army Chief Apirat Kongsompong's claims scholars, professors and politicians have been spreading Communist ideology and anti-monarchy sentiment, as well as being the masterminds behind the protests. We can assume that the hidden figures that Prayut mentioned are these so-called Communist benefactors or the masterminds, who have been meaning to overthrow the government and the monarchy.

Minute 14: Remember that. Do not be reckless, because everyone may die today or tomorrow. Is there such verse in the praying? We are ready to die at any point in time, through sickness or whatever. We cannot decide our faith. So do not defy the reaper.

At the very end of the remark, Prayut speaks of death in a figurative manner. When it comes to interpretation, we can say that it is a death threat to the protestors saying that they could die, or that the quote is simply to scare the protestors. However, the phrase 'Do not defy the reaper' is the direct threat against the protestors, claiming that he is willing to use force and that in some cases, death may be inevitable in the process.

Although we could not tell if the premier means what he had said surrounding the notion of death, what is clear from the remark alone is that he has become willing to use force and legal actions to suppress the growth of the demonstration, despite the protests being proceeded peacefully and democratically.

5.6 Prime Minister's Statement on November 19, B.E. 2563 (2020)

Background

Infused with rage from the royal motorcade incident, and the constant acts of resistance to the monarch's sovereignty as well as the growth of the movement itself, violence between the democratic protestors and the royalists became inevitable. The government crackdown in the evening of October 16, followed by the premier's direct quote alarming the protestors not to defy the reapers suggested that the royalist shall adopt an offensive stance.

Violence broke off on the street again on November 17, in which the riot police barricaded the road to prevent the protestors from marching to the parliament house. The context of the protest was to pressurise the government to pass the amendment of the constitution. The amendment is called 'iLaw Constitution' which aims to oust military officials from the parliament, abolish the 'NCPO's Twenty Years National Strategy' as well as cancel NCPO's self-amnesty bill following the military coup in 2014 (The Standard, 2020). The draft of the current constitution B.E. 2560 was done solely by the members of NCPO's self-appointed members under the legitimacy of Article 44. Replacing the military's constitution with civilian drafted constitution would ensure the civic participation in politics, the essence of democracy.

The riot polices were shooting chemical infused water against the unarmed protestors, as well as rubber bullets and teargas (Khaosod English, 2020). Roughly 40 people were hospitalised. During the demonstration, a royalist group wearing yellow shirts with Chakri Dynasty's emblem, clashed against the anti-government protestors. The answer to which side first provoked the violence is not known.

At the end of the day, the parliament rejected the civilian's drafted constitution (Thanthong-Knight, 2020). The prolonged political instability and the violence that broke off between the pro-democracy and the royalists, which is expected to become more aggressive and even lethal; had led to the government's decision to impose harsher countermeasure against the demonstration. Hence, the premier released an official statement regarding the resolution to the existing conflict on November 19 to personally address the conflict.

The Content

Prime Minister's Statement

19 November B.E. 2563

In accordance with the recent political unrests, which the government and every department have come together to seek peaceful solutions respectively to the laws, and Democratic form of Government with the King as Head of State.

However, the situation does not seem to get better; despite the government's sincerity towards the resolution of the matter. Through the national security officers who have been working to maintain order, as well as closely and cautiously surveillance the situation accordingly to the

international standard, and placed an utmost importance to the maintenance of national unity and for the betterment of the society.

Today, the situation has not been going in a positive direction, and violence is expecting to become even more aggravated. Possible damages to the nation, the monarch and the security of lives and properties of the citizens shall occur if the situation is left uncontrolled. Thereby, the government together with national security department came to a necessary conclusion to tighten the security procedures, by imposing every possible law and article against the protestors who have committed crimes and violated the livelihood of the society. The prosecution and arrest will be done according to the legal procedure of Thailand, as well as to the international standard.

Yours Faithfully

Discussion

The writer refers to this statement as an official declaration of political warfare against the ruling royalist's enemy. Prayut claimed that the past crackdowns, arrests and harassments were done according to the legitimacy of the law, and that the officials were being rather merciful and fair. He hoped that the aggressive crackdown and harassment would slowly scare the protestors and eventually dissolve the movement entirely, but it did not go as planned.

Referring to the line, 'Possible damages to the nation, the monarch and the security of lives and properties of the citizens shall occur if the situation is left uncontrolled' it is now extremely clear that the regime perceives the protestors of being the cause of the ongoing conflicts, not as a reaction of their incompetency. The prolonging of the movement would eventually harm the very institution that the military sworn to protect and die for, the monarchy. The protest in front of the parliament house on November 17 was the regime's final straw.

Royal nationalism is severely threatened by the demonstration, because the protestors' drafted constitution, which demands to reform the monarchy's power, oust the military and NCPO's influence from the parliament and bring back the true democratic government, had finally reached the parliament. Despite the rejection of the amendment, the protestors have been getting closer to their goals. To delay the inevitable end, the situation forced the regime to choose between being on defence, or become an aggressor. The following line states:

Thereby, the government together with national security department came to a necessary conclusion to tighten the security procedures, by imposing every possible law and article against the protestors who have committed crimes and violated the livelihood of the society.

Prayut Chan-O-Cha has decided to adopt an offensive stance against the protestors. The statement implies the possible use of lèse-majesté of the Penal Code of Thailand, which has been relatively replaced with Computer Crime Act B.E. 2560 (2010), to isolate the royal family's involvement in the prosecution against the monarch's critics.

Two protestors were charged with Article 110 of the Penal Code following the royal motorcade incident on October 14, 2020, the article which criminalises those who plot and act against the security of the monarch would be sentenced to prison for life. The two were eventually released from custody, but the prosecution itself serves as evidence to the regime's willingness to apply such harsh punishment to those who have committed treasons against the throne. Hence, it is no surprise if they were going to impose lèse-majesté against the demonstrators to protect the monarch, and preserve the sacred royal nationalism.

Following the statement, the regime shall treat the protestors as criminals who commit offences against the security of Thailand and the monarch; which can be interpreted as an official declaration of war against the anti-monarchy movement, by painting the opposition as the lawbreakers who can no longer be allowed to challenge the monarch and threaten the public order much longer. Ultimately, the enemy must be stopped, and royalism must endure.

5.7 Overall Discussion

The conduct of Communist Ghost under Prayut Chan-O-Cha's premiership functions on three key features as seen in the materials: 1) to portray the regime as the guardian of the monarch, 2) to dehumanise the opposition and 3) to create public anxiety of the invisible enemy of the throne. These features can be detected across the six selected materials.

Based on the selected materials, the writer comes to the conclusion that the regime's intention behind the crafting of these materials was not to paint the opposition of being actual Communists. Rather, the materials attempt to conceptualise the

opposition's activities and identities of being anti-monarchists. To achieve this, Communism had been used to encourage royalism, and rationalise violence and prosecution against Prayut's opposition. The perseverance of royal nationalism and the monarch are the regime's responsibilities, as well as their political legitimacy, for which they have shown the willingness to use violence against the citizens solely to protect the sovereignty. To analyse this, Anthony Smith's Ethno-Symbolism becomes a useful tool to understand the logic behind the creation of Communist Ghost; as the symbolic elements of the ancient and sacred monarch are clearly visible in all of the six materials to materialise national enemy against the unifying institution of Thailand in order to arouse royalist nationalistic sentiment.

However, it is noticeable that the regime avoided making a direct reference to Communism prior to Apirat's speech in 2019. The term itself had always been a strong word to accuse someone of being the monarch's enemy, which is a severe accusation within Thai society. Without proper expressions or incidents involving anti-monarchy sentiment done by the oppositions, the regime could not baselessly conceptualise them of being Communists. The regime could only indirectly represent their opposition for being the regime's critics to arouse the public anxiety of this invisible enemy against the nation prior to the years before 2019. This so-called invisible enemy is the essence of being a ghost; which will later become the foundation of Communist Ghost discourse that took place during Apirat's speech. We cannot see them physically, but somehow, we become aware of their existence. For instance, *Soo Phue Pan Din*, implied Prayut's critics of the enemies, but no other physical descriptions of the enemy were made within the song, nor did in the Policy Statement. Yet the society became aware of what types of 'behaviours' the regime would be treated as going against the nation and the monarch.

Prayut Chan-O-Cha and his subordinates made sure that criticising the regime would be treated as criticism against Thailand, and in many cases against the monarchy. This is because Prayut's regime claimed that the opposition aspires to overthrow the monarch, and that the regime is the wall that protects the monarch from such enemy. Hence, the monarch's security would be at risk if the regime is no longer in power, particularly if the pro-democracy protestors achieve their demands. Communist Ghosts was then brought back to create the public anxiety against the existence of a national enemy, which disguised as the pro-democracy protestors.

The Army Chief's speech on October 11, 2019, was the army's declaration that the Communist insurgent still exists within the society, and that they are the mastermind behind the mass movements against the regime. The declaration which started off as a conspiracy became official following the royal motorcade incident on October 14, 2020, which the regime used to exemplify the protestor's anti-monarchy sentiment, to arouse royalist nationalist tendency against the new wave of Communism. Following the speech in 2019, we can assume that these Communists were no longer the invisible Ghosts in the eyes of the royalist and the military. The Communist Ghosts has been visualised as the pro-democracy activists, demonstrators, anti-militarism scholars and liberal politicians, who have been demanding monarchical reforms and Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha's resignation. These Ghosts who possess the values that threatening the sacred Thai nationhood must be eliminated, and can no longer be called as Thais.

The success behind the deeply rooted establishment of Thai royal nationalism, hence, lies upon the success of the production of the evil Communists; both under Sarit-Thanom's regime in the 70s and Prayut's regime from 2014. The enemy must always exist against the nation, while the government stands as Thailand's guardian on behalf of the obedient subjects of the monarch. This is because the government and the monarch would ultimately lose decades of political and spiritual legitimacy over the population if royalist nationalist ideology fails to retain the people's adoration; especially with the younger generations that are becoming more resistant to the monarchical and military rule. Royalism is declining in Thailand together with the growth in numbers of dissident civilians; the harsher law enforcement Prayut's regime serves as a temporary solution will only escalate the existing political conflict.

Each material had their own objectivity within their respective circumstances, but altogether contributed to the production of the enemy of the monarch and Thailand, the Communist Ghosts. The making of the ghosts by the regime may seem ambiguous to many people, as they offer very little logical evidence, but that is not the functionality of Communist Ghost's discourse; The discourse functions based solely on fabricated and often twisted interpretation of the opposition's democratic demands as anti-monarchy expressions. Yet, regardless of how the result of the political conflict may have become in the end, the new Communist Ghosts have been successfully resurfaced under Prayut Chan-O-Cha's premiership.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

King Chulalongkorn's absolutism placed the foundation to the emergence of a nation that later became known as Thailand. The King positioned the monarch at the very core of the nation, transformed his family into a unifying institution that all Siamese should worship. The conception of the monarch as the pillar of Thainess became increasingly aggravated through the discreet operation of network monarchy, which took place during Sarit Thanarat's regime in the late 1950s. From then on, royal nationalism became a source of political legitimacy for every Prime Minister to uphold. He or she must safeguard the monarch's sovereignty from all kind of threats. Those who have expressed criticisms, or performed acts of disloyalty that may be considered as treasons against the throne would be immediately portrayed and treated as the national traitors.

General Prayut Chan-O-Cha's premiership as well, has been portraying himself as the guardian of the monarch since his succession to power as the leader of NCPO in 2014. For him and his government, the protection of the monarch is an utmost important responsibility, hence the perseverance of royal nationalism has been the central element of the regime's political standpoint, as well as being their source of political legitimacy. To properly become a guardian, there must be the enemy to protect the monarch from. The regime thus, perceives any parties that possess anti-monarchy sentiment, propose monarchical reforms or even gossip about the royal family as the traitors. And the regime would always be the frontline defence of the monarch on behalf of the entire Thai royalists.

During the first two years, the regime's policy on royal nationalism had not been clear, despite having many criminal cases relating to *lèse-majesté* against the civilians at the time. The writer perceives that *lèse-majesté* was not used against those who were the direct threats to neither the monarchy nor the nation, but it was used as a powerful weapon to silence and harass the regime's critics. *Lèse-majesté* was heavily fetishised. While the law is supposed to maintain the monarch as the unifying institution of Thailand, the abuses of *lèse-majesté* against simply anyone have in fact polarised the nation, and ultimately led to the downfall of the monarch's sovereignty.

The evidence became clear following the death of the well-beloved King Bhumibol in 2016. When the late king's son, Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn was announced the direct successor to the throne, the people began speaking and often times gossiping about him. Also, both domestic and international media began publishing his biography relating to his lavish lifestyle and some focused on his military achievements, and some told personal stories between him and his late father. It is safe to assume the obvious that Prayut's regime has always been aware of the King's fragile popularity amongst the general public apart from the royalists and worshippers of the late King Bhumibol. Hence, the regime had to be the caretaker, or the commander of the network monarchy to promote King Vajiralongkorn's image, in order to restore the people's respect to the new King similarly to how the people worship his late father.

To arouse royal nationalism and the love for the new King, the regime applied tactics of having a direct enemy to the throne, which are identical to the production of the evil enemy against the anti-Communist insurgents in the 70s. The regime's oppositions and critics had been tied together with the pre-existed symbolism of Communist Ghosts. The ghosts have been brought back to signify the very existence of the enemies conspiring against the monarch, their guardian and eventually Thailand.

The limitation of this thesis is the lack of access to legal documents relating to *lèse-majesté* and criminal offenses against the state. Having access to such documents would ensure the more validity to the analysis part to confirm the regime's official production of national enemy as the anti-monarchy, as well as an embodiment of Communist insurgency. It seems as if the regime prohibits the public from accessing to such information relating to crimes against the monarch.

The divine symbol of the monarch has been heavily abused through *lèse-majesté* to force imposed royal nationalism. The political enemy produced through legal procedures and government's statements as well as the royal gazettes would only lessen the people's respect to the monarch, and eventually royal nationalism would be perished in the coming future. Love and loyalty are not something that can be achieved through an enforcement, rather must be earned through years of expressing honesty, empathy and wisdom to the people. The protestors have been demanding monarchical reforms, not because they want to overthrow the monarch, but they want to position the monarch as the well-respected institution under the constitution. The monarch must truly be above politics, whereby their sacred symbolism must never be used to favour

and attack anyone. The monarch must become a true unifying figure of Thailand, not as polarising figure as they have always been.

If arousing the mass loyalty to the throne is the regime's goal, then they have done more harm to the monarch rather than protecting them. Creating an enemy is not a solution to the political polarisation in Thailand, and certainly will not make people become more thankful of the monarch, especially when royal symbolism is used to rationalise violence against the opposition.

We must move beyond this endless political cycle, in order to progress Thailand to prosperity and political stability. The regime must express sincerity to listen to both positive and negative criticism. Opposition must be allowed to participate in politics, not be made into a national enemy as what the regime has been doing to achieve peace and unity.

As King Vajiralongkorn once suggested that Thailand is the land of compromise. Personally, I wish to believe the King's words, but so far, Prayut Chan-O-Cha, as the Prime Minister of Thailand has done anything but compromise.

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Appendix

Table 1. Prajak Kongkirati's Kongkirati's binary opposition chart of the symbolic of good citizens between PDRC and the Red Shirt supporters during the 2014 political conflict Thailand (2016, p. 57 - 58)

Characteristics	PDRC	Thaksin's Regime and Red Shirts
Goodness	Good citizens	Bad citizens, Filthy, Despicable
Loyalty to the nation	Loyal, Protective, Nationalist	Traitors, Nation Haters, Anti-Patriotism
Loyalty to Buddhism	Faithful Buddhists	Anti-Buddhism
Loyalty to the monarch	Royalists, Worship the monarch	Anti-Monarchy
Moral and Ethics	Virtuous citizens, Ethical	Unprincipled, Atrocious, Villainous
Good Citizenship	Anti-Corruption, Honest, Hardworking	Thieves, Support corruption, Dishonest, Swindlers
Violence	Peace-loving, Gentle	Blood-thirsters, Murderers, Savage beasts, Cold-hearted
Self-Sacrifice	Sacrifice self-comfort for the nation	Thirst for power, Tyrannical
Nobility	High society, Honourable people	No honour, Low class, Goons, Rioters, Dirt
Quality	High quality civilians	Low quality civilians
Pureness	Clean, High moral, Anti-corruption	Degraded, Guilty, Flawed
Liberty	Freedmen	Slaves to Thaksin's Regimes, Lapdogs, Underlings, Corrupted
Intelligence	Highly literate, Rational	Dumb, Naive, Hillbilly, Peasants

English Translation of Commander in Chief Apirat Kongsompong's Speech on October 11, 2019 (Matichon TV, 2019)

Topic: Our Territory upon National Security Perspective

Min 5.48: Why do we have the military?

According to the Article 52 of the Constitution, the Royal Thai Army has the responsibility to protect the monarchy, preserve the sovereignty of the territory of Thailand, and maintain national order.

Min 6.44: Allow me to briefly explain the history of the territory of the Kingdom of Thailand since even before King Rama 1 of Chakri Dynasty. The territory ranging from Lanna Kingdom in the north. Kelantan, Terengganu and Sai Buri in the south also belonged to Thailand. In the east, near the border of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. In the west, Mueang Ma and Davao in today's Myanmar. This information is available for you students to learn. I'm not sure whether the current curriculum features this historical information or not. Do you youngsters realise how vast our kingdom was?

Min 8.03: Thailand lost territories 14 times in total, started from King Rama 1's reign.

We lost territory twice during King Rama 1's reign. Both of which were Penang to Britain and Davao to Myanmar.

We lost Hà Tiên to Vietnam during King Rama 2's reign.

Twice during King Rama 3, Kyaingtong to Myanmar and Perak State to Britain.

The loss of territories was because the growing influence of the colonisers in the region...

We lost twice during King Rama 4, Xishuangbanna to China, Cambodia and Laos, and six islands to France.

This is fact. This is history. I am not making these up. I simply summarised them, to inform you of how we survived colonisations and who preserved our land.

We lost 6 territories during King Rama 5's reign. Four of them to France. King Chulalongkorn had use his personal treasuries to pay ransom to France in order to

protect Burapha Province, Battambang, Siem Reap and Srisophon from colonisation. Twice to Britain.

Ladies and gentlemen, we may have lost territories many times during King Rama 5's reign by the British and French Empires. But do not forget. Thailand is the only nation in this region that remains independent from colonisation, with an utmost gratitude to the intelligence of the past Thai kings, for protecting our sovereign.

Min 11.00: Lastly the 14th during King Rama 9's reign. We lost Khoa Phra Wihan (or 'Preah Vihear' in Khmer) to Cambodia. This was to avoid engaging in unnecessary warfare with Cambodia. This was followed by King Bhumibol's mercifulness who asserted that we should not be any nation's enemy.

Min 15.05: 'Unless you are willing to pick up a weapon to defend your country. I suggest you to stop criticising those who do' There are so many groups of people who verbally assault and degrade the military and the national security force

Min 19.36: I asked myself 'Why was my father shot? What did he do to get shot?' Here is the answer. To defend Thailand from Communist insurgents in Ratchaburi province. My father was a colonel at the time.

Min 20.15: There was this news sub-headline, saying an estimated of a hundred Communist insurgents seized a village in the east of Thailand, executed two villagers. This happened in B.E. 2515 (1972).

Min 22.50: Thailand hasn't had peace in a very long time. There have been many important military operations in Thailand, and many of the audience here were parts of those operations. For myself, was a part of 'Operation 66/2523,' which eventually forced the insurgents and the blinded to lay down their weapons and surrender...

Is Mr. Sonthiyan here? You may speak with him on this matter. He was blinded, but he then realised how evil Communist ideology was. Especially what kind of people the ideology teaches the followers to become. He had a change of heart after such realisation.

But. There are many of those who hasn't changed. They transformed into politicians and scholars. Their brains are deeply rooted with Communist ideology like computer chips.

Min 25.10: The monarchy, military and the people are inseparable. In the past, the King fought on the elephant, soldiers in the field, and they were civilians, men and women who volunteered their services and lives for the king.

Min 26.08: During the counterinsurgency against Communism in B.E. 2519 (1976) On November 5 1976, King Rama 10, then a captain in Royal Thai Army and the Crown Prince made a royal visit to Dan Sai district in Loey Province to personally participated in the counterinsurgency. He slept and ate like an ordinary soldier. His presence was a huge inspiration to all of us. There were many more military operations until B.E. 2531, when Communist Party of Thailand finally surrendered, resulted in the end of Communist insurgency era.

But do not forget. It is not yet over. The ideology still exists inside the heads of some people.

Min 28.43: There is a term called 'Complex War' meaning a war that causes by a multitude of reasons for instance, terrorist groups and trade wars. Most particular, internal conflicts which occurred through public incitements by fellow countrymen.

Min 31.38: (Pause a video) Allow me to pause the video right here. This man is 'Joshua Wong' the protest leader in Hong Kong who once said '...if we are in a new Cold War, Hong Kong is the new Berlin...' So, why do I pause the video of this man? Firstly, Hong Kong is a part of China. Many of us had visited Hong Kong, it is a great place to travel to. Let me ask you this, do you still wish to visit Hong Kong now? There are some people who visit there recently and took a photo with him (showed a picture of a censored figure with Joshua Wong standing beside the unknown figure) Joshua Wong visited Thailand on many occasions. Who did he meet? What groups of people did he contact to? Their meetings definitely had hidden conspiracies. What have they been trying to accomplice? Even now that the political unrest in Hong Kong, this particular person visited the protestors as if he personally supported the movement.

Min 35.19: Ever since the political conflicted occurred in Hong Kong, remember that China hasn't used military force yet. There may be images that attempt to portray the polices' usage of weaponry, but it was done within the protocol. Most importantly, most of the protestors are teenagers. Let me ask you young people, if one day, there are people using the media to manipulate such movements like Hong Kong. Will you participate?

Min 59.00: For the military, whoever is the prime minister, whether police, a soldier, mister, missus or a miss, we will serve them according to the Constitution. We shall not choose who we serve. But these groups of people perceive soldiers not as the protectors of the Constitution nor the nation. Rather, they perceive the military as the obstacle to democracy. Soldiers, polices and the officials are all citizens. The military is necessary as the pillar to the security of the sovereign. Hence, there has always been political discourses against us to benefit certain groups, especially those spreading populism amongst youths. For instance, abolish army conscriptions and decrease the budget of the military and Ministry of Defense, as well as criticise the army's purchase of weaponry. Scums of the earth!

Min 60.01: Thailand is like a giant house, whereby the roof is the monarchy.

Min 60.05: What I'm about to say are what have been happening in Thailand. They are not coincidence. There is a theory, which I call 'Hybrid-Warfare' that I have been outspoken for many years. Hybrid-Warfare upon my definition is a combination of multiple conventional and unconventional tools of warfare. Concise of the following. First, Regular Military Forces as the major forces for maintain national and regional order. Second, the Special Forces for offensive operations against terrorism. The significance of Hybrid-Warfare started from the third circle. Irregular Forces, for instance terrorist groups, crime mops, 'mass resistance against the government (raises voice assertively)', drug cartels, men in black in the forms of the bombers in 8 different parts of Bangkok. I believe the social media will has a lot of feedbacks against me. But do not harm the nation. I want everyone to aware that this Hybrid-Warfare is currently happening in Thailand

Min 60.09: The fourth circle, Support of Local Unrest. Meaning providing any means of support to the people for political reasons. Such as some politicians who may bribed or pay the people to commence activism, public papers or create websites for the opposition. Fifth, perhaps the most urgent issue in Thailand, Information warfare propaganda. I've said earlier that there are Communist groups who haven't had a change of heart like Mr. Sonthiyan, and possess the aspiration to abolish the monarchy, and transform Thailand to become a Communist nation. How old are these people? Perhaps they are the same ages as me. But the older, maybe in their mid 70s, though are not physically active, but they are the masterminds. Even so, scholars and

professors that transmits their ideology to the younger generations. Being scholars and professors are not wrong. But if you only teach what you are supposed to teach, and refrain from spreading such wrongful ideology to your students repetitively, eventually they will obey you.

You have not followed your ethics. This is the combination between the traditional Communist ideology and far-left professors who studied in the countries that once attempt to colonise Thailand. Spreading fake news and propaganda on social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Min 60.13: Propaganda did not limit to such information only, but also produced collective symbolism. For instance, red shirt, yellow shirt, black shirt or rainbow shirt. What else? Three Fingers! The aim of such symbolism is to establish unity amongst them.

Min 60.14: Next circle, Diplomacy. This is a delicate, yet important matter. The use of international organisations and NGOs to increase the movement's publicities and awareness. By having 'some random white people' to take photographs in front of the police station, and having them standing amongst the protest to highlights that the protest receives international support and attention. Demanding international intervention on the matter.

Min 60.15: What is worse than that is Cyber Attacks. The use of BIG DATA ANALYTIC. Please listen carefully. When you press like button, online shopping, travelling or whatever you are doing on your phone, this information will be stored in the BIG DATA. The purpose of BIG DATA is to store and analyse the behaviours of the potential customers. But there has been some wrongful usage of it for political benefits. Especially to analyse the preferences or the trends that the youngsters are currently favouring.

Min 60.17: Lastly, Economic Warfare. For instance, the issue between the US and China. However, there are some groups who seeks benefit from the current economic crisis fro political gains. Such as publishing images of the poor. Let me ask you, Thailand has 70 million people, don't compare Thailand to nations like Singapore or small nations. Even in first world countries, poverty exists. There are no countries of our size that everyone is rich. That is why we have King Bhuminol's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. These people staged scenes of poverty, which propagates the

government's incompetency. I truly believe that whoever becomes the government would always aspire to get rid of poverty. Making everyone rich is challenging, but making everyone poor equally is easy. This is the concept of Communist ideology.

Min 60.21: In conclusion, you do not have to believe in everything that I have said. It is also okay to half believe my words. But let me ask you ‘who should fix the issues concerning national security?’ The scholars or some professors that were parts of the traditional Communists? The masterminds of the Communists with the pretentious far-lefts. Those who likes the number 2475. Those who self-proclaim as democrats. Or you want some selfish politicians. Lastly, you want to follow the businesspeople. Factory owner, that was born on the pile of money, lived life without struggle. Some who have participated in the menacing groups that caused public destructions. Some who have plotted with foreigners to intervene domestic issues. Brainwashing the youngsters for their political legitimacy. And possess anti-nation and monarchy sentiment.

Min 60.24: It is not wrong for you to support any of these people. It is not like Thailand never had these people as the leader. But as long as they do not have the aspiration of abolishing the monarchy, nor the needs to change the form of government, then please. Please lead our nation toward prosperity.

English Translation of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha's Speech on October 15, 2020 (Thai PBS News, 2020)

Minute 0.01: Allow me to clarify any inquiries concerning the enactment of the Declaration of State of Emergency. I believe you realised the ongoing situations in our country. The government saw the necessity to use Martial Law, due to the violence that had occurred. Today, we had a cabinet meeting which came to a conclusion according to the law, to passed state of emergency decree on October 15 at 4 am.

Minute 0.50: There are many important points in the Declaration, for instance, prohibition, the allowance for the authority to search and arrest suspects. Prior to the enactment of martial law, we had been using the Public Gathering Acts B.E. 2558. The government aspires to stabilise national order, due to the spread of Covid-19 as well as the financial crisis.

Minute 1.43: Yesterday, we had a meeting with the Economic Department to seek solutions to the existing domestic and regional economic issues. We have been spending massive amount of state budget to prevent the Covid-19 from coming to Thailand in the borderlines. These procedures have been proceeded according to plans. There were no unusual circumstances, hence there was no urgency to enact martial law. Moreover, I want to have it active for as little time as possible, only one month long, or less if the situation could be resolved sooner than expected.

Minute 2.25: It is not meant to harass any parties. But you have to understand the current context. Who has been hurt amidst of the ongoing disturbance? The officials have been the one getting hurt. Based on everything that has happened, we came to a conclusion that the situation is no longer normal. Everyone knows about the situation; it's surfaced on the media every day. I ask for your cooperation to stabilise order of this nation, is that possible or not?

Minute 2.58: Most importantly, I worry about the safety of the innocents. You know who is or who is not innocent. I have assigned the Vice Prime Minister and the Commander of the Royal Thai Police to handle the situation. Remember that we are not using the Public Gathering Acts now, the martial law covers everything including search and arrest. So, consider my warning. If you violate any law, then legal actions will be used against you like the procedure in any other countries.

Minute 4.09: Myself, as a leader of the government, I cannot let this unsolved. You have to be mindful of the majority of people in this country. The time and resources that we should be spending to take care of the welfare of the citizens, had to be relocated to deal with these illegal activities. It ruins everything. Our works become more difficult to manage. I ask for the you, the media's cooperation. Please put on the armband of your media agency when you go cover the incidents in the field. We will not allow you in without the armband. We must work together to stabilise peace. There are many pictures taken from different angles which cause confusion. I assure you that the authority worked tirelessly without using force, instead they are the one that have been assaulted. Are we going to keep living like this?

Minute 6.00: Let me warn those who might violate the law, even on social media. Spreading false information as such. Particularly those people who have done such thing today. Many journalists here probably have done it. Be careful.

Minute 6.33: Dear Thai citizens, please support the government's effort to resolve the situation. For the university students, the caretakers or the parents please take good care of them. I do not want any harmful consequences on them, because we do not know the real intention of hidden figures behind the protest. I think I know, but they haven't disclosed their identities to the public. So be careful not to be one of the suspects. Okay, don't consider my words as a threat.

English Translation of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha's Question and Answer Session After the Speech on October 15, 2020 (Matichon Online, 2020)

Minute 14:

Journalist: What would be needed now between praying or *Mettā bhāvanā*?

Prayut: Everything is needed right now. I do not curse against anyone, because the curse will eventually go against ourselves. Remember that. Do not be reckless, because everyone may die today or tomorrow. Is there such verse in the praying? We are ready to die at any point in time, through sickness or whatever. We cannot decide our faith. Do not defy the reaper.