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Ritualizing Identity-Based Political Movement Challenging Thailand's Political Legitimacy through Blood-Sacrificing Rituals

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ABSTRACT: This article offers a sociological perspective to investigate the structure and mechanism of the Red Shirts' blood-sacrificing rituals. It argues that the blood-sacrificing rituals functioned to challenge the legitimacy of Thailand's socio-political order – one that is directed by the network monarchy. The article suggests that (1) these rituals served to embody the different fragments within Red Shirts' umbrella, as well as to translate them into a powerful symbolic collective action, and (2) these rituals derived their powerful imaginare by embodying a two-part ideology – one that used the language of 'democracy' and 'justice' proposing an alternative political ideology and the other that used the language of 'blood' and 'sacrifice' drawn upon the sacred cultural habitus to marshal the politics of identification to further strengthen their demand. This article concludes that through their demand for full-fledged citizenship, the Red Shirts' blood-sacrificing rituals can be best understood as a vehicle of change posing a serious anti-structural force to an existing socio-political order.

Keywords: ideology, socio-political order, ritual, embodiment, identification, habitus, citizenship

> "This is a peaceful way to fight. We are asking for neither bloodshed, nor violence. If there is any bloodshed, let it be the blood of 'Phrai', of those without privilege like the Red Shirts, who is bleeding for democracy. Abhisit has to dissolve the parliament. Let them know that even our life, we can sacrifice for democracy."
> – Nattawut Saikur, Red Shirts' co-leader
> (Phu Chad Kan [Manager] 16th March 2010, 4)

I. INTRODUCTION

On 16th March 2010, three hundred liters of human blood were collected from over seventy thousand red-shirted protestors and poured at the four gates of Government House, as well as at the headquarters of the ruling Democrat party. Since early morning, a swarm of Red Shirt demonstrators lined up to donate ten cubic centimeters of their blood for their symbolical blood-sacrificing campaign. This campaign aimed to oust former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva's government (2008-2011), which was broadly criticized for holding power illegitimately and undemocratically. In addition, the Red

Shirts demanded fresh elections. During these blood-spilling incidents, the so-called Brahmanic cursing rites were ritually cast by a Brahman priest. In these spiritual rituals, the blood offering of the protestors were sacrificed as a pledge for democracy, and more importantly, for the notion of full-fledged citizenship. Here the Red Shirts took upon themselves the identity of Phrai – the serfs or the corvée labors in the traditional Sakdina system[1] – and contested the political legitimacy of the government through ritual performances. These events, therefore, raise a significant question: 'How do identity-based political movements use rituals to challenge an existing socio-political order?'

This above question contains three strands of ideas that mutually inform one another, which need to be critically analyzed if an answer to this question is to be sought: changes in socio-political order, roles of ritual performances, and politics of identity. First of all, it should be underlined that the key importance of the 'socio-political order' is that it functions to provide a normative reference for the idea of political legitimacy in order to maintain social harmony within the political community (Koller 2009, 310). Secondly, the term 'ritual' is particularly regarded to be of central significance in everyday existence in modern society serving to embody social relations (Bocock 1974; Williams and Bendelow 1998). Thirdly, it should be noted that the major concern of 'identity politics' is the politics of recognition – the reaction to the status of subordination and injustice which identity groups experience in the living world (Fraser 2009).

Along these lines, I suggest that in the case of Thailand's blood-sacrificing rituals, there are overlaps and mutual imbrications among these three concepts since (1) the blood-sacrificing rituals were carried out as a sacred form of collective resistance positing a challenge to an established socio-political order, (2) by employing the Phrai identity, the Red Shirts significantly threw up the question of the legitimacy of the existing order, and (3) the blood-sacrificing rituals drew its powerful symbolic expression upon the Phrai identity, and simultaneously, the Red Shirts' Phrai identity was further embodied through the ritual performances. Therefore, in this article, I will follow this threefold relationship via a closer analysis of each concept, as well as of their relation to the others.

The aim of this article is to review this triangulation so as to uncover the structure and the mechanism of the blood-sacrificing rituals performed by the Red Shirts. In this respect, there are two main arguments I would like to introduce. First and foremost, the central role of the blood rituals was essential in embodying the different fragments under the brand of Red Shirts and translating them into transcendental collective actions. Second, these rituals functioned as a vehicle of change that marshaled the politics of identity to further strengthen their demands for the renegotiation of their political spaces. In this way, the blood-sacrificing rituals posed a serious anti-structural challenge to an existing socio-political order.

This article will be divided into four main parts. The first part will map the current political polarization in Thailand by analyzing the nature of its socio-political order and the crisis of legitimacy. The second part will focus mainly on analyzing the blood-sacrificing rituals by investigating its governing ideology. To this end, primary materials – printed media, online resources and interview reports – will be critically examined. The

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[1] Sakdina probably means 'power over fields' and many originally have referred to some kind of land grant. By seventeenth century, it had become a numerical ranking attached to each official post. Recently, the term has generally been adopted as a shorthand for the premodern social order, equivalent to 'feudal' in Europe. (Baker, Chris and Pasuk Phongpaichit 2005, 266)

third part is an effort to develop a theoretical explication of the relationship between the blood-sacrificing rituals and the existing socio-political order. Lastly, the fourth part will triangulate the relationship between the blood rituals, Phrai identity, and Thailand's political legitimacy. Here, the idea of identification and the concept of citizenship will be brought in as the crucial elements driving the vehicle of change.

II. Mapping Thailand's Political Crisis

The recent political struggle between the military supported Democrat Government and the Thaksin allied National United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (NUDD), or the so-called Red Shirts, has left Thailand deeply polarized. After the military crackdown on 19th May 2010, the Red Shirts was forced to end their two-month-long rally against Abhisit's Government. This violence against unarmed protestors resulted in 85 people dead and another 1,378 injured (The International Institution for Strategic Studies 2010, 1). The Red Shirts' leaders and ex-Premier Thaksin were branded as 'terrorists' and a number of demonstrators were also seized under an Emergency law. In addition, some Red Shirts' supporters also faced the highly punitive lèse majesté charges. These incidents spread fear and anger throughout the country, especially among the Red Shirts who went home empty-handed. More importantly, these incidents markedly signified the deep crisis in Thailand's socio-political order. In this part of the article I will map the nature of the existing order and its crisis of legitimacy.

The Nature of Thailand's Socio-Political Order

There is a subtle controversy on the nature of Thailand's socio-political order – whether it can be characterized through the models of bureaucratic polity, constitutional monarchy, transitional democracy or liberal corporatism. However, according to Duncan McCargo (2005), these ideas fail to investigate the contemporary power structure in Thailand. Rather, McCargo asserts that since 1973, the primary source of national legitimacy has been centered on the palace. Even though Thailand's constitution accurately places the monarchy as the symbolic head of the state and "above" normal politics, in fact it appears that the king has actively engaged in politics through a loose alliance of his proxies – the judiciary, the army, the bureaucracy, and especially, the president of the Privy Council, General Prem Tinsulanond (McCargo 2005; Winichakul 2008). Additionally, the palace also has a dominant role in the economic sector owing to its ownership of a large part of properties in the real estate section (Ouyyanont 2008). Thus, this network monarchy[2] has been a significant political force typically operating to seek an expansion of its political influence (McCargo 2005, 516).

Nonetheless, it should be noted that in essence, the legitimacy of the present king is not merely based on his traditional authoritative position. In reality, the legitimacy of the network monarchy is greatly built upon the present king's charisma due to his success in ending the political conflicts in 1973 and 1992 even though it was through extra-constitutional interventions (McCargo 2005; Handley 2006). Furthermore, the image of

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[2] The term network monarchy was first developed by McCargo (2005) to describe the nature of Thailand's socio-political order. According to McCargo, the current monarch, King Bhumibol Adulyadej and his proxies, particularly General Prem have long posted the central significance in Thai politics.

the charismatic king also gained impressive popularity owing to the king's personal talent that is crucially promoted through many royal developmental projects and is also enhanced by a number of government and media propagandist campaigns. Together with the enforcements of the strict lèse majesté law – the law that prohibits any criticism on the king and members of royal family, the status of the king is sacralized and sustained above all criticisms (Fong 2009, 674). Insofar, the royal legitimacy is presented along with the trinity of the state ideology of "nation, religion and king" (Dressel 2010, 445). These three pillars considerably underline the legitimacy of an existing socio-political order in Thailand and thus constitute the dominant ideology underlying the network monarchy.

Since the legitimacy of the present Thai king is more or less derived from his personality than traditional monarchal institution, in this way, Max Weber's theme of charismatic authority can be applied to investigate the nature of the network monarchy. For Weber, the term 'charisma' can be defined as leaders who "in distress have been holders of specific gifts of the body and spirit; and these gifts have been believed to be supernatural, not accessible to everybody" (Weber 1968, 19). Thus, the idea of charismatic leadership is essentially foreign to the routine structure of social organizations. However, Weber states further that in reality, the sacred charisma is transformed into the realm of everyday institutional practices through the process of routinization of charisma. By this means, the authoritative charisma is embodied and propounded into the network of institutions serving to legitimize and prolong the existing socio-political order. Here, we can see that by placing the status of the sacred king as "above" normal politics and prohibiting the lèse majesté charge at the same time, the royal authority is routinized and manipulated through his network of profane alliances. Thus, this institutional embodiment of the Trinitarian ideology provided the foundations for the existence of the network monarchy in modern Thailand.

The Thaksin's Challenge and 2006 Coup d'état

The triumph of the billionaire communications tycoon, Thaksin Shinawatra, in the 2001 election posed a great challenge to the network monarchy. Thaksin's victory can be perceived as a reaction of many sectors to the failure of the previous governments to resolve the 1997 economic crisis. With the background of being a successful businessman and as a figure of progressive leadership at that time, Thaksin is much more distinct from the old-styled politicians (Phongpaichit and Baker 2008a, 63-64). Nevertheless, after he achieved power, Thaksin proceeded to replace the network monarchy with a new super network centered entirely on himself. This network is indeed characterized by a more hierarchical structure, encompassing all grassroots rural patron-client tiers, as well as provincial networks of influences. In this fashion, Thaksin attempted to freeze Prem out of key decisions of national policies (McCargo 2005, 513). Indeed, it should be noted here that Thaksin's popularity is vastly gained from his populist platforms (Phongpaichit and Baker 2008a).

Although Thaksin won the 2005 election and was also re-elected in 2006 with a landslide victory, his crisis of legitimacy began when a mass demonstration named the 'People Alliance for Democracy (PAD), or the 'Yellow Shirts', launched an anti-Thaksin campaign in late 2005. For the most part, the PAD accused Thaksin of corruption, abuse of power, cronyism and vote buying. They adopted the conservative royalist slogan of

"fight for the king and return royal power" portraying Thaksin as a tyrant who attempted to sell the nation and overthrow the monarchy (Asia Report N˚192 2010, 6). Furthermore, the PAD openly called for royal intervention to oust Thaksin's government. Even though their demand was strongly rejected by the king, this particular demonstration paved the way for the military to stage a coup.

Some observers have agreed that in essence, the 19th September 2006 coup d'état was a royalist coup staged by the military who employed a royalist discourse to legitimize the overthrow of democracy (Ungpakorn 2007; Pathamanand 2008; Winichakul 2008). Additionally, it is also broadly believed that the king's deputy, General Prem, was a key man directing the coup (Pathamanand 2008, 129). This signifies that the coup was markedly approved by the palace (Ungpakorn 2007, 7). Later on, this view was apparently confirmed when General Surayud Chulanont, a member of the Royal Privy Council, was appointed by the junta to lead the country. For this reason, it can be said that the 2006 coup once again revealed the nature of Thailand's socio-political order – one that is dominated by the network monarchy.

The Rise of Red Shirts

As response to the network monarchy sponsored coup, the anti-coup activists and Thaksin's supporters merged together under the brand of Red Shirts. Though, at the surface level this was seen as a campaign against the military-installed government, a more careful investigation reveals that it was reaction to the network monarchy's institutional embodiment of the Trinitarian ideology. Differing from the PAD that represented an alliance between the royalist urban elites and a handful group of NGOs and social movement leaders (Pye and Schaffar 2008, 40; Ungpakorn 2009, 78), the Red Shirts, on the contrary, drew large support from the urban and rural poor (Asia Report N˚192 2010, 1). Thus far the Red Shirts have challenged the legitimacy of the network monarchy by explicitly criticizing Prem for masterminding the military junta.

Despite a military propaganda campaign against Thaksin, the first post-coup election in December 2007 brought Samak Sundaravej, who was generally perceived as a Thaksin-nominee, into power. Nonetheless, the constant challenges from the PAD once more continued. This brought about the removal of Samak from his position in September 2008, after a court ruled him guilty of conflict of interest for having earned income from hosting television cooking shows. Furthermore, in December 2008, the PAD also occupied Bangkok's two main airports to force Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat, Samak's successor, to step down. Again, at the peak of the PAD's protest, the court ordered the dissolution of the People Power Party (PPP)[3] – the former Thai Rak Thai party (TRT) – on the charge of violating election laws. These two judicial coups eventually pushed the Democrat Party into the government position through the collaboration with other small parties, as well as the changing side of a fragment of the former PPP's MPs. Consequently, on December 10, 2008, Thai constitution day, the Red Shirts started their massive rally at the heart of Bangkok calling for fresh elections and

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[3] After the 2006 coup, Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party was officially banned due to the charge of violating electoral laws. Furthermore, 111 members of the party, including Thaksin were barred from participating in politics for five-year period. However, soon after the dissolution, the remaining members of the party reorganized in the People Power Party with Samak, and then Somchai as the leaders of the party.

restoration of the more progressive 1997 constitution that was abrogated by the 2006 coup. At this stage, it appears to be that by campaigning for 'Real Democracy' and 'equality for all' the Red Shirts posed a serious challenge to the existing socio-political order headed by the network monarchy.

In spite of a subtle controversy on the nature of the Red Shirts – whether it is a class struggle (Ungpakorn 2009; Glassman 2010) or a regional-based movement (Phongpaichit and Baker 2008b; Lintner 2009), it should be borne in mind that essentially, its nature is more complicated and cannot simply be reduced to these categories. Although the Red Shirts have large support in the North and the Northeast, in reality around seventy percent of red shirt demonstrators come from Bangkok and its surrounding areas. In addition, since Bangkok relies heavily on the migrant labour from the countryside, as well as from most rural provinces that also contain a large town with urban social and voting characteristic, hence, both rural-urban separation and class-based division are insufficient to expound the complexity of the Red Shirts (The international Institution for Strategic Studies 2010, 1). Furthermore, not only those of Thaksin's supporters who participated in the rallies, but the Red Shirts also consisted of several segments of the middle class and intellectuals, the opponents of the 2006 coups, groups of young democratic lovers, and former supporters of the PAD who turned their side after the military staged the coup (Nostitz 2009, 12-13; Charoensin-o-larn 2010, 5). Accordingly, these groups have set the decentralized and relatively autonomous networks under the Red Shirts' umbrella (McCargo 2010, 9). Along these lines, Charoensin-o-larn (2010) asserts that the Red Shirts has become closer to what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri call "multitude" – "a social multiplicity of management, communication and action in common while remaining internally different" (Hardt and Negri 2004, xiv). In this respect, it can be said that these various groups ultimately united under the brand of Red Shirts with a strong sense of social and political injustice.

If the crisis of Thailand's political legitimacy began when an established order was strikingly interrogated, it appears that by identifying the existing socio-political order as Rabob Amartayathipatai (aristocracy), the Red Shirts significantly raise the question of the legitimacy of the network monarchy (Dressel 2010). In this fashion, the Red Shirts through the deployment of the terms Ammart (aristocrats) and Phrai, politicized an older set of oppositional identities that sought to explicate the social relation within the present structure of inequality. To some extent, the term Ammart is referred to as a weapon to attack Prem, who is believed to be the real leader of the aristocratic regime. In this regard, the notion Phrai precisely indicates the status of commoner among members of the Red Shirts, who are excluded from the political decision making process (Charoensin-o-larn 2010, 5-6). Moreover, the term Phrai also raises a question as to the notion of citizenship in the so-called Thai-styled democratic regime (Dressel 2010, 445). In other words, it seems that the Red Shirts raise the important issue of "whether Thailand is a modern democracy, governed by elections according to rules laid down in a constitution, or in fact remains a monarchy, in which the royal palace is allowed to exert considerable extra-constitutional power" (The International Institution for Strategic Studies 2010, 2). Therefore, Red Shirts campaign against Abhisit – the figure head of the royalist conservative power – and their demand for a full-fledged democracy essentially contests the legitimacy of the network monarchy – the legitimacy of both its ideology and institutions.

III. The Ideology of Blood-Sacrificing Rituals

In the previous part, I argued how the Red Shirts challenged both the Trinitarian ideology, as well as the embodied institution of the network monarchy. In this part, I propose to show that the blood-sacrificing rituals of defiance of the Red Shirts contained an alternative ideology, one that challenged the Trinitarian state ideology.

After the first ten liters of human blood were poured at the main entrance of the Government House followed by the splashing of another twenty five liters at the Democrat Party headquarters, the Red Shirts' blood-sacrificing campaign gained impressive global attention. These blood-spilling incidents were soon launched after the Red Shirts massive rally entered the third day and yet their demand for the parliament's dissolution continued to be strongly rejected. On 15th March 2010, a day before the blood-splashing events, it was quite clear that Abhisit completely disregarded the red-shirts' demand by way of avoiding all face to face contact. Thus, after they had desperately waited for the government's response, as well as still having no plans for further steps, the protest leaders emotionally set a 24-hour deadline for the government to dissolve the House; otherwise, they would soak the government office with human blood. As a result, with no positive response from the government, on March 16, the blood-sacrificing rituals were carried out along with the Brahmanic cursing rites. Even though the blood-splashing events did not achieve its political goals, it achieved great public attention and discussion.

Furthermore, these discussions revealed that even among the Red Shirts' leaders and supporters, the understanding of the meaning of these blood-sacrificing rituals contained differences leading to variant understandings of the alternative ideology being put forward by the Red Shirts. With regard to these subtle differences in the understanding of the blood-rituals, this part of the article will focus on how the alternative ideology that governed the blood-sacrificing campaign was understood differently while also arguing that the ideology of blood-sacrifice was marshaled to legitimize and sacralize the Red Shirts' demand for change in socio-political order.

In order to explore the alternative ideology that underscores the blood-sacrificing rituals, first and foremost, the term ideology should be taken into consideration. According to Bruce Kapferer, ideology means "a selective cultural construction whereby certain significances relevant to experience are systematically organized into a relatively coherent scheme" (Kapferer 1988, 80). By way of referring to ideology as a social construction, its relation to the lived content, the collective imaginary and the existing social relations should be brought into account (Clarke et.al. 1993, 37). In this fashion, Louis Althusser asserts that the term ideology, therefore, can be perceived as a unity of the real social relations and the imaginary that expresses the social expectations rather than the illustration of the living reality (Althusser 1969, 233-234). Thus we can conclude that both the difference in social relations experienced by the leaders and protestors as well as the imaginary component of the ideology consisting of the different rhetoric marshaled to advocate the blood-sacrificing rituals created space for variant ideologies. Hence, in this part, the ideology of blood-sacrificing rituals and the variant understandings among the red-shirt supporters will be crystallized through the

interpretations of the red-shirt leaders' speeches and the blood donator's perception on this campaign.

The Leaders' Proclamation

To begin with the Red Shirt leader's proclamations, it should be kept in mind that the rhetoric and the discourses announced by the leaders played a somewhat crucial role in forming the different representations of the ideology of the campaign that affects the understanding of both supporters and bystanders. If we now turn to the rhetoric of the blood-sacrificing rituals raised by the leaders, we can see that it contains a two-part ideology which governed these rituals. The first part of the ideology uses the language of 'democracy' and 'justice' and thus reflected the alternative political ideology. The second part of the ideology, which used the language of 'blood' and 'sacrifice', with a 'sacred and spiritual' nuance of the Brahmanic rites, sought to unite the Red Shirts on the basis of their identity. In this way, while the former clearly indicates the Red Shirt demands arose in response to the current political conflict, the latter remarkably denotes the cultural symbolic that served to sacralize the Red Shirt's claims even as it emphasized their collective identity. The speeches of the leaders can be categorized into three kinds: the first kind emphasized on the alternative political ideology of democracy and justice. The second kind focused on identity and recognition by emphasizing on 'blood' and 'sacrifice', and the third kind contained a mixture of these two ideologies. So while investigating the meaning of the blood-sacrificing rituals, I will analyze this two-part ideology that governs it.

First of all, at one end of the spectrum, the blood-sacrificing campaign was represented purely in the language of 'democracy' and 'justice'. An example of this is seen in the announcement made by Nattawut on 15th March:

> Mr. Abhisit, stay calm and listen carefully. We will be intensifying our demonstrations against the government by enhancing our picketing strategy. We are demanding the sovereignty that used to belong to the people. Honour the demands of the human dignity of Thai citizens.[4] (Prachatai 15th March 2010.)

Here, it can be seen that when the words 'sovereignty' and 'the people' were used, these referred directly to their demand for democracy in which the sovereignty is not the state sovereignty but the 'people sovereignty'. Furthermore, when the words 'human dignity' and 'Thai citizens' were deployed, these also indicated their demand for the status of citizenship, in which the demands for justice and equality constituted the heart.

In contrast, at the other end of the spectrum, the language of identity was used which drew content from both symbolic cultural and religious material. The following two examples show how the blood-sacrificing campaign became the means to express the demands of social recognition:

> The curse itself is of Thai Brahmanic origin, not of Indian origin. Also during the reign of King Naresuan in the Ayutthaya period blood ceremonies to clean Chao Mae Toranee (the goddess of the earth) were performed. It is a highly unusual "Khun Sai" (Black Magic) ceremony, and only rarely performed by Brahmins…Even though such a curse has bad effects on the one performing it he still accepted those as he felt this curse was

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4 Translated from Thai and emphasis added by author.

for the good of the land, as it was against those he considered bad people – the government.[5] (Nostitz 2010)

This is a peaceful way to fight. We are asking for neither bloodshed, nor violence. If there is any bloodshed, let it be the blood of 'Phrai', of those without privilege like the Red Shirts, who is bleeding for democracy. Abhisit has to dissolve the parliament. Let them know that even our life, we can sacrifice for democracy.[6] (Phu Chad Kan [Manager] 16th March 2010, 4)

Here, it can be seen that the campaign essentially called for those who identified themselves as 'Phrai' or 'those without privilege' to sacrifice for these demands. Therefore, we can see that the terms 'bloodshed', 'blood', 'bleeding' and 'life' that are all actually translated from the single word in Thai – 'leud', were brought in as a mean to achieve these goals. In this sense, it can also be said that the language of 'democracy' and 'recognition', gained legitimacy for the blood-sacrificing campaign of the Red Shirts' demand for popular democracy when it was framed in the language of 'blood' and identity.

Finally, as I stated earlier, we can also find the mixture of the ideology of 'democracy' and 'recognition' framed in sacred language. An example of this mixture is seen in the following speech:

The blood of the common people is mixing together to fight for democracy.[7] (Guardian Online 17th March 2010)

And,

Even though he [Abhisit] does not have blood on his hands, his feet will be bloodied with our curses.[8] (Bangkok Post 21th March 2010)

At this stage, we can see that whereas the word 'blood' in the first sentence crucially signifies their demand for democracy, the words 'blood' and 'bloodied' in the second sentence are markedly related to the sacred cursing rites. With regard to the sacrality of the Brahmanic rites, it can be said that rather than a profane symbolical meaning, here the sacrality of human blood was referred to in order to enhance and sacralize claims for democracy. Accordingly, from the red-shirt leaders' proclamation, the blood-sacrificing rituals therefore focally expresses the genuine spirit of democracy and seeks to unite people on the basis of a common Phrai identity.

The Voices of the Blood-Donators

As I mentioned earlier, the above-stated 'alternative ideology' represented by the leaders of the Red Shirts had a number of variants due to the horizontal field of individual experiences of the participants. Therefore, the meanings of the blood-sacrificing

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[5] Reported by Nick Nostitz , who interviewed the Brahman priest. Emphasis added by author.

[6] Translated from Thai and emphasis added by author.

[7] Emphasis added by author.

[8] Emphasis added by author.

campaign perceived by the individual participants contain slight differences. This diversity can be seen through the various interpretations offered by the participants exercising different logics of reasoning. At this stage, the following examples will show the variant ways of understanding and reasoning among the blood donators.

> Example 1: Mali, a middle-aged woman from the Northeast, states that she participated in the red-shirt rally because "Previously, we can earn enough to live. We used to get 6,000 Baht per month; however, right now it decreases rapidly to 2,500 Baht that is not enough anymore. Now, our plans for the community projects are all canceled differing from the past, where everything was accepted. Right now, the economic is really bad." In this way, when she was asked about the reason for donating her blood, she strongly insisted that "Here we are. We are fighting for democracy and justice. We are now fighting for our progeny. How can our descendants live if the country is still like this?" Furthermore, she explains that "Democracy is fair. It is a redistribution differing from now that the elites control over everything. If you are just ordinary people like villagers, it is quite difficult to live. The price of rice and agricultural goods always fluctuate. This is because the elites suppress us. Also, the productive machines are too expensive. We cannot live."[9] (Prachatai 17th March 2010)

According to the first example, it appears to be that the notion of democracy is closely related to the idea of social justice and economic redistribution. It can be said that when Mali denotes the sources of economic inequality, she strikingly relates it to the existing social relation wherein the so-called elites occupy the privilege status.

> Example 2: Komkrit, a Bangkokian middle class, reveals his reason for donating his blood for the campaign since "It is a symbolical way of fighting. We want to let them know that even our blood, we can sacrifice for democracy. Even though the sacrificing of tiny blood cannot help us to conquer, let them know that we can sacrifice even our blood, anything else we can." Furthermore, he also demonstrates that he has joined the Red Shirt rally since "We want to see our Thailand developed in a way that it should be, in a democratic way, not retrogression into the regressive regime. Thailand does not just end at us, rather, she need to be developed from generation to generations. If our country still steps backward onto the regime in which those with privilege, those with supremacy, and those of conservative bourgeoisies possess the power, there will be no chance for our descendants to breath in this country."[10] (ibid)

In this second example, we can see that reference is made to the language of 'blood' and 'sacrifice' and thus clearly emphasizes its dependence on the cultural symbolic in its striving to build an identity that is opposed to the existing socio-political order, one which supports the cause of 'Democracy'.

> Example 3: Pim, a rural migrant in Bangkok, explained that she volunteered in blood donation because "I want to collect the blood and splash it in the same way as Nattawut announce. I like his ideology" and "I can do whatever the leaders want us to do. I will do because I want the parliament dissolved." This is because "This government does nothing. It should not be a government. I want a new government with more responsibility."[11] (Prachatai 17th March 2010)

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[9] Translated from Thai and emphasis added by author

[10] Translated from Thai and emphasis added by author

[11] Translated from Thai and emphasis added by author.

In contrast to the first and the second examples, this third example indicates that the leaders' personality can play a key role in influencing support from the demonstrators. However, the way Pim explicates her own experiences of being marginalized from government policy - seen in how she states that 'government does nothing' - underscores the notion of social expectation of a 'new government' that is partly associated with the Red Shirt leaders' announcement.

> Example 4: A 75-year-old protestor's reason for donating blood was because "I am <u>so proud to be a part of this ideology</u>. I am so glad that I can be a part of <u>a</u> struggle for democracy, for the ouster of this government. <u>I want Thaksin</u> to return safely to <u>serve the country</u> and to <u>solve the economic problems</u>. <u>I want him</u> to come back soon. <u>I love him</u> and <u>really miss him</u>. I am now seventy five years old, but in my life, I have never seen any <u>impressive Prime Minister</u> like Thaksin before."[12] (Thailand Mirror 17th March 2010)

The fourth example in some way is close to example three since their understandings of the blood-sacrificing campaign is based on individual charisma. In this case, we can see that Thaksin was recognized as an adored authority. By this means, their strong support for Thaksin apparently pushed them to volunteer for the campaign.

With regard to these variant understandings of the blood-sacrificing rituals, it should be underlined that in all examples, the term 'democracy' was placed as an object of the campaign. Moreover, as aforementioned, these variant understandings indicated the real situations that the individual participants perceived to be problematic.

This part has explicated the ideology of the blood-sacrificing rituals in its parts – political and identity, as well as the variant understandings among the Red Shirt supporters that essentially relied on individual experiences, the existing social relation which they identified as problematic, and their social expectations. In this way, we have already seen how the ideologies employed by the leaders signified general meanings of blood-sacrificing campaign. Furthermore, I have indicated that there were two kinds of ideologies used by the leaders. The first is the alternative political ideology using the language of 'democracy' and 'justice' that on the one hand served to identify the problematic of an established order in which they perceived as an illegitimate one; and on the other hand, placed the notion of democracy and equality as an ideology of the campaign. The second is the ideology of identity that used both sacred language as well as the language of blood to not only invent a collective identity but to also sacralize their demands for democracy. With regards to the key ideology represented by the leaders, the next part will explore how these variant understandings were gathered through the blood-sacrificing rituals, as well as how the rituals were performed as an anti-structural force.

IV. Embodiment and Resistance through Blood-Sacrificing Rituals

In the previous part, we have already seen that the blood-sacrificing rituals more or less played a key symbolical role in the Red Shirts struggle positing the demands for 'democracy' and 'justice' as their political expectation that accordingly threw up the question of the legitimacy of an existing socio-political order. We have already noticed that the blood-sacrificing rituals served to embody the different fragments under Red Shirts' umbrella, as well as transcended them into the form of powerful collective

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[12] Translated from Thai and emphasis added by author

expression. Therefore, in this part, the term 'ritual' will be of central concern and will be problematised.

It should be highlighted that the sociology of rituals possesses two major perspectives on the functions of rituals – one overlaps and reciprocally informs another: the first focuses on the embodiment function of rituals; and, the second underscores how ritual performances proposes a reading of social institutions (Mahmood 2008, 836). Following these notions, this article will take a closer analysis on both functions of the blood-sacrificing rituals. It will develop the theoretical explication on the embodiment function of the blood-sacrificing rituals and will also explain how the alternative ideology was posed through the ritual performances. Additionally, it will also argue that rituals can serve both as a normalized structural, as well as an anti-structural force. It is this latter ability of rituals that enables them to challenge an established socio-political order. So as to explicate this point, in the following sections, Pierre Bourdieu's notions of 'habitus' and 'field' will be taken up as a main theoretical framework.

RITUAL AND EMBODIMENT

Before we turn to Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus' and 'field', the term 'embodiment' that hereafter will constitute the heart of the analysis will be taken into account. It should be underscored that many sociologists have recognized the embodiment of social relation as a core function of ritual performances. According to Kate Cregan, 'embodiment' is a grounding condition of social existence derived from physical and mental experience: that is to say, "[Embodiment] is the condition of possibility for our relating to other people and the world" (Cregan 2006, 2-3). Moreover, "Embodiment is lived across all forms of community as a deeply-embedded social relational category. It is an ontological category constituted as both the context and the outcome of patterns of social practice and meaning" (James 2006, 180). In this respect, if we employ Emmanuel Kant's language, it can be said that the idea of embodiment is essentially based on the conception of the transcendent of immanent individual existences into the form of social relationship (Shilling 2009, 209).

The idea of embodiment also plays a crucial role in Bourdieu's theory. Bourdieu (1990) demonstrates three conceptions – each relates and implicates the others, namely, 'habitus', 'field', and 'bodily hexis' or 'embodiment'. First of all, Bourdieu highlights that 'habitus', a product of the past history enhanced through individual and collective practices, is essentially a structure of pre-condition which constrains and poses the limitation to individual actions (Bourdieu 1990, 55). In this manner, habitus functions as the structured dispositions that provide the generative principles molding the form of individual practices in a precise way (Crossley 2001, 93; Mahmood 2006, 837). Secondly, 'field' is a relative autonomous space wherein peoples associate and struggle through wider complex social relations (Bourdieu 1990, 131). It is within this 'field' that Bourdieu exposes that the individual actions and interactions are not only imposed vertically by the dispositive habitus but are also shaped immanently in accordance with their various social contexts (Crossley 2001, 104). Here, Bourdieu concludes that due to the affiliation between 'habitus' and 'field', this leaves the room for a degree of practical flexibility (Cregan 2006, 78). Lastly, Bourdieu introduces the term 'bodily hexis' – an embodied habitus and political content that takes place in specific social arena. For Bourdieu, 'bodily hexis' significantly functions to turn habitus into a permanent

disposition within one particular space (ibid, 72). In addition, he presents ritual practices as one of the best examples representing the notion of 'bodily hexis'.

According to Bourdieu, rituals are acted out as the collective symbolic actions reflecting the modes of belief of the social groups. Moreover, rituals are not merely performed on account of the dispositive habitus, but they are also practiced in relation to their explicit socio-political contents (Bourdieu 1977, 156). In this fashion, rituals take place as an embodied social relation that "bring the same symbol into different relationships by apprehending it through different aspects, or which brings different aspects of the same referent into the same relationship of opposition" (ibid 1990, 87). That is to say, rituals function to encompass the various sympathies within the particular contexts, and so, translate them into the forms of intersubjectivity directed by the symbolic ideologies.

In the case of Thailand's blood-sacrificing rituals, we have already seen that there were variant understandings of the alternative ideology, and the rituals precisely functioned to embody these different standpoints within the single brand of Red Shirts, as well as transcend them into a collective solidarity. In this manner, we can see that while the terms 'democracy' and 'justice' were placed at the heart as a pre-conditional ideology of the blood-sacrificing campaign, there were also variant languages that indicated the immanent 'fields' of individual daily experiences. Furthermore, through the embodiment function of the rituals, the notion of sacrificing blood as a pledge for democracy was commonly used among the Red Shirts' supporters. Here, it appears that the blood-sacrificing rituals significantly functioned to bind the different fragments within the Red Shirt umbrella together and gather them into a common intersubjectivity.

Although Bourdieu's theory of 'habitus' and 'field' offers a well-developed analytical framework illustrating how the variant understandings were accumulated under the alternative ideology posed by blood-sacrificing rituals, it should be denoted that Bourdieu is strongly alleged for his ontological determinism since the term 'habitus' is referred to in a restricted sense focusing on how 'ideology' is inscribed into the subjects (William and Bendelow 1998, 79; Crossley 2001, 111). In this way, the terms 'habitus' fails to notice the form of historically and culturally specific embodied capacities that can serve to set out the different ideologies departed from the dominant symbols due to the various phenomenological fields (Mahmood 2008, 837). Accordingly, the terms 'habitus' is somehow inadequate to emphasize the subordinate culture that is opaque to the dominant culture (Scott 1990, 13). Nonetheless, so as to compensate Bourdieu's weak points, this article suggests that a re-reading of his phenomenological roots is necessary. In this respect, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's transcendental phenomenology should be taken into consideration.

It should be underlined that first and foremost, an individual subject of Merleau-Ponty's analysis (1962) should be recognized as a 'being-in-the-world'. By ways of 'lived-through-the-world', it can be said that in fact, individual agencies are 'living-with-other'. This conception, therefore, indicates that on the one hand, through their relationship with the others, individuals are more or less embodied into the form of social intersubjectivity regarding to an institutional and historical order – a 'habitus'. On the other hand, this intersubjectivity is 'always-already' situated and decentred in relation to the phenomenal fields (Crossley 1995, 45). By investigating the interaction between the established forms and the fields of individual experiences, Merleau-Ponty places the term

'meaning', 'purpose' and 'subjective perception' at the core of his analysis. He argues that despite the dispositive forms, there is a flexibility of purpose within the symbolic world of human being (ibid 2001, 65-69). For Merleau-Ponty, the forms of social actions arise out from what agents perceive in their phenomenal worlds rather than what is derived from the past history, as well as from the point of view of a detached spectator rather than a pre-reflexive disposition (ibid, 75). Merleau-Ponty, furthermore, suggests that the social practices can also lead to the modification, transformation and regeneration of the structured habitus (ibid, 116). Here, if we take on Merleau-Ponty's account, it appears to be that the ritual practices in particular contexts can inversely bring about the transformation of ritual itself (Leistle 2006, 33). In this fashion, Crossley concludes that "we cannot say that 'all rituals are like this' or 'all rituals have this function'. The meaning, function, and characteristics of rituals will be different in different cases. Indeed, even the same ritual may change in these respects over time, as rituals necessarily belong to the flow of historical time" (Crossley 2004, 32). Hence, rituals possess the potential to initiate the forms of resistance since they reflect the subjective perceptions and their social imagination in response to what the individuals perceived in the phenomenal fields. The roles of the rituals as an embodiment of anti-structural alternative ideology will be investigated more in the following section.

Resistance through Rituals

So far, it can be seen that owing to the juxtaposition between a habitus of ritual performances and a field of everyday experience, rituals can serve as both a conventional and resistant force. Now, if we turn to the 'habitus' of ritual performances, it can be seen that in essence, the structured 'habitus' is essentially constituted and institutionalized into what Weber calls 'everyday official routines'. In this manner, rituals function to ritualize the social relationships in order to guarantee the legitimacy of an existing socio-political order, as well as to provide the aesthetic platforms for official routine practices (Forde et.al. 1962, 16-17). Furthermore, it should be highlighted that the ritualization of social relationships also brings the habitual officialdom to associate with some sacred symbols (Aldridge 2007, 144). In this respect, Clifford Geertz's (1980) notion of 'theatre state', for instance, gives us a well-analyzed theoretical framework mentioning how the sacred ritualized statecraft is institutionalized. Additionally, Geertz's theory also asserts that what the state rituals function for is, in fact the creation of a dramaturgical reference of social imaginary that serve to build up a social solidarity. To some extent, it can be said that through the function of embodiment, the ritualized social relationships somehow generates the 'imagined community' in Benedict Anderson's (1983) term.

As stated earlier in the first part, in Thailand, the notion of political legitimacy is markedly based on the Trinitarian ideology of "nation, religion and king" in which the network monarchy has occupied the dominant status in an existing socio-political order. Moreover, this Trinitarian motto was ritualized and routinized into individual daily experience, through the media propaganda, the performances of state and royal rituals and the operations of other specific organizations (Reynolds 1977). Accordingly, this state ideology is placed as a reference of an imaginary of common Thai people. If we turn to the ideology of 'blood' symbol, it should be kept in mind that for the most part, it contains the universal messages of life and death that touch the deepest feeling in man (Titmuss 1970, 16). More importantly, in Thai cultural context, the 'blood' symbol is

crucially related to the strong sense of nation. For example, Thailand's national anthem significantly expresses that:

> Thailand is the <u>unity of Thai blood and body</u>. The whole country belongs to the Thai people, maintaining thus far for the Thai.
> All Thais intend to unite together.
> Thais love peace, but do not fear to fight. They will never let anyone threaten their independence.
> <u>They will sacrifice every drop of their blood to contribute to the nation</u>, will serve the country with pride and prestige– full of victory, Chai Yo.

Here, we can see that the 'blood' symbol is crucially related to the homogeneous 'unity of the nation'. Likewise, the Trinitarian ideology of 'blood sacrifice is sloganeered in order to serve to 'contribute to the nation'. By way of ritualizing and routinizing this Trinitarian state ideology, the dominant discourse on 'blood' and 'nation' is thence constituted in Thai society as a habitus of Thailand's social imaginary.

With regard to the habitus of ritual performances, in a field of daily experiences, the creative power of the rituals should be taken into consideration. For example, in 'Resistance through Rituals' (1993), Stuart Hall and Toni Jefferson notably break away from the common perceptions of the "ritualized and stylized form" of everyday cultural expression. They argue that in actual fact, the dominant structure should be perceived as a 'map of meaning' providing the points of references for popular resistances (Hall and Jefferson 1993). At this stage, it seems to be that in the field of practices, there are the daily struggles against the monopoly of the legitimacy of habitus, (Schultheis 2008, 46), as well as the process of negotiation in which the meanings of the dominant order are reinterpreted and reshaped (Bell 1992; Stepputat 2004; Rudolph 2008).

In the case of Red Shirts, it is quite clear that the Trinitarian ideology of 'blood sacrifice' was more or less imitated by the Red Shirts; howsoever, with a different meaning. As a reflection of what they perceived as an illegitimate socio-political order, we can see that the term 'Thai blood and body' was precisely replaced by the clamor of the 'blood of Phrai'. This markedly indicates that from the Red Shirts' point of view, the socio-political order of Thailand was not 'a nation where people are united'; on the contrary, there is a structure of an unequal relationship between Ammat and Phrai, wherein the Red Shirts possesses the subordinated status. Therefore, by ways of substituting the terms 'sacrificing blood' as 'a contribution to nation' with 'sacrificing blood as a pledge for democracy', we can see that the legitimacy of the Trinitarian ideology is contested. In other words, it appears to be that the Red Shirts crucially challenged the existing socio-political order through a strong collective expression underlined by their alternative ideology that derived from the mimicry, renegotiation and retranslation of the state symbolic rituals.

Thus far, it can be said that the blood-sacrificing rituals embodying this alternative ideology posed a serious question to the normative imaginary of the homogenous unity of the nation that has long been legitimized through the sacred state rituals. Also equally, that this 'resisting' alternative ideology contained 'heterogeneity', which Partha Chatterjee (2004) calls a 'politics of the governed' against the domination of Trinitarian state ideology. It should be underscored that in the case of Thailand's blood-sacrificing rituals, the rituals precisely served as resistance contesting the established socio-political order in which the Red Shirts perceived as a problematic one rather than representing the

aesthetic ritual habitus. More importantly, by way of sacralizing the struggle through the powerful ritual practices, this indeed posed a strong challenge to the legitimacy of state ritual, as well as the ideology that underlined it (Werbner 2002). In addition, it should be noted that through the mimicry of the statecraft rituals, Finn Stepputat (2004) suggests that it is the ideology of common citizenship that more or less directs the ritual imitations. In this sense, we can see that in the case of the blood-sacrificing rituals, it was the demand for equal citizenship that lay behind the alternative ideology of 'democracy' and 'justice'.

V. Embodying Identity-Based Political Challenging

Throughout this article, I have addressed how the blood-sacrificing rituals were performed as an anti-structural force embodying the different fragments within the Red Shirts' umbrella, as well as translating them into a powerful symbolic expression. I have shown earlier that the rituals embodied a two-part ideology containing the ideals of 'democracy' as well as 'blood'. I have looked at how the first part of the ideology that contained the alternative political ideology through ritualization was able to create resistance against the dominating Trinitarian state ideology. In this part, I want to argue that the use of the symbols of 'blood' and 'sacrifice' in the rituals evoked the dynamics of Phrai identity from the cultural habitus which in turn drew upon the strengths of identity politics for its cause. Hence, this part will mainly concern on the contesting nature of Phrai identity and the alternative political ideology posed by the Red Shirts. In this way, I suggest that first and foremost, the term 'identity politics' should be critically examined.

'Identity politics' has recently attained a remarkable centrality within various academic disciplines since it highlights the rise of new social movements that pose the notions of 'recognition' and 'freedom' as a motto struggling against marginalization and discrimination. Even though the term 'identity movements' is generally referred to as a new wave of resistance against injustices in late modern societies, it should be noted that the concept of 'identity' itself is a problematic one. In this way, 'identity politics' is strongly criticized for firstly, their failure to challenge the real relation of power, and secondly, their ontological exclusion that eventually results in an essentialized group identity that neglects the diversity within group, as well as celebrating the boundary between the 'we' and the 'others' (Brown 1995; Fraser 2009). In this fashion, it should be denoted that the term 'rituals' is more or less condemned in a similar way as identity politics. Phina Werbner (2002), for instance, contends that although rituals can be performed as a response to an established order, they also require a certain degree of renewal and re-codification of some cultural values that finally confirm and institutionalize the boundary between the inner groups and the others.

In light of these charges, this part will consider the ritual performances in relation to the Red Shirts' usage of the Phrai identity. It will argue that in essence, the Red Shirt's Phrai identity markedly surpasses their problem of ontological exclusion by proposing the demand for citizenship – the unity of the human society wherein the differences and human dignity are universally respected – as an alternative ideology. Therefore, in this part, the term 'identity-based political position' will be employed in order to distance the Red Shirts' use of 'identity' from the essentialist identity politics. By means of identifying themselves as Phrai, I affirm that the Red Shirts took an identity-based political position to challenge the existing socio-political order. Moreover, I will further

develop a theoretical explanation on the roles of Phrai identity, as well as explicate how this identity surpasses the problems of ontological exclusion posed by the essentialist identity politics. Furthermore, the triangulation of socio-political order, ritual performances and identity-based political position will also be examined.

Identity-Based Political Position

Many scholars introduce the term 'identity-based political positions' so as to detach the notion of essentialist identity politics from the political struggles in which individual members identify themselves with particular identities in order to enhance their political demands. The term 'identity-based political positions' indicate the more unstable forms of identities as the identities they proclaim are not the inborn inflexible ones. Rather, the term 'identity-based political positions' should be understood as a form of inclusive identities, one that can encompass the various social subjects, as well as possesses a vital space for identity negotiation, identity accumulation and multiple identities in so far as these relevant identities can embody the common political stands. By embracing the 'identity-based political positions', these movements precisely set the explicit political objectives as the causes for their collective expression (Gupta 2007). In other words, it appears to be that the concept of identity deployed by the 'identity-based political movements' is not an essentialist, but a strategic and positional one (Hall 2003, 3). In this manner, identities are employed in the way that is closely related to the notion of 'habitus', a pre-given point of reference, in which the subjects can identify themselves 'with' and embody themselves 'through' with regard to their individual experiences (Menne, 1994). Thus, the 'identity-based political positions' should be considered as an energetic movement of the twofold dynamic of interaction between individual subjects and collectivity that ultimately places a variable form of identities as the points of 'identification'.

Concerning the 'identity-based political positions' as a temporal point of attachment through which individuals who share the same political goals identify themselves (Hall 2003, 6), it should be remarked that so as to embody a variety of differences into the certain forms of collective struggles, the idea of 'identification' crucially constitutes the heart of the identity-based political movements. The term 'identification' should be understood as a network of multiple and interlocking issue-centered political positions in which different identities can be attached as the nodal point of references thus establishing the chain of equivalence among these differences (Mouffe 1995). Through 'identification', the differences can be contained and maintained harmoniously within the fluid yet stable collective whole of 'identity-based political positions' (Gupta 2007, 69). In this sense, the term 'identity-based political positions' is more or less close to the notion of 'multitude' – the multiplicity of differences within the collective unity – explicated by Hardt and Negri (2004). More importantly, with regard to their shared political objectives, it is quite obvious that differing from the inflexible essentialist identities, the identities that are taken up by the 'identity-based political movements' can be dissolved once their demands are satisfied (Gupta 2007, 46). At this point, if we employed Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's language, it can be said that 'identification' can be instituted as the network of equivalences where identities can be territorialized, de-territorialized and re-territorialized (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

Viewing the embodied identity-based political positions as a point of 'identification', the Red Shirts adopt Phrai identity as a nodal point of reference for their unanimous struggle against an existing socio-political order. By this means, the Red Shirts' Phrai identity functions to embrace the multitude of people who commonly identify themselves as the subordinated or the underpriviledged status within Ammart-Phrai social relation. Therefore, we can see that the legacy of the terms Phrai – the subsidiary class in the traditional Sakdina system – is crucially placed as a cultural habitus or the points of identification among the different fragments within the brand of Red Shirts.

Unlike the essentialist identity politics that celebrates the politics of exclusion by proclaiming the boundary between the inner and outer groups, it should be highlighted that even though the Red Shirts' Phrai identity is carried out with reference to an oppositional relationship between Ammart and Phrai, the goals of the Red Shirts are not simply to invoke the long-lasting Phrai identity. On the contrary, what they demand for is the resolution of Phrai identity itself. In this way, it can be seen that while the Phrai identity serves to embody the unique individual members and transcend them into the form of collective resistance, in fact, the political objective of the Red Shirts is to demolish an existing socio-political order wherein the Ammart-Phrai social relation exists. Since the Red Shirts understands the terms Ammart and Phrai as the causes of social injustice they experience, what they struggle for is thus the dissolution of the status inequality – the end of the 'Phrai-hood'. Hence, what the Red Shirts strives for is neither the codified nor the institutionalized of Phrai identity, rather, they demand the abandonment of the terms Ammart and Phrai themselves in order to establish the new socio-political order in which justice and equality for all are possible. Here, the idea of citizenship is introduced as an alternative political order where the boundary between the 'we' of Phrai identity and 'the others' no longer remains.

The Blood of 'Phrai' and the Ideology of Citizenship

Now, let me turn to the relationship between the blood-sacrificing rituals that were carried out as an identity expression and the ideology of citizenship pronounced by the Red Shirts. So far, we have seen that in essence, the Red Shirts took on an identity-based political position to challenge the legitimacy of an existing social relation, and in this fashion, the blood-sacrificing rituals were carried out with reference to their Phrai identity. At this point, since (1) the term 'identity-based political position' functions to challenge an 'established order', (2) the 'rituals' are performed as an 'anti-structural force', and (3) the 'present social structure' serves to provide the social habitus for both 'identification' and 'ritual practices', hence, it can be said that there is an interaction and a circulation among these three concepts. With regard to the contested nature of the notion of the 'blood of Phrai', the idea of 'common citizenship' was indeed placed as a goal by the Red Shirts. Therefore, in this section, the triangulation of those key concepts and the idea of 'citizenship' will be investigated.

If we consider the triangulation of political legitimacy, ritual performances and identity-based political position, in the case of the Red Shirts, it can be perceived that the blood-sacrificing rituals served to gather all these notions into a form of powerful symbolical expression. In the third part, I mentioned that the blood-sacrificing rituals were carried out as an anti-structural force embodying and creating solidarity among the different fragments within the Red Shirts' umbrella. Furthermore, in this part, I also

indicated that the conception of Phrai identity was placed as a point of identification that functioned to encompass the immanent voices within the political field and transcend them into a universal struggle against the existing socio-political order. By means of relating the conception of 'sacrificing blood' to the notion of 'Phrai identity', it should be highlighted that the term 'sacrificing the blood of Phrai' was set as a bridge to link the habitus of the present social structure, the form of ritual practices, and the mode of identification together. Through the sacred blood-sacrificing rituals, the established order was thence challenged strikingly. Hence, it can be said that the blood rituals were precisely carried out as a vehicle of change exclaiming the Red Shirts' demand for 'equal citizenship'.

Furthermore, it should be marked that the ideology of citizenship promoted by the identity-based political movement does not necessarily have the same meaning as the one promoted by the state. This is because in reality, there are the movements from 'below' that act differently to promote the notion of citizenship as opposed to the present injustice they perceived from the existing socio-political structure (Stepputat 2004, 245). Thus, it should be underlined that the term 'citizenship' is, in fact, radical in its nature (Mouffe 1992, 3). According to Chantal Mouffe (1995), the exercise of the concept of citizenship is precisely associated with the ethico-political principles of modern democracy since it possesses a democratic challenge against the hierarchical order. Here, if we look at the relationship between the term 'citizenship' and the identity-based political movements, it appears to be that in essence, what the language of recognition speaks for is the demand for equal citizenship in which the multiple identities can democratically interplay as part of the entire public (Bickford 1997, 117). At this stage, we can see that the idea of citizenship "is not just one identity among others…nor is it the dominant identity that overrides all others…Instead it is an articulating principle that affects the different subject positions of the social agent while allowing for a plurality of specific allegiances and for the respect of individual liberty" (Mouffe 1995, 325). In this respect, it can be said that the language of citizenship pronounced by the identity-based political movements centrally focuses on the interrelation between the differences and the politics of togetherness (Bickford 1997; Bernstein 2005).

With regard to the contesting nature of the term 'citizenship', it appears that the Red Shirts also spoke out their demand for 'democracy' and 'social justice' in accordance with this term. In this manner, the language of citizenship employed by the Red Shirts crucially posed the notion of 'democracy' as an alternative order challenging the legitimacy of the network monarchy. By speaking the language of citizenship, the Red Shirts, therefore, attempted to renegotiate and reclaim their space within an existing political field. Additionally, it should be noted that their demand for the redrawing of the political space is indeed underscored by the term 'common citizenship' in which individual differences and human dignity are respected equally. Concerning the blood-sacrificing rituals as a vehicle of change, it can be alleged that what the Red Shirts demand for is the transformation of political space into 'a space for the appearance of the subjects' wherein the multitude of people are all visible and sayable.

VI. Conclusion

To summarize, this article has presented the blood-sacrificing rituals as a contesting symbolic expression that was carried out as a reaction to the Trinitarian state ideology –

the dominant ideology that was legitimized through the works of the network monarchy. The State-led ideology of network monarchy is seen as the source of crisis in modern Thailand. As a challenge to the network monarchy an alternative ideology centered on the ideals of 'Democracy' and 'Justice' was proposed by the Red Shirts contesting the Trinitarian State ideology. This alternative anti-structural ideology was embodied through blood-sacrificing rituals. Furthermore, the blood-sacrificing campaign consisted of a two-part ideology. The first part consists of the alternative political ideology that placed the terms 'democracy' and 'social justice' as the political objective of the Red Shirts. The second used the symbols of 'blood' and 'sacrifice' to embody the different fragments under the Red Shirts' umbrella. These blood-sacrificing rituals served to challenge the socio-political order by way of embodying the different fragments within Red Shirts and translating them into a powerful symbolic collective action. In addition, the latter ideology was significantly derived from the cultural habitus of the Trinitarian ideology itself.

The blood sacrificing rituals used to express this alternative political ideology contained the ideals of 'blood' and 'sacrifice' borrowed from the existing cultural habitus which linked the ritual to a Phrai identity resulting not only in their claim posing a sacred challenge to routinized Trinitarian ideology, but also acting as a means to harness the politics of identification to strengthen their challenge. Through the selection of cultural habitus, the blood symbol that was underlined by the Red Shirts' Phrai identity functioned to legitimize and sacralize their claim as a reaction to the routinized Trinitarian ideology exercised by the work of the network monarchy. Thus this dialectic between the alternative ideology of democracy and the politics of identification derived from the cultural habitus and their embodiment in the blood rituals placed the Red Shirts' claim for citizenship as a powerful alternative socio-political order. Through both alternative ideology and embodiment function of the rituals, we can also see that the blood-sacrificing rituals, as well as the Phrai identity were gathered together to challenge the Trinitarian state ideology which they termed as the aristocratic system – the system in which the Ammat-Phrai structure constituted the heart. Thus we can conclude that the blood-sacrificing rituals can be best understood as a vehicle of change promoting the alternative ideology of citizenship encompassing the ideals of 'democracy' and 'social justice'.

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