

International  
Institute of  
Social Studies

The logo for the International Institute of Social Studies, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a stylized, cursive script.

**Media Framing of Military Junta's Suppression  
of Political Dissidents Regarding the  
Constitutional Draft from January to August  
2016 in Thailand**

A Research Paper presented by:

***Thanit Nilayodhin (462343tn)***

(Thailand)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:

**Human Rights, Gender and Conflict Studies:  
Social Justice Perspectives**

(SJP)

Specialization:

**Conflict and Peace Studies**

Members of the Examining Committee:

dr. Dubravka Žarkov

dr. Shyamika Jayasundara-Smits

The Hague, The Netherlands  
November 2017

***Disclaimer:***

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

***Inquiries:***

**Postal address:**

Institute of Social Studies  
P.O. Box 29776  
2502 LT The Hague  
The Netherlands

**Location:**

Kortenaerkade 12  
2518 AX The Hague  
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460

Fax: +31 70 426 0799

# Contents

<i>List of Annexes</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>viii</i>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the military junta's suppression: Pre-coup political conflict	1
1.3 Context of the Military Junta's Suppression of Anti-Charter Movements	2
1.4 Context of <i>The Nation</i>	6
1.5 Research Questions and Objectives	8
1.6 Research Methodology	8
1.7 Justification of the Study	10
1.8 Scope of the Research	10
1.9 My Positionality towards the Topic	10
<b>Chapter 2: Theoretical Perspectives</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Military Junta Ideology and Media Frames</b>	
3.1 Military Junta Ideology Dominating the Media Sphere	14
3.2 Four Media Frames of News Coverage	16
<b>Chapter 4: <i>Normal power to suppress frame</i></b>	
4.1 Normal Power of State Authorities	17
4.2 Dissidents as Victims of State Authorities	19
4.3 Conclusion	20
<b>Chapter 5: <i>Law enforcement by key government figures frame</i></b>	
5.1 Government Figures' Imperative	21
5.2 Exclusion for Disguising the Junta Image	22
5.3 Conclusion	22
<b>Chapter 6: <i>Dissidents' criticism of the NCPO frame</i></b>	
6.1 Attention Drawn to Dissidents	23
6.2 Less NCPO Suppression, More Dissidents' Anti-Charter Image	24
6.3 Conclusion	25
<b>Chapter 7: <i>Keeping order frame</i></b>	
7.1 Government's "Order" and "Neutrality"	26
7.2 Unclear "Order" and Absent Junta	27

7.3 Conclusion	27
<b>Chapter 8: Reflections of the Media Frames on Military Junta Ideology</b>	
8.1 The Media Frames in a Nutshell	29
8.2 Dominant Frame vs. Counter-frame	30
8.3 Ambiguous Distance from the State Authorities	31
8.4 Legitimizing Military Junta's Suppression?	33
<b>Chapter 9: Concluding Remarks</b>	<b>34</b>
<i>References</i>	<i>345</i>

## **List of Annexes**

Annex 1: 24 Texts of News Coverage

## List of Acronyms

CDSD	Centre for Doctrine and Strategy Development
EC	Election Commission of Thailand
NCPO	National Council for Peace and Order
NDM	New Democracy Movement
NMG	Nation Multimedia Group
TLHR	Thai Lawyers for Human Rights

# **Acknowledgements**

My academic freedom will end when I enter my country.

## **Abstract**

This research examines the media's framing of military junta's suppression of political dissidents in Thailand from January to August 2016. It focuses on ways in which the media chooses to highlight and exclude certain aspects of the incidents of suppression in order to examine whether the media legitimize the military junta's actions by promoting the military ideology in its framing.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

The study of media reports of violent political conflicts could contribute to enhancing the body of knowledge and research on media and conflict, particularly in the context of Thailand. It should provide a fruitful discussion on the significance of the ways media report violent conflict between the dominant authority and the civilians who call for right to freedom of expression. If development thinking and practice include value of freedom from fear, than civic freedoms of political expression and freedom of press are significant aspects of development.

## **Keywords**

media, framing, suppression, human rights, military, dissidence, Thailand



# Chapter 1

## 1.1 Introduction

This research is concerned with news reporting of the military junta's crackdown on political dissidents regarding the constitutional draft from January to August 2016 in Thailand. More specifically, I will analyze highlighted and excluded elements in news coverage in order to identify media's frame. Also my research will examine whether or not the media frames reinforces the military junta's constitutional powers to suppress political dissent.

## 1.2 Background of the military junta's suppression: Pre-Coup Political Conflicts

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 a coalition of army forces and police, namely the *National Council for Peace and Order* (NCPO), seized power from civilian government of Yingluck Shinawatra by coup d'état. It claimed to bring back public order and social harmony and to reform political, economic and social institutions after widespread violent political conflict in the previous six months.

The conflict originally emerged from the politics of 'two colours' formed up in the late 2000s. The Yellow Shirts, or the *People's Alliance for Democracy* (PAD), was teamed up to protest against Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, the leader of *Thai Rak Thai Party* and his successors. Starting in February 2006, the PAD took to street to force elected Prime Minister Thaksin to step down by accusing him of corruption, abuse of power, and disloyalty to the monarchy (BBC 2012). The protest lasted until the military coup staged in September 2006 leading to toppling down of Thaksin-led government.

After the general election in December 2007 gave rise to Thaksin's proxy political party *People's Power Party* again, in 2008 the PAD occupied government office and airports calling for the removal of the Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej by claiming he was the puppet of Thaksin – who was later ousted by court's rule for his conflict of interest (Asian Correspondent 2014). Following a court's finding that the Thaksin's proxy party was involved in the electoral fraud previous year, the PAD did the same action to remove the Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat – who was voted by the Parliament to replace Samak and was Thaksin's brother-in-law (Weaver 2008).

The Red Shirts, namely *the United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship* (UDD) were formed in 2009 when Abhisit Vejjajiva from the opposition *Democrat Party* was elected a Prime Minister by the Parliament to substitute Somchai. UDD was formed to support Thaksin and his political party, and to run campaign against the PAD and Democrat Party. The UDD took street in Bangkok to protest against Prime Minister Abhisit – whom it accused of being endorsed by the coup makers of 2006 – and called for general election (Tran 2009). In 2010 the Abhisit government deployed troops to crack down the UDD protesters in Bangkok, causing a number of deaths and injuries (Human Rights Watch 2011).

In late 2013 the PAD rebranded as *the People's Democratic Reform Committee* (PDRC) resumed street protest in Bangkok when the government led by another

Thaksin's proxy party – namely *Pheu Thai Party* won general election and chose Thaksin's sister Yingluck Shinawatra as the Prime Minister – proposed Amnesty Bill to the Parliament. PDRC argued that the Bill will amnesty Thaksin, at that time in exile outside Thailand, from corruption conviction given by the Supreme Court in 2008 (Asian Correspondent 2014). This time protests were led by a prominent member of opposition Democrat Party.

In the following weeks the UDD headed by several political activists and some Yingluck's cabinet members started rallies to show support for the government in another area of Bangkok (Campbell 2013). Street demonstrations of 'two colours' escalated to violence in the same month. They used arms against each other until the government proclaimed state of emergency in Bangkok in mid-March 2014 (The National 2014).

In May 2014 the government encountered legitimacy crisis when Yingluck was charged with corruption in the government policy of *rice schema* by the National Anti-Corruption Committee (NACC) (Hodal 2014). The charge was followed by the constitutional court's rule over her abuse of authority by transferring a state official, resulting in withdrawal of her Prime Minister position (The Guardian 2014).

Army Chief Prayut Chan-ocha approved intervention after members of the Yellow Shirts were wounded and killed in the city centre on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014 (BBC 2014). And then, the army – calling itself National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) - proclaimed martial law on May 20<sup>th</sup> and eventually staged military coup on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014. The coup led to the absolute control over the country by the junta (ABC 2014). The coup makers promulgated an interim constitution, granting themselves excessive powers to “bring back peace and security and maintain public order” (McElroy 2014). By promulgating the new constitution, the junta is authorized to issue any order to carry out that task with impunity, including arbitrary detention and intimidation of dissidents, and sending civilian 'security-related' cases to military court. Crimes against 'security' as prescribed in the constitution are any act, including criticizing and public gathering, against the monarchy and the military junta. According to the statistic generated by the local non-governmental organization *iLaw* (2017), since the 2014 coup until March 2017 there are 283 civilians tried before military court.

### **1.3 Context of the Military Junta's Suppression of Anti-Charter Movements**

#### *Contrasting Perceptions of the Military in Thai Society*

There were polarized perceptions of the actions of National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO) within Thai society. The Army and its supporters believed that the military was the guardian of the core institutions of the state, namely the nation and the monarchy, as well as (to a lesser extent) of religion and the people. This belief has been implanted through formal education and mainstream media, for example, in films, television programmes, the national anthem. Moreover, 25-year-old male Thais are obliged by law to participate in the military conscription which is promoted by experienced Thai celebrities via media. People who held such belief – i.e. the Yellow shirts - tended to trust the military's explicit intention to launch the coup d'état in 2014 as a means to stop the political conflicts and violence breaking out during late 2013-2014, as well as

the corruption by politicians. Thus, they accepted the military junta's "roadmap to democratic regime of government with the King as the Head of State", including the promulgation of new constitution charter (Watts and Chomchuen 2014). As a result, they did not mind the military junta's crackdown on the anti-charter activists.

Contrary to this, some political activists, for example, the Red shirts, see the Army as a destroyer of history of Thailand's construction of democracy since the transformation of the system of government from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy in 1932. They argued that the recent military interventions in coups in 2006 and 2014 were made for eliminating key political adversaries of one political wing of the state - ex-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his allies - and that the coups disrupted the development of Thai's democracy. They asserted that the military was violent and self-interested. Therefore, the military junta, from their perspective, did not have legitimacy to run the country and draft the constitution charters. They contended that criticism of the new drafts of Constitution charters was their right to freedom of expression, and that the military junta's suppression of dissent was a violation of human rights.

#### *Constitutional Draft*

Political divisions about junta brought charter draft in the public spotlight: on the one hand, it was said by the military junta to be a milestone on the road to general election and a return to democracy; on the other hand, it was criticized by prominent academics, political activists, and former politicians as suppression of freedoms of expression and political action. As domestic and international pressures from significant states and human rights organizations, including the United Nations, demanded from military junta to bring back democracy, the draft was claimed to be a vital stage to reform political and economic institutions as a preparation for general election and democracy.

In November 2014 a Constitution Drafting Committee was set up by the military junta to write a charter draft accordingly to the junta's framework prescribed in the Interim Constitution. Content in the draft gradually revealed at press conferences was alleged by academics and major political parties to be an obstacle to liberal democracy (BBC 2015). This draft was eventually rejected by the junta-appointed National Reform Council in September 2015 before going to the referendum. The rejection was condemned to be a plan of prolonging the military junta's regime (Fuller 2015). Another committee was then formed to draft a new charter and was successful in winning the majority vote in the constitutional referendum held in August 2016. However, throughout the process of drafting the charter remained controversial.

#### *Oppositions Mushrooming Vs. Junta Cracking down*

As the army deployed the Reserve Officers Training Corps students (or the Grade 10 students) to houses across the country to promote the draft and the referendum (BBC Thai 2016a), controversial views of the draft from wide range of interest groups mushroomed in Bangkok and many provinces. They shared criticisms of the draft for its failure to achieve liberal democracy. For instance, Prime Minister was not elected in general election; the constitutional

court had power to dominate the politics; the military junta remained in power even after the general election; a number of rights were eradicated from the draft constitution. These criticisms were very important not only in a sense that they challenged the military junta's commitment to bring back democracy, but also that they were seriously addressed by various groups of people, ranging from local civil society organizations and activists to influential former politicians and academics, all of whom had to face the junta's security measures.

New Democracy Movement (NDM) was one of the most persistent political movements criticizing junta during the referendum period (January to August 2016). It gained enormous attention not only locally, but also from well-known international organizations, such as Foreign Policy magazine (Mimoun and Brennan 2016), Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2016), and many other world news agencies. The activists held press conference to clarify their standpoint against the draft, and proactively ran public campaign by distributing leaflets of "7 reasons to vote no" to people in Bangkok, Samut Prakarn province, and Ratchaburi province. However, they were systematically detained and tried before military court by police (HRW 2016).

More than 10,000 letters indicating receivers' home address from anonymous sender were found in public post boxes and post offices in three provinces in the northern region in July 2016 (Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR) 2016a). Each contained a piece of A4-size paper, addressing that the basic health care of people, subsidy for the elderly, and right to free fundamental education were erased from the draft charter. The letters failed to reach receivers' hands for they were confiscated by police and military officers who later linked the documents to 17 people. 12 of them were held incommunicado detention by the military without charge. Four suspects were accused of distributing "false" information according to the Referendum Act. One suspect escaped (TLHR 2016a).

Red-Shirt core leaders established "Anti Referendum-related Fraud Centres" across the country, with a headquarters in Bangkok, to monitor and ensure transparency in the military junta's execution of constitutional referendum in several provinces. But the opening ceremony of the centres was shut down by the military (Bangkokbiznews 2016). The Red-Shirts then launched the centre on Facebook page to receive online reports of fraud from internet users in different provinces (BBC Thai 2016b).

Local civil society organizations organized public discussion on the charter draft to express their particular concerns. The Assembly of the Poor, the Civic Network for Welfare State, and the Health Insurance Lovers Group asserted that the draft undermined the basic rights of the poor (Prachatai 2016a). Moreover, the Network of Four-region Slums contended that the right of local communities was not guaranteed by the draft and the drafting process was not legitimate.

Academics also played active role in commenting on the draft following principles of political science and law. Network of Academics for Civil Right consisting of professors in different academic fields from many universities in Thailand held a press conference to show their opposition to the draft. *Nitirat Group*, of university lecturers in law, published their criticisms of the draft via group's website. Many professors in these groups were closely monitored by the

military following their explicit political comments at public conference and mainstream media.

Similar to their professors, students from several universities took symbolic political actions and organized public discussions against the draft at their universities. For example, New-Generation Citizens Group co-hosted with the NDM a panel on “Speak for Freedom: Constitution and Northeastern Population”; however, their activity was barred by an acting dean who brought police and military officers to shut down the event (TLHR 2016b).

Comments of two former Prime Ministers, namely Yingluck Shinwatra and Abhisit Vejjajiva, from the biggest national political parties attracted much media attention. Despite their long-lasting competitions in general elections, they criticized similar issues in the draft. Yingluck posted her view on her Facebook fan page, which was later picked by news media (Lefevre 2016). Abhisit held a press conference to voice his party’s opposing stance towards the draft (Corben 2016). Unlike ordinary citizens, both of them were safe from prosecution by the military junta.

The referendum and the military junta’s suppression of anti-charter activists gave rise to proactive works of human rights organizations in the country. For example, non-governmental organization iLaw digested significant points of the draft to consider before the referendum and disseminated this material through its Facebook and website (Prachatai 2016b). It collaborated with other organizations to conduct online poll to ask internet users if they agreed or disagreed on those points (Prachamati 2016). Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR) was established in response to legal cases of human rights violations by the military junta since 2014. They monitored freedom of expression-related cases, served as lawyers for the defendants and criticized the military junta for neglecting “rule of law” and “fair trial” (TLHR 2016c).

### *Junta’s Legal Authorization*

Since the coup in May 2014, freedom of expression of both individuals and journalists was curtailed. “Political gathering” of more than four people and criticizing the coup makers, military government and their actions were outlawed by the “National Council for Peace and Order orders” (or “NCPO orders”), which were authorized by the Article 44 of the Interim Constitution, for these actions were deemed destroying “order” and “national security”. Those who failed to comply with the orders were subject to incommunicado detention for up to seven days and military court’s verdict.

Restriction on right to freedom of expression was enforced by several acts: expressing or disseminating content regarded “false”, “distorted”, and “destroying order and national security” via computer was forbidden by the Computer-related crime Act and gathering of more than four people for criticizing the military junta was prohibited by the new Public Assembly Act which was passed by the military-appointed National Legislative Assembly members’ majority vote in May 2015.

As the charter draft of the military junta was ready in early 2016 for the referendum held in August of the same year, opposition views were seen “false” and “distorted” and were thus banned by the Referendum Act enforced in mid-

April 2016. The offenders were subject to imprisonment up to ten years and a maximum fine of 200,000 baht (or approximately € 5,000).

## 1.4 Context of *The Nation*

The history of Thai media shows dynamic functions and capability of producing news coverage to readers. *The Nation* - a broadcaster I focus on - has gone through the history of media landscape influenced by political, economic, and social contexts of Thailand.

The 1840s marks the emergence of print newspaper as the first ever media of Thailand (or Siam at that time)<sup>1</sup>. From 1840s to 1890s, during the regime of absolute monarchy, newspapers were owned by foreigners (who criticized social injustice in the country) and Siamese noblemen who defended the monarchy and the country (Siriyuvasak 2007: 80-81). The newspapers reached only elitists, not general population who lacked access to education.

Between 1890s to 1910 media ownership was gradually shared by educated ordinary people (Siriyuvasak 2007: 83). Media reported events from Siamese history and provided critical comments on the society. Readership was extended to general population. In the period of early 1900s to 1925 newspaper became a popular medium of public debates on politics and of disseminating knowledge among population since people were entitled to fundamental education law and hence aware of politics and society (Siriyuvasak 2007: 83-84).

In 1930 the first Thai radio was founded by a Siamese nobleman for the purpose of promoting education, commerce, and entertainment for vendors and ordinary people (Siriyuvasak 2007: 100-103).

Vibrant discussions about society and politics in newspapers and radio became prohibited after a group of civilians and military conducted the 1932 Siamese Revolution which transformed the regime from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy. The period of 1932 to 1973 saw state's tight grip over press freedom in the name of national security and nationalist propaganda for the government affecting all media, including newly state-founded television channel (Siriyuvasak 2007: 84). Owing to power struggle between the old noblemen and the revolution makers, news outlets were divided into independent, government-affiliated, and royalist groups.

Between 1973 and early 1980s the media were heavily controlled by the state. Due to the student's uprising for democracy in 1973, radio and television stations were used by the government to spread propaganda against the protesters (Siriyuvasak 2007: 112). However, the uprising gave birth to variety of newspapers which promoted different political standpoints. These included newspapers still operating until today: *Prachachat*, *The Voice of the Nation* (with current name *The Nation*), *Thai Rath*, etc. Eventually all media were completely under the state control since another protest took place again in 1976. News outlets the government regarded as "dissenting", including *The Voice of the Nation*, were ordered to cease operation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Siam was renamed "Thailand" in 1948.

Economic growth among middle class and higher technology of communication in early 1980s revitalized press freedom and rendered the industrialization of newspaper business (Siriyuvasak 2007: 87). Newspapers relied heavily on advertising as a significant source of income. Radio was remarkably expanded and gained popularity (Siriyuvasak 2007: 107). Television programmes specifically targeted middle-class audience in order to gain advertising market share. International English-language news and political and social opinions became popular content (Siriyuvasak 2007: 114).

Since 2000s thanks to the proliferation of Internet and technological devices in the country, media outlets have expanded to online platforms, the so-called “new media”, via website, Twitter, and Facebook, etc. (Thailand Development Research Institute 2016). This change in media landscape has facilitated news workers to both reach variety of information and disseminate their coverage in real time.

*The Nation* is the first Thai-owned English-language daily newspaper of Thailand, founded in 1971. It is available both in print and website [www.nationmultimedia.com](http://www.nationmultimedia.com). *The Nation* is a part of *Nation Multimedia Group Public Company Limited* (or NMG) which has extensive array of goods and services separately operated by business units. NMG features one of the largest media outlets in the country. It circulates two Thai and one English-language daily newspapers, and one Thai-language weekly news magazine (business newspaper *Krungthep Turakit*, general newspaper *Kom Chad Luek*, *The Nation*, and *Nation Weekender*<sup>2</sup>). NMG also broadcasts two television channels: *Nation TV* and *NOW26* and produces Thai-language programmes broadcasted on three radio stations. Apart from news business units, NMG is also book publisher and distributor, offers printing services, delivery services, and provides bachelor’s and master’s levels education.

Domestic and international business and political news are main focus of *The Nation*, despite other areas of coverage including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (or ASEAN) news, general news, sport, and lifestyle. In 2016, the year of my research focus, *The Nation* prioritized news regarding ASEAN Economic Community, according to my interview with an employee<sup>3</sup>. Its target audience is Thai high-purchasing power business people who have English literacy, as well as expatriates residing in Thailand and interested in Thai economy and politics. Some of them are regular subscribers, receiving print newspaper via post every morning; some read online via mobile devices where they can get instant breaking news. With respect to the internal operation of *The Nation* team, a managing editor is responsible for the whole production process of all news areas: from covering at the scene to publishing. At the period covered by this research (January-August 2016) the political news section consisted of one editor, three journalists, and the managing editor. All of them were Thai nationals, not native English speakers. Events to be covered were approved by the editor or the managing editor. The news items written by journalists were approved, some edited, by the editor or the managing editor. During my interview with the managing editor, she noted that there were ideological differences

---

<sup>2</sup> *Nation Weekender* was closed down in June 2017 due to the decline in sales. (further information: <http://www.bangkokbiznews.com/news/detail/756639>)

<sup>3</sup> The interview was conducted on August 30, 2017. Interviewee’s identity is not revealed for his/her personal reason.

among the team. She said she allowed for such expression in the news pieces to a certain degree. One journalist I interviewed claimed that the managing editor sometimes edited her pieces to sound more “gentle”. After the approval of draft coverage, a group of native-English sub-editors copy-edit for English grammar and language. Apart from the three journalists in the team, the Thai-language news pool *Nation News Agency*, which is shared among news agencies of the NMG, is also used for gathering news from places the journalists could not visit in person.

## 1.5 Research Questions and Objectives

The main research question is: how does *The Nation* frame the incidents of the military junta’s suppression of political dissident regarding the constitutional draft, from January to August 2016, in Thailand?

In order to answer the question I operationalize it as follows:

1. What news and how does the media highlight and exclude in the reportage? (i.e. which events and information are made visible and which are hidden?)
2. Are media frames justifying and legitimizing military actions and supporting military ideology, and if so how? (i.e. how similar are media frames to the ideology of the military junta?)

My theoretical objectives are to contribute to the body of knowledge about media ideology and the ways media operate under the military regimes, with specific attention to Thailand, where there are not many such studies. My social objective is to contribute to the creation of the dialogue about the role of the media and politics in general, and in Thailand specifically.

## 1.6 Research Methodology

My research deals with two main parts of analysis. First, I adopt framing theory to examine ways the media highlights and excludes certain elements in its reportage of the military junta’s suppression of political dissidents. Second, I employ the concept of frame contestation to see how is media representing problem definitions and interpretations of the incidents made by different conflicting parties (i.e. the junta and its political opposition). Finally, I analyze the extent to which the media frames reflect the military junta’s ideology which is elaborated in the next chapter, before embarking on the media analysis.

Data for this study are: (1) official documents related to the army ideology; and (2) media coverage. The former consists of: (a) “*The Handbook on Indoctrination and Enhancement of Soldier Ideology*”<sup>4</sup> (Centre for Doctrine and Strategy Development 2011); (b) article on “*The Army and Its Threats*” (Pisek 2015)<sup>5</sup>; (c) the preamble section of the 2014 Interim Constitution; and (d) the article 44 to 46 in the Interim Constitution. All were officially published in Thai language at different time and, I claim, their publications were under oversight by the Royal

---

<sup>4</sup> Unofficial translation

<sup>5</sup> Unofficial translation



Thai Army, the military, or the junta. The document *a* and *b* were evidently written by the Centre for Doctrine and Strategy Development (or CDS), the Royal Thai Army. They were published on the freely accessible CDS website, and printed in 30,000 and 1,800 copies respectively,<sup>6</sup> supposedly to get distributed within the army. The *c* and *d* were written by the junta-appointed committee; however, its English version was unofficially translated by the Office of the Council of State of Thailand and published on several legal-related websites – which are publicly accessible. This first group of documents is consulted for examining the military’s and the junta’s perceptions of political dissent, Thai society and the country, and of the military itself. Importantly, the article 44 of the Interim Constitution specifically prescribes the military junta’s authority to operate the crackdown on dissent.

The latter set of documents are online texts of media coverage about the military junta’s suppression of political dissidents from *The Nation*. There had been a number of situations in which the military junta acted against dissidents since its rule in May 2014. I decided to choose one of the most reported incidents on *The Nation* website: the junta’s crackdown on political dissidents who opposed the military-written constitutional draft from January to August 2016. This incident was reported in 24 pieces found through the Google advanced search engine. The texts contain approximately 450 words per piece.

*The Nation* is my choice for two reasons. First, technically the key data should be in English language for comprehensible engagement in analysis between the supervisor, the second reader, and the researcher, as well as readers. *The Nation* is one of the two Thai-owned English-language newspapers in the country (the other is *Bangkok Post*). It is a part of large corporation which has several Thai-language news agencies in its ownership. Second, it has relatively large readership, both Thai and non-Thai<sup>7</sup>.

In addition to the military ideology-related documents and the media coverage I conducted interviews with four employees and one former employee of *The Nation* in order to understand journalist practices and other relevant operations within the organization. Their identities are concealed for security reasons. Unfortunately, I found that some of them were not comfortable to touch on the issue of influence of the state authorities on their work.

My analysis starts with the military junta’s ideology. Following Van Dijk’s (1998) theorizing the functions of ideology, I engage the first set of documents to investigate ways in which the Army and the junta position themselves in the society, determine roles and responsibilities, and specifically define and deal with dissidents. Then, I apply framing theory of Entman (1993) to analyze the media’s highlighting and excluding certain aspects of the incidents in its reportage, with special consideration of elements related to the military ideology. After that, I analyze such frames (i.e. emphasis and omission) in news reports to see whether or not the published news pieces support the military junta’s way of defining and curbing political dissidents, evident in the military ideology.

---

<sup>6</sup> The numbers of copies were stated in the online publications as cited.

<sup>7</sup> From my interview with an employee, *The Nation* circulates 68,200 copies of printed newspaper to households (both Thai and non-Thai) daily.

## **1.7 Justification of the Study**

Media coverage is not simply an account of reality. Rather, it is the conscious and unconscious selective report of a situation by journalists, editors and the media broadcasters who all have particular understanding of an event and write about it from a particular perspective. The author is not just an individual, but a social subject who is affected by and contributes to production of the dominant ideas and ideologies through the media. My research finding will decode media frames used to describe military's action in order to understand relationship of media towards junta ideology, subtly woven in news coverage.

## **1.8 Scope of the Research**

My study has some limitations. First, statements from news sources (i.e. press conference and interview given by government officials or police) are in Thai. They may be not accurately translated into English because some Thai words cannot be literally replaced by English ones while remaining exactly the same sense intended by the sources. Second, the news coverage which I use is limited to only one media agency and to a very specific event that attracts the media. Thus, my research results are not to be taken as representative of Thai media in general. Third, my previous work experience in journalism would be, on the one hand, helpful this research as I know very well the context of the media which is significant for the analysis; on the other hand, it can be an obstacle because I have worked during the military junta's rule and have been too familiar with the context, so may not always see the excluded aspect in the texts.

## **1.9 My Positionality towards the Topic**

The research topic is inspired by the polarized politics in Thailand where I live and work for promoting understanding of human rights. My previous jobs positioned me in the opposition to the pro-military government news agency and the military. I cannot neutralize myself as an activist of pro-democracy and anti-militarism. However, I strongly hope that this research would bring me to explore and understand ideas I have been opposing. Eventually I expect that I could see or create a neutral space where both conflicting parties are comfortable to discuss and exchange their ideas as a means to resolve the conflict.

## Chapter 2 : Theoretical Perspectives

The focus of my research is on framing (media's highlighting and excluding certain aspect of reported events) and the relationship between the media frames and the military junta ideology. In this section I draw theoretical discussions about ideology and framing theory articulated by different scholars that consider the idea of inclusion and exclusion in text. Then I explain theoretical perspective used in this analysis. Finally, I demonstrate how I adopt this theoretical framework to answer my research questions.

Framing has been theorized in different ways by various scholars. In this research I focus on framing theory, on inclusion and exclusion in the texts, and the relationship between dominant socio-political and other frames (such as media frames). Framing in media can be defined as a process in which journalists report particular aspect of a phenomenon while leaving out others, by using common language shared in a given society (Entman (1991, 1993), Gitlin (2003), Pan and Kosicki (1993), Tankard (2001). It is vital to note differences in the techniques of identifying salient, as well as omitted, elements and the functions of framing.

Tankard (2001) introduces "list of frames" approach to identifying frames by looking at eleven elements in news text: "headlines, subheads, photographs, photo captions, leads, selection of sources, selection of quotes, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, and concluding statements" (Tankard 2001: 101). However, in his work on "The Empirical Approach to the Study of Media Framing" Tankard does not explain how each element plays a role in making certain dimensions in news story salient.

Pan and Kosicki (1993: 55-56) use the term "signifying elements" to suggest distinct components in news text. Importantly, they assert that those elements must contain "devices" that motivate audience to "process" the information. That is, Pan and Kosicki see framing function in the way that discourse in the news text must correspond to common rules or norms in the society, so that the text and the message are understandable to the audience (1993: 59).

Gitlin (2003) adds that frames must be constant in arranging discourse in the text or imagery (2003: 7). Dissimilar to Pan and Kosicki (1993), Gitlin does not touch on existing system of organizing ideas of audience as news reader.

The most comprehensive theorization of framing, I would claim, is that of Entman (1993). He contends that framing is to include and exclude "certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts of judgements" (1993: 52). He clearly argues that highlighted elements are made by their recurrence or connection with audience's system of organizing ideas (1993: 53). Furthermore, Entman does not engage the function of framing as merely inclusion and exclusion in news coverage to bring about particular understanding and perception. He asserts that framing is intended "to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, and moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (1993: 52).

Nevertheless, identification of absent or excluded elements is not substantively elaborated by the scholars above. This would be a challenge in identifying excluded components in news text for carrying out the analysis. My solution to this lack of technical identification of the absence is to provide relevant socio-political context from various sources that disclose details excluded from the news text.

Having explored the literature on framing as inclusion and exclusion, I then look for theoretical framework for analyzing the relationship between the media frames and the dominant socio-political frames – in this case the frames offered by the military junta (which I refer to as ideology). Entman's (2003: 417-418) conceptualization of frame contestation continuum - from dominance to parity – is helpful here. He asserts that framing is used to “promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution” for one party against the other by making frames resonant culturally and prominent in the text, as well as images (Entman 2003: 417). Frame dominance is seen in the text which provides one-sided interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution in a way that comports with audience's culture while excluding dissenting frames. Frame parity, on the other hand, contains “counter-frame” that gives equal prominence and cultural resonance to interpretations and evaluations of two or more conflicting parties (Entman 2003: 418). Entman applies four functions of framing to locate media frame in the continuum from dominance to parity, revealing relationship between media frames and the dominant socio-political ones, i.e. reinforcing or undermining each other. These four functions are: problem definition; causal interpretation; moral evaluation; and/or solution.

In addition to framing, the concept of ideology is the vital basis for understanding the military junta's dominant frame and for investigation of the relationship between the media frame and the military junta frame. Van Dijk (2006: 120) defines ideologies as “foundational beliefs that underlie the shared social representations of specific kinds of social groups”. The military junta, in this research, is taken as a group that holds certain belief about political dissidents, society and its self-positionality. According to Van Dijk (1998: 24-25) social function of ideologies is to enable actors to determine goal, interest, and interaction with members of other groups. The military junta has particular goal and interest in exercising powers in certain ways towards political dissidents and society. Because of its institutional control over media, it is the dominant source of information and thus seen by the media as appropriate to be reported from. News reports thus tend to be aligned with the military junta's ideology (Fowler 1991: 22-23, Kuo and Nakamura 2005: 394).

Van Dijk's (1998, 2006) concept of ideology grounds clear theoretical understanding of the military junta dominant frame: ways of perceiving political dissidents and determining its actions accordingly as indicated in the army's publications and in the specific sections of the Interim Constitution. I find Entman's framing theory and frame contestation continuum elaborated above important for answering my sub-research questions: what and how does the media include, highlight and exclude in the reportage?; and how does the media's framing relates to the military junta's dominant frame and ideology that informs it?

With respect to the first sub-question, Entman clearly provides a concrete approach to see how media frames include and exclude certain aspects of reality through the four functions of framing.. The phenomenon of the military

junta's suppression of dissent can be interpreted differently by at least two opposing frames: the dominant one of the military junta, and the subordinate one of the political dissidents. Entman's framing theory helps me conduct systematic analysis of the news text. That is, it helps me to decode the salient elements – those that define problem and its causes, offer moral judgements, and suggest solutions – and the omitted ones – those that have potential to function the same way, but in an opposite direction (i.e. create a counter-frame, or an opposite view on the problem) which are largely derived from the socio-political context I provide in this study.

Regarding the second sub-question, the frame contestation continuum is a useful parameter for investigating the relationship between media's frame and the military junta's one. More specifically, seeking for counter-frame in the salient elements would enable me to judge whether the media frame reinforces or undermines the dominant frame expressed by the military junta.

To adopt this theoretical framework to my analysis of news coverage, I look for prevalence of specific terms in the texts, by their repetition or cultural congruence, and also reflect on excluded views and information. Then, I group the highlighted and excluded elements into two major categories according to the actors described: state authorities and political dissidents. After that, I classify them according to the four functions of framing in order to see the ways in which journalists frame phenomena and different actors. By then, I could make a conclusion on the media's highlighting and omitting certain aspects of the reported incidents.

The media frames refined through the process above are assessed to find out the extent to which counter-frame against the military junta frame is articulated in the texts. In this phase I assume the military junta's frame that defines political dissidents as problem and offers solutions to the dissidence as indicated in the prescription of the military junta's and the appointed agencies' powers in the newly created laws. I thereby examine whether the emphasized elements in the news texts and the omitted ones, but potentially made to be salient, reinforce or undermine the dominant frame manipulated by the military junta.

## Chapter 3 : Military Junta Ideology and the Media

Media's framing the incidents of the military junta's suppression of political dissidents was largely influenced by the dominant frame which was developed by the military junta ideology. In this chapter I explore such ideology and means of converting it into imperative practices by the military junta so that the media had to or made choice to comply with the dominant frame.

### 3.1 Military Junta Ideology Dominating the Media Sphere

In this section I give my analysis of ideology that underlies ways in which the military junta defined its goal, interest and threats (e.g. political dissidents), and determined its actions accordingly by adopting the Van Dijk's (1998, 2006) conception of social function of ideologies. And then I provide empirical description of how military ideology was operationalized by the military junta and became dominant in the society, specifically in the media.

#### *Military Junta Ideology*

In order to find out the military junta's ideology I analyze two groups of materials. The first consists of *The Handbook on Indoctrination and Enhancement of Soldier Ideology*<sup>8</sup> (CDS 2011) and article from *The Army and Its Threats* (Pisek 2015)<sup>9</sup>. The second is the preamble section, and articles 44, 45 and 46 in the 2014 Interim Constitution.

The first materials portrays ideology of the army force, not the military junta, in the sense that the army is accepted by the people to protect and honour the monarchy, safeguard the national security and unity, and take care of happiness of the people (CDS 2011). Soldiers of the army withhold the virtue as the highest value in carrying out these tasks:

The highest standard of virtue for a soldier to devote himself to the Nation, the Religions, the Monarchy, and the People by showing loyalty, adherence to honour and dignity of soldier, and holding responsibility for the duties and devotion.<sup>10</sup> (CDS 2011: 20)

Moreover, citizens have a role in protecting the unity of the nation, the religions and, most importantly, the King (CDS 2011: 1-2). Those who have different views engendered by politics are regarded as threat because they cause conflicts, use violence, infringe law, and eventually harm social unity (Pisek 2015: 27).

The second materials show the army-dominated military junta's framework of taking actions on behalf of the society and the monarchy which, apparently, the army ideology underlies. These materials mainly address the king and

---

<sup>8</sup> Unofficial translation by the researcher

<sup>9</sup> Unofficial translation by the researcher

<sup>10</sup> The original text is in Thai. This quote is translated into English by the researcher.

the public or the society, as the most important components of the country and thus require protection by the military junta. The Constitutional preamble points out that the military junta, the so-called the *National Council for Peace and Order*, had to launch the coup because it saw “division” in the society and damages to “public safety” caused by widespread violent conflicts (Constitution (Interim) 2014: 1). The article 44 prescribes that the military junta has powers to do any action to ensure, among others, “unity”, “public order”, and “national security”,

In the case where the Head of the National Council for Peace and Order deems necessary for the purpose of reforms in various fields, for the enhancement of unity and harmony among people in the country, or for the prevention, restraint, or suppression of any act which undermines public order or national security, the Monarchy, the national economy, or State affairs, irrespective of whether such act occurred inside or outside of the Kingdom, the Head of the National Council for Peace and Order, with the approval of the National Council for Peace and Order, shall have power to order, restrain, or perform any act, whether such act has legislative, executive, or judicial force; the orders and the acts, including the performance in compliance with such orders, shall be deemed lawful and constitutional under this Constitution, and shall be final. (Constitution (Interim) 2014: 20-21).

Moreover, the articles 45 and 46 affirm that the Interim Constitution is the highest law in the country; there must not be any law “contrary to or inconsistent with” it (Constitution (Interim) 2014: 21).

Considering these materials altogether gives a more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which the military junta operationalized the army ideology to rule the country. Henceforth, this operationalized ideology will be called *military junta ideology*. It is clear that the military junta identified itself as the legitimate institution – on whom people rely for their happiness and national security (CDSO 2011) – that has responsibility to halt political conflicts by taking action (as prescribed in the article 44) for “unity and harmony”, “public order”, and “national security” of the country. Thereby, junta has an authority to suppress political dissidents whom it defined as “threat” (Pisek 2015: 27). This military junta ideology is not only consolidated in law, but also became dominant frame, at least, in political and media sphere.

### *Make “It” Dominant*

The military junta ideology was transformed into the dominant frame for state authorities to run public administration and, especially, to deal with political dissidents since the coup in May 2014. As the Interim Constitution was promulgated, the military junta claimed authority prescribed in the article 44 to issue a number of orders, the so-called “NCPO orders”. For example, the NCPO order number 1/2014 was issued to alter the nomination process of local councils’ members and local administrators by claiming “people’s unity” and “public order” (iLaw 2014). Regarding the suppression of political dissidents, the army ( i.e. military junta after the coup) had declared the Martial Law two days prior to the coup, resulting in systematic crackdown on those involved in public gatherings, criticizing the military junta and the state authorities. The

crackdown included arrest, incommunicado detention, filing charges, and sentencing to jail by military courts (TLHR 2015). The Army Chief General Prayut Chan-ocha read out a televised statement nationwide, saying: "The royal Thai army intends to bring back peace and order to the beloved country of every Thai as soon as possible" (Wade 2014). Later, in early 2015 the military junta lifted the Martial Law, and replaced it with NCPO 3/2015 to keep its authority to suppress political dissidents (Ehrlich 2015).

This dominant frame of curbing political dissidents was not limited to political domain, but was pervasive in news media due to the military junta's restriction on press freedom. One month after the coup the military junta set up five working groups to monitor media and ban content deemed "false information" or "causing public misunderstanding" (Prachatai 2014). A few months later it released order 97/2014 and 103/2014 prescribing the ban on publishing content critical of military, and power to shut down media outlets which fails to comply with orders and to prosecute journalists or responsible persons in military court (Human Rights Watch 2014). In July 2016, one month before the referendum date, the junta heightened restriction on media's content by issuing order 41/2016 to authorize the independent state media regulator, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), to shut down media outlets which violate the NCPO orders and laws (The Nation 2016). Disobedient media faced penalties for criticizing the constitutional draft. For example, the Red-Shirt aligned *Voice TV* was ordered to suspend two political opinion programmes for ten days (BBC Thai 2017).

In addition to various institutional constraints, self-censorship of the media also lent opportunity for the junta to impose dominant frame in news coverage. Journalists were not able or comfortable to pose questions on critical issues to some key junta figures, such as NCPO Head and Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-ocha, and NCPO Deputy-Chairman and Defence Minister Prawit Wongsuwan. These junta representatives always verbally intimidated and expressed anger against journalists, or refused to respond when asked about the constitutional draft. *The Nation* team also had issues concerning the military junta dominant frame. From my interview with the managing editor, she said *The Nation* was careful when reporting anti-charter movements in the run-up to the referendum, but she insisted that coverage of all the parties were balanced. However, a journalist of the team whom I interviewed said sometimes her coverage was edited by the editor to make it sound more "gentle".

### 3.2 Four Media Frames of News Coverage

The 24 texts selected for the analysis are portrayed through four major frames which give different features of salience and exclusion of the state authority actors and the dissidents: *normal power to suppress* frame; *law enforcement by key government figures*; *dissidents' criticism of the NCPO*; and *keeping order*. In the following chapters I elaborate such distinct characteristics of each frame, chapter by chapter, along with examples from the typical texts of the frames. However, there are four texts that do not precisely fit into any of the above frames: 7, 8, 9 and 24. They have characteristics shared by more than one frame. Thus, I decide to focus my analysis only on 20 texts.



## Chapter 4 : *Normal power to suppress* frame

Having examining 24 texts, I identified one frame which was used most often to describe the reported incidents: *normal power to suppress* frame. There are six texts (i.e. *coverage 6, 11, 20, 21, 22 and 23*) that fit into this frame. These texts provide more description of different state authority agencies' actions than dissidents' ones. The state authorities, namely the police, military officers or the NCPO, the military court, and the Election Commissioner, carried out criminal proceedings against particular groups of people whom they consider the opposition to their policies, including to the NCPO order. Their criminal proceedings were not challenged or undermined in the media by the idea of legitimacy of the junta and the opinions of the opposition about these actions were not given any space. Thus, it would seem to the reader that actions of the state authorities against dissidents were not just lawful (under the newly installed military junta laws) but were also legitimate. Consequently, the actions were portrayed in the media – and were to be perceived by the readers - as *normal*.

In this chapter, I bring some typical texts as examples to show how they frame the state authorities by highlighting their conduct of bringing criminal proceedings against opponents, while omitting to discuss the laws or the NCPO orders that form the basis of the actions against dissidents. Then I demonstrate how the texts frame dissidents of particular groups differently by representing their actions and associated identities while excluding their views against the state authorities.

### 4.1 Normal Power of State Authorities

#### *Emphasis on Criminal Proceedings*

The *normal power to suppress* frame puts considerable emphasis on criminal proceedings of the state authorities, especially the police officers, in cracking down on the people who expressed opinions or possessed information about the constitutional draft that the military junta regarded as “distortion”. The authorities' actions are described in detail, accounting for half or more text. This particular aspect is made salient not only by overwhelming description of these acts in the texts, but also by writing about them in a way that is familiar to reader. It means that the *normal power to suppress* frame portrays the actions as usual practices which the state authorities had long been doing in society.

The frame presents police officers conducted criminal proceedings as they normally did under civilian rule. Police in Thai society have been perceived to be the legitimate law enforcers against crimes. The *coverage 21* depicts police officers carrying step-by-step criminal procedure against people involved in “distortion” documents: from first clues to arrest (see *Annex1.21, line 9-13, 17-18, and 23-29*). Words common in depicting regular police actions against crimes are used: “collected evidence”, “arrest warrants”, “conducted search”, “confiscated”, “the suspects”, etc.

Similarly, the military officers and the NCPO, apart from their joint operation with the police, are often associated with detention of dissidents at army camp. It had become usual case that military officers authorized by the NCPO orders summoned and detained dissidents – who prominently took part in anti-

coup protests or expressed criticism of the NCPO – at some military camps, for the purpose of what the NCPO called “attitude adjustment”. Dissidents were forced to sign an agreement stating they would not participate in any political action before being released. According to iLaw (2015) report, there were 666 civilians summoned to military camps from May to December 2014. During the first year Thai people received this military junta action via the NCPO televised broadcast and news report from media. Thence, NCPO’s power to summon and detain dissidents at military compound became familiar occurrence. The *normal power to suppress* frame reproduces the same normalizing narrative in the texts. For instance, *coverage 6* simply describes military detention of dissidents for “attitude adjustment” without giving explanation of how come the military junta had authority to detain civilian (see *Annex 1.6, line 33-36*).

Despite its rare appearance in the texts, the military court is presented as a judicial authority over civilian cases. In the normal circumstance military court is not used to try civilians. *Coverage 23* shows that the military court denied bail request from civilian dissidents without providing source of its exceptional authority, i.e. NCPO order, in this specific case (see *Annex 1.23, line 1 and 5-7*).

The Electoral Committee in this frame is portrayed as an authority who cracked down on “distortions” of the constitutional draft. The EC had actually been acknowledged as an independent institution for organizing elections. But this frame presents it as an NCPO’s ally who hunted dissidents. For example, EC formed up a committee to monitor criticisms produced and disseminated through the Internet which the media news refers to as “online offences” (see *Annex 1.11, line 26-33*).

#### *Exclusion for Making Power “Normal”*

The above state authority actions are normalized by exclusion of laws and/or NCPO order in the texts. The texts in the *normal power to suppress* frame do not mention specific laws and/or NCPO order while describing the state authorities’ crackdown on dissidents. They merely present the state authority actions and allegation against dissidents. For example, *coverage 20* details the police action of arresting a person who had allegedly distributed “distorting” draft content (see *Annex 1.20, line 8-10*). This text does not refer the allegation of “distortion” to the Referendum Act – which was put into effect by the junta-appointed National Legislative Assembly and criminalized false information against the draft – and the NCPO order 3/2015 – which grants the state officers appointed by the NCPO to suppress dissidents. Such exclusion renders ideas that the media takes the Referendum law and the NCPO order for granted, that it normalizes the police and the military actions to suppress anyone who possessed or distributed “distorted” draft. The term “distortion” also constitutes this frame, which I will elaborate in the section 4.2.

Another example is absence of NCPO order 3/2015 in presenting military detention by the NCPO. *Coverage 6* retells a statement given by the deputy commander of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Military Circle in Khon Khaen province, saying the NCPO detained two people at military camp (see *Annex 1.6, line 33-36*). The text does not indicate the NCPO order 3/2015 as source of authority to detain civilians who criticized the military junta. In addition, the text even shows responsibility of the NCPO for detaining people who committed offences according to *normal* law, namely the Computer Crimes Act. This absence of the NCPO order

suggests an idea that military detention was a legal measure in enforcing a normal law. In such framing, the junta laws are legitimized, and the state authorities' actions normalized.

## 4.2 Dissidents as Victims of State Authorities

### *Framing Dissidents Differently*

Although the *normal power to suppress* frame heavily stresses the description of state authority actions, it is interesting to examine noticeable differences of framing particular groups of dissidents as the victims of authorities' actions. In this frame there are three groups of dissidents whose identities and alleged actions are framed differently: the eleven letter-distributors; the ten online offenders; and the Red-Shirts.

The group of eleven letter-distributors is prominent in this frame (*coverage 20, 21, 22 and 23*). The texts always select certain people in this group and bring them up as "top politicians in Chiang Mai" when referring to the whole eleven people. Hence, the news coverage usually calls them "the eleven, including top politicians from Chiang Mai", giving them image of politicians, rather than critics or activists. Also, the texts notes that they were alleged to produce and disseminate "distorting" the constitutional draft (see *Annex 1.20, line 4-5; Annex 1.21, line 6-7; Annex 1.22, line 7-8; and Annex 23, line 6-7*). The texts do not present these documents in way that would influence the public decision to vote for or against the referendum. Such portrayal of alleged action disguises ability of the eleven distributors to make persuasive argument regarding the draft that could encourage public to make certain vote decision.

The *coverage 6* associates the ten online offenders with alleged action of posting "online criticism and sarcastic messages" (see *Annex 1.6, line 19*). The term "criticism" suggests slightly more idea that the offenders had made some arguments about the draft. And *coverage 11* describes the Red-Shirts did "political gathering" and activities that had impact on public (see *Annex 1.11, line 14-15 and 33*). Moreover, this group of dissidents has their own name, the Red-Shirts or the UDD (United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship), unlike the other two. These descriptions of the actions render an idea that they were organized movement and able to influence public opinion. As I have elaborated in this paragraph, even though all of the dissidents are subject to the state authority actions due to their opposition to the draft in this frame, each of the is described in particular way, and thus seen differently by reader.

### *Absence of Dissidents' Courage and Opinions*

All the texts in the *normal power to suppress* frame feature similarity in frequent omission of the dissidents' identity as activist and of description of dissidents' opinions about the draft. As shown above, each group is described differently, such as people who distorted the draft, posted sarcastic content online, but seldom as "activists". The term "activists" appears to refer to the ten online offenders two times (see *Annex 1.6, line 23 and 37*); the number (e.g. "all 10") and other terms (e.g. "others", "men", "those detained") are usually used instead. The Red-Shirts, are named "activists" once (see *Annex 1.11, line 15*); the group's name, the Red-Shirts and the UDD, is usually used. Evidently "activists" is never used to describe the eleven letter-distributors. This group is always named

by “the 11 suspects” and “the 11 people”, and as a result, is likely to be seen as criminals, not critics or activists. The point that I intend to make here is that all three groups were courageous to challenge the state authorities by expressing opinions against the constitutional draft, as well as the military junta, by different means, but their identity as “activist” which would signify their courage to stand up for freedom to expression is frequently omitted from this frame. Unlike the other group of dissidents, namely the NDM, in other frames, the term “activists” is usually placed after the group’s name, “the NDM activists”.

Besides the frequent absence of “activist” as identity in referring to the three groups, their opinions against the draft are never described. The texts only mention the allegation made by the state authorities. For example, *coverage 6* merely describes the ten online offenders’ action as “posting online criticism and sarcastic messages on the NCPO, the draft constitution, and the prime minister” (see *Annex 1.6, line 19-20*). The text does not literally show the wording used by the dissidents that the NCPO alleged to be “criticism and sarcastic”. Similar to *coverage 20*, the text does not show the content of the letters which the police claimed to be “distortion” of the draft, but only says “[the evidence] included many copies of a letter distorting content of the draft” (see *Annex 20, line 17*). It is important for reader to know what kind of expression is used in the letters in order for them to critically think whether or not those should be seen as illegal. Hence, it is taken for granted that the actions of the dissidents are illegal after the state authorities made allegations. The absence of dissidents’ expression about the draft may be caused by legal constraint of the media. Since the Referendum Act prohibited dissemination of “distorted” information about the draft, the media might be afraid to provide description of the alleged document in the texts.

### 4.3 Conclusion

The *normal power to suppress* frame considerably highlights actions of the police, the NCPO, the military court and the EC in carrying out criminal proceedings to crack down on dissidents. Its exclusion of the Referendum Act and the NCPO orders from the description of the state authority actions makes the power to suppress dissidents *normal*, thus unquestioned. Emphasis of the state authorities’ *normal* power becomes more salient by presenting dissidents in ways that exclude their identity as activists who were brave to criticize the draft, and such reporting legitimized the actions and the allegations made by the state authorities.

## Chapter 5 : *Law enforcement by key government figures frame*

The *law enforcement by key government figures* frame pushes forwards the normalizing and legitimizing frame. I find four typical texts (i.e. *coverage 2, 4, 5 and 15*) in this frame. They depict two high-ranking government officials, namely Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha, and Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan, as the key figures defending imperative of legal actions and warning general public of getting involved in campaigning against the constitutional draft and the referendum. The two persons are the chairman and the deputy chairman of the NCPO which seized control from civilian government by military coup in May 2014. Yet, the texts portray these two figures as regular government officials, not the NCPO members. In the first section I show the ways in which the texts emphasize these two government figures expressing legal enforcement in suppressing *unnamed* dissidents in an imperative manner. And in the second section, I uncover the significance of their NCPO positions and names of the dissidents which are excluded from the texts.

### 5.1 Government Figures' Imperative

The texts highlight statements given by Prayut and Prawit about their strong determination to enforce laws against campaigning activities regarding the charter draft and the referendum. Quotes and paraphrased statements of the two figures are repeated in the headline, the leads and the texts. Their names and government positions, instead of their military junta positions are mentioned. Such presentation renders a sense that the two individuals were the leading figures of the regular government, who conducted regular law enforcement activities.

The texts label Prayut as “Prime Minister”, and Prawit as “Deputy Prime Minister”. These positions belong to the government which is supposed to be formed up as a result of fair general election according to civil constitution. Labelling the two coup makers gives an idea that Prayut and Prawit enjoy popular support from Thai constituency to suppress dissidents by enforcing law. In other words, the two figures are represented in the texts as the legitimate authorities to crack down on campaigning against the draft and the referendum.

Prayut is further framed in an imperative fashion by the verbs used in the texts. His actions of enforcing law against dissidents are described by *determining* verbs. For instance, *coverage 4* is headlined “Prayut confirms campaign ban ahead of referendum but critics still defiant”, *coverage 5* “Prayut puts priority on enforcing new referendum law”. The term “confirms” and “puts priority” render a meaning that Prayut was the highest authority to control direction of state’s legal action against campaigning. Moreover, his actions are portrayed by *offensive* verbs in *coverage 15*, for example, “Those behind ‘fake’ [quotation marks used by the text] booklet face jail: PM”, and “The prime minister yesterday warned”. The term “face jail” and “warned”, which were addressed directly to people who participated in campaigning activities, depicts Prayut not simply as the director of legal authority, but the powerful figure who can threaten people.

## 5.2 Exclusion for Disguising the Junta Image

Exclusion of Prayut's and Prawit's positions in the NCPO from the media reports helps heighten their status as the government authorities in carrying out legal actions against dissidents. Prayut's position of the NCPO chairman is only mentioned once in *coverage 15* (see *Annex 1.15, line10-11*). Omitting their NCPO positions from the texts erases a fact that the NCPO, or the military junta, is a crucial force behind the referendum, and, specifically in this case, normalized the law such as the Referendum Act to crack down on the oppositions. Therefore, such exclusion creates an understanding that Prayut and Prawit did not *play politics* against dissidents, rather they enforced the law to *bring offenders to justice*.

Besides the NCPO positions, name of dissent group is mostly not mentioned while describing the government officials' actions and allegations, except in the *coverage 2* where the name of academic network is indicated. The texts most often do not specify who are the dissidents which the state figures alleged to get involved in "distortion" of the draft or campaigning activities. Instead, for example, *coverage 4* uses the term "people" to represent the dissidents (see *Annex 1.4, line 46*), and *coverage 15* "many people" and "some people" quoted from Prayut's interview (see *Annex 1.15, line 7, 16 and 23*). This failure to identify specific group of dissidents suggests that any person might be subject to penalty prescribed in the Referendum Act. It means that the penalty should have impact on wide range of the public. In this sense the exclusion of specific dissent group's name strengthens the idea, as I have argued above, that the two key government figures did not play politics against certain group, but generally enforced the law for social justice.

## 5.3 Conclusion

The *law enforcement by the key government figures* frame emphasizes Prayut and Prawit as the prominent government officials who controlled the direction of law enforcement against campaigning activities in the matter of constitutional draft and the referendum. The texts in this frame spotlight their government status, instead of their NCPO positions. Description of their actions shows their determination and power. This way of framing portrays that Prayut and Prawit have highest authority to enforce law against dissidents, without questioning legitimacy of their positions. Furthermore, exclusion of dissent group's name and the use of "people" underpins an assumption that everybody can be seen as a threat and thus can be legitimately threatened by these two men.

## Chapter 6 : *Dissidents' criticism of the NCPO frame*

The *dissidents' criticism of the NCPO frame* has totally different features from the previous frames. Four texts (i.e. *coverage 1, 3, 12 and 14*) found to fit into this frame provide detailed criticisms of the NCPO from three major groups: the network of academics; two prominent Pheu Thai<sup>11</sup> politicians; and the NDM activists. Yet, it is noticeable that the texts' presentation style varies according to each group of dissidents. Moreover, the frame de-emphasizes conflicts between the NCPO and the dissidents, except in the case of the Pheu Thai politicians (*coverage 3*). In the following section, I show how criticisms of the NCPO by the dissidents dominates the texts and how it is differently arranged according to each group. And then I analyze significance of exclusion of NCPO's actions from some of these texts.

### 6.1 Attention Drawn to Dissidents

Despite more emphasis on the dissidents' opinions than the state authority actions, this frame allocates varying degree of importance to each group of dissidents by presenting their views about the constitutional draft and the NCPO in different styles.

The network of academics gained the most attention from the media. Detailed description of their criticisms dominates more than half of the texts in *coverage 12 and 14*; only a few lines are dedicated to the state authority actions against not the academic network, but other groups of dissidents. *Coverage 12* describes action against the NCPO's prohibition of campaigning, concern about current political situation, and petition of the academics (see *Annex 1.12, line 6-8, 10-14 and 25-30*). Also, *coverage 14* lists clearly the various areas of criticisms of the NCPO actions from each well-known academic of the same network: calling for NCPO to respect human rights, liberty and democracy; introducing positive side of allowing free campaign; and criticism of the Referendum Act for the lack of rule of law (see *Annex 1.14, line 11-28*). This text brings up a clear criticism of specific provision in the Referendum Act from a law professor of a famous university:

Saowatri Suksri, a law lecturer at Thammasat University, said Clause 2 of Section 61 of the Referendum Act was not in line with criminal law principles. She said the section was vaguely written. People did not know what they could and could not do as the law could be broadly interpreted. (see *Annex 1.14, line 25-28*)

The text not only gives description of the criticisms in detail, but also mentions academics' names and institutions. This presentation style significantly highlights individual academic's presence and standpoint towards the constitutional draft and the referendum.

Description of criticisms by the Pheu Thai politicians is less extensive than those of academics in *coverage 3*. Their criticisms revolve around the

---

<sup>11</sup> Pheu Thai is one of the prominent political parties in Thailand. It always wins seats from the North and Northeastern parts of Thailand in general elections.

NCPO's violation of right to freedom of expression during the referendum period, which are substantiated by a mention of the interim constitution and the international human rights principles. For instance, the text says:

[Chaturon Chaisang] said the NCPO had not abided by Section 4 of the interim constitution or Article 19 of the UN General Assembly's Universal Declaration of Human Rights because opponents to the drafts were not allowed to voice their opinions in public. (see *Annex 1.3, line 29-31*)

Similar to *coverage 12* and *14* (about the academic network), this text mentions the dissidents' names and positions: Watna Muangsook, former commerce minister and prominent Pheu Thai politician; and Chaturon Chaisang, a key Pheu Thai member (see *line 7, 11 and 18*). However, presentation of their criticism is different from that of academics, and is combined with information about their actions of wielding international supports (see *line 7-12 and 18-23*) and the account of NCPO action of suppression (see *line 15-17, and 24-25*). Therefore, the text depicts these dissidents' opinions while slightly overshadowing them by inserting other information.

The NDM activists' criticism is the least addressed in the text (*coverage 1*) in comparison with the other two groups. Although the description about the NDM's activities dominates the text, their views are presented briefly in a few sentences, for instance:

[T]he single-ballot electoral system, the non-MP prime minister, and the authorization of the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) as well as its weapon – Article 44 – to stay in power for at least 15 months after the charter is promulgated. (see *Annex 1.1, line 12-15*)

The text does not unpack these points that the dissidents criticise, but leaves them vague. It is impossible for reader to understand the NDM's reasons of, for example, criticizing “the single-ballot electoral system” and “the non-MP prime minister”. While looking at the presentation of the views of the academics and the Pheu Thai politicians I find that portrayal of the NDM in *coverage 1* is less sufficiently given evidence to support its arguments. Also, the structure of the text about NDM's criticism (see *line 12-15 and 34-41*) is different, interrupted by detailed explanation about the NDM's background movement and current activities (see *line 17-32*).

## 6.2 Less NCPO Suppression, More Dissidents' Anti-Charter Image

Salience of the dissidents' opinions is not made only by detailed description of their criticism of the junta's laws but also by an absence of the NCPO action against them. The texts of *coverage 1, 12 and 14* downplay role of the NCPO in responding to the actions and opinions of these individuals and groups, and thereby leaves an impression that they are free to express their views.

*Coverage 1* mentions in one sentence an NDM activist's statement that the group was allowed by the police to run campaigning activities (see *Annex 1.1, line 33*). Even though the text gives a rather detailed description about the police action in the final paragraph (see *line 46-52*), it is not related to the NDM activists, but another dissent group. Thus, the coverage does not inform the readers that NDM activists had been charged for violating the Martial Law and NCPO



orders following their public rallies against the military coup in June 2015 (Prachatai 2015).

In the same vein, *coverage 14* does not add an account of the military junta harassment and suppression of the two academics, Chanvit Kasetsiri, and Saowatri Suksri. In 2015 Chanvit attempted to organize an activity at Thammasat University where he worked as a professor, but was barred by the NCPO who claimed that the activity had hidden agenda (Prachachat Thurakij 2015). In 2014 Saowatri was intercepted by Immigration officer delegated by the military junta for not reporting herself to the NCPO following the summon which claimed to “keep order” and “resolve the problem” (Voice TV 2014).

Such exclusion of NCPO suppression of the NDM activists and some academics in the past highlights the dissidents’ current position against the draft charter, and leaves an impression of freedom of political expression and association. Moreover, it also tones down the perception that these dissidents position themselves as the extreme opposition to the military junta.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The *dissidents’ criticism of the NCPO* frame spotlights the opinions of three groups regarding the constitutional draft and the NCPO in different degree. The frame favours the academic network the most by clearly presenting each individual academic’s criticisms in sophisticated fashion. This frame also portrays the Pheu Thai politicians’ criticisms in detail, but diminishes consistency of criticisms by putting story of military junta suppression in between. Through this frame, opinions of the NDM activists are rendered vague, not elaborated. This results in the lack of substantive position against the draft and the military junta. The exclusion of the military junta’s suppressive actions against these individuals and groups in the past renders their criticism of the junta-made laws normal, as if their views are given in the context of the country that enjoys full freedom of speech and association. .

## Chapter 7 : *Keeping order* frame

The last frame I identified in the news coverage is the *keeping order* frame. There are only two out of the 24 news texts conforming to the frame: *coverage 13* and *14*. Yet, these two texts have remarkable features about self-image and position of the state authorities towards suppression of dissidents. The *keeping order* frame gives prominence to description of the government's exercising authorities to maintain "order" and "neutrality" in the referendum process. Meanwhile, the frame leaves out elaboration on such keywords as "order" and "neutrality" which were the justification of the government to not allow people to express opinion regarding the constitutional draft and the referendum. Moreover, it de-emphasizes the influence of the NCPO in making and implementing government policies (i.e. the laws, constitutional draft, referendum etc.). In the following section, I explain how the government is made salient as an authority of ensuring "order" and "neutrality" in the texts. Then, I point out several elements made unclear and excluded from the texts, such as the term "order" and "neutrality", and analyse significance of this exclusion.

### 7.1 Government's "Order" and "Neutrality"

The *keeping order* frame pays strong attention to the government as the core state authority of keeping "order" while maintaining "neutral" position in the run-up to the constitutional referendum. *Coverage 13* contains one-third of the whole text explaining the government's project of "order centres": objective of establishing the "centres" (see *Annex 1.13, line 10-11, 14-16* and *22*); and approach to running the project (see *line 17-20*). These statements are substantiated by the NCPO's commitment to perform the same task as the "centres" (see *line 28-30*). Similarly, *coverage 19* provides half of the whole text describing the responsible authority, the Minister of Interior, delivering command to local state agencies to strictly implement the project (see *Annex 1.19, line 5-32*).

The heavy description of the government's implementation of "order centres" project is built upon the keywords "order" and "peace" together with other relevant terms (e.g. "smoothly", "commotion", "distorted", "settles", "usual", "unrest", etc.). These words are used to describe activities of the "order centres" for the purpose of suppressing dissent. For example, *coverage 13* brings a statement of the government spokesperson indicating the main responsibility of the "centres":

Sansern [the government spokesperson] said the centres would seek information on activity that caused commotion, distorted the charter draft's content or violated the referendum law, as well as handle matters in line with the public assembly bill. (see *Annex 1.13, line 14-16*)

The text of *coverage 19* stresses the government's self-positioning as "neutral" regarding running the "centres" and making decision on the referendum. The text explains the way in which the Interior Minister addressed the importance of "being neutral" in operation to his agencies:

The interior minister said that he had instructed officials of the government’s peace and order maintaining centres to maintain neutrality ahead the referendum. (see *Annex 1.19, line 27-28*)

“Everyone has to accept the result. Neutrality by authorities is essential. If people do not have faith in them, there could be disturbances,” he said. (see *line30-32*)

The government’s commitment to “neutrality” is strengthened by description of the EC’s instruction given to its officials at polling stations (see *line 41-45*). The text describes the EC’s action in a way that corresponds to the government policy (i.e. the “order centres”).

## 7.2 Unclear “Order” and Absent Junta

Despite of repetition of the favourable-sounded keywords “order and “neutrality”, the texts take for granted their meaning by not elaborating ways in which the government defined these terms. These vocabularies came out of the state authority’s mouths and were arbitrarily used by the media to report the state authority actions. It is significant for reader, as well as dissidents, that these words are clearly defined because the state authorities were exploiting the arbitrary use of these terms to justify their actions against dissidents whom they alleged to “distort” the draft constitution. For example, *coverage 19* describes the Interior Minister’s commanding his officials:

The interior minister instructed the ministry’s officials to maintain neutrality and help prevent any attempt to create unrest ahead of the August 7 national vote. (see *Annex 1.19, line 12-13*)

The text does not further elaborate the term “unrest” – which was initially used by the Minister in this case – after describing the Minister’s action. “Unrest” could be seen, on one hand, a positive action in which state authority allowed individuals to campaign peacefully, or a negative action in which individuals were forced to stay silent at home, on the other hand. Therefore, these vocabularies are treated as *normal* justification for the government to crack down on dissent.

In addition to the exclusion of important terms’ definition, the *keeping order* frame also neglects presence of the NCPO in the government. Interior Minister General Anupong Paochinda is portrayed as part of the government. The texts label this government official as the Interior Minister, omitting altogether his position in the NCPO as the vice chairman of advisory committee. This absence of NCPO position ignores the fact that the military junta actually controlled the government and the public administration, including the referendum process. Thus, the frame heightens legitimacy of the military junta in the name of the government to exercise authority to suppress dissidents.

## 7.3 Conclusion

The *keeping order* frame highlights the government actions of suppressing dissidents in the name of “order” and “neutrality”. The texts in this frame give detailed explanation of the ways in which the government and the Interior Minister put effort to run newly established “order centres” to deploy their officials to maintain “order” during the referendum process in a “neutral” manner. However, the frame leaves these two key terms “order” and “neutrality” undefined.

Also, it excludes NCPO position of the Interior Minister, and thereby disregards the dominance of military junta in government policy direction.

## Chapter 8 : Reflections of the Media Frames on Military Junta Ideology

I have elaborated on the four media frames and have analysed the ways in which texts highlight and exclude certain aspects of the incidents of the military junta's suppression of political dissidents. In this chapter I provide the synthesis of those four media frames in order to see the overall picture of how the media frame the events regarding referendum on the new Constitution. Then I look for counter-frames in the texts in order to see whether the media framing provide problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and remedy suggestion by both military junta and political dissidents.

### 8.1 The Media Frames in a Nutshell

The four media frames explained in the previous chapters are significant in projecting the pictures of military junta' suppression and political dissidents' criticisms. The *normal power to suppress* frame, the *legal enforcement by key government figures* frame and the *keeping order* frame portray different aspect of the phenomenon from the *dissidents' criticism of the NCPO* frame.

The first three frames normalize and legitimize the junta by downplaying the role of the NCPO in suppressing dissidents. They do so by highlighting the presence of the government, the top government officials and the police as the key actors of carrying out suppressive actions as if these were the regular police actions against criminal infringement. The *normal power to suppress* frame presents every single detail of the police actions of criminal proceedings against dissidents. This renders a sense that the frame is building a narrative of *crime scene* where the accused were caught by handcuffs and police officers confiscated evidence. When looking at the phenomenon through the *legal enforcement by key government figures* frame, one clearly sees General Prayut Chan-ocha and General Prawit Wongsuwan standing on the top of government and declaring official order to take legal actions against the dissidents. Similarly, the *keeping order* frame depicts the government and the Interior Minister as the key state authority to eradicate the dissidents in order for the referendum to run "smoothly".

At the same time, these three frames undermine an importance of dissidents' criticisms regarding the NCPO and the constitutional draft by excluding the description of dissidents' opinions about the draft that were alleged by the state authorities to be, for example, "distortion" and "commotion". The *normal power to suppress* frame highlights the state's allegations against dissidents, but does not dig up the allegations in order to disclose dissidents' opinions. The *legal enforcement by key government figures* frame blurs the figure of the NDM activists while paying much attention to the specific government officials by referring the dissidents as "people" which was initially spoken out by the government officials.

On the contrary, the *dissidents' criticism of the NCPO* frame uncovers another aspect of the phenomenon by promoting the presence of dissidents. This

frame provides large amount of description of dissidents' opinion regarding the NCPO and, to a lesser extent, the draft. It also describes the opinions of the dissidents addressed to the NCPO, rather than any other state agencies (i.e. the police and the government) which are the predominant actors in the other three frames. In addition, the frame elaborate the criticisms regarding the NCPO from various perspectives. It also specifically highlight the right to freedom of expression of individuals to run campaigning which is made silent, or de-emphasized, in the other three frames by talking about police actions, law enforcement and public "order" instead. But it does so by being silent about the NCPO's actions against these prominent dissidents.

## 8.2 Dominant Frame vs. Counter-frame

In this section I examine four functions of framing – i.e. problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and suggested remedies – embedded in each media frame in order to identify the dominant frame of the military junta and the counter-frame of the political dissidents. I call the frame of the dissidents "counter-frame" for it is dominated by the military junta frame as explained in *chapter 3*.

I find that the media frames the phenomenon in ambiguous way. Despite clear highlight and exclusion of certain elements, media frame does not purely contain one-sided frame, but combines and presents both the dominant frame and the counter-frame, albeit to different degrees. For example, the dominant frame is more prominent than the counter-frame in the media frame of normal power to suppress, and vice versa in the dissidents' criticism of the NCPO frame.

The *normal power to suppress* frame heavily consists of the dominant frame. It presents the phenomenon from the military junta's perspective. *Coverage 6* and *11* in this media frame describe rather clearly the way in which the military junta defined campaign against and criticism of the constitutional draft as the violation of law and NCPO order that needs to be suppressed by means of military detention, shutting down the campaign event, and monitoring the movement of dissidents. The texts show that the military junta saw this problem caused by the dissidents' misunderstanding about the NCPO and the constitutional draft and provoking the public. Whereas, *coverage 20* gives a counter-frame made by a dissent group, namely "Open Forum for Democracy Foundation (P-NET). This counter-frame states that: the P-NET perceived the lack of participation in the process of drafting the constitution as the problem because the state authority was not clear in enforcing law regarding the campaign; and the group proposed the state should respect liberty and participation of individuals by allowing them to voice opinions. However, the text does not make this counter-frame salient in comparison with the dominant frame which highlights the state authority actions in almost the whole text.

Similarly, the *legal enforcement by key government figures* frame consists to a large extent of the dominant frame. This media frame clearly gives perception of the military junta towards the dissidents and the way in which the military junta deal with dissidents and morally judged its action. *Coverage 4* presents Prayut's perception that: state authority should enforce the Referendum Act to

bring the dissidents who ran campaign into judicial procedure because these people “distorted” the information of the draft and influenced the public decision on the referendum. The text also indicates that Prayut was concerned about “order” for the public in taking action. One counter-frame is identified in *coverage 2*. It is of the Red-Shirt leader Nattawut Saikuar who interpreted the phenomenon completely contrarily to the dominant frame. The text defined detaining dissidents as the problem because it destroys the country’s reputation, and suggests a solution that the government should allow individual to express their opinions. But this counter-frame is not salient in the *legal enforcement by key government figures* frame which dedicates half of the text to the description of Prawit’s and EC’s actions.

Also, the *keeping order* frame remains within the dominant socio-political frame as produced by the military junta. The dominant frame here identifies, apart from “distortion” or “commotion” the “unrest” made by the dissidents as the problem, without stating its cause. This problem should be dealt with by monitoring the dissidents, finding the source of “distorted” document, and enforcing Referendum Act and Public Assembly Act. The military junta in this dominant frame claimed “order” and “neutrality” as the justification to deal with the problem. The *keeping order* frame also includes small extent of counter-frame of politicians from Democrat and Pheu Thai Party. This counter-frame sees public curiosity about the draft as the problem which needs to be resolved by holding talks among politicians and “non-extremist” academics or organizing a public discussion because this group of politicians believed in “free speech”.

The *dissidents’ criticism of the NCPO* provides strong counter-frame, especially, by the academics. The counter-frame defines the prohibition of campaign and detention of dissidents by the NCPO as the problem because such actions violated the basic right to freedom of expression. It evaluates the phenomenon based on the respect for fundamental human rights, i.e. the right to freedom of expression, and free and fair referendum. It proposes that the state authorities should allow campaigns and free the dissidents.

### 8.3 Ambiguous Distance from the State Authorities

Before moving to my analysis of military junta ideology in the media frames, it is important to note that the texts make certain distance from state authorities to various degrees, suggesting that *The Nation* did not completely agree with what state authorities said. The *legal enforcement by key government figures* frame shows very clear distance by using quotation marks (“...”) to present Prayut’s and Prawit’s statements. For example, *coverage 5* quotes Prayut’s affirmative statement about law enforcement: “The Act has to be respected” (see *Annex 1.5, line 11*). Also, the frame undermines the government figures’ determination to enforce law against dissidents by placing interrupting paragraphs that questions earlier statements. For instance, *coverage 2* and *5* put the EC’s indecisive action regarding the law enforcement right after the two government officials’ persistence (see *Annex 1.2, line 19-28*; and *Annex 1.5, line 20-26*).

Distance between the texts and the state authorities is present also in the *normal power to suppress* frame. Some texts use quotation marks to describe

the police's suspicions and allegations against dissidents as seen in *coverage 21*, "The initial evidence links some well-known local politicians and a famous family [to alleged wrongdoing]" (see *Annex 1.21, line 21-22*), and in *coverage 20*, "distorting" (see *Annex 1.20, line 5*). The term "alleged" (without quotation marks in the texts) is also used to distance the texts from the state authorities, for example, in *coverage 20*:

Evidence found during a search at the company was linked to letters that allegedly distorted the charter draft's content. (see *Annex 1.20, line 16-17*)

However, from my observation such technique of creating distance is not consistently used in the *normal power to suppress* frame. I find some texts do not use "alleged" or quotation marks to create distance from the state authority's allegation against dissidents. For instance, *coverage 6* directly describes the NCPO's accusation against the ten online offenders of "posting online criticism and sarcastic messages" (see *Annex 1.6, line 19*). *Coverage 20* follows the police narrative that evidence linked to the "distorted details about the draft" was found, and that a suspect of "attempting to cause disturbances" was under arrest (see *Annex 1.20, line 25 and 28*). Therefore, it is not clear that the *normal power to suppress* frame has created a distance from the state authorities due to the inconsistency of applying distancing terms and quotation marks in the texts.

Distance is hardly made in the *keeping order* frame. The frame highlights at least two key state-authority terms, such as "order" and "neutrality". In the texts these two keywords are mostly not put in quotation marks, suggesting that the media does not question the state authority's actions to ensure "order" and "neutrality" in the run-up to the referendum. For example, *coverage 13* describes the role of the "order centres" without quotation marks: "Sansern [the government spokesperson] said the centres would seek information on activity that caused commotion, distorted the charter draft's content..." (see *Annex 1.13, line 14-15*). *Coverage 19* does not create distance from the state-authority terms "peace", "unrest" and "misunderstanding" (see *Annex 1.19, line 1, 6, 13, 16, 26*), for instance, "Local administrators told to keep the peace ahead of referendum".

The *dissidents' criticism of the NCPO* sometimes creates distance from the dissidents while describing their opinions about the NCPO and the draft. For example, *coverage 14* which presents four academics expressing criticisms puts quotation marks in two academics' statements. *Coverage 3*, however, does not distance itself from a dissident accusing the NCPO of violation of human rights:

He [Pheu Thai politician Watana Muangsook] said the NCPO had not abided by Section 4 of the interim constitution or Article 19 of the UN General Assembly's Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (see *Annex 1.3, line 29-30*)

Hence, the position of *The Nation* remains ambiguous as its frames sometimes create distance from both the dissidents and the state authority.



#### 8.4 Legitimizing Military Junta's Suppression?

Military ideology is pervasive in the dominant socio-political frame (as elaborated in *Chapter 3*). To state the military ideology briefly, the army is a legitimate institution of protecting people's happiness and national security. People also hold responsibility to take care of national unity. If they disregard this role, for example, by causing conflict, they are deemed as "threat" by the army. This ideology can be identified from the three media frames. The *law enforcement by key government figure* frame portrays Prayut and Prawit as legitimate authority by referring to them as the top government officials, i.e. Prime Minister, and Deputy Prime Minister, respectively, ignoring their positions within the junta. It highlights that both government figures held strong command of law enforcement in the country, not specifically against any particular group of dissidents, but it never ask how those laws came into being. The *normal power to suppress* frame provides description of the military junta-assigned actions taken mostly by the police officers in line with the law. This frame treats the the dissidents as objects of police actions as *threat* in a sense that they were acting against the law by falsifying the official document (i.e. the constitutional draft). But the frame ignores the question whether the military junta itself is a legitimate power. The *keeping order* frame serves to show the goal of the military junta by emphasizing the state authority's statements about "peace" and "order", and in effect, again, normalizing and legitimizing the junta. However, these three media frames are challenged by the *dissidents' criticism of the NCPO* frame which provides substantive counter-frame. This last frame significantly argues against the military junta's perception of dissident; it depicts the right to freedom of expression to undermine the authority's notion of "order" and "distortion", but it also underplays junta's actions against these academics and prominent politicians.

Therefore, it is not precise to say that the media frames completely conform to the dominant frames and ideology of the military junta, and hence completely legitimize the military junta's suppression of political dissidents, despite of the prominence of the first three frames in the 24 texts. This is because while reproducing the dominant frame in the texts, from time to time *The Nation* keeps distance from what the state authorities – i.e. the junta - were saying. Nevertheless, it is also undeniable that *The Nation* pays much less attention to providing counter-frames to the military junta's ideology. Such framing, at the end, more or less reinforces the dominant frame and, as a result, fails to question the normalization and legitimacy of the military junta actions.

## Chapter 9 : Concluding Remarks

*The Nation* uses four frames to report military junta's suppression of political dissidents regarding the constitutional draft. Three frames portray the state authorities' actions with different highlighted aspects. The *normal power to suppress* frame gives detail about the police actions of criminal proceedings against dissidents. The *law enforcement by key government figures* frame pays specific attention to Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-ocha and Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan, two men who hold position within the junta installed government, depicting them as the major commanders for law enforcement in the country. The *keeping order* frame depicts the government as the "neutral" authority of keeping "order" in the run-up to the referendum. All three frames reproduce the dominant ideology of the military junta because the state authorities are presented as *legitimate* institutions of safeguarding people's lives and national security, defending them from dissidents who are depicted as having intention to cause conflict and confusion in the society. I do not claim that *The Nation* conforms to the dominant frame totally, but rather that this set of frames enable *The Nation's* reader to see more the military junta's perspectives and less the dissidents' ones.

*The Nation* also creates certain distance from the state authorities in the texts, using quotation marks and the word "alleged", warning reader of taking for granted the *facts* constructed by the state authorities. Stronger still, the dominant junta ideology is challenged in *The Nation* by the *dissidents' criticisms of the NCPO* frame which gives prominence to counter-frame created by the dissidents in a way that undermines *legitimacy and normalization* of the state authorities by highlighting the importance of the rights to freedom of expression of individuals, including the dissidents. But that frame is less prominent compared to the other three.

Therefore, my answer to the research question is that *The Nation's* framing allocates more dominance, in terms of framing to the state authorities than to the dissidents. Such way of framing should not be seen as unconditional legitimizing of the military junta's suppression of the dissidents by the journalists and the broadcaster.

# References

## Chapter 1

### *English-language sources*

- ABC (2014) 'Timeline: Events in the lead-up to Thailand's political unrest'. Accessed 11 May 2017 < <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-04/timeline-of-the-lead-up-to-thailands-political-unrest/5234094>>.
- Al Jazeera (2015) 'Thai ex-PM defends rice scheme at impeachment'. Accessed 11 May 2017 < <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2015/01/thai-ex-pm-defends-rice-scheme-at-impeachment-20151961514439238.html>>.
- Asian Correspondent (2014) '2006 – 2014: Thailand political crisis timeline'. Accessed 4 June 2017 < <https://asiancorrespondent.com/2014/01/2006-2014-thailand-political-crisis-timeline/#3p5C7W78fRfc8AK1.97>>.
- BBC (2012) 'Profile: Thailand's reds and yellows'. Accessed 4 June 2017 < <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13294268>>.
- BBC (2014) 'Deadly attack on Thai protest camp in Bangkok'. Accessed 11 May 2017 < <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27419558>>.
- BBC (2015) 'Thailand's controversial draft constitution explained'. Accessed 22 September 2017 <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34149522>>.
- Campbell, C. (2013) 'Thai Color Wars: Red and Yellow Shirts March in Bangkok'. Accessed 11 May 2017 < <http://world.time.com/2013/11/24/thai-color-wars-red-and-yellow-shirts-march-in-bangkok/>>.
- Corben, R. (2016) 'Thai Political Parties Oppose Draft Constitution'. Accessed 23 September 2017 < <https://www.voanews.com/a/thai-political-parties-oppose-draft-constitution/3279334.html>>.
- Entman, R.M. (1993) 'Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', *Journal of communication* 43(4): 51-58.
- Fuller, T. (2015) 'Thailand's Military Junta Rejects Draft Constitution'. Accessed 22 September 2017 < <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/07/world/asia/thai-draft-constitution-rejected-by-junta-backed-council.html?mcubz=0>>.
- Hodal, K. (2014) 'Thai anti-corruption body votes to impeach Yingluck Shinawatra'. Accessed 11 May 2017 < <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/08/thai-anti-corruption-impeach-yingluck-shinawatra>>.
- Human Rights Watch (2011) 'Descent in Chaos: Thailand's 2010 Red Shirt Protests and the Government Crackdown'. Accessed 5 June 2017 < <https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/05/03/descent-chaos/thailands-2010-red-shirt-protests-and-government-crackdown>>.
- Human Rights Watch (2016) 'Thailand: Activists, Journalist Arrested for Vote-No Campaign'. Accessed 23 September 2017 <

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/12/thailand-activists-journalist-arrested-vote-no-campaign>>.

Lefevre, A.S. (2016) 'Ousted former Thai PM criticizes draft constitution'. Accessed 23 September 2017 < <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-politics/ousted-former-thai-pm-criticizes-draft-constitution-idUSKCN0QM0XN20150817>>.

McElroy, D. (2014) 'Thailand army announces military coup as talks fail'. Accessed 11 May 2017 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/world-news/asia/thailand/10848854/Thailand-army-announces-military-coup-as-talks-fail.html>>.

Mimoun, R. and J. Brennan (2016) '[A Chance for Change in the New Thailand](#)'. Accessed 23 September 2017 < <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/18/a-chance-for-change-in-the-new-thailand/>>.

The Guardian (2014) 'Thai PM Yingluck Shinawatra in court over abuse of power claims'. Accessed 11 May 2017 < <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/06/thai-prime-minister-yingluck-shinawatra-court-abuse-power>>.

Tran, M. (2009) 'Two demonstrators killed as Thailand troops bid to end Bangkok unrest'. Accessed 5 June 2017 < <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/apr/13/thailand-bangkok-protests>>.

Van Dijk, T. (1998) 'Opinions and Ideologies in the Press, II in Approaches to Media Discourse Ed. A. Bell and P. Garrett'.

Watts, J. M. and W. Chomchuen (2014) 'Thai General Maps Return to Democracy'. Accessed 21 September 2017 < <https://www.wsj.com/articles/thai-economic-agencies-propose-budget-1401443868>>.

Weaver, M. (2008) 'Thailand prime minister to step down after court strips him of office'. Accessed 5 June 2017 < <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/dec/02/thailand-protests-somchai-wongsawat>>.

#### *Thai-language sources*

Bangkokbiznews (2016) '*Nor. Por. Chor. Perd Soon Prab Kong Prachamati* (Red Shirts Open Anti Referendum-related Fraud Centres)'. Accessed 23 September 2017 <<http://www.bangkokbiznews.com/news/detail/701118>>.

BBC Thai (2016a) '*Ror Dor Chit Ab Sah* (Reserve Officers Training Corps student Volunteers)'. Accessed 22 September 2017 < <https://www.facebook.com/BBCThai/posts/1743393205881712>>.

BBC Thai (2016b) '*Nor. Por. Chor. Perd Tha-barn Lai Pid* (The Red Shirts Open, The Military Closes)'. Accessed 23 September 2017 < <https://www.facebook.com/BBCThai/photos/a.1527194487501586.1073741828.1526071940947174/1786379261583106/?type=3&theater>>.

Centre for Doctrine and Strategy Development (2011) '*Koo Mue Karn Plook Fang Lae Serm Sang Udom Karn Tha Harn* (Handbook on the Indoctrination and Enhancement of Soldier Ideology)'. Accessed 23 July 2017 <

[http://www.cdsd-rta.net/index.php?option=com\\_abook&view=book&id=52:audomkan&catid=4:2015-11-24-08-58-07&Itemid=200](http://www.cdsd-rta.net/index.php?option=com_abook&view=book&id=52:audomkan&catid=4:2015-11-24-08-58-07&Itemid=200) >.

iLaw-freedom (2017) ‘*Chom Nitasakarn “Klai Klai Kor Pai Sarn Thabarn Dai Version Online* (Visit the exhibition “Anyone can go to military court” online version)’. Accessed 11 May 2017 <<https://freedom.ilaw.or.th/blog/ขมิ้นทรศกร-ใครๆก็ไปศาลทหารได้-เวอร์ชันออนไลน์>>.

Pisek, P. (2015) ‘Kong Thap Bok Kab Pai Kook Kam Roob Bab Tang Tang (Army and Its Threats)’. Accessed 23 July 2017 < [http://www.cdsd-rta.net/index.php?option=com\\_abook&view=book&id=53&catid=5:2016-04-28-08-00-11&Itemid=214](http://www.cdsd-rta.net/index.php?option=com_abook&view=book&id=53&catid=5:2016-04-28-08-00-11&Itemid=214) >.

Prachamati (2016) ‘*Mati Rattathummanoon* (Survey of People’s Opinion about the Constitutional Draft)’. Accessed 23 September 2017 < <https://www.prachamati.org/vote/constitution>>.

Prachatai (2016a) ‘*Krue-khai Prachachon Prakard Mai Rub Rang Rattathummanoon* (Civic Society Vowed to “Reject the Draft”)’. Accessed 23 September 2017 < <https://prachatai.com/journal/2016/07/67049>>.

Prachatai (2016b) ‘*iLaw Wikroh 7 Praden Rang Rattathummanoon Cha-bab Long Prachamati* (iLaw’s Analysis of 7 Points in the Constitutional Draft)’. Accessed 23 September 2017 < <https://prachatai.com/journal/2016/04/65102>>.

Siriyuvasak, U. (ed.) (2007) *Mass communication: media, culture and society*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press.

Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (2016a) ‘*Mue Jor. Mor. Wicharn Rang Rattathummanoon*’ *Thook Tham Hai Klai Pen Jor. Mor. Bid Buen* (When the ‘constitutional criticism letters’ were made to be the ‘distorted letters’)’. Accessed 23 September 2017 < <http://www.tlhr2014.com/th/?p=1367>>.

Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (2016b) ‘*Chao-na-thi Mor. Khor. Chaeng Kwam Nak-suek-sha Chad Kitchakam “Pood Pue Seree-phap Rattathummanoon Kab Kon Isan* (Local Authorities Charged the Students for Organizing “Speak for Freedom: Constitution and Northeastern Population”)’. Accessed 23 September 2017 < <http://www.tlhr2014.com/th/?p=1430>>.

Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (2016c) “The Force of the Gun Camouflaged as Law and a Justice System’. Accessed 23 September 2017 < [http://www.tlhr2014.com/th/?wpfb\\_dl=84](http://www.tlhr2014.com/th/?wpfb_dl=84)>.

Thailand Development Research Institute (2016) ‘*Krong Karn Sueksa Wichai Patiroop Sue* (Research on Media Reform: Roadmap Proposal to Media Reform for Regulating Broadcasting and Telecommunication)’. Accessed 26 October 2017 <<https://tdri.or.th/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Roadmap.pdf>>.

The National (2014) ‘Timeline on Thailand’s political crisis’. Accessed 11 May 2017 < <http://www.thenational.ac/world/southeast-asia/timeline-on-thailands-political-crisis>>.

Tnews (2016) 'Nielsen Puey Kod-sa-na Pee 58 Med Nhern Sa Pad 1.2 San Lan Terb To Kwa 3%' (Nielsen reveals 2015 Advertising Expenditure costs 1.2 hundred million, 3% growth)' Accessed 13 May 2017 <<http://www.tnews.co.th/contents/175742>>.

## Chapter 2

- Entman, R.M. (1991) 'Symposium Framing US Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents', *Journal of communication* 41(4): 6-27.
- Entman, R.M. (1993) 'Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', *Journal of communication* 43(4): 51-58.
- Entman, R.M. (2003) 'Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House's Frame After 9/11', *Political Communication*, 20(4): 415-432.
- Fowler, R. (1991) *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. Routledge.
- Gitlin, T. (2003) *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*. Univ of California Press.
- Kuo, S. and M. Nakamura (2005) 'Translation Or Transformation? A Case Study of Language and Ideology in the Taiwanese Press', *Discourse & Society* 16(3): 393-417.
- Pan, Z. and G.M. Kosicki (1993) 'Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse', *Political communication* 10(1): 55-75.
- Tankard, J.W. (2001) 'The Empirical Approach to the Study of Media Framing', *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*: 95-106.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1998) 'Opinions and Ideologies in the Press, I in Approaches to Media Discourse Ed. A. Bell and P. Garrett'.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2006) 'Ideology and Discourse Analysis', *Journal of political ideologies* 11(2): 115-140.

## Chapter 3

### *English sources*

- Constitution (Interim) 2014 (Thailand). Accessed 28 October 2017 <[http://web.krisdika.go.th/data/outside21/outside21/file/Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand \(Interim\),B.E. 2557 \(2014\).pdf](http://web.krisdika.go.th/data/outside21/outside21/file/Constitution%20of%20the%20Kingdom%20of%20Thailand%20(Interim).B.E.%202557%20(2014).pdf)>.
- Ehrlich, R.S. (2015) 'Thailand prime minister replaces martial law with stricter command'. Accessed 29 October 2017 <<http://www.washington-times.com/news/2015/apr/1/prayuth-chan-ocha-thailand-prime-minister-replaces/>>.
- Human Rights Watch (2014) 'Thailand: Two Months Under Military Rule'. Accessed 11 May 2017 <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/21/thailand-two-months-under-military-rule>>.

- iLaw (2014) 'Report on the Exercise of Power under Section 44 of the Interim Constitution of Thailand'. Accessed 29 October 2017 <<https://www.ilaw.or.th/node/3938>>.
- Prachatai (2014) 'Thai junta to censor media causing "hatred toward monarchy"'. Accessed 11 May 2017 <[http://prachatai.org/english/node/4168?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=facebook](http://prachatai.org/english/node/4168?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook)>.
- The Nation (2016) 'Junta gives more power to NBTC to shut down media'. Accessed 11 May 2017 <<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/breaking-news/aec/30290575>>.
- TLHR (2015) 'TLHR report: "Martial Law and the Military Court: Civil and Political Rights in Thailand"'. Accessed 29 October 2017 <<https://tlhr2014.wordpress.com/2015/02/02/tlhr-report-martial-law-and-the-military-court-civil-and-political-rights-in-thailand/>>.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1998) 'Opinions and Ideologies in the Press, I in Approaches to Media Discourse Ed. A. Bell and P. Garrett'.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2006) 'Ideology and Discourse Analysis', *Journal of political ideologies* 11(2): 115-140.
- Wade, F. (2014) 'Thai army declares martial law'. Accessed 29 October 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/20/thai-army-declares-martial-law>>.

#### *Thai sources*

- BBC Tha (2017) '*Kor Sor Tor Chor Long Dab Chong Wicharn Rattaban Pai Laew Kee Rai* (How many news outlets have been penalized by the NBTC?)'. Accessed 30 October 2017 <<http://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-39415924>>.
- Centre for Doctrine and Strategy Development (2011) '*Koo Mue Karn Plook Fang Lae Serm Sang Udom Karn Tha Harn* (Handbook on the Indoctrination and Enhancement of Soldier Ideology)'. Accessed 23 July 2017 <[http://www.cdspd-rta.net/index.php?option=com\\_abook&view=book&id=52:audomkan&catid=4:2015-11-24-08-58-07&Itemid=200](http://www.cdspd-rta.net/index.php?option=com_abook&view=book&id=52:audomkan&catid=4:2015-11-24-08-58-07&Itemid=200)>.
- Pisek, P. (2015) '*Kong Thap Bok Kab Pai Kook Kam Roob Bab Tang Tang* (Army and Its Threats)'. Accessed 23 July 2017 <[http://www.cdspd-rta.net/index.php?option=com\\_abook&view=book&id=53&catid=5:2016-04-28-08-00-11&Itemid=214](http://www.cdspd-rta.net/index.php?option=com_abook&view=book&id=53&catid=5:2016-04-28-08-00-11&Itemid=214)>.

## **Chapter 6**

### *Thai source*

- Prachachat Thurakij (2015) '*Pid Pratoe 'Thammasat' Harm Chad Ngarn 'Poo Tao Khor Khama-Rod Nam Dam Hua Yaowachon'*- Yai Chad Rim Thanon' (Thammasat's Entrance closed, Banning the Activity). Accessed 9 October 2017 <[https://www.prachachat.net/news\\_detail.php?newsid=1428746658](https://www.prachachat.net/news_detail.php?newsid=1428746658)>.
- Prachatai (2015) 'Timeline: Karn Klueh Whai Khong Kha Buan Karn Prachatthip-patai Mai Chon Tueng Wan Thook Chab Koom (Timeline: the movement of

the NDM until the arrest)'. Accessed 9 October 2017 <<https://www.prachatai.com/journal/2015/07/60105>>.

Voice TV (2014) 'Saowatri Thoog Tor Mor Ruab Khana Klub Chak Doo Ngarn Tang Pratet (Saowatri intercepted by immigration officer on her back from work abroad)'. Accessed 9 October 2017 <<https://news.voicetv.co.th/thailand/107255.html>>.



# Annex 1: 24 Texts of News Coverage

## Annex 1.1: Coverage 1

### 1 Activists campaign against draft charter at [Thammasat](#)

2 [national](#) February 28, 2016 01:00  
3 By KASAMAKORN CHANWANPEN  
4 THE SUN

5  
6 **YOUNG activists in the New Democracy Movement (NDM) held**  
7 **a political exhibition yesterday against the junta-sponsored**  
8 **constitution, giving a dozen reasons to reject it in the upcoming**  
9 **national referendum.**

10  
11 Held at [Thammasat](#) University's [Tha Prachan](#) Campus, the exhibition focused on the  
12 politically controversial points in the charter draft such as the single-ballot electoral system,  
13 the non-MP prime minister, and the [authorisation](#) of the National Council for Peace and  
14 Order (NCPO) as well as its weapon – Article 44 – to stay in power for at least 15 months  
15 after the charter is promulgated.

16  
17 It was a bid to encourage voters to say 'No' in a referendum set to take place in July, they  
18 said.

19 NDM is an independent political movement. Its members include the 14 student activists who  
20 campaigned against the 2014 coup and current regime. They include the Dao Din group from  
21 [Khon Kaen](#) and students from [Thammasat](#).

22  
23 Some of these individuals received local and international attention last year when they were  
24 detained for about two weeks after staging protests against the junta.

25  
26 Besides the exhibition, the activists also screened a Chilean film, "No", based on the  
27 successful campaign to overthrow dictatorship in Chile via a referendum in 1988.

28 Later, the youths staged a fund-raising concert: "We are Friends: The Naughty Citizens Day".  
29 Tickets were sold for Bt100 each.

30  
31 A key NDM figure, [Rangsiman](#) Rome, a law student at [Thammasat](#), said the funds would be  
32 used to [subsidise](#) the group's activities against the constitution draft until the referendum is  
33 held. Before the event, he informed the police and they had allowed them to go ahead. "In the  
34 meantime, we will stay reserved about the constitution draft, but will move again after the  
35 final version is completed. [We] will certainly campaign against it, since fundamentally the  
36 drafters do not represent the people and were appointed by the coup-makers, the NCPO," the  
37 activist said.

38  
39 [Rangsiman](#) also expressed concern over the fairness of the proposed referendum. He urged  
40 the government to allow both supporters and opponents of the draft to campaign according to  
41 their preference.

42  
43 Meanwhile, another public talk on the constitution draft entitled "What's up, new charter?"  
44 by an independent civil society group, [Prachamati.org](#), that was to take place today at the  
45 Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC), was cancelled.

46 Police contacted the BACC and said the activity would be deemed a political assembly and  
47 would violate an NCPO order.

48

49 The people responsible should have sought permission from the authorities first, they said.  
50 However, the police did not respond when Prachamati.org later sent an official letter to  
51 explain that it was not a political assembly but an activity that opened space for free speech  
52 and thus it should not be prohibited.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30280356>

1 Govt bans campaigns, T-shirts on charter vote

2 *nation* April 19, 2016 01:00  
3 By THE NATION

4  
5 Pepple not permitted to wear "vote yes" or "vote no" shirts before  
6 August referendum  
7

8 CAMPAIGNING for or against the draft constitution, including wearing T-shirts with slogans on  
9 them, will not be allowed in the lead-up to the referendum on the charter, a chief government  
10 figure said yesterday.

11 "You can like or dislike (the charter) but don't express it (to the public) and keep it inside your  
12 head. Those wearing 'Vote No' or 'Vote Yes' T-shirts will have them taken off," Deputy Prime  
13 Minister Prawit Wongsuwan said.

14 Prawit was responding to anti-charter groups, like the Network of Academics for Civil Rights,  
15 whose members wore T-shirts with a "Vote No" logo when they read out a statement on Sunday  
16 outlining five arguments against the charter at a press conference.

17 Politicians and activists cried foul over a restrictive regulation in the referendum bill, as it  
18 appears that they cannot express their opinions freely on the charter.

19 The Election Commission (EC) is yet to come up with a clear stance on public campaigns or a  
20 list of "do's and don'ts" ahead of the referendum.

21 Thanit Sripratej, deputy secretary-general of the commission, said the EC was still working on  
22 the campaigning part, as that was unclear in the referendum bill.

23 However, to make it clear, the EC may have to wait for passage of the bill so that it can take the  
24 penalties that wrongdoers will face into consideration, he said.

25 In its meeting yesterday, the EC agreed the referendum will be held on August 7.

26 Boonyakiat Rakchatcharoen, acting secretary-general of the agency, said the EC had prepared  
27 further regulations to implement the scheduled date, pending promulgation of the referendum  
28 law, which has already been endorsed by the National Legislative Assembly.

29 The EC also backed the printing of one million copies of the new charter, along with four million  
30 copies of charter summaries, four million more copies of the NLA's explanations on the  
31 additional question and 17 million copies of a booklet summarising key charter issues.

32 The booklets will be ready for delivery to households on May 23.

33 Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam denied that old charters would be adapted if the new  
34 charter did not pass the referendum, saying only that he had said it could be done.

35 He said it would not make sense and would be inexplicable if the 2007 or 1997 charters, which  
36 were torn down after recent coups, were put in place again. Only their good parts should be  
37 brought back for use, and this could be possible.

38 Ultimately it was up to the National Council for Peace and Order to make a decision if the  
39 charter was turned down, he said. But any new charter drafting must still stick to the framework  
40 given under Article 35 of the 2014 Interim Constitution.

41 "To this point, we have not prepared any way out. So, be calm, it's only three months away," he  
42 said. Fifty million people would make a decision at the referendum, and he would not say  
43 anything about it that could be misleading.

44 In related news, the Constitution Drafting Commission panel tasked with preparing charter  
45 information for dissemination revealed that it has come up with two sets.  
46 One is for the CDC's spokespeople, and the other covers 10-20 simplified issues people would  
47 need to know about.  
48 The CDC, which will hold rallies nationwide to explain the charter to the public, has not yet  
49 settled how many presentations would be staged, Theinchai Na Nakorn, a member of the CDC  
50 panel, said.  
51 Meanwhile, red-shirt leader Nuttawut Saikuar called for the government to open space for all  
52 parties to express their opinions, saying that otherwise their publicity campaign would backfire.  
53 He warned against the government's move to detain anyone who voiced opposition to the  
54 charter, as had happened to key Pheu Thai figure Watana Muangsuk.  
55 The custody measure under special order Article 44 could also overrule the referendum bill, he  
56 said, as well as undermine the country's reputation among the international community.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30284223>

1 Watana insists on right to express his opinion

2 *national*, April 19, 2016 01:00  
3 By JUTHATHIP LUCKSANAWONG, |  
4 WATT

5 Pheu Thai politician taken in for fourth "Attitude Adjustment"

6  
7 A PROMINENT Pheu Thai politician who has confronted the junta by lodging a complaint to the  
8 UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon alleging human rights abuses is standing firm in his opposition  
9 to the charter draft, saying he will vote "No" in the referendum regardless of being subjected to  
10 "attitude adjustment" sessions.  
11 Former commerce minister Watana Muangsook also plans to lodge the same complaint with about 20  
12 relevant agencies, including European Union bodies and the United States Embassy in Bangkok,  
13 claiming the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO)'s "attitude adjustment" sessions infringe  
14 on human rights, party spokeswoman Sunisa Lertpakawat said yesterday.  
15 The NCPO summoned Watana yesterday to the 11th Military Circle for his fourth round of attitude  
16 adjustment following his Facebook message saying "vote no" on the draft, which was posted last  
17 Wednesday.  
18 Chaturon Chaisang, a key Pheu Thai member, said he had talked to embassy representatives from  
19 Switzerland, Norway and Canada who also visited the military base and he quoted them as saying  
20 they were concerned about human rights infringements in Thailand.  
21 Chaturon added that the embassy representatives also said that limiting individuals' rights to voice  
22 opinions would also limit people's rights to receive information and bring disadvantages during the  
23 referendum.  
24 Watana was detained for allegedly violating Article 44 of the interim charter and NCPO order  
25 13/2016 banning activities considered to be a threat to the state, according a report.  
26 The politician has said he has a right to express his opinions about the draft, adding that he could  
27 campaign against it as a matter of freedom of expression regardless of whether the junta supported  
28 it.  
29 He said that the NCPO had not abided by Section 4 of the interim constitution or Article 19 of the  
30 UN General Assembly's Universal Declaration of Human Rights because opponents to the draft were  
31 not allowed to voice their opinions in public.  
32 According to Watana's messages on Facebook, military authorities planned to detain him on  
33 Wednesday afternoon at his home in Prawet in Bangkok but he asked them to postpone this until  
34 Monday because he wanted to spend the Songkran break outside the capital.  
35 Military officers visited his residence on Thursday to arrest him but could not find him.  
36 Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan remained firm on arresting Watana, saying that he would  
37 be detained if he spoke out.  
38 "Although [Watana] rejects the draft, he should rather keep it in his mind. As I said before, it's not  
39 time to speak out," Prawit said.  
40 The deputy prime minister said the incident had nothing to do with the non-government group  
41 Human Rights Watch because it did not constitute an abuse of rights.  
42 Pheu Thai Party called yesterday on the NCPO to immediately release Watana, saying he had done  
43 nothing wrong and was just expressing his opinion in line with normal laws.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30284224>



1 [Prayut confirms campaign ban ahead of referendum but critics still](#)  
2 [defiant](#)

3 *national* April 20, 2016 01:00  
4 By WASAMON AUDJARINT  
5 THE NATION

6  
7 **Junta says its own get-out-the-vote effort is neutral.**  
8

9 AHEAD OF the referendum on the constitution draft, Prime Minister General [Prayut Chan-o-cha](#)  
10 yesterday confirmed that all parties would be prohibited from campaigning either for or against  
11 the charter.

12 The prohibition will be fully enforced after the draft bill that will govern the referendum process  
13 receives royal endorsement, [Prayut](#) said, claiming that such measures were necessary to keep  
14 order.

15 [Prayut](#) may have been referring to Article 62 of the referendum bill, which prohibits people from  
16 inciting disorder during the referendum election with a possible penalty of three years in jail and  
17 a fine of Bt200,000. Courts could also revoke offenders' right to vote for five years.

18 If Article 62 offenders [organise](#) in groups of five people or more, they could face one to 10 years  
19 in jail and fines ranging from Bt20,000 to Bt200,000, and possibly have their voting rights  
20 revoked for 10 years.

21 Disruptive actions are judged to include incitement to violence, threats and distorted information  
22 sent via social media channels, which might induce people not to vote or influence their  
23 decisions.

24 [Sceptical](#) commentators have questioned the definition of "wrongful" messages as specified in  
25 the draft and asked the government and the Election Commission to provide a clarification.

26 There are also worries that junta authorities could interpret the ambiguity as they chose.

27 The government has mounted its own campaign to encourage people to vote in the August 7  
28 referendum, although authorities say the effort is not intended to influence people to vote in  
29 favour of the draft.

30 Since seizing power in 2014, the military has banned political activity but for the most part has  
31 not prevented political parties from commenting on relevant issues, including the draft  
32 constitution.

33 [Prayut](#) said the referendum draft bill would help prevent politicians from "playing backstage", a  
34 concern that has been raised by Constitution Drafting Commission (CDC) chief [Meechai](#)  
35 [Ruchupan](#).

36 "They will be put in jail for 10 years if they do so. Let them do it if they are not afraid," [Prayut](#)  
37 said. "Once the bill arrives, the law will be the law."

38 All parties have to cooperate with the junta as "there must be rules and other components [to  
39 follow] as well", he said.

40 "Don't say democracy is equal to elections and freedom. It's not like that," [Prayut](#) said after a  
41 Cabinet meeting yesterday. "We're not going to adopt what's bad."

42 [Prayut's](#) comments followed the recent public backlash in response to the final version of the  
43 charter draft. The Network of Academics for Civil Rights group on Sunday joined many other  
44 movements encouraging the public to reject the draft on the grounds that it would tend to deprive  
45 people of power.

46 Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan also has said people were not allowed to campaign  
47 regarding the draft, which includes a ban on “Vote No” or “Vote Yes” T-shirts.  
48 “Don’t campaign and don’t influence the referendum. Let people be free to think,” Prawit said  
49 yesterday. “If you disagree, then just tick that box.”  
50 After restating Prawit’s earlier point of view on the ban, the prime minister added that he had  
51 informed the Cabinet about it.  
52 Academics will also be banned from campaigning once the referendum draft bill is in effect, he  
53 said.  
54 However, CDC member Prapan Naikowit said the referendum bill did not ban campaigns  
55 outright, but prohibited activities that are deemed to convey distorted information, defame  
56 others, cause chaos or encourage destructive political movements.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30284292>

1 Prayut puts priority on enforcing new referendum law

2 *national* April 27, 2016 01:00  
3 By WASAMON AUDJARINT  
4 THE NATION  
5 6,072 Viewed

6  
7 **PRIORITY IS BEING given to the enforcement of the recently implemented Referendum**  
8 **Act, not the junta's orders to control incidents related to the upcoming plebiscite, Prime**  
9 **Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha said yesterday.**  
10

11 "The Act has to be respected," the premier announced at his weekly press briefing. "The  
12 National Council for Peace and Order [NCPO]'s orders are to only maintain peace. They  
13 function separately.

14 "Or do you not want them both? What do you want then?" the premier asked.

15 Meanwhile, Election Commissioner Somchai Srisuthiyakorn will today file a charge against  
16 people who allegedly violated the law.

17 This will be the first case filed under the law, although it came into effect last week, and clear  
18 guidelines from the Election Commission (EC) on what can or cannot be done have yet to be  
19 issued.

20 Among the issues in question is the holding of public seminars, which security officials and the  
21 EC interpret differently. Security authorities say that Article 61 of the Act prohibits all acts  
22 deemed provocative or violent, while the EC says the Act does not ban public opinions or  
23 academic discussions about the draft charter.

24 Somchai said on Monday that any honest action that does not violate the law could definitely be  
25 carried out, provided it does not involve vulgar, violent, aggressive, distorted or seditious  
26 comments.

27 Prayut backed Somchai, saying "a further discussion" could be held to help define what exactly  
28 could be considered a violation of the law.

29 "It depends on whether the EC will take the matter to the government," he said.

30 Prayut also said that the Act, in practice, does not strictly ban the public from expressing  
31 opinions on the draft charter.

32 "Though the Act is in effect now, is it really stopping them from speaking out?" he said in  
33 reference to the red-shirt United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship and Great Mass of  
34 People's Foundation for Thailand's Reform. The two groups staked out opposing positions on  
35 the draft charter two days after the Act was enforced.

36 "If the act did not exist, wouldn't there even be more [political] conflicts?" he said.

37 When asked if his remarks could mean that people had more freedom of expression in relation to  
38 the draft, he said: "I don't know, I don't allow anything for now."

39 The PM said he would not invite or welcome any observers from foreign countries or NGOs to  
40 monitor the referendum process. "It will not be suitable for them to come now. Is our [political]  
41 situation normal yet?" He also said it "depends on laws" whether the NCPO would be authorised  
42 to listen in on conversations conducted via mobile apps such as LINE during the period leading  
43 up to the referendum.

44 Meanwhile, NCPO spokesman Colonel Winthai Suvaree said it was legal for soldiers to  
45 distribute leaflets calling on people to vote on the referendum.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30284785>



## Annex 1.6: Coverage 6

### 1 Junta gets tough on its critics

2 *national* April 28, 2016 01:00  
3 By KASAMAKORN CHANWANPEN  
4 THE NA

#### 5 **Sixteen detained and freed over silent protest in Bangkok; 10 others still under military** 6 **detention.**

7  
8 IN A SIMULTANEOUS move to crack down on anti-junta groups, the authorities yesterday briefly  
9 detained 16 activists in the capital while a member of the Election Commission (EC) lodged a  
10 complaint with police, alleging a Khon Kaen-based funding organisation had posted rude criticism of  
11 the draft constitution.

12 The activists were nabbed from Victory Monument as they staged a silent, thumbs down protest  
13 against the alleged recent abduction of eight anti-junta civilians.

14 The group was led by human rights lawyer Anont Nampa, who was later charged with organising a  
15 public protest without permission, police said. The activists were quickly removed from the  
16 monument and taken to Phya Thai Police Station. All of them were freed a few hours later.

17 Prior to the protest, National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) spokesman Colonel Winthai  
18 Suyari confirmed that the junta had previously detained eight people from Bangkok, and two from  
19 Khon Kaen yesterday for posting online criticism and sarcastic messages on the NCPO, the draft  
20 constitution, and the prime minister.

21 “All 10 are in military detention. They were not abducted [as widely reported earlier]. They can be  
22 detained not longer than seven days,” he said.

23 Of the 10 activists, only five – Noppaklao Kongsuwan, Supachai Saiboot, Wararat Mengpra-mool,  
24 Harit Mahaton, and Nithi Kulthanasilp – have been identified so far, according to Thai Lawyers for  
25 Human Rights [TLHR], a group of lawyers representing mostly those charged by the current regime.  
26 Noppaklao and Wararat were also confirmed by red-shirt leader Jatuporn Prompan as the  
27 administrators of the official Facebook page of the red shirts.

28 According to a source in TLHR, the junta has not yet pressed charges against those detained, though  
29 it claimed to have evidence that they had violated the Computer Crimes Act.

30 Winthai said officials were investigating whether they had an intention to commit offences. Evidence  
31 linked the two in Khon Kaen with the eight people in Bangkok, as they had posted information in the  
32 same group, he said.

33 Colonel Somchai Kanpachai, deputy commander of the 23rd Military Circle in Khon Kaen,  
34 acknowledged that the two men were under detention by the NCPO for “attitude adjustment” after  
35 they were suspected of committing offences under the Computer Crimes Act. They talked for two  
36 hours at the camp before being sent to Bangkok.

37 Relatives of the eight activists would today file a complaint at the Criminal Court against the  
38 authorities for misconduct.

39 Meanwhile, EC member Somchai Srisuthiyakorn lodged a petition with Bangkok police alleging that  
40 a Khon Kaen-based group had posted harsh criticisms of the constitution draft and had violated the  
41 recently adopted referendum law.

42 Somchai said they had posted Facebook messages with abrasive, aggressive, and seditious content  
43 about the charter draft, which would be a violation of Article 61 of the referendum law that carries a  
44 penalty of up to 10 years’ imprisonment or a Bt200,000 fine, and a five-year ban on voting.

45 The untitled Facebook group was officially a fund based in Khon Kaen province, but Somchai did  
46 not provide any details about the group.

47 Despite the complaints filed against the anti-charter group, Somchai insisted that posting online  
48 messages about rejecting or accepting the draft constitution is permissible, but they have to be based  
49 on educational reasons without harsh, aggressive, threatening, or seditious language that aim to  
50 persuade voters in a particular way.  
51 Not only the EC members, but everyone is eligible to file a complaint at any police station against  
52 those violating the referendum law, he said.  
53 Pol Colonel Termphao Siriphuban, the superintendent of Thung Song Hong Police Station, said he  
54 would collect more evidence before tracing the administrators of the Facebook page.  
55 Constitution Drafting Commission spokesman Udom Rathamarit, however, raised doubts as to  
56 whether Somchai, as an individual, was legally eligible to file the complaint. According to the  
57 referendum law, to determine whether violations have taken place, the EC members must jointly  
58 decide and pass a resolution, he said.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30284870>

1 **Shock over do-gooder's arrest for violating referendum law**

2 *national* May 01, 2016 01:00

3 By THE SUNDAY NATION

4 **THE arrest of Jirapan Tanmanee, chairperson of the Rathawat Tanmanee Fund for the**  
5 **Rights of Autistic People, has come as a shock to many, especially those who were not**  
6 **aware of the public referendum law that went into effect on April 22.**

7 |  
8 Jirapan was charged for allegedly violating Article 61 of the Act, which bans the dissemination of  
9 draft charter content through print, broadcast or digital media in a manner that deviates from the  
10 truth or provides information deemed violent, aggressive, vulgar, provocative or threatening or  
11 aims to influence voters. The violators of the Act can face up to 10 years in jail and a Bt200,000  
12 fine.

13 Apart from Jirapan, 59, who is based in Khon Kaen, 10 others are also facing the same charges.  
14 During initial investigation, Jirapan claimed that she did not know such a law had been  
15 implemented. Police said Jirapan has voiced her repentance and is seeking release on bail.  
16 Jirapan is married to a physician who operates a clinic in Khon Kaen's Ban Pai district. She set  
17 up the Rathawat Tanmanee Fund in 1996 in order to help autistic children lead normal lives. Her  
18 son is also affected by autism.

19 The Facebook page of her organisation initially had 4,000 followers, but later when she saw its  
20 popularity waning, she decided to opt for new a way to attract attention – discussing politics.

21 On Monday, she posted an image of human-rights activist Gothom Arya with a message saying  
22 that the country is not a five-year experiment and that the draft charter might lead to a crisis.

23 Jirapan's post clearly disapproved of the draft's Article 178 and her message allegedly used  
24 impolite language. It was also seen as encouraging people to vote "no" in the referendum.

25 Many Facebook users shared her post. With the office of her foundation located in Khon Kaen's  
26 Muang district, Jirapan often took her son horseriding at the 23rd Military Circle and became  
27 quite familiar with several soldiers at the Sri Patcharin Camp.

28 She is also known to have close ties with an anti-coup group based in Khon Kaen, especially  
29 activist Aunty Wad Mai Khon.

30 She has also pushed for the establishment of an Autistic Centre in Khon Kaen University after  
31 many autistic children were stopped from enrolling in school. Her efforts also led to the setting up  
32 of the Northeast region's first Autistic Research Centre at Khon Kaen University's  
33 Demonstration School in 2002.

34 People who know her say Jirapan is ready to fight for people's rights and society, while parents  
35 of autistic children still admire her for fighting for kids with autism even though her attention has  
36 turned to politics.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30285019>

1 **Junta to get tougher with ‘troublemakers’**

2 *national* May 03, 2016 01:00

3 By The Nation

4

5 **A KEY junta figure yesterday implicitly threatened tougher action against political**  
6 **“troublemakers” in the run-up to the August 7 referendum on the draft constitution.**

7

8

9 Army commander-in-chief General [Teerachai Nakwanich](#), in his capacity as secretary general of  
10 the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), said there were only a handful of “the same  
11 old faces” that came out to “stir up trouble”.

12 The general also said he would deal with those people himself. “We have some means to deal  
13 with them,” he said. “They are troublemakers. They may stir up trouble as much as they like, but  
14 we will arrest them.”

15 When asked if authorities would “play hardball” with the political activists campaigning against  
16 the draft charter, the Army chief responded: “You will have to wait and see. But we will no  
17 longer summon them for ‘attitude adjustment’ any more. They just didn’t get what we said to  
18 them.”

19 He said the media paid too much attention to the small group of protesters.

20 “Three or four troublemakers came out loitering. A dozen reporters followed them, and more than  
21 100 police officers showed up. A lot of confusion ensued,” [Teerachai](#) said.

22 “In fact, we should not pay attention to them. If the media do not treat them as important, nothing  
23 will happen.”

24 [Teerachai](#) said there was no plan to summon former [prime minister](#) [Thaksin Shinawatra](#)’s son  
25 [Panthongtae](#) for questioning in connection with an allegation he was funding some of the eight  
26 webmasters arrested recently for campaigning online against the draft charter and the junta. He  
27 said some of those arrested had confessed to the alleged connection.

28 However, deputy police spokesman Pol Colonel [Krissana Pattanacharoen](#) yesterday declined to  
29 confirm any connection between [Panthongtae](#) and the arrested persons. But he added that more  
30 arrests would be made of individuals found to be linked to the suspects.

31 “If evidence points to [Panthongtae](#), police investigators must summon him for questioning as part  
32 of the procedure,” [Krissana](#) said.

33 Meanwhile, NCPO spokesman Colonel [Winthai Suvaree](#) yesterday countered a call by ex-prime  
34 minister Yingluck [Shinawatra](#) for Prime Minister [Prayut Chan-o-cha](#) to listen to his critics.

35 The spokesman said [Prayut](#) had been open to comments about him and his regime on many  
36 channels so that they could be adapted to benefit the country. He said the government was not  
37 prohibiting dissent, it was simply attempting to ensure that such opinions were spread through  
38 appropriate channels, with non-violent means.

39 The spokesman said this was unlike events in the recent past, when the country not only was  
40 divided but also saw loss of lives due to political violence. “That was not acceptable, in any  
41 society,” he added.

42 At the Crime Suppression Division, [Chatchet Songsri](#), who claimed to represent a group calling  
43 itself “We Love the Country”, filed a police complaint calling for investigation into the New  
44 Democracy Movement (NDM) group of [activists](#).

45 Chatchet said police should trace the trail of money used to fund the NDM's frequent activities.  
46 "I wonder if there is anyone behind them and if their activities are funded by anyone," he said.  
47 In a related development, the military court yesterday granted a police request for further  
48 detention of Pheu Thai Party politician Watana Muangsook over accusations he violated an  
49 NCPO order. Watana is to be detained from today until May 14 pending completion of an  
50 investigation.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30285147>



1 **NCPO closely monitoring red shirt anti-fraud centre**

2 *national June 11, 2016 01:00*

3 By JITRAPORN SENAWONG,  
4 CHANKARN

5

6 **THE National Council for Peace and Order believes the red shirts had a hidden political**  
7 **motive for setting up a referendum anti-fraud centre, so the authorities are keeping a**  
8 **close eye on the facility.**

9

10 The Election Commission is among agencies overseeing the issue, NCPO spokesman Colonel [Piyapong Klinphan](#) said. But  
11 he said the NCPO would also monitor the group.

12 Colonel [Peerawat Sangtong](#), a spokesman for the Internal Security Operations Command, said his  
13 agency would support the EC in looking for violations of the referendum law.

14 He said the agency always followed the movements of political groups but it was not a law  
15 enforcer.

16 Meanwhile, [Boonsong Noisophon](#), an Election Commission member, thanked the Constitutional  
17 Court for accepting a petition from the Ombudsman's Office to look into whether Article 61 of  
18 the referendum law violates the charter. He said the move would help clear up the issue.

19 The EC was ready to act whatever the court ruling, he said. If it rules the controversial clause in  
20 the referendum law is at odds with freedom of expression guaranteed in the interim charter, the  
21 bill would be amended, he said.

22 [Boonsong](#) said new clauses could also be added to the bill. Any amended version of the bill  
23 would be given to Cabinet and National Legislative Assembly (NLA) before endorsement, he  
24 added.

25 In the meantime, the referendum law as it stands remains in effect, he said.

26 Red-shirt leaders including [Jatuporn Prompan](#) yesterday submitted an open letter to Prime  
27 Minister [Prayut Chan-o-cha](#) at Government House explaining the objectives of the anti-fraud  
28 centre.

29 "If there's no intention to cheat, this centre will pose no problem," [Jatuporn](#), chairman of the  
30 United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship, said.

31 He said the authorities had threatened people in charge of the centre's branches in different  
32 provinces.

33 [Jatuporn](#) told the PM this was a good chance for him to ensure the referendum was transparent.

34 In a related development, EC president [Supachai Somcharoen](#) said administrative officers across  
35 the country playing a role in the referendum were only tasked with spreading information about  
36 the charter, explaining the NLA's additional question in the referendum and explaining the  
37 referendum process to the public.

38 'Officials should stay neutral'

39 He said they should remain neutral and not try to influence people's decision on how to vote.  
40 He encouraged the officers to keep doing their task, despite the uncomfortable political  
41 circumstances.

42 Meanwhile, [Pheu Thai](#) politician [Noppadol Patama](#), a former foreign minister, urged the  
43 authorities to allow people to express themselves freely, saying that doing this would be  
44 beneficial to the country in every way.

45 Freedom of expression would help create a free, fair and respected referendum in the eyes of  
46 people both in and outside the Kingdom, as well as create a democratic and relaxed atmosphere in  
47 the country, [Noppadol](#) said.

48 He said it would help ease the distrustful atmosphere while facilitating trust-building in every part  
49 of society. Ultimately, it could help bring about reconciliation.

50

51 “Allowing constructive expression is the best way to learn about democracy in reality,” he said.  
52 “I don’t believe that different views will always lead to chaos and unrest.  
53 “The chance is less than a snake protruding from a toilet bowl,” he added, in reference to the  
54 news story about a snake coming up through a toilet.  
55 Freedom was as important to democracy as air was to mankind, Noppadol said.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30287907>

Annex 1.10: Coverage 10

1 **NCPO, EC to monitor UDD's anti-fraud Facebook page**  
2 *Breaking News June 19, 2016 16:06*  
3 By The Nation|  
4 **The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) and the Election Commission are**  
5 **closely monitoring the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD)’s anti-**  
6 **fraud centre Facebook page, NCPO spokesman Col Piyapong Klinpan said Sunday.**  
7  
8 Piyapong said the NCPO and the EC will check whether the Facebook page's posts would be  
9 tantamount to insitigation of the public to vote or not to vote in the referendum, which is  
10 prohibited by the referendum law.  
11 The spokesman said the NCPO expected the UDD would turn to step up its activities on the  
12 social media after its centre was shut down Sunday.  
13 Piyapong said the NCPO would tread carefully on taking action against the UDD’s FB page  
14 because it did not want to create public sentiment in line whith the UDD's plan.  
15 He dismissed reports that the August 7 public referendum may not take place, saying it is the ploy  
16 of the opponents.  
17 “They are trying to distort the truth and create political sentiment during the run-up to the  
18 referendum,” he said.  
19 The UDD’s anti-fraud FB page now has 1522 likes since it was launched on June 5, the same day  
20 when the centre was established at Imperial World Department Store’s Lat Phrao branch.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/breaking-news/aec/30288553>

1 **Police storm red-shirt centres, foil openings**

2 *national* June 20, 2016 01:00  
3 By JUTHATHIP LUCKSANAWONG,  
4 WASAM

5 **RED-SHIRT leader Jatuporn Prompan vowed yesterday to keep the group's anti-fraud**  
6 **centres active by using social media, despite them being banned by the junta. The junta,**  
7 **in turn, warned him further activities could break the law.**

8  
9 A plan by the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) to broadcast the kick-  
10 off of its referendum fraud-monitoring centres nationwide live via its "Peace TV" channel  
11 yesterday was foiled. Police stormed into the station's studio at Imperial World shopping  
12 centre in Lat Phrao in Bangkok, to stop its activities.

13 The police, led by Chokchai Station chief Pol Col Supol Kamchu, told the station to stop all  
14 its activities as they would breach the National Council for Peace and Order's ban on political  
15 gatherings of five people and more. The red-shirt activists were ordered to leave the studio  
16 before the police occupied the venue.

17 Jatuporn said: "Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha is unreliable because the PM earlier  
18 allowed the anti-fraud centres to be set up. But eventually the junta made a U-turn and barred  
19 the red-shirt operation."

20 He said although officers had occupied anti-fraud centres in Bangkok and provinces – where  
21 supporters who ran the fraud centres were arrested – the red shirts would not back down from  
22 their plan.

23 "The centres have been open since June 5 and will continue to gather referendum fraud  
24 complaints from the people through online channels."

25  
26 EC to monitor Facebook for 'offences'

27 The Technology Crime Suppression Division, Ministry of Information and Communications  
28 Technology and the Election Committee (EC) resolved last week to set up a committee to  
29 monitor the use of online media to disseminate messages regarding the referendum. The  
30 committee also aims to suppress online offences.

31 National Council for Peace and Order spokesman Col Piyapong Klinpan said the NCPO and  
32 the EC were closely monitoring the UDD's anti-fraud centre Facebook page on whether it  
33 breaks the law by inciting moves to involve the public. Piyapong said the UDD's stepping up  
34 of its activities on social media after its centre had been shut down was not beyond what the  
35 NCPO had expected. He said the council would tread carefully taking action against the  
36 UDD's FB page because it did not want to stir public sympathy as that is what the UDD  
37 wanted.

38 The UDD's anti-fraud FB page now has 1522 'likes' since it started on June 5, the same day  
39 when the centre was established at its headquarters in Lat Phrao.

40 Meanwhile, Pheu Thai executive Chaturon Chaisang said the forced closure of the anti-fraud  
41 centres was illegitimate, as their operations were not violating any law, including the  
42 referendum bill. The UDD merely wanted to gather information on possible fraud and was  
43 not assembling for any political reason, he said, referring to the NCPO order prohibiting  
44 gatherings of five or more people.

45 "It signifies that people cannot engage with the plebiscite process at all. They can't even  
46 exchange information," he said.

47 Meanwhile, Jatuporn will meet with the United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner  
48 for Human Rights today to discuss rights issues as the country heads to the August  
49 referendum on a charter draft.



50 Jatuporn warned that if the junta did not allow people to take part in the referendum, Prayut  
51 would end up like General Suchinda Kraprayoon, the former prime minister who took office  
52 during the 'Black May' uprising in 1992 and was ousted by protesters following major  
53 bloodshed.  
54 Police and military officers yesterday shut down UDD's fraud watch centres across the  
55 country.  
56 National Security Council secretary-general Thawip Netniyom also said yesterday that the  
57 UDD plan to open referendum anti-fraud centres has hidden motives. "They are trying to get  
58 publicity, which is not right. If they want to ensure fairness and transparency, they can just  
59 ring the officials to tip them off about any irregularities," he said.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30288590>

1 **Academics call for immediate release of seven student activists**

2 *national June 29, 2016 01:00*  
3 By PIYANUCH THAMNUKASETCHAI  
4 THE

5 |

6 **A NETWORK of pro-civil rights academics yesterday called for the immediate release**  
7 **of seven student activists who are under 12-day detention at a remand prison. They also**  
8 **called for authorities to stop threatening people who express themselves peacefully**

9  
10 The network said the government should promote a free and fair referendum by supporting open  
11 campaigns and discussion.

12 A group of academics, including Anusorn Unno of the Thai Academic Network for Civil Rights,  
13 yesterday read the statement signed by 292 academics from across the nation outside the  
14 Bangkok Remand Prison, where the students are being detained.

15 The students from the New Democracy Movement (NDM) had joined six other activists,  
16 including three labour-union members, to distribute anti-draft charter leaflets in Samut Prakan on  
17 Thursday evening.

18 All 13 were arrested and charged with violating the junta's Order No 3/2558, which bans political  
19 gatherings of more than five people. Their alleged anti-charter activities in Bangkok and nearby  
20 areas were said to mark the 84th anniversary of the Siam Revolution.

21 Six of the 13 were released on a Bt50,000 bail, while the seven NDM activists – students and  
22 graduates from Thammasat, Ramkhamhaeng and Kasetsart universities – did not ask for bail  
23 because they did not believe they had broken the law. Their lawyers are working on filing a new  
24 request in court for their unconditional release.

25 Anusorn criticised the current atmosphere, which he described as suppressing political freedoms,  
26 as well as the Referendum Law's Article 61, which restricts people's right to expression.

27 He said the group would invite academics living overseas to write e-mails to the government and  
28 the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) asking them to respond to their demands. The  
29 recent UK referendum "Brexit" should serve as an example because free expression was allowed,  
30 network members said.

31 Meanwhile, NCPO spokesman Winthai Suwaree told the press yesterday that the NCPO would  
32 not change its approach regarding politically motivated activities. He said participants would first  
33 be asked for their cooperation, but if their actions violate the law, then normal judicial procedures  
34 will follow.

35 Authorities would try to take every element into consideration when judging a situation, he said.  
36 He added that a recent event, where regime critics attached anti-referendum banners to balloons  
37 that were then released, constituted only a partial expression of opinion, but officials believed the  
38 action broke the law and had to take action.

1 [Govt opens 'order' centres](#)

2 *nationa* July 04, 2016 01:00

3 By THE NATION

4 6,642 Viewed

5 **Denies move is an attempt to monitor politicians ahead of August plebiscite.**

6  
7 THE government has started setting up [centres](#) at provincial and district levels nationwide to  
8 ensure that the August 7 referendum on the new charter runs smoothly.

9 Government Spokesperson Maj-General [Sansern Kaewkamnerd](#) said the [centres](#), the first of  
10 which were opened on Friday, were responsible for emergency planning, monitoring the  
11 situation and setting up checkpoints.

12 A crucial order was announced yesterday to facilitate the opening of the [centres](#) after there  
13 were movements by politicians ahead of the referendum process.

14 [Sansern](#) said the [centres](#) would seek information on activity that caused commotion, distorted  
15 the charter draft's content or violated the referendum law, as well as handle matters in line  
16 with the public assembly bill.

17 The [centres](#) are run by the Interior Ministry with provincial branches directed by governors  
18 and district branches handled by local officials, [Sansern](#) added. The [centres](#) will deliver  
19 executive reports in the pre-referendum phase from now until August 6 and then in the post-  
20 referendum phase from August 8 to 10 or until the situation settles.

21 [Sansern](#) told The Nation that the [centres](#)' establishment had nothing to do with political  
22 movement. They were set up because the referendum is around the corner, he said.

23 However, their establishment came after rival politicians last week said they wanted to hold  
24 talks to discuss ways to achieve reconciliation.

25 The plan was reportedly initiated by [Pheu Thai](#) veteran politician [Sudarat Keuraphan](#).  
26 Prime Minister General [Prayut Chan-o-cha](#) said on Friday that politicians should talk  
27 privately and "can do anything they like as long as it is not against the law".

28 Colonel [Piyapong Klinpan](#), the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) deputy chief  
29 of public relations, said the NCPO would monitor any activities to ensure Thailand remained  
30 in order before the referendum date.

31 "We already have the referendum bill that bars any actions that can confuse the public [about  
32 the plebiscite]," [Piyapong](#) said. "I would like to ask politicians to let the Election  
33 Commission and the charter drafters carry out their duties as usual."

34 The Democrat Party's deputy leader [Nipit Intarasombat](#) said that he and [Sudarat](#) had agreed  
35 to hold talks informally and in private so politicians could express opinions comfortably and  
36 freely.

37 [Nipit](#) encouraged "non-extremist" academics to support the talks to lessen public doubt. He  
38 stressed that the talks were not meant to oppose the junta.

39 [Pheu Thai](#) member Group Captain [Anudith Nakornthap](#) agreed with holding talks but said  
40 that it should be staged openly to avoid public [scepticism](#).

41 Both [Nipit](#) and [Anudith](#) said politicians should stop attacking one another so political hatred  
42 could be restrained.

43 [Suriyasai Katasila](#), deputy rector of [Rangsit University](#)'s College of Social Innovation, said  
44 political issues were far too complicated to be solved by politicians merely [talking](#). [Suriyasai](#)  
45 urged political parties to undergo reforms to regain public trust.

46 United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) co-leader [Nattawut Saikua](#) said the  
47 government's order to set up the [centres](#) would raise public doubts over whether authorities  
48 wanted to ensure the referendum result was in their [favour](#).

49 Nattawut also criticised the government for “copycatting” the UDD’s countrywide anti-fraud  
50 centres that aimed to monitor possible corruption during the referendum process. Many of the  
51 centres were shut down last month at their opening ceremonies as authorities said they broke  
52 the junta’s order banning political gatherings of more than four people.  
53 “The government told us we didn’t have to set up the centres because the EC [Election  
54 Commission] is already in charge of tackling voting corruption,” the UDD figure said.  
55 Election Commissioner Somchai Srisutthiyakorn said he did not know the details of the  
56 centres but would welcome them as the government was helping the EC keep the plebiscite  
57 process in order.  
58 “People should not worry that the centres will infringe on their rights,” Somchai said. “They  
59 are certainly unaffected as long as they don’t aim to create a commotion.”  
60 Meanwhile, Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva called on the prime minister, in his  
61 capacity as head of the NCPO, to ensure that the junta stays neutral in the referendum  
62 process.  
63 In an exclusive interview with The Nation, Abhisit suggested that Prayut should withdraw  
64 state mechanisms deployed to help disseminate the charter content and adjust its stance on the  
65 matter because it was now viewed as a campaigner for referendum.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30289736>

## 1 Call for referendum campaigns to be staged

2 *national* July 04, 2016 01:00

3 By [Juthathip Lucksanawong](#)

4 **Pro-democracy academics on Sunday urged the authorities to allow campaigns for or**  
5 **against the upcoming referendum on the draft charter to be carried out and release the**  
6 **seven [antiplebiscite](#) student activists recently arrested.**

7  
8 The academics spoke at an event called the “Referendum Campaigning is People’s Right, not  
9 Illegal”. It was [organised](#) by the New Democracy Movement at [Thammasat](#) University’s [Tha](#)  
10 [Phra Chan](#) campus.

11 [Chanvit Kasetsiri](#), former rector of [Thammasat](#) University, stressed that the campaigns could be  
12 staged and called on the powers that be to [realise](#) the importance of human rights and go beyond  
13 the dictatorship which has persisted in the country for decades.

14 [Puangthong Pawakapan](#), a political science lecturer at [Chulalongkorn](#) University, said the rights  
15 to vote “yes” or “no” is a fundamental rights which people should have. However, she said the  
16 powers that be had deprived the people of such a right.

17 “We are moving backwards while other democratic countries embrace liberty and democracy,”  
18 [Puangthong](#) said.

19 [Decharut Sukkumneod](#), an economist at [Kasetsart](#) University, stressed that campaigning for the  
20 referendum was legal and useful.

21 “Campaigning can lead to change,” [Decharut](#) said, citing a [freededucation](#) campaign carried out by  
22 high school student activists as an example.

23 “That campaign led to the junta’s move to provide 15year [freededucation](#) [from kindergarten to  
24 [Matthayom 6](#)] for people,” [Decharut](#) said.

25 [Saowatri Suksri](#), a law lecturer at [Thammasat](#) University, said Clause 2 of Section 61 of the  
26 Referendum Act was not in line with criminal law principles. She said the section was vaguely  
27 written. People did not know what they could and could not do as the law could be broadly  
28 interpreted.

29 Lawyer [Anont Nampa](#) will on Tuesday file a second request asking police to release the seven  
30 student activists.

31 The activists’ supporters at the [Thammasat](#) University event expressed their support of the  
32 students’ campaign as they regard it as being legal.

33 The seven were among thirteen activists from the NDM and a [labour](#) union who were arrested  
34 while handing out leaflets concerning the August referendum. They were charged with violating  
35 the National Council for Peace and Order’s order 3/2558, which bans political gatherings of more  
36 than four people.

37 Six were temporarily release on [Bt50,000](#) bail.

38 The detained students include students from [Thammasat](#), [Kasetsart](#), and [Ramkhamhaeng](#)  
39 universities.

40 Their supporters will visit them at Bangkok Remand Prison on Monday.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30289743>



1 **Those behind ‘fake’ booklet face jail: PM**

2 *national* July 09, 2016 01:00  
3 By THE NATION

4 **Probe said to be closer to identifying those funding document on charter with 'distorted'**  
5 **information.**

6 |  
7 THE prime minister yesterday warned that “many people will be put in jail”, as the authorities  
8 investigate the source of funding for the publication of a booklet on the draft constitution  
9 described by the drafters as containing false and distorted information.

10 Prime Minister General Pravut Chan-o-cha, who also heads the National Council for Peace and  
11 Order (NCPO), said authorities were investigating the matter to determine who had produced the  
12 booklet and the source of the funding.

13 He added that it was against the law to falsify a state document.

14 “We will find them finally. If they are put into jail, there could be a protest again,” he told  
15 reporters.

16 The PM said he believed “some people” had funded the publication of the document, adding that  
17 “things are getting clearer and clearer now”.

18 When asked if he was confident the masterminds would be arrested, Pravut said: “I am confident  
19 in the officials responsible. They will make any arrests, not me.”

20 Responding to a reporter who asked whether he thought the Election Commission (EC) would be  
21 able to deal with people attempting to disrupt the August 7 referendum on the draft constitution,  
22 he said he was hopeful and would offer moral support to the authorities involved.

23 “Many people will end up in jail. Don’t worry about that. Investigations are under way on several  
24 cases. And don’t accuse me of persecution,” he said.

25 On Thursday, the Constitution Drafting Commission (CDC) asked the EC to take action over the  
26 distribution of copies of a document containing what it said was false information about the draft  
27 charter – an action which was against the Referendum Act.

28 The “fake” booklet looks like the one produced by the CDC that summarises the draft  
29 constitution with specific points, but it also includes information that does not exist in the draft  
30 charter and contains “false” content, according to the CDC spokesmen.

31 On Thursday, a group of student activists, called the New Democracy Movement (NDM),  
32 admitted that they had produced the document in order to criticise certain points in the draft  
33 constitution.

34 Pakorn Areekul, a leader of the group, said the cost of publication had been covered by donations,  
35 denying a suggestion that it was funded by an unnamed political group.

36 The NCPO is investigating to determine who gave financial support to the NDM in producing  
37 copies of the document that contained “distorted information”, a source familiar with the matter  
38 said yesterday.

39 “We will find out whether the students could afford to print copies of the document, and if  
40 anyone had supported them. Also, we will see where the copies were printed, how many were  
41 printed, and how much it cost,” the NCPO source said. He added that the CDC and the EC were  
42 separately attempting to find out in which provinces copies of the document had been distributed,  
43 and who was behind the distribution.

44 CDC chairman Meechai Ruchupan said on Thursday that he was convinced the document had  
45 been published in large numbers, and that its publication must have been funded by a group of  
46 people.

47 Yesterday, Meechai said a CDC subcommittee was looking into the document produced by the  
48 NDM student group to determine whether any of its content was against the law.

49 However, he admitted that although initially he had found part of the document’s content to “lack  
50 good reason”, it was not a distortion or false.

51 The subcommittee has yet to conclude its findings, CDC spokesman Chatchai Na Chiangmai said  
52 yesterday.  
53 In a related development, the German Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee has criticised the  
54 content of the draft constitution, the EurActiv Germany website reported. “With concern, we note  
55 that the draft constitution does not strengthen a separation of powers, but the power of the  
56 military is maintained in the future,” said the committee’s coordinators – Norbert Rottgen, Stefan  
57 Liebich and Marieleise Beck.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30290146>

Annex 1.16: Coverage 16

1 **Three NDM members and Prachathai reporter held in Ratchaburi over**  
2 **‘anti-charter’ leaflets**

3 *national July 11, 2016 01:00/*  
4 By Juthathip Luksanawong  
5 The Na

6 **FOUR citizens including a reporter for Prachathai have been detained on charges of**  
7 **breaching a ban on campaigning against the charter draft after police searched their**  
8 **car and found leaflets with information against the draft.**

9  
10 The charge under Article 61 of the Referendum Act carries penalties of up to 10 years in jail, a  
11 fine of up to Bt200,000 and a five-year suspension of a person’s electoral rights. Article 61  
12 prohibits the dissemination of “false”, “vulgar”, “inciteful”, or “intimidating” information about  
13 the referendum in August.

14 Reporter Taweesak Kerdpoka and three activists from anti-junta group New Democracy  
15 Movement [NDM], Pakorn Areekul, Anucha Rungmorakot and Anan Laoked appeared at Ban  
16 Pong Police Station in Ratchaburi province yesterday to show moral support for 18 red-shirts  
17 who reported to police after receiving a summons.

18 The 18 have been accused of violating the junta’s ban on political gatherings after they were  
19 involved in the red-shirts’ provincial anti-fraud centres aimed at monitoring possible fraud in the  
20 referendum on the charter draft.

21 When the four were about to leave, police searched their car and found leaflets with information  
22 against the draft. They were taken to police for interrogation and charged.

23 Police did not allow them to seek bail. The four were detained and due to be taken to the  
24 provincial court, where they will be able to apply for bail, lawyer Anont Nampa said.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30290259>

Annex 1.17: Coverage 17

1 **Police raid Prachatai's office**

2 *Breaking News July 12, 2016 16:20*

3 By The Nation

4

5 **Police officers Tuesday raided Prachatai's office to search for evidence relating to a**  
6 **recent incident where its reporter was arrested and charged in violation of the**  
7 **referendum law. But none were found.**

8

9 The raid followed the court's warrant to search for items such as documents or print media that  
10 oppose the referendum or encourage voters to vote against the charter draft.

11

12 During the search, Prachatai wrote on its Facebook page that some military officers were also  
13 observing the operation.

14

15 The police officer told Prachatai that the operation followed the incident in Ratchaburi's Ban  
16 Pong District where its reporter was charged with breaching the Article 61 of the referendum law  
17 which prohibits vote influence. He was in the vehicles together with other anti-charter activists  
18 where documents opposing the charter draft and "Vote NO" stickers were found.

19

The reporter and the activists, however, were released on Bt140,000 bail Monday.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/breaking-news/aec/30290384>



1 Police fail to find anti-draft material during search of 'Prachatai'  
2 office

3 *national July 13, 2016 01:00*  
4 By KASAMAKORN CHANWANPEN,  
5 KHANI

6  
7 **POLICE from Sutthisan Station conducted a search yesterday of an office of**  
8 **Prachathai, the online news agency, to investigate links to the recent arrest of one of the**  
9 **agency's reporters in Ratchaburi.**

10  
11 Reporter Taweesak Kerdpoka and four activists were accused of breaching the Referendum Law  
12 after they were found in a pick-up truck on Sunday along with alleged anti-charter booklets and  
13 stickers reading "Vote NO" in reference to the upcoming plebiscite.  
14 An officer from Sutthisan Station said police had a court-approved warrant issued to search for  
15 relevant documents and check if there were connections between the agency and the recent arrest.  
16 However, police did not find any evidence linking Prachatai to the alleged anti-charter materials.  
17 Taweesak said the warrant authorised police to seize documents, but they did not take any  
18 material from the office. Military officers stood outside observing the search, but generally the  
19 authorities seemed friendly, he said.  
20 The reporter said the office was under suspicion of being behind the New Democracy Movement  
21 (NDM) activists, probably because he was among those arrested with them and police had been  
22 trying to identify the 'masterminds'.  
23 The office returned to normal operations after police left, Taweesak said.  
24 Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha said at his weekly press briefing at Government  
25 House that responsible officers were working on the case and they should be given time to do  
26 their job.  
27 Prayut said the officers followed legal procedures and would take action in line with the law,  
28 adding that people should instead pay attention to genuine charter issues rather than "false" ones.  
29 The Constitution Drafting Commission (CDC), meanwhile, is considering whether to take action  
30 against the NDM activists involved in producing and distributing the booklets.  
31 The CDC's subcommittee on public relations said agents were examining the controversial  
32 documents, which allegedly contain content opposing the charter draft. Initially, the CDC divided  
33 the content into four categories – opinions different from the drafters', opinions opposing the  
34 charter draft, half-truths and distorted facts, a source in the CDC said.  
35 He said opinions differing from the CDC's and against the charter draft were not illegal but the  
36 half-truths and distorted facts were problematic.  
37 However, the CDC had not yet resolved whether to report violations of the Referendum Law to  
38 the Election Commission, the source said, adding that it would launch a public relations  
39 campaign to correct the distorted facts.  
40 In reference to the arrest in Ban Pong in Ratchaburi, the source said people distributing anti-  
41 charter documents might not be charged for violating Article 61 of the Referendum Law because  
42 the intention behind the action might not be clear. But those responsible for producing content  
43 distorting the charter should be held legally accountable, he said.  
44 Article 61 bans "false", "rude", "inciting" or "intimidating" messages related to the referendum,  
45 with maximum penalties of up to 10 years jail and or a fine of up to Bt200,000.  
46 The international media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) on Monday called on  
47 authorities to withdraw all charges against Taweesak.

48 "It is unacceptable that local officials, acting under the junta's authority, fail to distinguish  
49 between political activists and a journalist who is covering their activities," Benjamin Ismail, the  
50 head of RSF's Asia-Pacific desk, said.

## 1 Local administrators told to keep the peace ahead of referendum

2 *national* July 16, 2016 01:00

3 By THE NATION

4

5 **INTERIOR Minister Anupong Paochinda yesterday warned local administrators of**  
6 **possible punishment if they fail to prevent unrest or unwanted incidents in their areas in**  
7 **the run-up to next month's referendum on the draft constitution.**

8

9 General Anupong chaired a meeting of provincial governors from all over the country at the  
10 Interior Ministry yesterday. Participants also included Deputy Interior Minister Suthi Makbun,  
11 Interior permanent secretary Grisada Boonrach, and directors-general from all departments.  
12 The interior minister instructed the ministry's officials to maintain neutrality and help prevent any  
13 attempt to create unrest ahead of the August 7 national vote. He also urged them to help  
14 encourage eligible voters to turn out in great numbers.

15 He told reporters that the Interior Ministry expected to rely on village heads and kamnans to help  
16 maintain peace in the run-up to the referendum.

17 "Kamnans and village heads are supposed to know what is going on in their areas. They have to  
18 be able to explain what happens. They have to work to the best of their ability and cooperate with  
19 all the relevant agencies. If they can't do it or turn a blind eye to what's happening, we will see  
20 what to do with them," the interior minister said.

21

22 Anupong also said that he wanted the authorities to get the culprits who mailed letters with  
23 "distorted information" about the draft constitution to many houses in northern provinces. He said  
24 his ministry was working with local police and military authorities on this case.

25 He said that he had instructed ministry officials to focus on finding the source of the documents  
26 that could cause misunderstanding among the voters.

27 The interior minister said that he had instructed officials of the government's peace and order  
28 maintaining centres to maintain neutrality ahead the referendum.

29 He urged voters to use their good sense when deciding which way to vote.

30 "Whatever the result will be, there must be no unrest in the country. Everyone has to accept the  
31 result. Neutrality by authorities is essential. If people do not have faith in them, there could be  
32 disturbances," he said.

33 Police concluded that the documents confiscated in Chiang Mai did not distort the draft charter,  
34 Royal Thai Police deputy spokesman Maj-General Songpol Wattanachai said.

35 He said the conclusion was drawn after a working group from the Parliament Secretariat and  
36 Chiang Mai University studied the content of the documents.

37 The spokesman also said that police were examining a number of documents mailed to different  
38 locations in Lampang province to determine if they distorted the draft charter. Police would take  
39 legal action against the publisher and printer of the documents if they were found to violate the  
40 Referendum Act, he added.

41 In a related development, Election Commission member Somchai Srisuthivakorn advised polling  
42 station officials to be careful in performing their duty on voting day to prevent possible  
43 allegations of vote fraud.

44 "This upcoming referendum will be watched closely by people in the country as well as  
45 foreigners. This is a sensitive issue. You have to strictly follow the regulations and guidelines,"  
46 he said during an orientation meeting of polling station officials in Prachin Buri province.

47 Somchai said no private watchdog workers would be allowed in polling stations but they would  
48 be allowed to observe the process outside the stations.

49 People could wear shirts embossed with "vote yes" or "vote no", Somchai said. But he advised  
50 against doing so, explaining that while the act would not be illegal it would be "improper".

## 1 ▾ Raids find ‘evidence of distorted’ charter draft

2 *national July 24, 2016 01:00*

3 By THE SUNDAY NATION

4 **A JOINT unit of military and police officers yesterday reported finding copies of letters**  
5 **“distorting” charter content during a raid on a company owned by the family of a well-**  
6 **known Chiang Mai politician.**

7  
8 The team raided the Tambon Charng Puak municipal office and five other places after arresting  
9 Samart Kwanchai, 63, for distributing the leaflets earlier in the morning in the northern city’s  
10 Muang district.

11 They searched the office of the mayor, the Office of the Municipal Clerk, a residence of Kachen  
12 Jiakkachorn, the mayor of Tambon Charng Puak, and a company that is a family business of a  
13 well-known local politician.

14 Kachen is said to be related to Bunlert Buranupakorn, president of the Chiang Mai Provincial  
15 Administrative Organisation who is reportedly on an overseas trip.

16 Evidence found during a search at the company was linked to letters that allegedly distorted the  
17 charter draft’s content. These included many copies of a letter distorting content of the draft, with  
18 the same type of envelope and paper as letters mailed to local residents earlier. Previously,  
19 authorities confiscated some 10,000 such letters at the Chiang Mai Postal Office.

20 According to unnamed employees of the company, the documents and stationery items belong to  
21 Wissarut Kananitisarn, 35, who is a close aide to a well-known Chiang Mai politician.

22 Wissarut, who allegedly produced and distributed the letters, had fled from Chiang Mai but was  
23 arrested in Bangkok.

24 During yesterday’s search, police also found a jacket, a backpack, a helmet and a pair of slippers  
25 that looked the same as ones used by a man who put letters with distorted details about the draft  
26 into postal boxes at different locations in Chiang Mai. The man’s acts were caught on security  
27 cameras. In Lampang, police and military officials also had an arrest warrant approved by the  
28 Lampang provincial court to arrest Pongpan Jirawang, 33, for attempting to cause disturbances  
29 during the upcoming public referendum.

30 He was arrested at a house in Tambon Banthi, in Lamphun’s Muang district.

31 Meanwhile, Democrat Party deputy leader Kalaya Sophonpanich said that she had not found any  
32 booklets that distorted the charter draft in the Central and Northeastern provinces. She said she  
33 visited constituents there every week and asked the party candidates and former MPs of the party  
34 who told her they had not found anything unusual. She said villagers there had a high awareness  
35 of national politics and they would have reported to the party if they had found any such booklets.  
36 Democrat Party deputy leader Sathit Pitutecha said that former MPs of the party told him there  
37 were no booklets distributed in their provinces. Half of the constituents in the central region did  
38 not know if the charter draft would pass the referendum and most people planned to follow the  
39 advice of those whom they respected on whether to accept or reject the draft. About 70 per cent  
40 did not express their opinion, afraid of breaking the law.

41 Pattani Provincial Governor Suriya Amornroj yesterday led top officials in the province including  
42 1500 students to rally on a provincial road (Pattani to Hat Yai) in the campaign to encourage  
43 voters to exercise their rights on August 7.

44 Meanwhile, Election Commis-sioner Supachai Somcharoen said the EC is continuing its public  
45 relations campaign to promote voting in the referendum. A major campaign will be carried out on  
46 August 4 at the Royal Plaza in Bangkok and six major provinces – Chiang Mai, Nakhon  
47 Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, Songkhla, Pattani and Chon Buri.

48 He said the EC expected a voter turnout of 80 per cent. He expressed confidence that there would  
49 not be any destruction of eligible voter lists, arson attacks, or any blocking of voters going to cast  
50 their ballots.

51 The Open Forum for Democracy Foundation (P-NET) yesterday issued a statement, expressing  
52 concern about liberty and public participation problems in the upcoming referendum. The  
53 statement said the public did not have the courage to freely participate in expressing varying  
54 views over the charter draft due to ambiguous laws and regulations.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/aec/30291265>



## 1 Police seek charter arrests

2 *national* July 26, 2016 01:00

3 By THE NATION

### 4 "Old power clique" linked to suspects; warrants to be sought over draft "distortions"

5  
6 POLICE WILL seek arrest warrants for at least five people including politicians suspected of  
7 involvement in the production and distribution of "distorted" draft constitution content in Chiang  
8 Mai.

9 Deputy national police chief Pol General Sriwara Rangsibhramanakul yesterday said the  
10 Provincial Police Region 5, which covers the northern provinces, has discovered an unnamed  
11 "old political clique" has been active ahead of the August 7 referendum on the draft constitution.  
12 "They [police] have collected evidence to seek court permission to issue arrest warrants for five  
13 people," he said.

14 Sriwara was speaking at a press conference at the Provincial Police Region 1 headquarters on  
15 Vibhavadi Rangsit Road in Bangkok, where he met with senior police officers to discuss  
16 preparations for the national vote.

17 Chiang Mai police chief Pol Maj-General Montri Sambunnanont said police know the identities  
18 of the five suspects and are gathering evidence to support their request for arrest warrants.

19 "We believe there are at least five people in the initial batch," he said, adding that police have  
20 forensic evidence to back their accusation against the suspects.

21 "The initial evidence links some well-known local politicians and a famous family [to alleged  
22 wrongdoing]," the Chiang Mai police chief said, without elaborating.

23 On Saturday, hundreds of police and military officers conducted searches of 10 locations in  
24 Chiang Mai, including the Chang Phuak municipal office and a company owned by the family of  
25 Chiang Mai's Provincial Administrative Organisation chief executive Boonlert Buranupakorn.  
26 A number of letters with allegedly distorted content of the draft charter were found at the  
27 company and the municipal office. Police also confiscated clothes that looked similar to those  
28 worn by a man seen on security camera footage putting copies of the letter in postal boxes in the  
29 northern city.

30 Another search was conducted yesterday at the same municipal office in Chiang Mai and police  
31 confiscated a computer and a motorcycle suspected of being used in the alleged wrongdoing.

32 They also found evidence linked to the letters, police said.

33 Chiang Mai Governor Pawin Champrasart said a fact-finding committee had been set up to  
34 investigate a suspected link between the letters and local administrators.

35 However, he added that a further investigation is needed to determine whether Boonlert is  
36 involved in the matter. The governor said Boonlert has been on leave since July 11 and left the  
37 country last Wednesday. "There is no evidence yet to link him to any wrongdoing," he added.

38 An estimated 100,000 police officers will be deployed to ensure the referendum is carried out  
39 smoothly, Royal Thai Police deputy spokesman Pol Maj-General Piyapan Pingmuang said.

40 He added that National police Chief Pol General Chakthip Chaichinda has instructed police  
41 across the country to step up security and urged the Election Commission to deploy more officials  
42 to prevent illegal activities at provincial and district levels.

43 Meanwhile, police are investigating seven cases related to the destruction of lists of eligible  
44 referendum voters in Bangkok, Kanchanaburi, Khon Kaen, Satun, Supan Buri, Rayong and  
45 Phichit. Piyapan said, adding that most of the cases were caused by accidents or human error.

46 At least four cases involved children and none are linked to politics, he said.

47 Election Commission deputy secretary-general Thanit Sriprathet said vandalism of eligible voter  
48 lists was not uncommon during the run-up to any vote and ongoing cases have not been linked to  
49 political motivations. "It happens all the time, either naturally or deliberately.

50 "In some cases, ballots have been blown away by the wind or soaked by rain. Other times, kids  
51 are being kids and play around with the lists resulting in damage," Thanit said. "But now it's just

52 that the situation is intense with all the 'vote yes' and 'vote no' campaigns. So, everyone is a little  
53 too anxious.”  
54 Police are investigating the cases following procedures regardless of the age of violators, he said.  
55 Chakthip said that a new list of 306 eligible voters had been posted at Had Moon Krabue Temple  
56 in Tambon Yan Yao in Phichit's Muang district, after the previous list displayed in the temple  
57 hall was destroyed by more than 10 monkeys.  
58 Phichit Election Office director Pravoon Chakpattarakul said the Phichit Provincial Election  
59 Commission put the 19-page eligible voter list on a board following the incident.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/acc/30291410>

## 1 11 face sedition charges over draft charter

2 *national* August 03, 2016 01:00

3 By THE NATION

### 4 **Suspects to be sent back to Chiang Mai in case related to 'distorted' letters.**

5

6 ELEVEN PEOPLE including top politicians from Chiang Mai have been charged with sedition,  
7 criminal association and violating the referendum law for allegedly distributing letters that carried  
8 distorted information about the draft charter. The accused will be tried in both civilian and  
9 military courts.

10 The 11 people were accused of violating Article 116 on sedition and Article 210 on criminal  
11 association of the Criminal Code as well as Clause 2 of Article 61 of the Public Referendum Law.  
12 Chiang Mai Provincial Administrative Organisation president Boonlert Buranupakorn, former  
13 Pheu Thai MP for Chiang Mai Thassani Buranupakorn, Tambon Chang Puak mayor Kachen  
14 Jiakkachorn and Thassani's sister Tharntip Buranupakorn are among the 11 suspects.

15 They were yesterday escorted from the 11th Army Circle, where they had been detained for an  
16 initial seven days, for further interrogation at the Crime Suppression Division.

17 Deputy national police chief Pol General Srivara Ransibrahmanakul, Region 5 Police Bureau  
18 commissioner Pol Lt-General Thanitsak Theerasawat, Chiang Mai Provincial Police chief Pol  
19 Maj-General Montri Sambunanon and top officials from the Crime Suppression Division took  
20 charge of the suspects before announcing at a press conference that they would be charged.

21 Pol Maj-General Chayapol Chatchaidej, chief of the Counter Crime Planning Division of the  
22 Office of Police Strategy, said the suspects had committed the crimes in an organised and  
23 systematic manner.

24 Post office officials in Lampang, Lamphun and Chiang Mai provinces tipped off security officials  
25 saying they had found a large number of dubious looking letters in post boxes from July 12 to  
26 15.

27 Officials from the Election Commission (EC) examined the letters, suspecting that they contained  
28 messages that "distorted" the draft charter. The EC then filed a complaint at the Mae Ping Police  
29 Station in Chiang Mai, resulting in an investigation led by Srivara.

30 Witnesses and circumstantial evidence pointed to Wissarut Kuanitisarn as a suspect. He was  
31 arrested and charged with violating clause 2 of Article 61 of the Public Referendum Law, after  
32 which he confessed and provided information that helped police apprehend the other suspects.  
33 Based on information provided by Wissara, police on July 26 raided local government offices in  
34 Chiang Mai as well as a company belonging to the Buranupakorn family and found the letters,  
35 Chayapol said.

36 Police said the masterminds included Boonlert, Thassani, Kachen and another suspect, Pairat  
37 Maichompu. Wissarut and Aimorn Dabsok produced the letters, while suspects Adipong  
38 Kammun, Krittakorn Potaya, Aimorn, Wissarut and Thewarat Rinta delivered them.  
39 Tharntip was also accused of helping other suspects flee from police and providing them with  
40 support.

41 Police have asked the court to extend their detention.

42 Srivara said the 11 suspects would be flown to Chiang Mai and the case will be taken over by  
43 Thanitsak, who oversees the North.

44 Pol Lt-Colonel Thanvalak Thudi, who conducted a physical examination of the suspects, said  
45 none of the accused showed any signs of wounds or of having been assaulted.

46 Boonlert denied the charges and said he would only give a statement to the court.

47 National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) spokesman Colonel Piyapong Klinpan did not  
48 answer whether the 11 suspects still have the right to cast ballots during the referendum, but he  
49 added that Police Region 5 has no more than 48 hours to seek court approval to detain the  
50 suspects.

51 He said the suspects would be sent back to Chiang Mai where they wield influence, but the  
52 NCPO believes that local officials would strictly follow the law.  
53 Meanwhile, 19 members of the red-shirt United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship  
54 including chairman Jatuporn Prompan were released without bail after they surrendered to face  
55 charges of violating the NCPO ban on political gatherings. The charges were related to their  
56 attempts in June to open fraud-monitoring centres nationwide.  
57 The 19 people pled innocent and Jatuporn said they were released unconditionally.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/30292025>

Annex 1.23: Coverage 23

## 1 Bail for suspects held over ‘distortion’ of draft denied

2

3 *Breaking News |*

4

5 **The military court in Chiang Mai province Thursday rejected a bail request from 11**  
6 **suspects, including top politicians from the province, who face charges for allegedly**  
7 **distributing letters containing “distorted” information about the draft charter.**

8

9 Police wrapped up the investigation Thursday and filed a lawsuit against the 11 suspects on  
10 charges of sedition, criminal association and violating the referendum law after the 48-hour  
11 detention limit was completed.

12 More than 50 police officers escorted the suspects from Police Region 5 to the 33rd Army Circle  
13 at Kawila Fort under heavy security.

14 The male suspects will be detained at the Chiang Mai Central Prison in Mae Taeng district, while  
15 female suspects will be detained at the Chiang Mai Women Correctional Institute in Muang  
16 district. Police have a maximum of 84 days to detain them pending investigation.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/breakingnews/30292132>



## 1 Anti-junta activists indicted

2 *national* August 30, 2016 01:00

3 By JUTHATHIP LUCKSANAWONG |

4

5 **PUBLIC PROSECUTORS** yesterday indicted four anti-junta activists and a reporter  
6 from the Prachatai online news outlet for allegedly violating a ban on campaigning  
7 about the draft constitution.

8

9 Their lawyer said the charge carried a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, and prosecutors  
10 additionally proposed a 10-year electoral-rights revocation for the five accused.  
11 The Ratchaburi Provincial Court granted bail of Bt140,000 each, which was sought previously,  
12 according to lawyer Arnon Nampa. He said the prosecutors said Prachatai reporter Taweesak  
13 Kerdpoka and the New Democracy Movement (NDM) activists possessed and prepared to  
14 distribute “Vote No” stickers.  
15 However, Election Commission member Somchai Srisutthiyakorn yesterday stressed that such  
16 stickers would not breach Article 61 of the Referendum Act. According to Somchai’s Facebook,  
17 he said he was willing to testify to prove that the defendants were innocent.  
18 Arnon insisted the accused had done nothing wrong, denied all allegations, and the case would be  
19 vigorously contested in court.  
20 The five accused are Taweesak, NDM activists Pakorn Areekul, Anucha Rungmorakot and Anan  
21 Laoked, and Panuwat Songsawatchai, another red-shirt-supporting student based in Ratchaburi.  
22 On July 10, Taweesak went with the three NDM activists by car to Ratchaburi’s Ban Pong district  
23 police station to report on the actions of students who were travelling to give moral support to 18  
24 red shirts who reported to police after receiving a summons.  
25 The 18 were charged with violating the junta’s ban on political gatherings after being involved in  
26 the red shirts’ provincial anti-fraud centres aimed at monitoring possible fraud in the referendum.  
27 When Taweesak and the others were about to leave, they were intercepted by police, who  
28 searched their car and found “Vote No” stickers and pamphlets opposing the constitutional draft.  
29 The four, along with Panuwat, who was brought to the police station later that evening, were  
30 accused of breaching Article 61, which bans the dissemination of “false”, “vulgar”, “inciting”, or  
31 “intimidating” messages in relation to the August 7 referendum on the charter.  
32 Chuwat Rerksirisuk, editor-in-chief of the news outlet, said the organisation was considering  
33 filing a counter-suit against the investigators based on their groundless charges. He said  
34 Taweesak and the activists had not disseminated any documents against the charter draft, so had  
35 done nothing to breach Article 61.  
36 Prachatai director Chiranuch Premchaiporn said her organisation would help Taweesak fight the  
37 case, as he was charged while on duty. The court hearing is set for September 21.

Site link: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/30294066>