

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

WHY RECONCILIATION FAILED IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation seeks to explain why successive Thai governments have failed in maintaining peace through conducting reconciliation processes. Relying on a public survey and quantitative analysis, it argues that the reconciliation process conducted by several governments during the past decade failed because trust building—both in terms of trust in national institutions and trust among the people—has been ignored. The neglect of the Thai governments to invest time and other resources in building trust has made the term reconciliation unpopular and created perceptions of the reconciliation process as being conducted as a means for the people holding state power to defeat the people of opposing groups rather than a means of resolving conflict problems and reconciling society. This dissertation thus recommends that the government as one of the most important political institutions for the facilitation of a reconciliation process must seek the ways to increase its trustworthiness in the eyes of the public. Interactive channels must also be made available to the people to communicate together, to build understanding, and to exchange opinions; especially channels for broad-based discussions about the pathway to transform the conflicts and the future of this country in order to build trust between the people. Without these recognitions and mechanisms, the political conflicts in Thailand could not be transformed to durable peace.

Certification of Dissertation

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses, software and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.



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ENDORSEMENT



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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The Aims and Focus of the Study

The current political conflicts in Thailand have had many adverse impacts on Thai society, especially since the military coup led by the Council of National Security (CNS) on September, 19th of 2006. Since 2006, Thai society has become deeply divided. The cleavage that has existed in the society has been apparent through several massive protests organized by two opposing groups of Thai citizens (Hewison 2015: 57). The first group is usually referred to as the “yellow shirts,” the urban middle-class movement that emerged and first united as the People’s Alliance for Democracy (PAD) in February 2006¹ to oppose the government of Thaksin Shinawatra² (Pye and Schaffar 2008: 43-44; Hewison 2014: 3). In November 2013, this group newly formed the People’s Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC), a coalition of the Democrat Party (DP), the PAD, and pro-military groups.

The second group is the “red shirts” or the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) that first formed in September 2006 to oppose the military coup, which overthrew the government of Thaksin five weeks before the scheduled election (Forsyth, 2010: 464). While the UDD is the dominant red-shirts group, the movement includes other groups only loosely affiliated and not subordinate to the UDD. Both

¹ In fact, Sondhi Limthongkul, a leader of PAD, had already been promoting anti-Thaksin campaigning for several months, largely under the Thailand Weekly talk show label, and his supporters had already informally adopted yellow as their color.

² More information regarding the roles of Thaksin Shinawatra and his family in Thai politics during the past decade could be found in many literature such as McCargo (2011), McCargo and Ukrist Pathmanand (2005), Pasuk Phongpaichit and Baker (2004).

movements grew rapidly with hundreds of thousands of citizens joining each camp's several demonstrations during the past decade.

In the early period of the disputation, some scholars have depicted such phenomena as “a tussle of competing elites, with a rising elite, associated with Thaksin, challenging the long-dominant conservative elite of palace-connected military leaders, big business/old money and technocrats” (Hewison 2015: 57 and see, Hewison 2008: 205–7 for further explanation). Since the divide between the yellow-shirt and red-shirt protesters and supporters is rooted in class (the rural reds versus the urban middle-class yellows) differences, some scholars argued that the political conflict in Thailand can be seen as a conflict of class and privilege in which a minority urban middle class tried to hold the upper hand against the rural masses (Pasuk and Baker 2008: 21). Albritton and Thawilwadee (2006: 136) shared a similar view and claimed that the “tale of two democracies” thesis is the best way to explain what is going on in the past decade of Thai politics.

According to the tale of two democracies thesis (Anek 1996), the reason democracy failed to be firmly established in Thailand over the past several decades is to be found in the conflicting perceptions and expectations of the urban middle class (most are Bangkok-based citizens) and the rural poor over democracy, elections, and politicians. In particular, for rural voters,³ democracy is valued as a mechanism to draw greater benefits from the politicians to their communities and themselves. Elections, in the rural electorate's view, are therefore very much local, not national affairs, dealing with the exchange of votes for personal and tangible benefits rather than abstract rewards such as laws, policies, or public interest.

³ Anek (1996) defines rural electorate simply as Thai populations who reside in villages (in the 1980s almost 70 percent of the workforce are farmers or peasants).

In contrast to the rural electorate, the well-educated middle class ideally view democracy as a form of legitimate rule adopted by most civilized nations. For this reason, elections should be mechanisms for recruiting honest and capable persons to serve as lawmakers and political executives rather than a process through which voters get parochial and personal benefits. For urban middle-class voters, voting decisions should be made independently of social, cultural, and especially financial obligations. However, in practice, elections in Thailand, in the eyes of the urban middle-class, have not lived up to their expectations; so that they remain “an invalid source of regime legitimacy.” Because of vote-buying, the majority of Thai voters did not choose their representatives independently and did not have “responsible judgment.” For the urban middle-class Thai citizens (the majority being the unsophisticated rural poor) were not “the sovereign of the state” as in democratic theory because they were just “a vehicle for illegitimate power” for the unethical politicians (Anek 1996: 214-215).

The existence in society of the conflicting views and expectations of the urban middle class and the rural poor concerning democracy, elections, and politicians, as described above, Anek (1996) concluded, leads to instability in democracy in Thailand, in which the rural majority votes to set up a government while the less in number, but louder voiced, middle class criticizes and weakens the cabinet, which finally is ended by either its own internal conflicts or an external military coup. This conclusion seems appropriate to explain what creates the yellow-red difference, at least, at the beginning of the period when the conflicts occurred (before the 2006 coup). However, as the conflict deepened, it has been described by many as reflecting a deep societal division that cuts across many types of socioeconomic backgrounds and loyalties.

As many studies (e.g., Abhichart 2010; Ammar and Somchai 2011) have asserted, people that identify themselves as being close to either the yellow or the red

shirts are socioeconomically mixed. There are many red-shirts protesters and supporters that are middle-class, earn a high income, and have a great opportunity for education and many yellow-shirt protesters and supporters are working-class, earn a low income, are less-educated, and come from provincial areas, even though the majority of the red shirts are rural residents that have less income and a lower level of education than the majority of the yellow shirts, who tend to come from big cities. Moreover, emerging as an anti-Thaksin on the one side and as pro-Thaksin on the other, both shirts have identified themselves with one specific party over the other party—i.e., the yellow shirts with the DP (in the 2007 and 2011 elections) and the red shirts with the PPP and then PT (in the 2007 and 2011 elections).

Although the yellow-shirt movement is composed of people from all regions of the nation, many of the yellow-shirt supporters came from the Bangkok middle classes and from the Democrat Party's strong electoral base in the south. In contrast, a large number of the red-shirt supporters came from the densely populated north and northeastern parts of the country where the pro-Thaksin party had dominated certain electorates since the 2001 House of Representatives election. Primarily driven by the establishment of well-off urban people with royalist sentiments, key aspects of the yellow-shirt movement's rhetoric are its anti-corruption focus, protection of the monarchy, and a growing opposition to electoral politics, whereas the red-shirt movement has been delineated as the political movement of the awakening rural people, with a consciousness of growing inequalities. As a result, the nature of the current political conflict is more complicated to understand than simply as differences in the views and expectations of democracy and politics of the two groups of people who have differences in socioeconomic status (lower-higher levels of education or lower-higher income) or in areas of living (Bangkok-province).

Some scholars view a decade of political conflicts between these two opposing groups of people as demonstrating a new political “culture” that makes Thailand very difficult to govern (Ockey 2009: 315-316). Others see a growing trend of protest activism as evidence of a political awakening of the Thai rural masses (Abhichart 2010; Chairat 2010). Whether these circumstances are seen as a threat or an opportunity for the sustainable development of democracy in Thailand, because the massive protests organized by these two opposing groups of people caused not only physical damage but also painful emotions among the people, reconciliation is one of the most important policies that Thai governments during the past decade have paid attention to. During the past years, many alternative models for reconciliation from various countries were investigated by both domestic researchers and international experts and introduced to Thailand. Many of the scholars’ and experts’ recommendations were applied by Thai governments as a reconciliation policy, but none of them was successful. Some of those unsuccessful experiences which should be noted here are the reconciliation-policy initiations and implementations of Abhisit Vejjajiva’s and Yingluck Shinawatra’s governments.

On his first day as the Thai Prime Minister, Abhisit called on all Thai people to participate in the government’s reconciliation process after the five-point roadmap was announced. This roadmap included that the monarchy must not be used as a tool in political conflicts; the country must be reformed by tackling economic inequality and disparities; the media must refrain from reports which exacerbate social or political conflicts; an independent fact-finding panel must be established to review fatal incidents involving security forces and protesters; and the reconciliation process must be carried out with the cooperation of all sides (The Nation, December 31, 2008: 2A). With the road map for social policy, social cohesion was expected to increase in Thai society.

However, instead of bringing reconciliation to Thai society, signs of future protests continued to exist immediately after the election of Abhisit as the new prime minister by the House of Representatives on December, 15th of 2008. On the voting day, about 200 red-shirted Thaksin loyalists shouted and threw bricks outside the parliament building, showing their disagreement and anger with the House of Representatives' decision. Less than a week after that (December 20), more than 40,000 red-shirted supporters gathered in downtown Bangkok to listen a video addressed by Thaksin, in which he expressed his disapproval of what he called military interference in the House of Representatives' vote for prime minister (Bell 2008; Mydans 2008). For Thaksin and his supporters, the assembling of the Democrat-led government was not organized by a true prime ministerial electoral process but by another kind of military coup—an indirect coup or what the pro-Thaksin leaders called a “coup in disguise,” as the way in which the military intervened in politics by manipulating the civil government instead of making a coup (Askew 2010).

Two major protests launched by the Red Shirts occurred in April 2009 and April-May 2010. The clashes between the Red Shirt protesters and security forces, including both police and soldiers, in April 2009 left more than 120 people injured (Bristow 2009), while the brutal crackdown and dispersal of the Red Shirts during the April-May 2010 events led to at least 91 deaths and more than 1,800 injured (Tharoor 2010). Many of the Red Shirt leaders were put in jail, and others went into exile, while emotions were still painful (Horn 2010).

As a response to the political conflicts between his government and the red shirts, Abhisit appointed five independent committees working towards the aims of establishing reconciliation and to conduct political reform. These committees involved (1) the National Reform Committee, (2) the National Reform Assembly, (3) the Truth

for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand (TRCT), (4) the Constitutional Reform Committee, and (5) the Working Group for Reforming the Media. However, when the TRCT had worked for less than a year, Prime Minister Abhisit decided to dissolve the House of Representatives after amending sections 93-98 and 190 of the 2007 Constitution⁴ according to the recommendations made by the Constitutional Reform Committee and determined the date for holding the general election on July 3rd of 2011.

The succeeding government led by Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra also started to formulate a reconciliation policy to solve conflict problems. On Tuesday, August 23rd 2011, Yingluck presented her policies to the Parliament and stated that the creation of solidarity and reconciliation among people in the nation and the restoration of democracy were the urgent priorities for the first year. For this reason, the government would fully accommodate and support the independent operation of the TRCT as declared in the policies. Apart from the reconciliation policies initiated by the government, the House of Representatives established the Ad Hoc Committee on National Reconciliation Building. This Ad Hoc Committee had completed its work and proposed recommendations for reconciling the country and the government. Those recommendations included conducting public deliberations throughout the whole country in order to allow people from all sectors to exchange and dialogue about

⁴ Sections 93-98 of the 2007 Constitution involve the size of the House of Representatives and its selection procedure. Amendments were proposed to change the multi-seat constituency system to the single-member constituency system and election under the proportional representation system, which consists of 80 House of Representatives members from an eight regional party-list basis, to the election of 100 House of Representatives members on a national party-list basis. Section 190 involves parliamentary approval for international treaties. It requires the strict parliamentary screening of all international agreements that could affect the country's economic, social, and security affairs. Amendments were proposed to reduce the screening power of the parliament in order to allow the government more independently to make international agreements.

possible solutions for transforming the conflicts and to imagine Thailand's future. The government accepted this idea.

However, while none of the public deliberations have been conducted, four reconciliation bills were drafted and submitted to be considered in the House of Representatives in late May 2012. All of these bills were immediately rejected by the opposition party: the Democrat Party, and the anti-Thaksin protesters. For the anti-Thaksin protesters, Yingluck government's ignorance of what the TRCT and the Ad Hoc Committee on National Reconciliation Building recommended for reconciling Thai society revealed that the government was insincere in launching and facilitating a reconciliation process, but focused exclusively and hurriedly on the enactment of the reconciliation bills to pave the way for amnesty for Thaksin (Chairat 2013: 294). A new episode of political conflicts began again in Thailand, and was finally ended by the military coup led by the so-called National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) on May 22nd of 2014.

1.2 Research Questions and Analytical Framework

The aim of the present research is to investigate concrete steps to bring about sustainable reconciliation in Thailand in the present context. The research seeks to explore two major questions:

- (1) Why do Thai governments fail in maintaining peace through conducting a reconciliation process?
- (2) What are the key factors for bringing about reconciliation in the case of the recent political conflicts in Thailand?

It should be noted and clarified here that when discussing the terms political conflict and reconciliation process, the main focus of this research is limit to the examination of how to address violent conflicts in the country's deeply polarised society throughout the past decade between the anti-Thaksin group, or the Yellow Shirts, and the pro-Thaksin group, the Red Shirts. The research does not cover the reconciliation process for resolving the ongoing Islamic insurgency in southern Thailand. In particular, the research does not purport to specifically analyse the work of the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) (2005–06), an independent body established by the Thaksin government to address a violent conflict in the country's southern border provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, which has claimed more than 5,000 lives in the past decade⁵.

In order to answer the above two questions, this dissertation develops a conceptual and analytical framework based upon undertaking an extensive review of the literature on conflict and conflict transformation theories, transitional justice, and reconciliation and peace building theories. Then, analyses of past political conflicts in Thai society from the 1932 revolution onwards are employed in order to: (1) find conflict resolution tools used in the past political conflicts in Thai society; (2) clarify the root causes of the current political conflict; and (3) understand how the term reconciliation in the Thai language has been interpreted, explained, and applied differently by policy makers, scholars, activists, and leaders of the conflicting groups across past years.

According to the literature review (which will be discussed in more detail below), at least three factors are crucial to assuring the success of the reconciliation

⁵ Discussions on the NRC work could be found in several reports and literature, for instance, International Crisis Group (2005) and McCargo (2010).

process: (1) the political will of power-holders dedicated to achieving their goals in the public interest; (2) the degree of inclusiveness of the process; and (3) the core questions from which the entire conflict roots should be addressed and solved to act as a driving force for democratization. Applying these required factors to the case of Thailand, this research expands the second and the third factors into four elements and then argues that the reconciliation process conducted by several Thai governments during the past decade failed because of the disappearances of five factors: (1) the political will of the top political leaders committed to peace and reconciliation; (2) strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process; (3) a societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution; (4) an inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders; and (5) a fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness.

Experiences from several countries have demonstrated that, in order to reconcile the society, peaceful coexistence, trust, and empathy have to be developed in a sustainable way (e.g., Brounéus 2003, Hayner 2011, Mihr 2018, Olsen et al. 2010). For this reason, the disappearance of the required factors for the achievement of reconciliation occurred in the case of Thailand because the reconciliation processes introduced and implemented by Thai governments during the past years overlooked trust building—both in terms of trust in national institutions and trust among the people. This failure, repeated many times, has made the term reconciliation unpopular and created perceptions of the reconciliation process as being conducted as a means to defeat the people of opposing groups rather than a means of resolving problems and reconciling society. The old Thai style of reconciliation, especially enacting laws to enforce peace and using a military coup in order to stop violence, is still implemented by political

leaders. As a result, the political conflicts in this country may have been temporarily stopped, but have never been solved.

Relying on a quantitative method of examination (the survey design and methods of data analysis will be explained in more detail in chapter 4), this dissertation seeks to understand and explain how and why trust building is vital for making the reconciliation process a success. The dependent variable in this research can thus be formulated as the *public opinions about the reconciliation process*. This variable is measured by the survey questions which asked the Thai respondents to evaluate the six key elements previous research claimed to be important for the reconciliation process in the case of Thailand's current political conflict, using a 0-10 scale, where 0 signifies "not at all important;" and 10 signifies "very much important." The six key elements include: (1) the political will of the top political leaders to be committed to peace and reconciliation; (2) strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process; (3) a societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution; (4) an inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders; (5) a fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness; and (6) punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence.

The main explanatory variables are *trust in institutions*, measuring by the level of trust in the four major democratic institutions—the government, the parliament, the courts of justice, and the political parties, and *trust in individuals*, measured by the variable created from the survey question asking the respondents to what extent most people can be trusted. Control variables include: color affiliation, political identification, gender, age, income, level of education, employment and area of residence (urban/rural). This research hypothesizes that people who have a higher level

of trust in institutions and trust in other people will have a more positive attitude supporting the reconciliation process than those who have a lower level.

1.3 Significance of the Topic

The impact of violent conflict on a country's society, economy and political governance, as has happened in Thailand during the past decade, is destructive and all encompassing. The conflicts caused many tangible and visible effects, such as injured and slain civilians and officers, destroyed private-company and government buildings, and other damaged physical infrastructure. They also caused many intangible effects, including the near collapse of state institutions, distrust in government, the destruction of solidarity and social cohesion, psychological trauma and pervasive fear. Thus, it must be recognized that the legacies of large-scale past abuses can, if left ignored and unaddressed, fuel future conflicts. However, since there has been no sign indicating that the decade-long political conflict in Thailand will be addressed in ways that reduce violence and increase justice in human relationships, there is no guarantee that the cycle of violence would not be repeated if the NCPO government stepped aside and the civilian government regains control after the forthcoming elections, answers to the research questions addressed by this dissertation are very important.

Answers also are required because previous studies of the Thai case have mainly focused on illustrating the causes and results of the current political conflict (e.g., Asia Foundation 2009; 2010; 2013, Bjarnegård and Tønnesson 2015, King Prajadhipok's Institute 2012, Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand, 2012). This dissertation does not reject the reality that in order to find the key factors for bringing about reconciliation, the understanding of the causes and results of Thailand's current political conflict should first be clear. In particular, this dissertation accepts that many

previous studies, especially those conducted by the Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand (2012) and the King Prajadhipok's Institute (2012), have done very well in explaining the causes and results of the current Thai political conflict as well as indicating factors that are crucial to assuring the success of the reconciliation process in the case of Thailand. However, those studies cannot tell us why the Thai governments during recent years failed in maintaining peace through a reconciliation process and whether the Thai citizens agree or disagree with those proposed factors necessary for successfully implementing a reconciliation process. This dissertation thus created survey questions based on those required factors suggested by the previous studies to ask the respondents for their views. Thus, this research would allow us to examine whether and to what extent these factors are important for reconciling Thai society from the perspectives of ordinary citizens.

Another weakness of the previous studies is that almost all of them conducted their research by relying on qualitative method of examination. Survey studies dealing with public perceptions of the conflict are still rare. Some are outdated, as the situation has moved far beyond what had happen when those surveys were conducted. In addition and more importantly, almost all of the previous survey studies failed to pay much attention to public opinions regarding the solutions which could transform the conflict and build peace in Thai society. The perception surveys conducted by the Asia Foundation in 2009 and 2010 are examples of such a deficit. More precisely, instead of focusing directly on Thai citizens' attitudes toward the political conflict, the primary purposes of the 2009 Asia Foundation's survey were (1) to know about the Thai public's opinions and knowledge on issues relevant to the constitution, political parties, and election administrators; (2) to measure Thai voters' knowledge of and attitudes towards democracy and democratic institutions (Asia Foundation 2009: 3), while the 2010

survey maintained similar purposes and added some questions relevant to the political events of April-May 2010 (Asia Foundation 2010: 3).

Another example is the perception survey again conducted by the Asia Foundation in 2013. In this latest survey, the Asia Foundation aimed to learn specifically about the demographic composition of the protesters and to probe the perspectives of political activists on issues that were explored in the 2010 survey as well as issues related to the 2013 tensions (Asia Foundation 2013: 1). However, because the 2013 Asia Foundation survey was conducted by asking only the protesters during the Yellow Shirts' and Red Shirts' demonstrations on 30 November 2013, the findings obtained from this survey could not be viewed as representative of the public at large but only the active yellow- and red-supporters. Therefore, compared to the past perceptions surveys, the results derived from the public opinion survey and quantitative analysis employed by this dissertation provide a clearer and more comprehensive picture of Thai citizens' attitudes and perceptions about peace and reconciliation, and the key factors, in their opinion, for bringing about reconciliation across the nation. Moreover, because reconciliation is a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships which are the very constituent elements of society that support the continuation of violent conflict, this dissertation examines not only attitudes and perceptions about peace and reconciliation, but also associations between these attitudes and perceptions and various factors, especially trust both in terms of institutional and individual trust. Assisted by an improved conceptual and analytical framework, this dissertation provides explanations of how and why trust building is vital for making the reconciliation process a success which are more extensive than those obtained from previous studies in the Thai context. Although this dissertation focuses on a single country, the answers derived from the Thai case also provide a clear understanding of

the relationships between trust and reconciliation that could also be examined in relation to other post-conflict countries.

1.4 Outline of Chapters

After this introductory chapter, the next chapter (Chapter 2) explores the literature on conflict and conflict transformation theories, transitional justice, and reconciliation and peace building theories. Several insights regarding conflict, conflict transformation, reconciliation, and peace are drawn from the discussion of these theories, and applied to the conceptual and analytical framework of this dissertation. The review of literature in chapter 2 also deals with the importance of trust building as one of the key success factors for the initiation and implementation of the reconciliation process.

Chapter 3 outlines Thailand's past political conflicts since the country began its democratization process in 1932 up to the period where this dissertation begins its interpretation (i.e., in late 2005). The main attempt is to provide a historical background for the analyses of how the past political conflicts in Thai society have been dealt with and what previous studies identified as the root causes of the current political conflict. The chapter 4, then, examines the definitions and utilizations of the term reconciliation in the Thai language and context. The purpose of this examination is to understand how the term reconciliation in the Thai language which is “ปรองดอง [prong-dong]” was perceived by the Thai citizens and has been interpreted, explained, and applied by the governments and leaders of the conflicting groups after 2005.

Chapter 5 is concerned with methodology and design. It discusses how the questionnaire used in this dissertation was constructed, what sampling techniques were applied to this dissertation's public opinion survey, and how the data collection was

conducted. This chapter also explains the dependent and independent variables of the study, and ends with describing the analytic methods and procedures.

The two following chapters present the data findings in stages. Chapter 6 assesses the survey data by looking at public opinion concerning conflict and conflict transformation. This assessment focuses on attitudes and perceptions among people with varied socioeconomic backgrounds, political identifications and democratic values. It seeks to explain whether the people who identify themselves as red-shirt supporters hold different attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation to the people who identify themselves as yellow-shirt supporters. The results obtained from this assessment indicates some opportunities for the reconciliation process to be initiated and successfully implemented as the views on conflict and conflict transformation between people in the conflicting groups are not sharply different.

Chapter 7 tests the hypothesis that people who showed trust in political institutions and other people are more likely than those filled with distrust to support elements important for the reconciliation process. The chapter divides its examination into two stages. The first stage employs bivariate tables to test the hypothesis that trust in institutions and trust in other people are associated with reconciliation. The second stage uses the ordinary least squares (OLS) method in order to analyze the effects of trust on the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process, dividing into four models. The chapter concludes with the confirmation of previous research indicating the essential nature of trust in making the reconciliation process successful.

Chapter 8 summarizes the whole study and points out its contribution and limitations, and suggests areas for future research. It closes the dissertation by discussing what can be done to facilitate the reconciliation process that could transform political conflict in Thai society into peace.

Chapter 2 The Review of Literature

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the aim of the present research is to investigate possible concrete steps to bring about sustainable reconciliation in Thailand in the present context. The research seeks to explore two major questions: (1) Why do Thai governments fail in maintaining peace even through conducting a reconciliation process? (2) What are the key factors for bringing about reconciliation in the case of the recent political conflicts in Thailand? In order to answer these two questions, this chapter shows how this researcher has developed a conceptual and analytical framework based upon undertaking an extensive review of the literature on conflict and conflict transformation theories, transitional justice, and reconciliation and peace building theories. In the final part of this chapter, the discussion on the relationship between trust and reconciliation is highlighted in order to show why building trust is important for the accomplishment of the reconciliation process.

2.1 Conflict and Conflict Transformation Theories

The framework for this research is developed with the assumption that some form of conflict is intrinsically a part of society. This belief is in accordance with many scholars (e.g., Bercovitch et al. 2009: 3, Morris 2004: 26, Stephenson 2008) who state that conflict is inevitable as long as humans interact with each other. From this perspective, conflict is not only normal, ubiquitous, and unavoidable, but often desirable in human societies when it is well conducted (Kriesberg 2011: 50). It is not true that conflict always leads to negative outcomes like violence and atrocities; rather, conflict can lead to some positive outcomes, such as the development of innovative ideas, and

general improvements, depending on how the parties in conflict deal with it (Bercovitch et al. 2009: 4).

Since conflict can lead to either negative or positive outcomes, there is no single cause of conflict. Rather, conflict can result from a combination of various factors, including (1) political and institutional factors such as weak state institutions (Lake 1996), breakdowns in the social contract and consequent corruption (Murshed and Tadjeddin 2009), elite power struggles and political exclusion (Van Wyk 2007), identity politics (Melvin 2007); (2) socioeconomic factors such as poverty (Goodhand, 2001), inequality (Kanbur 2007), absence or weakening of social cohesion (Colletta and Cullen 2000); (3) resource and environmental factors such as unjust resource exploitation (Lujala 2010), scarcity of national resources (Lind and Sturman 2002), environmental insecurity (Barnett and Adger 2007). Each of these factors may constitute a cause, dynamic and/or impact of conflict. Conflict is multi-causal, multidimensional, and context-specific (Hoeffler 2012; Mohammadzadeh 2016; Ohlson 2008; Smith 2003).

Conflict can occur at any level of human relations, ranging from interpersonal to global relationships (Fischer 2011; Galtung 1996; Lederach 2003). In recent decades, one of the conflict levels that many scholars and practitioners have paid attention to concerns attaining significant reconciliation between former enemies that fosters sustained peace between them after prolonged and violent intrastate conflicts (Gibson 2006; Lederach 1997; Long and Brecke 2003; Rigby 2001). Protracted, deadly intrastate conflicts can roughly be categorized into three groups: (1) conflict that aims to change political structures or state ideology; (2) conflict that aims to change government in order to have power to govern and allocate resources; and (3) conflict that aims to establish a new country or separate territory (Azar, 1990: 7-11). In a large-scale conflict,

there is a need for a process to transform the conflict into a desirable outcome. To define, describe, and analyze the dimensions, correlates and dynamics of conflict—and the particular contexts in which conflict arises, scholars, practitioners, and/or policy makers need to understand the complexities of such conflicts. Those required understandings, according to Bercovitch *et al.* (2009: 4-9), could be derived from the identifications and elaborations of who are the parties in conflict; what that conflict is about; in what environment the conflict exists and moves in; how the parties in conflict and any involved agents perceive and think about the conflict and issues related to it; and how these people act and/or react in such conflicts. With these understandings, the process to transform the conflict could then bring about changes for the good by adjusting hostile relationships and attitudes, redressing grievances and root causes of the conflict, and building an environment that is conducive to development and positive peace (Abu-Nimer 2001: 687; Fischer 2011: 415).

The tools and mechanisms of conflict transformation can include dialogue, mediation, and negotiation between parties and relevant stakeholders. Adjusting relationships and attitudes is one aspect of transforming conflict (Lederach 1999: 23; Rosoux 2011: 545), while another dimension is to find substantive agreement for sustainable peace (Bell and Zulueta-Fülscher 2016: 10). Acknowledging, understanding, and identifying the interactions between various causes, courses, and consequences of various conflicts are essential in designing appropriate approaches and methods for conflict prevention, resolution, and transformation (Galtung 1996; Kriesberg 2011: 61-62; Miall 2004: 75-77). In this regard, the concept of “conflict transformation,” as a number of conflict theorists and practitioners, including John Paul Lederach (1995; 1999; 2003), have advocated, is different from other concepts, particularly “conflict resolution” and “conflict management.”

Conflict transformation is different from the other two concepts, Lederach (2003: 4) asserts, because it reflects a better understanding of the nature of conflict itself. Conflict resolution implies that conflict is always bad and painful—hence something that should be ended as quickly as possible (Lederach 2003: 29). Relying on problem-solving approaches, conflict resolution also assumes that conflict is a short term phenomenon that can be “resolved” permanently through effective methods of de-escalating such as negotiation and mediation techniques or other intervention processes (Azar and Burton 1986: 1; Lederach 2003: 30). Unlike conflict resolution, conflict management assumes that conflicts are long term or deep-rooted processes that often cannot be quickly resolved (Lederach 2003: 30). The best way to deal with conflicts is to manage and contain them, and occasionally to reach a historic compromise in which violence may be laid aside and normal politics recommenced (Pickering 2000: 25).

According to the conflict management approach, it is possible to intervene and control the situation in ways that make the ongoing conflict more beneficial and less damaging to everybody; in other words, to change a zero-sum game into a win-win situation (Burton 1990: 66-82). In this regard, conflict management is the art of appropriate intervention to achieve political settlements, especially to influence actors having the power and resources to put pressure on the conflicting parties in order to induce them to settle (Miall 2004: 3). It is also the art of designing appropriate institutions to direct the inevitable conflict into appropriate channels (Bloomfield and Reilly 1998: 18). However, the notion of management can suggest that the goal is the reduction or control of volatility more than dealing with the real source of the problem (Lederach 1995: 16-17).

Conflict transformation, as described by Lederach (1995: 17), does not suggest that we simply eliminate or control conflict, but rather recognize and work with its

“dialectic nature.” By this he means that social conflict is naturally created by humans who are involved in relationships, yet once it occurs, it changes (i.e., transforms) those events, people, and relationships that created the initial conflict (Lederach 1995: 17). Thus, the cause-and-effect relationship goes both ways—from the people and the relationships to the conflict and back to the people and relationships. In this sense, conflict transformation is a notion that describes a natural phenomenon that creates potential for constructive growth, and a willingness to respond in ways that maximize this potential for positive change (Lederach 2003: 15). According to the conflict transformation approach, conflicts change relationships in predictable ways, altering communication patterns and patterns of social organization, altering images of the self and of the other (Lederach 1995; Miall 2004; Spangler 2003). Even when people’s needs, interests, and values are different, even non-reconcilable, advocates for a conflict transformation approach believe that progress has been made if each group gains a relatively accurate understanding of the other (McClung and Kloos 2016: 81).

Acknowledging that conflict may be expressed either in competitive, aggressive, or violent way or through nonviolent advocacy, conciliation, or attempted cooperation, the conflict transformation approach provides a set of lenses for describing and explaining how conflict emerges from, evolves within, and brings about changes in personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions (Lederach 1997: 83). Dealing with the real source of the problem rather than aiming to reduce or control the conflict, this approach also constitutes a comprehensive set of tools for developing creative responses that promote peaceful change within those dimensions through nonviolent mechanisms (Lederach 1997: 84). However, the varied types of possible transformations must be recognized.

According to Miall (2004: 9-11), there are at least five types of transformation, including context, structure, actor, issue, and personal transformations. Context transformations refer to changes in the context of conflict that may radically alter each conflicting party's perception of the conflict situation, as well as their motivations. Structural transformations are changes in the relationship between conflicting parties from asymmetric to symmetric relations. Actor transformations include decisions on the part of the actors involved to change their goals or alter their general approach to conflict. Issue transformations concern the shift of incompatible conflicting parties' demands to compatible ones. Personal transformations focus on making changes in minds, perceptions, and wills. To transform a conflict, a concept of conflict transformation should be applied as a process of engaging with the complicated relationships, interests, discourses and the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict (Galtung 1996: 70-126).

This dissertation's analytical framework is developed relying on the concept of conflict transformation instead of conflict resolution or conflict management, and the view that any conflict has multiple origins. Therefore, in order to transform the current political conflict in the case of Thailand, this dissertation argues that Thai society has to recognize that the current conflict relates to several issues, for example, socioeconomic inequality, development gaps between urban and rural areas, corruption, and vote buying (Dalpino 2010; Hewison 2010). In order to transform such a conflict, both conflicting parties have to have positive views of the conflict's potential for achieving their goals. They have to perceive that transforming the conflict will lead to positive changes in their country (Coy 2009; Fisher et al. 2000). Thus reconciliation is a way to support conflict transformation because this concept provides a place for conflicting parties to transform past conflict into a harmonious relationship. It also deals

with truth and mercy, as well as justice and peace, which are the critical and essential components for transforming violent conflicts (Lederach, 2003).

2.2 Transitional Justice

Besides conflict transformation, one needs also to consider issues related to truth and justice in a transitional period (Rigby, 2001). Transitional justice is a process implemented in response to serious human rights violations (de Greiff 2012: 31). To some it is a mechanism for bringing peace, reconciliation and democracy to the after-conflict-violent society and moving such a society forward without the recurrence of violent events (Olsen et al. 2010: 980). This process was first devised in the late 1980s in response to political changes in Latin America and Eastern Europe (Teitel 2003: 70). The main objective of this process was to bring justice to the Latin America region after widespread human rights violations by former regimes (Teitel 2003: 70). After that, transitional justice was adopted and implemented in many countries that had experienced serious conflict and violent events, such as Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Haiti, East Timor, and South Africa (Arenhövel 2008: 573).

Transitional justice comprises the two concepts: transition and justice linked together. The first concept is transition which could refer to the process of political transformation from one regime to another regime in a society; for example, from the authoritarian or repressive to the rule of democracy (Kinsella and Rousseau 2009: 475-491); or the transition from one circumstance to another circumstance, such as from a social conflict to peace and stability (Quinn 2009: 35). The notion of transitional justice also includes the concept of justice, which does not only refer to criminal prosecutions, but also extends to include truth seeking, public apologies, social and economic

developments, and memorialization or reforms in the teaching of history (de Greiff 2012; Hayner 2009).

Linking these two concepts, transitional justice is implemented in a society where situations of conflict are more complicated than general crime, many people are involved in the incidents—both victims and perpetrators, and the normal system of justice is inadequate to be applied as a conflict-resolution mechanism (Fletcher et al. 2009: 169-172). In situations such as this, enforcing criminal law and the normal criminal justice system based on punishment of offenders may help breaking the cycle of violence (Minow 1998; Bell 2000), but cannot lead the society towards overcoming the conflict and building peace (Vinjamuri and Snyder 2015: 303-304). Transitional justice develops from the attempt to seek a way to overcome the conflict which can be achieved in several ways, incorporating legal, political, economic and psychosocial dimensions (Lambourne 2009: 35). The experiences of many countries around the world have shown that one or many of the following measures can be implemented depending on what is appropriate to the conflicts in each country (United Nations 2010: 7-9).

1. Criminal prosecution: the prosecution of the perpetrators, who must be held accountable and responsible for the past violent events, may be one of the most important factors that help prevent a recurrence of the violent conflict in the future.

2. Truth finding: the process of establishing the truth about past violence through investigation, inquiry, and truth-seeking about incidents that have occurred. The objective of this process is for the society to learn from its past violent events to prevent their recurrence in the future. This process, thus involves dealing with the truths found, especially by considering who the truths

could be disclosed to—the victims, the families of victims, or the society in general, when, and how.

3. Restoration programs: providing assistance, compensation, and treatment to the individuals who were affected by the violent events. Restoration may include compensation for damaged property, treatment of mental and physical wounds, and state or official apologies.

4. Memorialization of victims: the process whereby society recognizes events and people and raises a moral consciousness about the past violent events to help prevent it from happening again in the future. The implementation of this process could be in the form of a memorial or a museum.

5. Institutional reform: the process of reforming institutions and agencies that are responsible for human rights violations; for instance, police, military personnel, judicial agencies, mass media, and so on; to help prevent these bodies from still employing the same procedures which may cause violence again in the future.

In short, transitional justice involves critical and controversial issues such as truth-finding, reparation, compensation, amnesty, and structural reforms (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Thailand 2011; 2012; Huyse 1998). This could constitute the reconciliation phase, in which the process of bringing the society out of a state of conflict, reconciling differences, and promoting harmony among the people is the most important part (Skaar 2013: 62). Transitional justice scholars and practitioners therefore mention various end goals of transitional justice, including but not limited to: the rule of law, social reconstruction, deepening of democracy, and sustainable peace.

However, it should be noted here that justice and peace are both very abstract terms that mean different things to different people. The challenge, as Ledearch (1995: 20) pointed out, is that to transform the conflict into a sustained peace, we need the process that helps “to pursue justice in ways that respect people, and [at the same time] to achieve restoration of relationships based on recognizing and amending injustices.” To accomplish this, the reconciliation process is vital because it involves the identification and acknowledgment of what happened (i.e. truth), an effort to right the wrongs that occurred (i.e., justice) and forgiveness for the perpetrators (mercy). In other words, the end result of the reconciliation process is not only harmonization, but peace. The next section discusses theories of peace building and reconciliation.

2.3 Peace Building and Reconciliation Theories

In this study, the concept of reconciliation is understood as that specific process that takes place during peace building. According to Johan Galtung (1976), peace building is structurally explained as the way to create sustainable peace by identifying the root causes of the violent conflict and conducting activities to correct the problems that caused the conflict. Peace building, therefore, deals with the whole process of restoring a conflict prone situation, from the structural causes of the struggle to its resolution and the assurance of peaceful living together (Galtung 1998:13-28).

Peace processes normally involve intragroup and intergroup dialogues (Haider 2011). The sessions can be both public and closed door. The most important thing is that the process must be inclusive, with the involvement of multiple stakeholders (Brounéus 2003: 52). Besides the dialogue, the processes also involve mediation and negotiation in order to reach a peace agreement (Thoms et al. 2008). Once an agreement is reached, one also needs to handle the truth and memories after violent incidents

(Brounéus 2008; Taylor 2014). Society has to go through transitional justice, which might be controversial. Many challenges lie ahead regarding truth-finding, the issues of forgiveness and reparation, compensation and healing, and the reform of political, economic and social structures for justice and reconciliation. Clearly this is a massive agenda which will take years, if not decades, to achieve.

A reconciliation process should reduce hatred and create trust as well as restore relationships between those who have engaged in violent events (Lederach 1997; 1998; Shriver 1995; Staub 2000). At its simplest, one of the goals of reconciliation is to find a way for the people who are former enemies to live together. In this regard, it does not mean that the parties alienated by conflict have to love their former enemies, or forgive everything they did, or forget the past in any way, but to coexist with them, to develop the degree of cooperation necessary for sharing the future society with them, so that people in the society as a whole have better lives together than they have had separately (Bloomfield 2003a: 11). As a process, reconciliation is ideally utilized in order to prevent, once and for all, the use of the past as the seed of renewed conflict (Abu-Nimer 2001). The basic idea is to create a process that consolidates peace, breaks the cycle of violent conflict, and strengthens reintroduced or newly established democratic institutions (Galtung 1990). Responsibility, truth acceptance, mercy, and the shared future of the society, therefore, are part of the process (Abu-Nimer 2001; Bloomfield 2003a). Above all, the end goal is to construct a reconciled society where different people can coexist peacefully and be able to manage and transform conflict into better change (Abu-Nimer 2001; Weiner 1998).

Theoretically, the reconciliation process requires both the victims and the offenders to gain renewed confidence in themselves and in each other (Bloomfield 2003a: 12). It also entails believing that an acknowledgement of the humanity of others

is basic and one of the most important components of mutual trust to help open the door for the gradual arrival of a desired and sustainable culture of non-violence (Abu-Nimer 2001; Bercovitch et al. 2009). Moreover, in order for trust and confidence to be truly developed, a post-conflict society has to establish or reconstruct a minimum of functioning institutions—a non-partisan judiciary, an effective civil service and an appropriate legislative structure (Huyse 1998). It is this requirement that links a reconciliation policy to the many other tasks required in a transition from violent conflict to sustainable peace.

The process of reconciliation, in practice, is not easy to achieve. In its backward-looking dimension, reconciliation ideally should bring about the personal healing of survivors; reparation and compensation for past injustices; construction or reconstruction of non-violent relationships between individuals and communities and the acceptance by the former parties to the conflict of a common vision and understanding of the past (Bloomfield 2003a: 12-13). As a forward-looking operation, reconciliation means enabling victims and perpetrators to get on with their lives and, at the level of society, the establishment of a civilized political dialogue and an equitable sharing of power (Huyse 1998).

2.4 Trust and Reconciliation

Experiences from various countries across the world indicate that trust builds social cohesion and conflicts can be resolved accordingly. The case of South Korea is highly relevant, especially the process to reconcile the society after the Kwangju uprising of May 1980. Beginning as a university students' protest against the rise to power of General Chun Doo-hwan in the southwestern city of Kwangju, the uprising expanded to an armed civilian struggle where civilians were attacked with cruel acts of

violence by the government troops (Jong-chul Ahn 2003). Although the ten-day struggle ultimately ended in military suppression, its legacy and effects were of lasting significance. It was arguably the event that most shaped the political and social landscape of South Korea in the 1980s and 1990s (Baker 2002; Jung-kwan Cho 2003; Olsen et al. 2010).

Twentieth century South Korean history saw periods of extensive human rights violations, particularly under the tyrannical government that followed a coup in 1961, through to the early 1990s (Hayner 2011: 55). During this period, democratization activists and opposition party leaders were often found dead under suspicious circumstances. While the government authorities were suspected of these targeted killings, the families of the dead were forced to remain silent, in fear (Hayner 2011: 55). With the beginning of democratization in 1987, families of the dead began pushing for the truth about these cases. In order to respond, the Korean Government at that time employed two critical reconciliation mechanisms.

The first mechanism was the enactment of the Special Act Concerning the May Democratization. Firstly, the Korean National Assembly approved this special law which brought out the facts surrounding this incident and punished the perpetrators of 21 December 1995. Even though critics asserted that this Act was unconstitutional because it was retroactive legislation, the Constitutional Court upheld its constitutionality. As a consequence, former President Roh Tae-woo was imprisoned for seventeen years while ex-President Chun Doo-hwan was sentenced to life imprisonment. Understandably, it was impossible to prosecute the junta members while the authoritarian regimes were in power. The May 18 Act could thus be regarded as the realization of legal justice, a vital factor bearing on trust in political institutions among individuals.

The second mechanism was the appointment of the 2000 Presidential Truth Commission on Suspicious Deaths. This commission was mandated to examine specific deaths, rather than undertake a broader historical review of patterns, causes, and consequences. Created across its almost four-year term, the six volumes of the Commission's report add up to 4,300 pages. This report includes an analysis of the overall causes of suspicious deaths, a description explaining each of the eighty-five cases investigated, and policy recommendations. Even though they could not resolve all the referred cases, the Commission's work helped to separate some facts (true statements) from fiction (myths). Many truths found by the Commission also created objective opportunities for people to see the past in terms of shared suffering and collective obligation. More significant still is the acknowledgment that victims and offenders share a common identity, as survivors and as human beings. These forms of sharing and recognition may help increase social trust between individual citizens in the society.

The procedure of reconciliation cannot be carried out successfully if it leaves out the implementation of building trust, both trust among individuals and trust in institutions. Drawing upon the Korean experience, at least three crucial factors could help assure the success of trust building and ultimately the reconciliation process. Those factors include: (1) the political will of power-holders dedicated to achieving their goals in the public interest; (2) the degree of inclusiveness of the process; and (3) the core questions from which the entire roots of the conflict should be addressed and solved to act as a driving force for political change/democratization.

The ultimate goal of reconciliation is not only an end of violence, but also the creation of a new relationship between the conflict parties (Lederach 1998: 51-65). The success of reconciliation, then, depends on turning a zero sum (or win-lose) situation

into a win–win frame, where both victims and perpetrators will benefit from a common future in lasting peace (Maoz 2004: 225-238). Thus, from these sources, three phases of transition from violence to peace can be identified: (1) violent conflict, (2) conflict transformation, and (3) reconciliation (Huyse 2003b: 19-21). It is important to note that these three phases are fundamentally dynamic and non-linear, meaning that violence can reoccur in any phase (Lederach 2003: 19). There is no guarantee that order and peace will be restored and sustained even though the parties alienated by conflict can reach a peace agreement. The peace and reconciliation process is fragile, requiring tremendous time and effort as well as patience from the parties involved (Lumsden 1999). The conflict transformation phase is based on the assumption that neither party will achieve its goals through violent means. There is no sustainable solution without peaceful settlement. The reconciliation phase is based on transitional justice and peaceful coexistence (Bloomfield 2003b: 44). To accomplish the conflict transformation and reconciliation phases, trust building is very important and has to be developed in a sustainable way.

Broadly speaking, trust is the social expectation which includes honesty and good cooperation based on general social standards (Fukuyama 1995: 25). Trust is important, and sometimes it is very important. It is an important factor for strengthening democracy (Almond and Verba 1963; Flanagan 2003; Putnam 1995, 2000; Uslaner 2002). This is because democracy depends on the willingness of people to leave their destiny in the hands of others (Uslaner 1999). Indeed, trust leads to the willingness to confront risk which is based on the belief that other people will react as expected and will behave in the ways that are mutually accepted, or at least those people do not intend to do harm to others (Bullen and Onyx 1998). Moreover, trust in others usually leads to people's involvement in public acts in various forms. In general, people who trust in

other people usually use their right to vote, work to solve community problems, join charity activities, spend their time in volunteer works, and are ready to join in decision making about conflicts in the community (Newton 2006: 848; Uslaner 1999: 128). Trust in others is therefore an important factor for participation in various activities.

There are differences between the trust in institutions and trust in individuals. Trust in institutions involves the fact that modern life involves less dependency on informal communication and interpersonal relations, but involves more dependency on the standards and social structures in which such communication is implanted. Trust in institutions appears to have both institutional and personal aspects. That is, people may trust both the system as such and the individual actors they encounter or observe (Newton 1999; Rothstein 2001). In addition, trust in government may be based on experiences over a long period of time, on the current situation or on the expectations of the government in the future (Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2001:19). The higher the level of trust inspired by the current government, the more likely it is that a person will express specific support and trust, while long-term experience points more in the direction of diffuse support and trust (Newton 1999; Rothstein 2001). Trust in individuals, on the other hand, can be separated from consideration of other kinds of trust since each person, whether or not they are trustworthy, has both specific characteristics and common characteristics. Moreover, some people may say that most people in their family, people in the neighborhood, or small communities in which people are close to one another are trustworthy because knowledge about those persons has long been established (Wuthnow 2002: 64).

Trust is a fundamental concept in the field of peace research. Building trust is essential and has a critical impact on every stage of the peace process. As Walter (1999) theorized, trust can be regarded as a precondition of peace because establishing

trustworthiness is the key to solving the commitment problem. The existence of trust between individuals, especially those who are conflicting parties, makes conflict resolution easier and more effective. As Liwicki and Wiethoff (2000: 102) asserted, if the conflicting parties perceive themselves as having strong common goals, values, and identities, they are motivated to sustain the relationship and find constructive ways to transform the conflict. In contrast, a low level of trust in institutions can undermine the implementation of peace agreements, for example, by reducing citizens' compliance with the law, which in turn increases the risk of conflict recurrence (De Juan and Pierskalla 2016). In addition, many scholars (e.g., Besley and Persson 2010, Fjeldstad 2004) have suggested that the agenda of post-conflict state-building should give priority to the issue of trust, particularly trust in government, because the capacity of the government to raise revenues determines security, development, and the political stability of a country in the long run. More precisely, if a new government established as a result of a peace process is unable to secure a stable stream of income to restore public services, people are more likely to withdraw their support for the government and restart a new phase of violence (Levi and Stoker 2000). If trust has had a critical impact on the achievements of a reconciliation process in recent post-conflict societies, then we should find further evidence in the case of Thailand.

2.5 Conclusion

Literature on conflict and conflict transformation theories, transitional justice, and reconciliation and peace building theories discussed in this chapter provides us with several suggestions as to how to deal with violent political conflicts, especially those that cause a deep divide between groups of people in the society. Firstly, such conflicts should be considered as deep-rooted or long-term processes that cannot be quickly

resolved and easily controlled; thereby, the recognition of and working with the real source of the conflict problems are the most appropriate way to deal with a deep-rooted human conflict. Secondly, because conflicts are naturally created by humans who are involved in relationships, a multilevel political process that involves people at all levels of the body politic is essential for helping citizens to transform conflictual relationships into relationships that can end violence and build peace. More precisely, within that multilevel political process, all parties (e.g., the government official and the public levels of the peace process, as well as political institutions and citizens' groups in civil society) must all interact continuously and work together toward a possible solution.

Finally, the peace and reconciliation process should be recognized as a fragile process that requires tremendous time and effort as well as patience from the parties involved. In this process, neither party will achieve its goals through violent means. A sustainable solution without peaceful settlement is impossible. Thus, the peace and reconciliation process should rely on the ideas of transitional justice and peaceful coexistence, in which the implementation of building trust both in terms of trust in institutions and trust in other people is very important for the accomplishment of the process.

In the next chapter, these insights will be applied to the case of Thailand. However, before moving forward to the investigations of how the Thai citizens view conflict and reconciliation, as well as why building trust is important in making the reconciliation process a success, the next chapter explores the historical background of the current conflict going back as far as the 1932 revolution.

Chapter 3 Historical Background

This chapter analyses past political conflicts in Thai society from the 1932 revolution onwards. The objective of this analysis is twofold. Firstly, it attempts to find conflict resolution tools used in past political conflicts in Thai society. Secondly, it aims at clarifying the root causes of the current political conflict. This analysis will therefore provide not only a historical background for the analyses of how the past political conflicts in Thai society have been dealt with but also what previous studies identified as the root causes of the current political conflict.

3.1 Past Political Conflicts in Thai Society

The Thai political system has been somewhat unstable since 1932 when the country transitioned from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy (parliamentary democracy) (Nakarin, 1992). A succession of military dictators followed and was sustained during the regime of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram⁶ who allied the country with Japan during World War II (Pasuk and Baker 2008: 134-135). He was Prime Minister for several terms. During his last term, he was suspected of fraudulent practices during an election, which led to public outrage and student protests (Darling

⁶ Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram, known as Phibun Songkhram in the west, (born July 14, 1897, near Bangkok, Thailand—died June 12, 1964, Tokyo, Japan) was the 3rd prime minister of Thailand from 1938 to 1944 and 1948 to 1957. He was one of the leaders of the military branch of the People's Party (Khana Ratsadon) that overthrew the absolute monarchy in 1932 (see further information about his roles in Thai politics in, for example, Liow 2015: 306).

1960: 348). Consequently, his power was seized by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat⁷'s coup d'état which was supported by the American army and the people who were exhausted with the corrupt government and the fraud of the recent election (Russell, 2014).

After the coup in 1957, there was again an election, and Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn⁸ became the Prime Minister. Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat left the country for medical treatment. A year later, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat returned to Thailand and staged a second coup because he believed that there were several sensitive issues which could not be solved by the then government (Pasuk and Baker 2008: 246). This time, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat became the Prime Minister and claimed that he needed to make a revolution and change the whole system of the country. After he officially assumed his position, he dissolved the parliament and abolished the 1952 Constitution (Giles 2014).

An interim constitution promoted by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat was promulgated on January 28, 1959, which consisted of 20 articles including Article 17 which granted absolute power to the Prime Minister.⁹ He established the Constitutional Commission to enact a new constitution, but it was never completed during his regime.

⁷ Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat (born June 16, 1908, Bangkok—died Dec. 8, 1963, Bangkok) was the 11th prime minister of Thailand from 1958 to 1963 (Liow 2015: 332).

⁸ Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn (born August 11, 1911, Tak, Thailand—died June 16, 2004, Bangkok, Thailand), was the 10th prime minister of Thailand and served this position for three times in 1958, between 1963 and 1971, and between 1972 and 1973 (Liow 2015: 370).

⁹ Article 17 of the 1958 Interim Constitution stated that "During the enforcement of the present Constitution wherever the Prime Minister deems appropriate for the purpose of repressing or suppressing actions whether of internal or external origin which jeopardize the national security or the Throne or subvert or threaten law and order, the Prime Minister, by resolution of the Council of Ministers, is empowered to issue orders or take steps accordingly. Such orders or steps shall be considered legal."

He ruled the country with martial law for five years and then died. His successor Field Marshall Thanom Kittikachorn became Prime Minister and stayed in the position for almost a decade (Thak 2007: 9). In 1971, the Thanom government staged a coup and terminated the 1968 Constitution. Even though a new Constitution was drafted in 1972, it still gave Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn and the army extensive power which led to public protests.

This section examines Thailand's experiences in transforming political conflicts into peace through three critical events in Thai political history: the 1973 student uprisings, the 6 October 1976 massacre, and Black May 1992. It argues that before the current political conflict began in 2005, conflict resolution methods used in Thailand's past political conflicts relied mainly on two major mechanisms depending on the political contexts and socioeconomic situations surrounding the particular conflicts. First, when the political conflicts occurred as conflicts among the elite groups, laws and regulations were enacted by the winning groups to get rid of or exclude their opponents. Second, when the political conflicts were expanded and drew in the involvement of ordinary people, the main conflict resolution tool was the reform of political institutions and socioeconomic structures, especially through the drafting of a new constitution.

3.1.1 The 1973 student uprisings

Before the end of the Thanom regime, economic development resulted in the expansion of education and student numbers at university level increased rapidly. Thereafter, student-led demonstrations took place at Thammasat University and the Democracy Monument in October 1973. Approximately 500,000 protesters gathered to

demand a new Constitution and the release of student protesters who had been arrested by the government¹⁰ (Pasuk and Baker 2008: 193-194).

Largely due to external pressure flowing on from the Vietnam War, the politics of Thailand in the 1970s became very tense (Kitti 2007: 874). The military government, with the support of the US, stepped up its control over the country's politics while intellectuals and socialist students strongly opposed the Junta (Morell and Chai-Anan 1988). The situation became a crisis when a student-led popular uprising overthrew the corrupt and unpopular military government of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn. A coalition of workers, farmers, students, and members of the middle class began to mobilize for democracy, clearly demonstrating the potential for political change at the grassroots level. After three days of violence, King Bhumibol Adulyadej made a call to end the violence. By October 14, the students had respected the King's advice and began to disperse. However, while a group of protesters was dispersing, government troops blocked the way and opened fire on them (BBC News, 14 October 1973). Legitimacy was withdrawn from the nation's top military leaders, who were forced to go into exile, after the use of violence on masses of Thai citizens in the streets of Bangkok led to 77 deaths and 857 injured (Morell and Chai-Anan 1988; Kovit 2010).

Without their authoritarian leaders, Thailand's military returned to their barracks, at least temporarily, permitting the expansion of a democratic space in which human rights became more respected, the media received more freedom to criticize politicians and governments, and political parties had the opportunity to form and play

¹⁰ It should be noted here that although this event has been known as a student uprising because the student movement certainly was a key to pressure the military government and led to the step-down of the junta, there were several key factors that led to the success of the popular movement in 1973, including the rivalry between armed forces and the active labour unions.

an extensive role in Thai parliamentary politics (Morell and Chai-Anan 1988; and Hewison 1997). The 1974 Amnesty Act for Students and Democratization Movement Participants, the Act Repealing Revolutionary Order No. 36/1973, and a new constitution-drafting initiative were implemented in order to restore the honor of and provide compensation for those involved in the democratization movement (Charnvit Kasetsiri 2000). However, the perpetrators have never been prosecuted. Besides, the victims never received legal compensation until March 7th, 2005 (Prachatai, 30 August 2016). Moreover, the 1973-76 period of civilian rule did not provide harmonious politics and widespread public participation. Rather, it was a period of great political conflict and competition among polarized people at the top of society who split into two ideological camps—left or progressive, and right or conservative.

3.1.2 The Massacre of 6 October 1976

After the 1973 student uprising, the 1974 Constitution was promulgated, applying several new electoral rules, including a rule that made membership of a political party a requirement for election to the House of Representatives. The duration of this opening of political space (Girling 1981; Morell and Chai-Anan 1988; Hewison 1997) was short and ended on 6 October 1976 when protesting students who gathered to oppose Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn's return from exile, were killed or imprisoned by the right-wing Village Scouts and the military. The inability of the government to control the situation provided a perfect opportunity for the military to step in again. Newspapers were shut down. Thousands of protesters were arrested on that day, and 18 were later charged with serious crimes such as treason, and violations of the Anti-Communist Act, and were detained for two years before being granted amnesty in 1978 (see, for example, Anderson 1977; Puey 1977). This bloody restoration

of authoritarianism not only brought the armed forces back into power, but also illustrated the residual strength of conservative forces (McCargo 2002; Morell and Chai-Anan 1988).

Many of the students fled to the “jungle” to join the Communist insurgents (Anderson 1998). For about two years after the massacre, the state narrative presented in public throughout the country was triumphalist, claiming that the communists were defeated and the country was saved (Thongchai 2001: 4). The victims were held to blame for the chaos and danger to the three pillars, the “Nation, Religion, and Monarchy,” constructed by the right as the unified national identity of Thailand (2001: 4). Since then, both the threat of communism domestically and regionally, and general communist phobia has gradually come to an end, while the civic and popular movements, many of which have been driven by people from the 1970s generation, have grown (2001: 4). Eventually, Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda¹¹ promulgated the Thai Prime Ministerial Order 66/23 Anti-communist Insurgency Policy. This policy was intended to fight communist insurgents, not just communist policy (Chaiwat 2002: 31). The PM Order 66/23 authenticated the communist insurgents’ existence, and strongly affirmed their significance as a threat to national security with the possibility of their seizing state power (2002: 32). In this sense, PM Order 66/23 was intended as a novel response to a new and dangerous situation. That is, instead of adhering to the then existing law of the land against communism, the Thai state chose not to punish the mistaken ones, but instead to embrace them as friends (2002: 33).

¹¹ Prem Tinsulanonda (born August 26, 1920, Songkla, Siam [Thailand]—present), was army general and the 16th prime minister of Thailand and served this position for three consecutive terms from March 3, 1980 to August 4, 1988 (Liow 2015: 314).

In short, as it had mobilized several groups of Thai people (not only residents of Bangkok, laborers, taxi drivers, and businessmen, but also ordinary villagers, farmers, and provincial elites), political conflict during the 1973-1976 period indicated an imperative task facing Thailand “to devise political systems that can balance participation with stability, change with order” (Morell and Chai-Anan 1988: 4). Many Thai scholars labeled the form of government in the period of General Kriangsak Chamanan (prime minister, 1977-1980) and General Prem Tinsulanonda (prime minister, 1980-1988) as a “half-a-page democracy”(prachathipataikhreungbai) (Kobkua 2003) or “semi-democracy” (Case 1996; Chai-anan 1989; Neher 1987) which is basically one form of a limited or guided democracy¹².

3.1.3 Black May 1992

Since 1976, Thailand had been led by military Prime Ministers until General Chatichai Choonhavan¹³ gained the most popular votes in the general election and became a civilian Prime Minister in 1988. During his term, General Chatichai focused on economics and he was well recognized for his international policy “turn the battlefield into a marketplace” (Chambers 2005; Pongphisoot 2017). However, his

¹²The major characteristic of the semi-democratic government of Thailand is that it is the form of government in which the prime minister, regardless of whether he/she is a member of the House of Representatives, is elected by a coalition of parties, and major ministries are given to retired military figures, famous politicians, or high-level bureaucrats.

¹³ Chatichai Choonhavan (born April 25, 1922, Bangkok, Thailand—died May 6, 1998, London, England) was the 17th prime minister of Thailand between August 4, 1988 and February 23, 1991. His father, Field Marshal Phin Choonhavan, was the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army from 1948 to 1954 and was a leader of several coups against the government, most notably the 1947 coup (see, for example, Liow 2015: 119 and Mydan 1998, for more information about his roles in Thai politics).

administration was notorious for massive corruption and he was unable to solve legislative gridlock (Mydans 1998). Also, he could not balance the interests of the military, the bureaucracy, and the National Assembly leading to the conflict between him and the army (1998).

The event that eventually led to Black May 1992 was the military coup on February 23, 1991 when the National Peace Keeping Council (NPKC), led by General Sundhorn Kongsompong, the Supreme Commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, took over the administration of the country. Instead of retaining power, as had happened in military interventions in the past, the NPKC promulgated a provisional constitution and, after a brief period, paved the way for a civilian interim government headed by Anand Panyarachun,¹⁴ a bureaucrat turned businessman. The majority of the new cabinet was composed of well-respected, experienced technocrats who were known for their liberal thinking and belief in democracy (Christensen 1991). The interim government was entrusted with administering the country until a new constitution was promulgated and a general election scheduled for early 1992. After the general election in March 1992, five political parties (Rassadorn, Samakkee Dhamma, Social Action, Thai Citizen, and Chart Thai) designated General Suchinda Kraprayun, a leading member of the NPKC who promised that he would not seek political power after the election, as the prime minister (Callahan 1998: 120). Suchinda's appointment as prime

¹⁴ Anand Panyarachun (born August 9, 1932, Bangkok, Siam [Thailand]—present), was the 18th prime minister of Thailand and served this position twice, once between 1991 and 1992 and again during the latter half of 1992. His Government initiated reforms in several key sectors of the Thai economy, including tax and trade regimes, industrial restructuring, environmental management, educational and health services. In 1996, Anand was elected as a member of the Constitution Drafting Assembly and was appointed Chairman of the Drafting Committee (for more information about his roles in Thai politics, see Liow 2015: 73).

minister accompanied by the appointment to his cabinet of almost the same corrupt politicians who were ousted in the 1991 coup resulted in massive demonstrations in Bangkok and other cities in May 1992 (Kitti 2007). According to eyewitness reports of action near the Democracy Monument in Bangkok, soldiers may have killed seven hundred and fifty protesters after only two days of protests (Callahan 1998).

Due to Suchinda's use of violence against the demonstrators, many pro-democracy campaigners died in the uprising. "Black May" became a common name for the 17-20 May 1992 bloody confrontation between the unarmed pro-democracy demonstrators and the NPKC, backed by tanks and modern munitions. In response to negative sentiments against the armed forces being used as political instruments, the military, since the end of the Black May event, decided to withdraw and disengage itself from active politics (Kobkua 2003: 18).

According to the official report, 52 people were confirmed dead, hundreds were injured, over 3,500 were arrested and many had been tortured in a military crackdown. Besides, many protesters remain missing to this day. Asia Watch and Physicians for Human Rights reported on the official autopsy on the Conditions of Deaths during the Events of May 17-20 that gunshot wounds caused all deaths 18 of them were shot in the head and neck. Also, there were no injuries caused using tear gas, rubber bullets or other non-lethal forms of crowd control weapons (The Nation, 20 May 2015).

The mechanisms used in order to resolve the conflict during and after the Black May events were both direct and indirect. Direct mechanisms included royal intervention, constitutional amendment, and amnesty act promulgation.

(1) Royal intervention

Early on the morning of 20 May, Princess Sirindhorn addressed the nation on television, calling for a stop to the state of chaos. Her request was rebroadcast

throughout the day. In the evening, her brother, Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn's similar public request was broadcast. Then at 9:30 p.m., a television broadcast of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Suchinda, and Chamlong Srimoung¹⁵ was shown, in which the King demanded that the two parties alienated by conflict put an end to their confrontation and work together through a parliamentary process. Following the broadcast, Suchinda released Chamlong and announced an amnesty for the protesters. He also agreed to support an amendment to the constitution requiring the prime minister to be elected from amongst the members of the House of Representatives. Chamlong asked the demonstrators to disperse, which they did. On 24 May 1992, Suchinda eventually resigned as prime minister.

(2) Constitutional Amendment

Since one of the critical problems that led to the Black May events was popular disagreement with Suchinda's appointment as prime minister, because he had not run in an election, the amendment of the 1992 Constitution was initiated in order to stipulate that the prime minister must be a member of the House of Representatives. However, the process of the constitutional amendment was not completely smooth because the Senate, which comprised of 270 appointed-members and most of whom are active senior military officers, has a power of scrutinizing the bills, which definitely include the proposal aiming to amend the constitution, from the House of Representatives (Surin 1993: 342). After the months-long battle over the constitution between the pro-

¹⁵ Chamlong Srimoung was a former army general who formed and was a leader of the "Young Turks" military clique during the 1970s, aiming to espouse an ideology of incorruptible leadership and anti-leftism. He also is a Thai activist and former politician. In 1988, he founded and led the Palang Dharma Party and served for six years as governor of Bangkok. As an activist, he led the anti-military uprising of May 1992, and became a prominent member of the People's Alliance for Democracy, a group strongly opposed to former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra (Liow 2015: 116).

democratic House of Representatives members and the solidly-backing-the-military appointed Senators, the constitutional amendments to disallow the non-elected person to take over the premiership was in active on September 11, 1992 or two days before the 1992 general election was held.

(3) Amnesty Act Promulgation

As a response to previous political crises, the Amnesty to Democratization Movement Participants Act was enacted in order to restore the honor of and provide compensation to people involved in the May 17-21, 1992 democratization movement. It should be noted here that this is an unusual amnesty decree because there had been general amnesties before, but they were usually presented as legislative bills and passed by the National Assembly. This amnesty decree was issued during an alleged national emergency; an executive decree is sanctioned under Article 172 of the 1992's Constitution if the security situation warrants. Thus Paragraph 1 provides: If it is necessary to uphold the security of the country and protect the public or to maintain the country's economic stability, or to alleviate the effect of public disasters, His Majesty the King will sign a royal decree that has the same legality as an act of Parliament; Paragraph 2: The signing of a royal decree, as set out in Paragraph 1, can be carried out when the Cabinet considers there is an emergency which warrants the urgent issuing of a decree, and when there is no alternative possibility. Thus, an executive decree needs approval of the full Cabinet before it can be signed by the King and formally promulgated.

In addition to these direct reconciliation mechanisms, an atmosphere of reconciliation (such as the appointment of a trusted leader) was also established and utilized as an indirect conflict resolution tool. After Suchinda resigned, the nation once again turned to Anand Panyarachun, who was appointed as interim prime minister until

the new elections in September 1992. This appointment helped ameliorate the atmosphere of conflict because Anand Panyarachun enjoyed the confidence of many Thai citizens. Secondly, and more importantly, the Black May events of 1992 contributed to the realization within government that calls from civil advocacy organizations to introduce genuine political reform could no longer be ignored (Arghiros 2001: 235). The pressure and desire for a new constitution was felt and expressed at every level of Thai society, resulting in the eventual promulgation of a new constitution in 1997, which was said to be different both in content and in the way it was drafted. It was drafted with the specific aim of political reform and, unlike previous constitutions, after widespread consultation with the Thai people.

Almost all the reports of every committee of investigation, except for those of the Defense Ministry, shared some facts in common viz that the government had used excessive force against the civilian protestors, which caused massive deaths, injuries, and specially disappearances (the numbers of missing persons from each report are inconsistent: The Government Committee reported 115 missing, the Interior Ministry reported 207 missing, and the Hotline Center reported 288 missing) (Human Rights Watch 1993). The Government Commission's report was considered less critical of the military than those of the House Committee and the Commission chair Sophon Rattanakorn told media reporters on July 2nd, 1992 that the use of force against the protestors had been "procedurally correct" and General Suchinda as prime minister had never issued any specific orders to kill the demonstrators (Freedom House 1992). Moreover, on August 3, 1992, Prime Minister Anand told the Far Eastern Economic Review regarding the responsibility of the commanders, that, according to the Defense Ministry fact-finding report, the commanders were acting in accordance with due procedures and what they did was not illegal. Therefore, there was no legal basis to put

them on trial. Although decades have passed since the Bloody May massacre, many questions remain unanswered, including the final death toll and the fate of the disappeared.

3.2 The Root Causes of the Current Political Conflicts in Thailand

The political crisis in Thailand since late 2005 until the present is considered as an ongoing and unsolvable problem. Political instability in Thailand accrued during Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his Thai Rak Thai Party's (TRT) regime. The entry to power of Thaksin and the TRT created a major change in the politics of Thailand. Since it was the time Thailand needs "a hero" to lead the country to move forward after almost half a decade under the financial crisis. At that time, Thaksin, due to his image as a successful businessman, was the first choice for big domestic business to represent its interests (Hewison 2006: 99) while the new strategy he applied in the establishment of his Thai Rak Thai party and the 2001 electoral campaign especially by addressing "policies that promised rapid economic recovery, targeting the poor, and made social welfare a significant of its platform" (Hewison 2006: 101). Moreover, the TRT's policy is different from the policies of other Thai political parties. Unlike governments in the past, especially those that relied on the suggestions and recommendations proposed by the bureaucracy and technocrats in initiating public policies, the ruling TRT prepared its own public policies obtained from conducting research and workshops with ordinary citizens, activists, and experts for many years (Hewison 2010: 122-123; Pasuk and Baker 2009: 80–82).

Originally, Thaksin set his party's ultimate goals as a political reformer, aiming to resolve the nation's problems that had arisen from the 1997 economic crisis (Pasuk

and Baker 2004: 78-9). However, to achieve such a purpose, his party needed to win the House of Representatives election with a majority vote. The TRT's policy strategy was then broadened to capture a variety of groups of voters by introducing a wide range of welfare-oriented policies in order to respond to the basic needs of the people, in particular the poor in urban and rural areas (Brown and Hewison 2005: 359; Kengkij and Hewison 2009: 454-458; Pasuk and Baker 2009: 80-82). Some scholars have claimed that the TRT's policies were initiated in order to tackle the inequality between the urban middle-class and the rural poor¹⁶ by reducing the income gap between these groups and making it easier for the poor to access social welfare services (Patana 2010: 13; Prapart 2010: 46-47). Others have argued that the TRT's policies were designed to attract the majority of rural voters. These policies have allowed Thaksin and his TRT to gain high levels of popularity. Only the big capitalists, especially those who have a close relationship to Thaksin, benefited from the TRT policies, while others gained small benefits from a good investment atmosphere, which occurred because the poor had a better life than in the past and had little reason to unite for protests or demonstrations (Anek 2006; Pasuk and Baker 2002: 9).

Unlike various public policies advertised by other political parties in the past, almost all of the TRT's policies that they had promised the voters prior to being elected were brought into practice. Soon after Thaksin and his party came to power, for example, the TRT's three major policies, including agrarian debt suspension, the setting up of a village fund, and a 30 Baht health scheme were immediately implemented

¹⁶ In the Thai context, the key differences between these two groups of citizens are that the urban middle-class are those who largely work in the corporate sector, have a good education, and are more linked to the world market, while the rural poor are those who mainly work in the agricultural sector, have limited education, and are less linked to the global economy.

(Pasuk and Baker 2004: 93). Since then various economic and social policies, such as low-cost housing, One-Tambon¹⁷-One-Product (OTOP) scheme, scholarships for poor students, and so forth, were implemented. Whether these policies were effective or successful in terms of policy implementation, delivering what the political party had promised to the voters was something that never happened in Thai politics before and considerably helped to boost Thaksin and his TRT's popularity (Hewison 2010: 122). However, the high popularity of Thaksin and his TRT saw a range of welfare-oriented programs introduced by his government recognized as "populist policies" by the opposition which then became a controversial issue between his supporters and his opponents and eventually one of the critical root-causes of the current political conflict.

The strength of Thaksin and his TRT's populist policies was, as Pasuk and Baker (2002: 11-12) indicated, the opportunity for Thai voters to choose the public policies they preferred through elections. However, because the implementation of these policies required a large amount of finance, one of the major concerns raised by many political scientists and economists was that they could cause fiscal and financial crises. Ammar Siamwalla, one of Thailand's most prominent economists, for example, stated that the "...Thaksin government's populist policies were economic policies that created an artificial demand; the government spent a large amount of budget with no productive (result) and did not encourage people to save money; in the long run, this kind of policy will increase the public debt and lead to a large amount of the budget deficit..." (Anchalee 2002: 13). "The destabilizing effects of Thaksin's project have aroused extensive opposition, from the old elite—the Palace, bureaucracy and military top

¹⁷ *Tambon* or sub district is the third administrative subdivision level formed below district (*amphoe*) and province (*changwat*).

brass—to Southern separatists, urban middle classes, organized labour and grass-roots groups, as well as from disgruntled former cronies such as Sondhi” (Kasian 2006: 10).

Moreover, the landslide victory¹⁸ of Thaksin and his TRT in the 2005 election, the second election after the 1997 constitutional reform, led to many concerns about the development of democracy in Thailand, particularly developments that may produce a “single party” form of government in which one large party gets a majority and lets other medium or small parties have seats in the cabinet but with a little bargaining power. This pattern has long occurred in other Asian democracies such as Singapore and Malaysia¹⁹ rather than a liberal democracy, in which a contested election is one of the most important features. Throughout the periods of Thaksin’s government, the roles of Thaksin as a prime minister and of his administration were hugely criticized on many issues including corruption, conflict of interest, strongman rule, and single-party dominance.

A time of political unrest soon followed, sparked by the selling of Prime Minister Thaksin’s family telecommunication shares to Temasek, a Singaporean investor for about 70,000 million Baht (\$2,000 million) without paying any taxes. During April and May, 2006, the opposition formed the “People’s Alliance for Democracy” or (PAD) to protest against Thaksin’s administration. The PAD movement grew very fast because of the wide use of mass media such as newspapers, websites, and satellite TV to communicate among protesters. In February 2006, thousands from the anti-Thaksin groups assembled to protest and the situation ended with the

¹⁸The TRT gained 377 of 500 seats in the 2005 House of Representatives election.

¹⁹In Malaysia, the— United Malays National Organization or UMNO —which until 2018 had been elected to govern the country since its independence from the United Kingdom in 1957, while Singapore’s political system can be categorized into a multiple-party system with single-party domination (i.e. People’s Action Party, PAP) since its independent from the Malaysian Federation in 1965.

government's dissolution (Nelson 2010). Then Thaksin called for a snap election, but this was boycotted by the opposition party, the Democratic Party because they argued that the parliamentary dissolution and the election were not fair. This situation was deemed a constitutional crisis and led to a political vacuum. Military leaders staged a bloodless coup in September 19th, 2006 while Prime Minister Thaksin was at the UN General Assembly. The military seized the government and appointed a new cabinet and the National Assembly. Thaksin's party: the TRT was dissolved by the Constitutional Court's decision and he was banned from politics for five years.

Many studies have been conducted in order to understand and explain the root causes of the current political conflicts in Thailand (Bjarnegård and Tønnesson 2015; King Prajadhipok's Institute 2012; Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand 2012). Among those studies, the explanations presented in the Report of the Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand (TRCT) and the King Prajadhipok's Institute Study (KPI) have made these the two most popular documents most often mentioned and referred to. According to the TRCT's report (2012), the root cause of the current political conflicts is deep-rooted in the economic, social, class, and political structure of the country. When the conflict re-appeared in 2005, it gave rise to two clearly opposing groups, who promoted clearly different ideas and ideologies in the struggle for power. This struggle eventually became violent due to the inequality of the socioeconomic structures, differences between social classes, political intervention by the military through coup d'états, the use of media channels to expand the conflict, and weak democratic and judicial mechanisms; especially the criticism that state mechanisms did not adhere to the rule of law.

Similar to the TRCT, the KPI Report (2012) focuses its analysis of the root causes of Thailand's current political conflicts by looking at the situation that developed

following the 2001 election and peaked in late 2005. Not too much different to the TRCT's explanations, the KPI report concludes that the root causes of the current political conflicts lie in the existence, in Thai society, of contending views on the values and key elements of democracy, with regard to power and resource allocation. The first view emphasizes the electoral process with the executive deriving its legitimacy from "majority rule" as the key and the most fundamental element of democracy which must be recognized and realized in the Thai political system. The opposing view considers that the "morality and ethical behavior" of the executive bodies are more important than their representativeness. Each view is held by a variety of groups for different reasons, from conviction to personal interest. In the context of a society characterized by strong socioeconomic inequality, the conflict between opposing views on democracy has increased in intensity and scope, occupying the social and psychological domains. Each major party in the conflict considers that the use of power by the other one is illegitimate. For instance, the intervention of the executive branch (especially by the government) in the work of the public scrutiny bodies (e.g., the Election Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Constitutional Court) or the use of coup d'état are all seen as illegitimate. The conflict has invaded all sectors of society, as a result of grassroots mobilization and biased media on both sides.

3.3 Conclusion

The outline of the Thai political chronology up to the period where this dissertation began its interpretation shows that conflict resolution mechanisms used in Thailand's past political conflicts relied mainly on the use of laws and regulations. The review of previous literature also reveals that the causes and effects of the current political conflict are a combination of a conflict deep-rooted in the economic, social,

class, and political structure of the country and the existence of contested views on the values and key elements of democracy, with regard to power and resource allocation in Thai society. These deep rooted causes mean that the conflict is barely resolved and thus still exists until the present.

CHAPTER 4 The Definitions and Utilizations of Reconciliation in the Thai Language and Context

In order to understand how the term reconciliation in the Thai language has been interpreted, explained, and applied by the Thai governments, leaders of the conflicting groups, and the people over time, this chapter divides its examination into three parts. In the first part, the definitions of reconciliation in the Thai language and context are outlined, examining how the word reconciliation is perceived and being heard by the Thai citizens before this country enters into the political conflict which began to erupt in 2005. In the second and third parts, the focus then shifts to the assessments of how the term reconciliation has been defined and utilized by the Thai governments, the elites of every side of conflict, and the people during the past decades to ascertain the causes of their unsuccessful in maintaining peace through conducting a reconciliation process.

4.1 Reconciliation and the Thai Citizens before 2005

Before Thailand entered into the political conflict which began to erupt in 2005, the word “ปรองดอง [prong-dong]” (reconciliation), was often heard by Thais, and was derived from the royal speech of His Majesty King Rama 9. However, the exact definition of reconciliation that H.M. the king had used tends to mean “สามัคคีปรองดอง [sa-mak-kee-prong-dong],” which matches the English word “harmony” rather than “reconciliation.” With reference to his majesty the king’s royal guidance to demonstrators regarding the popular uprising on 14 October 1973, he stated the following: “Those who are older, they have experience. Young people have a body and

brain power. If older and younger people harmonize²⁰ and work in unison, the country and politics will go well.”²¹ Further, on other occasions, such as the royal speech made to the ceremonial guard parade on 3 December 1979 at Dusit Palace Royal Grounds, the king stated that “Thai forefathers were fighters who were harmonized and united²² no matter what they did; as a result, our country has had the sovereignty and prosperity until today.”²³ Another example is the royal speech given to the Thai people on the 1989 New Year’s Day, stating that “harmony²⁴ and generosity have been important traits of the Thai people to help the country remain independent and prosperous from the past to the present.”²⁵

In addition, a part of the royal guidance on the graduation ceremony of Chulalongkorn University on 13 July 1990 the King remarked that “everyone should be aware that every problem can be solved. If a person cannot solve a problem, more persons should collaborate in harmony²⁶ so that such a problem will not be an obstacle to the success of work.”²⁷ Additionally, the royal speech addressed to groups of persons on the occasion of H.M. the King’s birthday on 4 December 1993 mentioned that “harmony or reconciliation²⁸ does not mean that if one person says one thing, others have to say the same thing; otherwise, life will mean nothing. There must be differences

²⁰ Emphasized by the author

²¹ <http://www.manager.co.th/mwebboard/listComment.aspx?QNumber=197374&Mbrowse=9>

²² Emphasized by the author

²³ <http://www.polyboon.com/stories/story000073.html>

²⁴ Emphasized by the author

²⁵ <http://www.polyboon.com/stories/story000073.html>

²⁶ Emphasized by the author

²⁷ <http://www.polyboon.com/stories/story000073.html>

²⁸ Emphasized by the author

among people. Even though sometimes there are different thoughts in their work, eventually they should work together in harmony.”²⁹

According to this definition, the word “ปรองดอง [prong-dong]” (reconciliation) that was used and understood in Thai society before 2005 matches the meaning defined in Royal Institute Dictionary as “ออมชอม [om-chom] ประนีประนอม [pra-nee-pra-nom] ยอมกัน [yom-kan] ไม่แก่งแย่งกัน [mai-kaeng-yaeng-kan] ตกลงกันด้วยความไกล่เกลี่ย [tok-long-kan-duay-kwam-klai-klia] ตกลงกันด้วยไมตรีจิต [tok-long-kan-duay-mai-tree-chit],” which is like many words in English in verb form, such as to harmonize, to be in harmony ,to be reconciled, to compromise, to compound differences. In addition, since the late 1980s, when conflicts between the government sector, private sector, and civil society were progressing due to the Thai Government’s guidelines for economic development through the creation and implementation of mega projects that have had effects on society and the environment at large, the concepts of conflict resolution and conflict management have been addressed and adopted by many social science scholars in Thailand. According to these concepts, the word “สันติวิธี [santi-witee]” (peaceful means) is used mostly as an instrument to deal with conflicts, while the words “สันติสภาวะ [santi-sapawa]” and “สันติสุข [santi-suk]” (peace) are mentioned as the goal of conflict management.³⁰ The word “ปรองดอง (prong-dong),” which corresponds to the English word “reconciliation,” has been rarely used. When it is used, it seems to fit the English word “harmony” rather than “reconciliation.”³¹

²⁹ <http://km.rdpb.go.th/Knowledge/View/68>

³⁰ See, for example, Rungtham Sujithammarak (2002: Unit 1).

³¹ See, for example, Chaiyan Ratchakul (2002: Unit 2).

However, since the military coup of September 19, 2006, led by General Sonthi Boonyaratglin which organized the Council for Democratic Reform (CDR), following a year-long political crisis involving Thaksin, his allies, and political opponents, the term reconciliation has been mentioned and applied to solving the political conflict more often and with a more specific meaning than in the past. According to this study's literature survey, reconciliation has been used and defined in the laws and policies implemented by several Thai governments and academic reports, aiming to understand the causes of the conflicts and to recommend appropriate solutions, with at least three meanings.

The first meaning of reconciliation is in accordance with the romantic view of Thai society as an amicable society, in which the Thai people live together in harmony and peacefully. The solution for the current political conflict, according to this view of reconciliation, pays attention to the application of the principles and ideas that have already existed and been acknowledged by the people in the Thai culture, such as the principles of Buddhism.

Adopted by Thai scholars and activists in the peace studies field, the second meaning of reconciliation refers to the knowledge about conflict management and conflict resolution disseminated in Thailand before the current political conflict occurred in 2006. Reconciliation, according to this perspective, is the goal of conflict resolution methods such as negotiation, mediation, and dialogue.

The third definition of reconciliation applied in Thailand is the one that specifically refers to the process that has been used in several countries in order to build peace. In this regard, reconciliation is not only a goal, but a means to bringing peace to the society through the process of dealing with the search for truth, social justice, sympathy and forgiveness, and accommodation between conflicting groups or people.

4.2 Reconciliation as Conflict Resolution and Management Methods

The first category of the meaning and understanding of reconciliation existed in most of the policy statements of the Council of Ministers delivered by the Thai governments to the Parliament after the military coup on September 19th, 2006. For example, the government of General Surayud Chulanont indicated in the policy statement delivered to the National Legislative Assembly on November 3rd, 2006 the following:

“The Government is intent on building a strong society on the basis of virtue, a society in which all people live in peace and harmony, on the basis of the following policies:

Promote compassion and understanding, unity and reconciliation among the country’s people so that they cooperate in the revitalization and rehabilitation of the nation on all fronts. In doing so, the Government shall draw lessons from past conflicts and failures to prevent and resolve such problems to foster understanding among the people. The Government shall also create a process for the resolution of problems, putting a premium on national harmony, while promoting the dissemination of examples of good cooperation that brings happiness to all segments of the Thai community.

Formulate a social reform plan for shared happiness and national harmony on the basis of virtue. The Government is to draw up this plan together with the people, business, civil society, academia, media

and religious institutions so as to build a caring, virtuous and democratic society, one in which the local community and civil society are strong.³² ”

According to this statement, the term reconciliation, applied and announced by the government of General Surayud in order to solve Thailand’s political conflict, which the CDR claimed as one of the main reasons for having a coup, was the same word as that used by the government of Thaksin when the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) was established on March 28th, 2005 in order to solve the conflict in the deep southern provinces.³³ This term was used by both governments with the same meaning as the word “solidarity” in English. For the government of General Surayud, reconciliation is the desired condition for the Thai people to live together. In other words, reconciliation is the ultimate goal that the government aims to achieve. In order to accomplish such a goal, the government of General Surayud applied conflict-resolution approaches and mechanisms proposed by scholars and activists in the field of peace studies. These approaches and mechanisms, as already discussed were similar to those that had been previously used in Thailand for solving conflicts, especially between state agencies and involving groups or individuals in the public policy process.

The conflict resolution approaches and mechanisms applied by the government of General Surayud can be divided into two major methods. The first method was a public forum hosted and organized by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The major goal of this public forum set up by the government was the creation of the so-called solidarity or conflict-resolution networks among ordinary people at the

³² Policy Statement of the Council of Ministers Delivered by General Surayud Chulanont, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand to the National Legislative Assembly on Friday, 3 November 2006, pp. 14-15

³³ See, Prime Minister’s Order, 28 March 2005.

provincial level. The government of General Surayud expected that these networks could help to educate people about the political conflict and encourage them to work in cooperation in constructing unity and solidarity among the people in the nation (Manager Online, 9 March 2008). The second method focused on solving the conflicts between political leaders. In this regard, the government of General Surayud appointed General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, a former premier and the former deputy prime minister under the Thaksin government, as the government's president of the advisory team on national security and reconciliation (Bangkok Post, 1 October 2006, p.4) The government also supported the role of General Chavalit, who declared himself to represent a chain linking politicians and conflicting groups together, in coordinating backdoor negotiations or dialogues between the interim government and former prime minister Thaksin, who had been in exile since the 2006 military coup (Manager Online, 20 January 2008).

However, the government of General Surayud failed to make the conflicting groups, especially the PAD leaders, accept these conflict-resolution approaches and mechanisms. The words "reconciliation" and "solidarity" were perceived and interpreted by the opposition to the government as representing a compromised process among political leaders, who wished to protect only their own interests. The real ultimate goal of the conflict-resolution approaches and mechanisms used by the government of General Surayud was to turn back time by asking the conflicting groups to forget everything, as if nothing had happened to Thai politics during the past decades. For the PAD leaders, this way of solving the political conflict was no different from what the previous interim governments established by the military coup did in the past, especially though the enactment of the amnesty law regarding the actions of all involved persons with no conditions (Suravich Weerawan, 2007). It was not a method that could

solve any conflict problems; rather, the conflict only became compounded or was swept under the carpet.

After the 2007 Constitution was promulgated and the victory of the People Power Party (PPP), the TRT's proxy party, in the House of Representatives election on December 23rd, 2007, the word reconciliation was again mentioned in the policy statement delivered by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej to the Parliament. The key sentences stated the following:

“Over the next four years, the Government will look after both short and long-term problems, and is committed to the administration of the country under two main principles, which the Government is confident will contribute to the sustainability of the Thai economy and society, as well as establish confidence among Thai and foreign investors and the international community.

First is the fostering of reconciliation among all Thais, who will have to work together in guiding the country through various crises and building a secure foundation for the country's future. This fostering of reconciliation includes the important matter of resolving and healing the problems in the three southern border provinces, leading towards peaceful coexistence and harmony among the local people, and developing the economic potential of the country's South so that it becomes a significant national economic base...”

According to the policy statement of the government of Samak, the term reconciliation had been used with almost the same meaning as that used by the

government of Surayud (i.e. solidarity). However, the implementation of this policy under the supervision of the government of Samak, in practice, was not the continued process of the reconciliation policy initiated during the period of Surayud's government. Rather, the first task of the government of Samak, in order to achieve its goal in fostering reconciliation among Thai citizens, was to propose a bill aiming to revise the 2007 Constitution. The government and the PPP leaders claimed that this process of constitutional amendment, because it provided a platform for all Thai citizens to work together in recommending a desired political structure for the country's future, would be a critical means for making the dream of reconciliation in Thai society come true (The Nation, 22 March 2008, p. 1A).

In contrast, for the PAD, the real purpose behind this attempt to revise the 2007 Constitution was no other than the reversal of the ban imposed on the executives of the disbanded TRT and the opportunity to acquit self-exiled Thaksin (Bangkok Post, 25 March 2008, p. 10). This disagreement and the heated debate regarding the constitutional amendment led to the reunion of the PAD to protest against the PPP-led government's proposal. The PAD protesters then extended their goal to topple the two governments led by Thaksin's proxy parties. The first government was that of Prime Minister Samak. The other was the government of Somchai Wongsawat, Thaksin's brother-in-law, who became prime minister after the PPP was dissolved following the decision made by the Constitutional Court and the Pheu Thai Party (PT). The second generation of Thaksin's proxy party was then immediately established. With the strong support of the military, small and medium parties (including the group of House of Representatives members that decided to defect from the PT to establish their own party; i.e. the Phumjai Thai Party: PTP), the leader of the Democrat Party: Abhisit

Vejjajiva, was elected by the House of Representatives to be prime minister and to form a new government (The Guardian, 14 April 2009).

4.3 Reconciliation by Applying the Concept of Transitional Justice

In the policy statement delivered by Prime Minister Abhisit to the parliament on December 30th, 2008, the usage of the word reconciliation, on the one hand, was similar to the use made of the term by the government in the policy statements of Surayud, Samak, and Somchai and appeared as one of the priorities and ultimate goals that the government aimed to achieve. On the other hand, the government of Abhisit added some new ideas (words) necessary for the implementation of the reconciliation policy. As the government stated, they would "...[p]romptly promote harmony and reconciliation among people in the nation by using peaceful means, listening to opinions from all sides and avoiding any use of violence as means of resolving national problems in all circumstances; restore social order and enforce law on the basis of equality and justice to all sides; and support the participation of organizations established pursuant to the Constitution in the process of reconciliation within the framework of each organization's mandate"³⁴.

Nevertheless, when this policy statement was implemented, the election of Abhisit as new prime minister was immediately rejected by the pro-Thaksin movement: the Red Shirts. This rejection led to the two major protests launched by the Red Shirts that occurred in April 2009 and April-May 2010 (Askew 2010). As a result of these two events, many Red Shirt leaders were put in jail, and others went into exile, but emotions

³⁴ Policy Statement of the Council of Ministers Delivered by Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand to the National Legislative Assembly on Friday, 30 December 2008, p.4.

were still strong and painful (Reuters, 4 April 2010). As a response to these political conflicts, the government of Abhisit appointed five independent committees to work towards establishing reconciliation and to achieve political reform.³⁵ Among these committees, the Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand (TRCT), headed by Professor Kanit Nanakorn and eight other suitably-qualified commissioners, played a key role in: “[1] carrying out investigations and truth-seeking into the root causes of the problems, conflict, and violent clashes that occurred; [2] creating mutual understanding and determining solutions that would lead to the prevention of further violence and damage; and [3] promoting enduring reconciliation in the nation” (Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand 2012: iii). According to these core missions of the TRCT, the definition of reconciliation and international experience in conducting the reconciliation process, based on such definitions used in several countries, or, as this research calls it, the third category of reconciliation meanings, was first introduced and adopted by the Thai government and its state agency as not only an end but also a means of bringing about peace and reconciliation to the country.

In adopting this category of the reconciliation concept, the TRCT announced the employment of the principles of transitional justice in its procedures and its intention to modify those principles where necessary to suit Thailand’s unique situation through the lessons learned from many countries that have experienced violent conflict, in which the normal systems of justice were unable to be applied to solve their problems. More specifically, the TRCT determined its strategy of operations consisting of four major activities. The first activity was investigation and truth-seeking, which refers to

³⁵ These committees or working groups include the National Reform Committee, National Reform Assembly, Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand (TRCT), Constitutional Reform Committee, and Working Group for Reforming the Media.

investigating the root causes of the conflict and violence that have occurred in the country in recent years, as well as seeking the truth and facts about the violence that occurred during April and May 2010. The second activity was related to the process of restoration, rehabilitation, and violence prevention. This activity involved the creation of understanding between the organizations, institutions, groups, and individuals that were affected by violent incidents. It was also an activity that used restorative and social justice in order to promote enduring national reconciliation in Thailand and the prevention of further violence and loss. The third activity was to conduct research that would clarify the root causes of the conflict in terms of the law, the political situation, and the historical events that influenced the division and violence in recent times. The final activity was drawing the lessons learned from the results found in the above three activities in order to report to the public and to recommend to the government what should be done for building reconciliation and preventing further violence (Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand 2012: 8).

However, when the TRCT had worked for less than a year, Prime Minister Abhisit decided to dissolve the House of Representatives after amending sections 93-98 and 190 of the 2007 Constitution according to the recommendations made by the Constitutional Reform Committee and determined the date for holding the general election as July 3rd, 2011. Contrary to what Prime Minister Abhisit and his supporters expected, Yingluck Shinawatra, former Prime Minister Thaksin's youngest sister, and her PT, won the election by an absolute majority. Yingluck then became the first woman prime minister ever in Thai history. In her policy statement delivered to the Parliament on August 23rd, 2011, Prime Minister Yingluck announced that she would ensure that the TRCT would continue to act independently and would receive full cooperation from the government and all sides in carrying out verification and fact finding regarding cases

of political violence, human rights violations, loss of life, physical and mental injury, and damage to property (Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand 2012: 5). The government would, according to her, follow the TRCT's recommendations to provide remedies to persons regardless of their positions or political ideologies, including ordinary people, protesters, government officers, and private sector entrepreneurs who had been affected by the violence that took place in the later period of the promulgation of the 1997 Constitution (Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand 2012: 4).

Alongside the reconciliation policies continued by the government of Yingluck, the Ad Hoc Committee on National Reconciliation Building headed by General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, the former leader of the CDR who became a member of the House of Representatives after the 2011 election, was also established. This *ad hoc* committee comprised all parties to the conflict, including politicians from the government and opposition parties, Yellow and Red Shirt leaders, state officers involved in the conflict events, and representatives from other related agencies. One of the key tasks that this *ad hoc* committee intended to accomplish was to provide recommendations for reconciling the country with the government. Those recommendations mainly included the reconciliation process suggested by the research report conducted by King Prajadhipok's Institute, the national academic institution under the supervision of the President of the National Assembly.

According to the research conducted by King Prajadhipok's Institute, the term reconciliation was defined according to the meaning used by the TRCT as "the processes to rectify the past wrong and prevent further violence that may occur in the future by constructing a peace-building process, stopping a violent circle, and revitalizing democratic institutions" (King Prajadhipok's Institute 2012: 18).

The report also clarified this concern by making an observation in the case of Thailand—that reconciliation is not an easy-implemented process (King Prajadhipok’s Institute 2012: 27). The implementation of a reconciliation policy in Thailand seems to be impossible without having an atmosphere of peace building and specifically, trust building, both in terms of institutional trust and trust among individuals (King Prajadhipok’s Institute 2012: 27-29). In this regard, the government and all of the people involved in the reconciliation process have to recognize that this process requires ongoing, and inclusive plans, procedures, and methods because it is related to many complicated activities, such as the creation of the people’s attitude of forgiveness instead of revenge, the management of a shared history and memory about the violent events, and the restoration of confidence in the judicial process (King Prajadhipok’s Institute 2012: 29-32).

Hence, in order to transform the conflict and build peace in this country, the understanding of factors which could influence public opinion to support reconciliation ideas and implementations is required. This dissertation attempts to meet this requirement by developing a public opinion survey and quantitative analysis to explore Thai citizens’ attitudes and perceptions about peace and conflict transformation, and the key factors, in their opinion, for bringing about reconciliation across the nation. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology and design in more detail.

CHAPTER 5 Data and Methods

Previous studies have illustrated the causes and results of the current Thai political conflict. However, almost all of them relied on a qualitative method of examination. Survey studies dealing with public perceptions of the conflict are still rare. Moreover, almost all of them failed to pay much attention to public opinions regarding the solutions which could transform the conflict and build peace in Thai society. Therefore, this research uses a quantitative survey and analysis to explore Thai citizens' attitudes and perceptions about peace and reconciliation, and the key factors, in their opinion, for bringing about reconciliation across the nation. In this chapter, a brief overview of the survey design will now follow, describing the questionnaire development, sampling techniques, and data collection. In the final part of this chapter, the dependent and independent variables of the study as well as the methods of data analysis will be explained in more detail.

5.1 Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was divided into four parts. According to the review of the literature discussed above, the most important root causes of the current political conflict in Thailand are (1) the different views on democracy dividing the parties alienated by conflict and (2) the socioeconomic gap between the urban middle-class and the rural poor. The first part of the questionnaire asks the respondents about their attitudes toward democracy, focusing on the democratic principles that are the controversial issues between the parties alienated by conflict—elections, the rule of law, political ethics, and (socioeconomic) equality. The second part of the questionnaire focuses on the respondents' opinions about the way to reconcile Thai society, asking

them to consider the importance of several key elements of the reconciliation process drawn from the experiences of several countries around the world applied to the case of Thailand. The third part of the questionnaire asks the respondents about their level of trust in institutions and other people in the society. The final part of the questionnaire deals with the respondents' political identification (or more specifically, party affiliation) and socioeconomic backgrounds (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Survey Questionnaire—Indexes, Measure, and Coding

Indicators	Measure/ description	Coding
1. Attitudes toward democracy		
- Election	Responses to survey question: Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree with the following statement- <i>competitive and periodic elections are a necessary and indispensable element of sustained efforts to the right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her country?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree
- Political ethics	<i>Thailand needs an ethical leader, regardless of how he or she get into power, to take the country back from the corrupted politicians?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree

Indicators	Measure/ description	Coding
- Rule of law	<i>When the country is facing a difficult situation, it is ok for the government to disregard the law in order to deal with the situation?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree
- Socioeconomic equality	<i>Elections based on vote-buying by offering money to legitimate voters is a beneficial aspect of Thai people because it is a matter of income distribution to Thai people?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree

2. Perceptions about conflict, reconciliation, and peace

2.1 Attitudes toward conflict and conflict

transformation

<i>Without regard to the other factors, strictly conforming to the law will make Thai society peaceful?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree
<i>Sometimes, using violence (such as in a military coup) to solve the conflict problem is necessary because it is a method that can rapidly solve the problem?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree

Indicators	Measure/ description	Coding
	<i>Conflicts can be resolved by talking to each other?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree
	<i>We can decrease tension of conflict by forgiving for each other?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree
	<i>If people do realize their faults, then forgive them?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree
	Responses to survey question: <i>The society has rules and regulations, so people who commit illegal practice deserve their punishment?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree
	<i>The best forgiveness is the forgiveness with no conditions?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree

Indicators	Measure/ description	Coding
2.2 Opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process		
<p>How important are the following elements for the reconciliation process in the case of Thailand's current political conflict?</p>	<p>a. The political will of the top political leaders that are committed to peace and reconciliation</p> <p>b. Strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process</p> <p>c. A societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution</p> <p>d. An inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders</p> <p>e. A fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness</p> <p>f. Punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence</p>	<p>0-10:</p> <p>0 = not at all important;</p> <p>10 = very much important</p>

Indicators	Measure/ description	Coding
3. Trust		
3.1 Trust in institutions	Do you strongly trust, trust, don't trust, and not at all trust in the following institutions- a. The government b. The parliament c. The courts of justice d. Political parties	0 = not at all trust 1 = don't trust 2 = trust 3 = strongly trust
3.2 Individual Trust	<i>Most people can be trusted?</i>	0 = strongly disagree 1 = disagree 2 = agree 3 = Strongly agree
4. Political identifications & Socioeconomic backgrounds		
4.1 Political identifications		
- Color affiliation	If you had to choose one, which of the following would most closely describe your political opinion?	0 = no color / neutral 1 = Red 2 = slightly leaning Red 3 = slightly leaning Yellow 4 = strongly Yellow

Indicators	Measure/ description	Coding
- Party identification	How close do you usually think your political opinions are to the following parties? a. Democrat Party b. Pheu Thai Party c. Chart Thai Pattana Party d. Phumjaithai Party e. Other parties (please identify)	0-10: 0 = feel totally not close to this party 10 = feel very much close to this party
4.2 Socioeconomic backgrounds		
Gender	Respondent's gender	0 = female 1 = male
Age	Respondent's age (computing from the responses to the question: <i>In what year are you born?</i>)	18 years old to the highest
Income	Respondent's average household's earn during the last 12 months	0 Baht to the highest
Employment	Are you current self-employed, working in a family business or an outside employer?	0 = not employed 1 = self-employed 2 = working in a family business 3 = working for an outside employer

Indicators	Measure/ description	Coding
		4 = working in public sector
Education	Respondent's educational level	0 = incomplete primary school and lower 1 = complete primary school 2 = complete elementary school 3 = having some university degree and higher
Religion	Respondent's religion	0 = none 1 = Buddhist 2 = Roman Catholic 3 = Protestant 4 = Islam 5 = Hindu 6 = Others
Urban / rural resident	Respondent's area of living	0 = village/small town (living outside a municipality area) 1 = large city/metropolitan

Indicators	Measure/ description	Coding
		(living in a municipality area)

For use in the process of data collection, the questionnaire was translated into Thai, with a signature and stamp certifying it is an accurate translation by the expert for the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England.

5.2 Sampling Method

This research used a nationally representative sample as a way to look at public opinions of Thai citizens cross-nationally. The respondents for this survey were obtained in a statistically representative national sample of a minimum 800 adults (18 years old and above). The baseline information and addresses were drawn from the household information compiled by the Community Development Department, Ministry of Interior, for the respondents in the northern, northeastern, central, and southern regions. For the respondents in Bangkok, the baseline information and addresses were from the District Offices of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. The sample was allocated in Bangkok and 4 regions of Thailand by using a three-step stratified sample selection. The stages include:

1. Stratified sampling for specifying the locations to be studied, which were divided into 4 regions and Bangkok, in the total of 5 provinces as follows:

The Northern Region – data gathered from Chiang Mai,

The Northeastern Region – data gathered from Sakon Nakhon,

The Central Region – data gathered from Suphan Buri,

The Southern Region – data gathered from Songkla, and

Bangkok

2. Systematic random sampling of 4 legislative constituencies voting units from the entire unit in Bangkok and systematic random sampling of 2 legislative constituencies voting units in the urban area (in the area of the municipality) and 2 legislative constituencies' voting units in the rural area (outside the area of the municipality) from the entire unit in the other 4 provinces, which produces the following distribution of constituencies by region (province):

	Urban	Rural
Northern Region (Chiang Mai)	2	2
Northeastern Region (Sakon Nakhon)	2	2
Central Region (Suphan Buri)	2	2
Southern Region (Songkhla)	2	2
Bangkok	4	

3. Systematic random sampling of respondents from across 20 voting units produces an N of 800 and the following distribution by region (province) compared to the official numbers of Thai eligible voters in the constitutional referendum held on 7 August 2016:

	Numbers of Eligible Voters*	Sample
Northern Region (Chiang Mai)	8,100,809	128
Northeastern Region (Sakon Nakhon)	17,009,430	270
Central Region (Suphan Buri)	14,063,805	223
Southern Region (Songkhla)	6,828,332	108
Bangkok	4,483,075	71
Total	50,485,451	800 ³⁶

*Official data obtained from the Office of the Election Commission of Thailand (last updated in August, 2016 for the constitutional referendum held on 7 August 2016)

5.3 Sample Size and Error Margins

An indicator of data quality is the standard error of the estimate, on which the margin for sampling error is based. As survey statistics are mostly proportions, the key measure of data precision is the standard error of a proportion taken from a sample. It is computed as follows:

³⁶ If selected respondents were unavailable, substitutes of the same gender and age were obtained from names on either side of the chosen respondent on the voting list. This procedure yields an N of 800 respondents.

$$\pm Z^* \sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}}$$

Where Z, at 95% confidence level is 1.96; p is the sample proportion estimate and n is the sample size. The overall sample size of 800 voting-age adults gives a maximum error margin of $\pm 3.46\%$ at the 95% confidence level, assuming a simple random sampling design.

5.4 Field Survey

Data was gathered through face-to-face interviews. The researcher recruited one local coordinator per region (province) to form a team of 8-10 experienced interviewers per region (province) for the nationwide survey. The survey coordinators are respected lecturers (political science/social science) from local universities in each surveyed area (region/province), which included Rajabhat Institute Chiang Mai, Rajabhat Institute Sakon Nakhon, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, and Prince of Songkhla University. Each survey coordinator worked with an interviewer team consisting of a small group of university students (around 8-10 per team) with previous experience of survey interviewing. The process of data collection in each region/province began with a preparatory meeting between the researcher, the survey coordinators, and the interviewer teams. This meeting was held in order to allow the survey coordinators and the interviewer teams to learn about the questionnaire and the interview process. In the meeting the survey coordinators were instructed on how to supervise their field interviewers and check the questionnaires before returning them to the researcher. The researcher conducted the meeting with each regional team via Skype in the first week

of July, 2017. Data collection then started in the second week of July, 2017 and finished at the end of the second week of August, 2017. To produce completed questionnaires for each of the selected respondents in each region, the researcher worked closely with each team’s local coordinator, who randomly observed the work of each interview team once per region. Finally, 800 questionnaires in total were completed.

5.5 Examination of Representativeness of the Sample Set

Is the demographic structure of successful samples consistent with that of the entire population? This section compares the percentages between the actual numbers of Thai eligible voters and the samples on gender, age, education level, employment and religion. Figures for the entire population come from the 2016 statistics from Thailand’s National Statistical Office, Ministry of Digital Economy.

Domain	Sub-domain	Percent	
		Entire population	Sample
Gender	Female	51.6	50.9
	Male	48.4	49.1
Age	30 years old and lower	19.7	14.5
	31-40 years old	20.7	22.1
	41-50 years old	22.2	22.0
	51-60 years old	19.1	22.9
	More than 60 years old	18.3	18.5
	Primary education and lower	48.5	30.6

Domain	Sub-domain	Percent	
		Entire population	Sample
Level of Education*	Elementary education	34.0	48.4
	Higher than elementary education	17.5	21.0
Employment	Self-employed	35.3	29.7
	Working in a family business	22.3	25.3
	Working for an outside employer or the public sector	42.4	45.0
Religion	Buddhism	93.6	96.6
	Islam	4.9	2.6
	Christianity	1.2	0.8
	Others	0.3	-

*The percentages for the entire population are a calculation for the population 15 years and above.

5.6 Methods of Data Analysis

Data obtained from the questionnaire survey was used in the two stages of examination. The first stage employed tables, graphs, bivariate and regression analyses to examine public opinions towards conflict and conflict transformation in Thailand, focusing in particular on the response to the question: Do people who identify themselves as “red-shirt supporters” and “yellow-shirt supporters” differ in their attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation? At this stage, frequency tables are used to investigate the seven survey questions asking the Thai respondents’ attitudes

toward conflict and conflict transformation. This examination aims to answer whether the Thai respondents support conflict transformation as an approach in dealing with the decade-long political conflict of this country. Then, tables, graphs, and bivariate analyses will be used in order to learn more about the red-shirt and the yellow-shirt supporters. The key question here is whether Thailand is really as polarized along color lines as it is commonly argued by much of the previous literature. The final part of the first stage will examine the associations between the color inclination of the respondents and their attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation, using bivariate tables and regression analyses.

In the second stage, the theory that trust is associated with variations in views on reconciliation will be tested. The researcher hypothesizes that those trusting in political institutions and other people are more likely than those distrusting political institutions and other people to support elements important for the reconciliation process. The measures of public opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process will rely on the survey questions that asked the respondents to evaluate the six key elements which previous research has claimed to be important for the reconciliation process in the case of Thailand's current political conflict. Those elements include (1) The political will of top political leaders committed to peace and reconciliation, (2) Strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process, (3) A societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution, (4) An inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders, (5) A fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness, and (6) Punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence. Firstly, bivariate tables will be developed in order to compare the mean score of respondents' opinions about the six key elements of the reconciliation process between those who

trust in the four political institutions and those who trust in other people and those who did not.

Finally, the ordinary least squares (OLS) method will be employed in order to analyze the effects of trust on opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process, dividing into four models. In each model, the dependent variable will be *the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process*, measured as an index, relying on the respondents' self-reports of their opinions about the six key elements of the reconciliation process used in the first part of this section's analysis. In order to investigate the powerful impact of trust on opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process, Model 1 will be created by excluding both trust in institutions and trust in other people variables and including eleven socioeconomic-background, three color- and party-identification, and four democratic-value variables. Then the Models 2, 3, and 4 will be created by adding trust in institutions and trust in other people variables as the main explanatory variable for each Model. The main explanatory variable for Model 2 is *trust in institutions*, measured by the average level of trust in the four major democratic institutions—the government, the parliament, the courts of justice, and the political parties. The main explanatory variable for Model 3 is *trust in individuals*, measured by the variable created from the survey question asking the respondents to what extent most people can be trusted. In Model 4, both *trust in institutions* and *trust in individuals* will be included as the main explanatory variables. These analyses are based on the hypothesis that people who have a higher level of trust in institutions and trust in other people will have a more positive attitude supporting the reconciliation process than those who have a lower one.

Chapter 6 Public Opinions towards Conflict and Conflict Transformation

Even though previous studies have illustrated the causes and results of the current Thai political conflict, almost all of them failed to pay significant attention to public opinions regarding the solutions which could transform the conflict and build peace in Thai society (e.g., Asia Foundation 2009; 2010; 2013, Bjarnegård and Tønnesson 2015, King Prajadhipok's Institute 2012, Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand 2012). This chapter aims at assessing the survey data by looking closely at public opinions concerning conflict and conflict transformation in Thailand, focusing in particular on attitudes and perceptions among people with varied socioeconomic backgrounds, political identifications and democratic values. A key question dealt with in this chapter is: Do people who identify themselves as “red-shirt supporters” and “yellow-shirt supporter” differ in their attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation? This assessment also will help this dissertation situate political conflict in the Thai context.

6.1 Attitudes toward Conflict and Conflict Transformation

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the key aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the understanding of how Thai citizens view the conflict and reconciliation process in Thailand. In this chapter, the Thai respondents' attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation thus is investigated through the seven core survey questions in order to know whether the Thai respondents support conflict transformation as an

approach to deal with the decade-long political conflict in this country. These questions asked whether the Thai respondents strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements that could be divided into three categories, relying on the three conflict approaches discussed in the theoretical chapter. The first category, **a conflict management approach**, comprises the three questions that reflect the attitude of the people who view conflict as a long-term process that cannot be quickly resolved and support the use of law and regulations to control or reduce the volatility of the conflict problem. These three questions include agreement with the following statements: (2a) Without regard to the other factors, strictly conforming to the law will make Thai society peaceful; (2f) The society has rules and regulations, so people who commit illegal practices deserve their punishment; and (2g) The best forgiveness is forgiveness with no conditions. If the Thai respondents had a positive attitude toward a conflict transformation, they would strongly disagree or disagree with these statements.

The answers to the question, whether the Thai respondents support the use of law and regulation to solve the conflict problem, are in a quite consistent direction. Table 6.1 shows that the majority (more than 70%) of the respondents strongly agree or agree that without regard to the other factors, strictly conforming to the law will make Thai society peaceful. At the same time, almost 80% of the respondents strongly agree or agree that the best forgiveness is the forgiveness with no conditions. Moreover, more than 95% strongly agree or agree that the society has rules and regulations, so people who commit illegal practices deserve their punishment.

Table 6.1 Support to use law and regulation to solve the conflict problem

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2a. Without regard to the other factors, strictly conforming to the law will make Thai society peaceful.	0.8	27.5	50.1	21.6
2f. The society has rules and regulations, so people who commit illegal practice deserve their punishment.	0.8	2.8	65.8	30.7
2g. The best forgiveness is the forgiveness with no conditions.	2.8	18.3	50.8	28.2

The second category, **a conflict resolution approach**, consists of one question that reflects the attitude of the people who view the conflict as a short term but bad phenomenon—so that they support the use of an intervention process to resolve the conflict problem. That question measures agreement with the following statement: (2b) Sometimes, using violence (such as a military coup) to solve the conflict problem is necessary because it is a method that can rapidly resolve the problem. If the Thai respondents had a positive attitude towards conflict transformation, they would strongly disagree or disagree with this statement.

Unlike the responses to the uses of law and regulation statements, the answers to the question, whether the Thai respondents support using any forms of intervention processes to solve the conflict problem, are almost equally divided. Table 6.2 shows

that although the majority (a little more than half) of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree that sometimes using violence (such as in a military coup) to solve the conflict problem is necessary because it is a method that can rapidly solve the problem, more than 45% strongly agree or agree with this statement. The high proportion of the agreement to this statement expressed by the Thai respondents partly is evidence as to why military intervention in the form of a coup occurred twice with the significant support of many citizens since the political conflict occurred in 2005. The results indicating the higher proportion of the agreement to this statement expressed by the Yellow Shirt supporters than the Red Shirt supporters, which will show in Table 6.5 below, make this claim clearer and more convincing.

Table 6.2 Support to the use of violent or non-violent intervention processes to solve the conflict problem

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2b. Sometimes, using violence (such as in a military coup) to solve the conflict problem is necessary because it is a method that can rapidly solve the problem.	14.3	39.1	36.8	9.8

The third category, a **conflict transformation approach**, is covered in the three questions that reflect the attitude of the people who support the use of a reconciliation

method or mechanism to solve the conflict problem. Those three questions include agreement with the following statements: (1) Conflicts can be resolved by talking to each other; (2) We can decrease the tensions of the conflict by forgiving each other; and (3) If people do admit their faults, then forgive them. If the respondents supported the use of a reconciliation method or mechanism to solve the conflict problem, they would agree with these statements.

Table 6.3 Support to use a reconciliation method or mechanism to solve the conflict problem

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2c. Conflicts can be resolved by talking to each other.	0.5	2.1	62.8	34.6
2d. We can decrease tension of conflict by forgiving for each other.	0.8	1.8	57.1	40.4
2e. If people do realize their faults, then forgive them.	2.0	5.4	58.5	34.1

Responses of the respondents clearly show positive support for the use of a reconciliation method to solve the conflict problem. Table 6.3 demonstrates that the great majority (more than 90%) of the respondents strongly agree or agree that conflicts can be resolved by talking to each other, the tension of conflict can be reduced by forgiving each other, and if people do realize their faults, then forgive them. This

attitude toward conflict and conflict transformation of most Thai respondents is a good sign of a great opportunity to bring about reconciliation and peace to the Thai society in the future.

6.2 The Red-Yellow Conflict in Thailand

In the case of Thailand's decade of street protests, some scholars have depicted such phenomena in the early period of the disputation as "a tussle of competing elites, with a rising elite, associated with Thaksin, challenging the long-dominant conservative elite of palace-connected military leaders, big business/old money and technocrats" (Hewison 2015: 57 and see, Hewison 2008: 205–7 for further explanation). However, as the conflict deepened, especially after the military-royalist coup led by the Council of National Security (CNS) on September, 19th of 2006, society-wide mobilization and political polarization has existed in Thai society (Hewison 2015: 57). As briefly mentioned in the introductory chapter, there has been a political contest between two rival movements, usually referred to as the "yellow-shirts" and the "red-shirts."

One movement is the PAD, the major supporter of the yellow-shirts during 2006 to 2008, which was originally formed in February 2006 by a group of previous business associates of Thaksin plus a rival politician, and then was supported by intellectuals, elements of the military, some unions, political activists and had a voice through Sondhi's media outlets (Pye and Schaffar 2008: 43-44; Hewison 2014: 3). PAD's protests resumed after the unexpected victory in the 2007 election of the pro-Thaksin party (i.e., the People Power Party); their followers occupied Government House from August to December of 2008, they blocked the entrance of the parliament building on October, 7th 2008 in order to prevent the House electing a new prime minister after Samak Sundaravej was judged by the Constitution Court to be disqualified, and shut

down Bangkok's two airports between November, 25th and December, 3rd 2008 (Naruemon and McCargo 2011: 995). The PAD ended the protest and declared "victory" after the Constitutional Court, on December 2, 2008, dissolved the three parties of the government coalition, including the People Power Party, Chart Thai, and Matchima Thippatai, for electoral fraud involving party executives, which caused Somchai to be disqualified from the prime minister position (Dressel and Mietzner 2012: 400). Following another election victory by the pro-Thaksin Pheu Thai Party in 2011, a large proportion of the PAD joined with several other anti-Thaksin and royalist groups to become the PDRC in November 2013 (Soprano 2016: 299). Starting from an attempt to oppose the Pheu Thai Party's amnesty bill that would give immunity to everyone who had been accused of political crimes since the 2006 coup, the PDRC's street protests promoted a campaign that rejected electoral democracy³⁷ and eventually paved the way for the May 2014 coup (Hewison 2015: 59; Prajak Kongkirati 2016: 473).

Another movement is the UDD, the major group of the red-shirts which initially emerged to oppose the 2006 coup, then campaigned against the military-backed constitutional referendum in 2007, and eventually organized as a parallel movement to the PAD to represent the interests of the deposed political parties (i.e., the Thai Rak

³⁷ In response to the protests, Yingluck dissolved the House of Representatives parliament on December 6, 2013, and, as her brother had done before the 2006 coup, called for snap elections on February 2, 2014. However, the opposition Democrat Party and the PDRC's supporters decided to boycott the February polls. Instead of conducting a "vote no" campaign like the PAD did in the 2011 election, the PDRC supporters obstructed people from casting their votes, and obstructed officials from transporting ballot boxes to polling stations (Kitti Prasirtsuk 2015: 202; Prajak Kongkirati 2016: 473). Amidst such disruptions and violence, Yingluck won the elections but the constitutional court, on March 21st 2014, nullified the vote.

Thai and People Power Party) and also of Thaksin since late 2008 (Forsyth 2010: 464). On December 20th 2008, the UDD supporters gathered in downtown Bangkok to show their dissatisfaction with the military-backed election of Abhisit as the new prime minister (Bell 2008; Mydans 2008). The UDD's protests in early 2009 caused the cancellation of the 4th East Asian Summit scheduled to be held in Pattaya (Fuller 2009). Violent clashes with police and soldiers during the demonstrations in Bangkok in April 2009 left hundreds of people injured (Johnston, 2009). Between March, 14th and May, 19th 2010, the UDD held another month-long protest against the Democrat Party-led government and the conservative elite by occupying the Pan Fah Bridge area and the priciest shopping area of Bangkok: Ratchaprasong (Dalpino 2011: 156). Their confrontations with a group of people who disagreed with their demonstrations and violent clashes with the armed forces led to nearly a hundred deaths and more than 1,800 injuries (Horn 2010; Tharoor 2010).

During the PDRC's protest against Yingluck's government between November 2013 and May 2014, the UDD protestors, at the same time, held two major counter-demonstrations. The first counter-demonstration was held at the Rajamangala Stadium from November, 24th to December, 1st 2013 in order to support the government of the Pheu Thai Party after its withdrawal of the amnesty bill, while the PDRC's protest continued and expanded its goal to force Yingluck to resign from office. However, this demonstration was short lived because confrontations between Ramkamhaeng University students allied with the PDRC and UDD occurred from November 30 until the morning of December, 1st 2013. Another counter-demonstration was held on the Aksa road in Bangkok's suburbs, and divided into two periods. The first period was between April, 5th and April, 6th 2014. The second period was from May, 10th of 2014 until the date of the military coup on May, 22nd 2014. The main purpose of the UDD's

second counter-demonstration was to show its frustration with the decision made by the Constitutional Court to remove Yingluck and other cabinet members from office regarding their decision to transfer Thawin Pliansri from the office of Secretary General of the National Security Council (NSC) to the Office of Prime Minister Advisor (Hiebert 2014).

The ongoing political conflict between red and yellow that followed the 2006 coup has had a massive impact on Thai society. This conflict has been described by many as reflecting a deep societal division that cuts across many types of loyalties and socioeconomic backgrounds. The yellow-shirt movement has often been portrayed as primarily driven by the establishment of well-off urban people with royalist sentiments. Many of its supporters came from the Bangkok middle classes and from the Democrat Party's strong electoral base in the south. Key aspects of the yellow-shirt movement's rhetoric were its anticorruption focus, protection of the monarchy, and a growing opposition to electoral politics. In contrast, the red-shirt movement has been delineated as the political movement of the awakening rural people, with a consciousness of growing inequalities. Although the red-shirt movement is composed of people from all regions of the nation, enormous numbers of its supporters came from the densely populated north and northeastern parts of the country where the pro-Thaksin party had dominated certain electorates since the 2001 House of Representatives election. The first step in dealing with public views of conflict and conflict transformation, according to the survey data, will take a close look at some of these claims.

6.2.1 The Yellow-Red Divide in Thai Society

The first result is that this chapter questions whether Thailand is really as polarized along color lines as it is commonly argued? According to this dissertation's

data, more than two-thirds of the respondents (67.5%) claim to be completely color neutral, and only 16.1% have a yellow inclination and approximately 16.4% have a red inclination (Figure 6.1). These findings are slightly different to those presented in a report presented by the Asia Foundation (2011: 15), in which approximately a quarter of the total respondents claimed they had either the yellow or red inclination.³⁸ In addition, it should be noted here that the finding that the majority of the respondents identified themselves as color neutral could be excessive number because the military government since taking control the state power in 2014 is trying very hard to suppress the color divide. The answer this dissertation received might not completely be what that actually is in mind and past actions of the respondents. For this reason, in order to clearly understand about public opinions towards conflict and conflict transformation, color affiliation should be emphasized along with other factors, especially socioeconomic backgrounds, political identifications and democratic values.

n = 800

³⁸ According to the Asia Foundation (2011: 15), those who identified themselves as strong yellow supporters represent 5.1 percent while those who identified themselves as strong red supporters represent 6.6 percent. In addition, around 5.2 percent identified themselves as leaning yellow supporters whereas about 7 percent identified themselves as leaning red supporters.

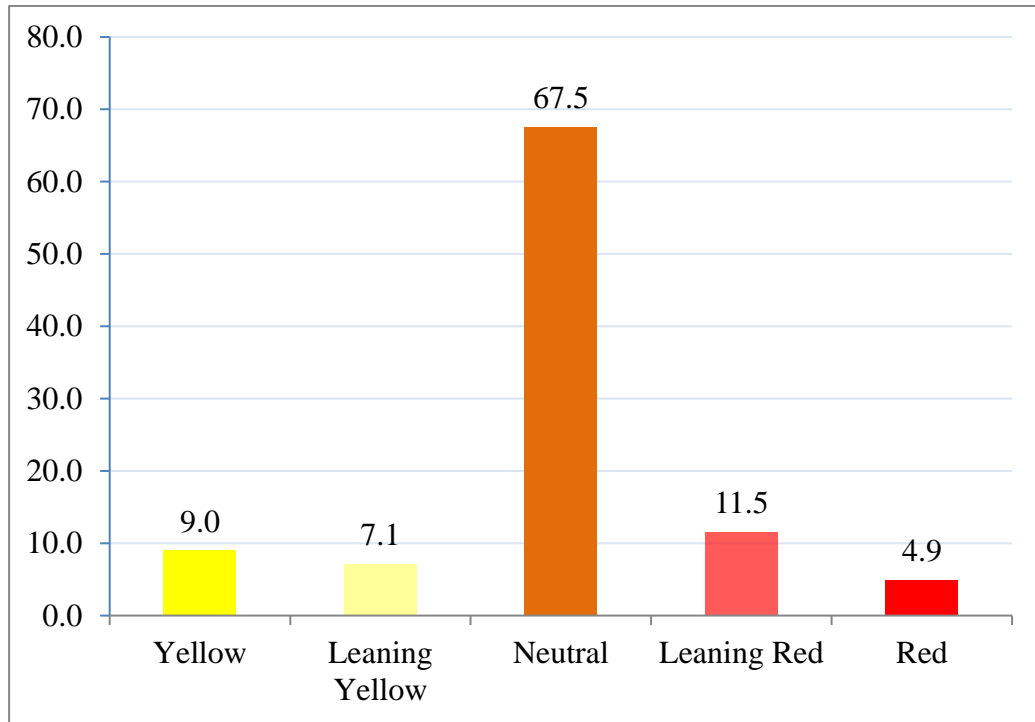


Figure 6.1

Color inclinations of the respondents

6.2.2 Demographic and Socioeconomic Differences between Yellow and Red Supporters

In order to examine the demographic and socioeconomic differences between the yellow and the red supporters, the *color affiliation* variable is now measured as a 3-category variable, where -1 represents the *yellow* (those who identified themselves as slightly leaning and strongly yellow), 0 represents the *neutral* (those who identified themselves as no color or neutral), and 1 represents the *red* (those who identified themselves as slightly leaning and strongly red). Three demographic and socioeconomic indicators, including *region*, *rural-urban divide*, and *wealth*, are then employed in order to test: (1) whether the yellow and the red supporters are regionally differentiated, (2)

whether the yellow supporters consist of a larger proportion of urban-based Thais than the red supporters, and (3) whether the yellow supporters are wealthier than the red supporters. Firstly, the *regional* variable is measured as a 5-category variable, where 1 represents the north, 2 represents the northeast, 3 represents the central region, 4 represents the south, and 5 represents the capital city, Bangkok, respectively. Based on earlier literature considering yellow-red disparities discussed above, the yellow supporters are expected to be in a larger number than the red supporters in the south, while the red supporters tend to be more numerous than the yellow supporters in the north and northeast.

Secondly, the indicator for the *rural-urban divide* is measured as a dichotomous variable, where 0 represents the Rural, the respondents who live in a small town or village outside the municipal area, and 1 represent the Urbanite, the respondents who live in a large city (in a municipal area) and Bangkok. A large proportion of the yellow supporters are expected to be in the urban area, whereas a large proportion of the red supporters are expected to be in a small town or village. Finally, using the respondent's self-report of their average monthly household income during the past 12 months, the *wealth* is measured as a 4-point scale variable, where 0 is *the low income* (those whose their household earns less than 9,000 Baht a month), 1 is *the lower middle income* (those whose their household earns between 9,001 and 20,000 Baht a month), 2 is *the upper middle income* (those whose their household earns between 20,001 and 80,000 Baht a month), and 3 is *the high income* (those whose their household earns more than 80,000 Baht a month), respectively. The yellow supporters tend to be wealthier than their red counterparts.

Regional differences between the two groups are in line with expectations. Figure 6.2 shows that the northern and northeastern regions are, as expected, a red

stronghold, with a small number of yellow supporters. The southern region, in contrast, is a yellow stronghold, with very few red supporters. The color clash seems to be the most relevant to respondents in the central region and Bangkok, as both groups have supporters in almost similar numbers. Bangkok and its surrounding provinces, in particular Nonthaburi, Samutprakan, and Pathumthani, are the places where the violent clashes have taken place. Arguably, Bangkok is also the area where people have been most affected by the yellow-red conflict in their everyday life.

n = 800

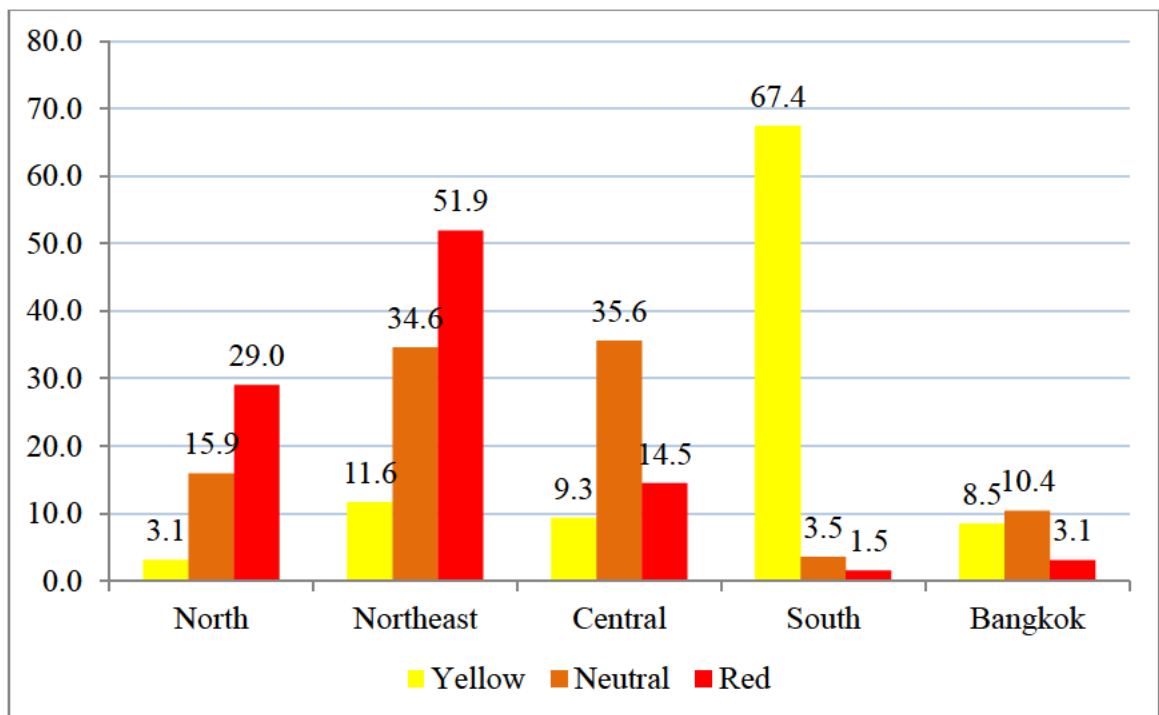


Figure 6.2

Yellow-Red Inclinations divided by region

The rural-urban divide between the yellow and the red supporters also is in line with expectations. As shown in Figure 6.3, approximately three fourths of the

respondents who identified themselves as a red supporter are living in the rural areas. This proportion is about 20% higher than the proportion of those who identified themselves as a yellow supporter. In addition and as expected, the proportion of the urban residents who identified themselves as yellow supporters is almost double those who identified themselves as red supporters.

n = 800

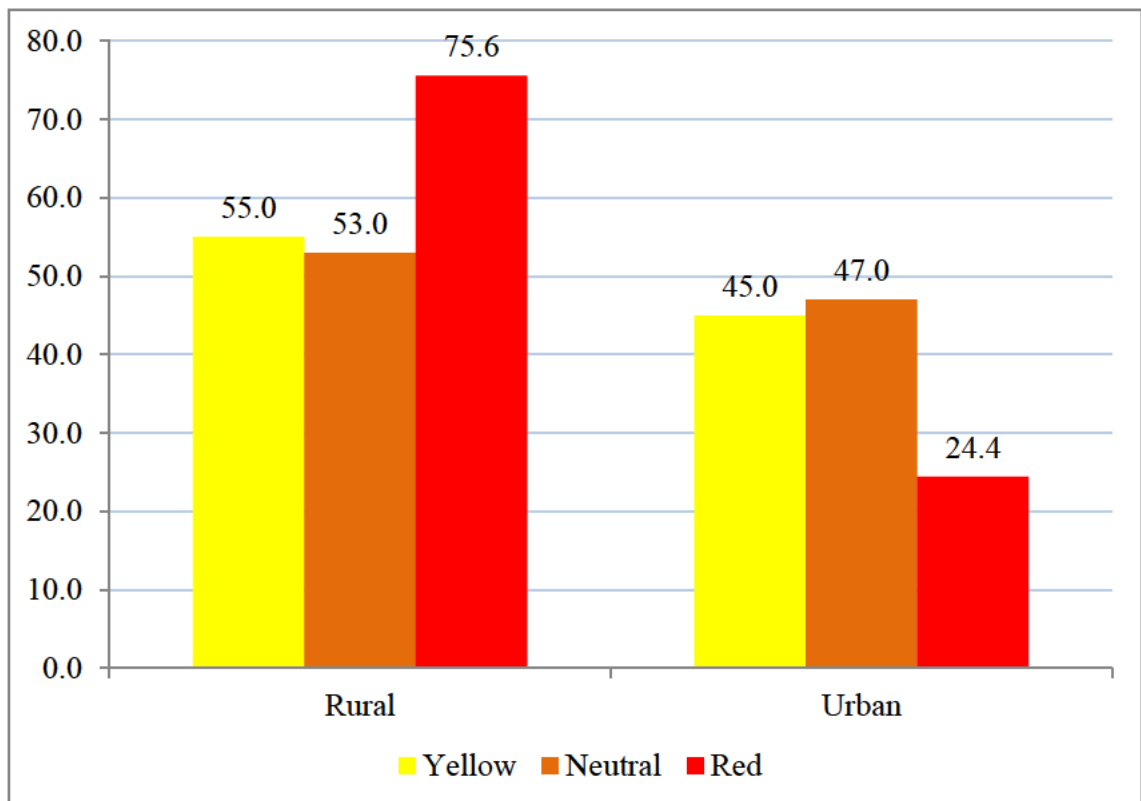


Figure 6.3

Yellow-Red Inclinations and Rural-Urban divide

However, because the proportions of both groups in the rural and urban areas are less different than what might have been expected, this result suggests that what is going on in today's Thai politics cannot be explained by simply adopting "a tale of two democracies" thesis, one of the most emphasized explanations by the Thai media and scholars from the 1990s. Rather, this result confirms what recent scholars have claimed i.e. that people who identify themselves as being close to either the yellow or red movement are socioeconomically mixed (see e.g., Ammar and Somchai 2011). The difference between these two groups of respondents in terms of their wealth, as shown below, makes this claim more emphatic.

Based on the cash-income indicator used in this dissertation, the yellow supporters tend to be wealthier than their red counterparts, as expected. Figure 6.4 shows that almost 60% of the respondents who identified themselves as a yellow supporter are those whose household earned monthly income is in the upper middle income and high income categories. In contrast, approximately 70% of the respondents who identified themselves as a red supporter are those whose household earned monthly income is in the low and lower middle income categories. According to this finding, the color-based political conflict in Thailand could not be explained as an absolute conflict between the rich and the poor because the rich and the poor are supporters of both groups. Rather, the better way to explain this phenomenon is that the political conflict between the yellow and the red supporters in this country is a conflict between one political movement where the majority of its supporters are the richer and another political movement where the majority of its supporters are the poorer people.

n = 800

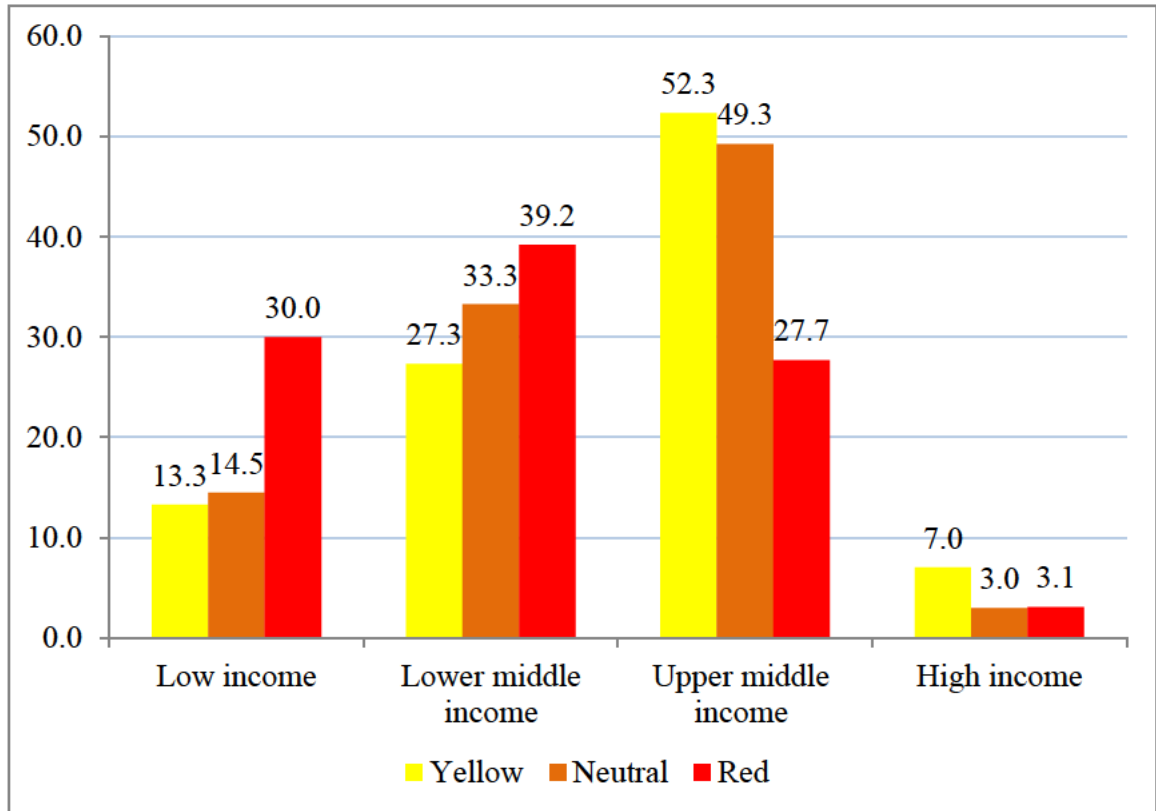


Figure 6.4

Yellow-Red Inclinations divided by Income Categories

6.2.3 Differences in Party Identification and Democratic Values between Yellow and Red Supporters

Apart from the three demographic and socioeconomic indicators, this section utilizes *party identification* and *democratic values* as other indicators in order to examine the yellow-red divide in Thai society. Table 6.4 uses the mean scores to show the differences of party identification between the red-shirt and yellow-shirt supporters. Similar to the measurement used in the examinations of the demographic and socioeconomic differences between the yellow and the red supporters, the color affiliation variable in the table below is measured as a 3-category variable, where -1 is

the *yellow* (those who identified themselves as slightly leaning and strongly yellow), 0 is the *neutral* (those who identified themselves as no color or neutral), and 1 is the *red* (those who identified themselves as slightly leaning and strongly red). The measures of the *party identification* variable rely on the 11-point scale questions, asking the respondents how far they usually think that their political opinions are close to the following parties—Chart Thai Pattana Party, Democrat Party, Pheu Thai Party, and Phumjaithai Party. Each of these questions asked the respondents to rate their degree of affiliation to each political party, ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 is “feel totally not close to this party,” and 10 is “feel very much close to this party.” According to previous studies regarding the yellow-red divide in Thai society, the yellow supporters are expected to be more strongly affiliated with the Democrat Party than the red supporters, while the red supporters tend to be more strongly affiliated with the Pheu Thai Party than the yellow supporters.

The results in Table 6.4 reveal the expected party polarization between the yellow and red supporters. That is, the respondents who identified themselves as a yellow supporter are very much more likely than the respondents who identified themselves as a red supporter to report that their political opinions are close to the Democrat Party. In contrast, the respondents who identified themselves as a red supporter are very much more likely than the respondents who identified themselves as a yellow supporter to report that their political opinions are close to the Pheu Thai Party. The table also presents a very small difference in party identification among the respondents who identified themselves as no color or neutral, as the mean scores of how these respondents think their political opinions are close to all of the four political parties range between 2.11 and 2.80.

Table 6.4 Yellow-Red Inclinations divided by Party Identification.

Color inclination		Political Party			
		Chart Thai Pattana Party	Democrat Party	Pheu Thai Party	Phumjai Thai Party
Yellow	Mean	.48	8.80	.26	.56
	N	129	129	129	129
	S.D.	1.275	1.946	1.176	1.334
Neutral	Mean	2.29	2.21	2.80	2.11
	N	540	540	540	540
	S.D.	2.432	2.384	3.021	2.292
Red	Mean	2.61	.85	7.57	1.89
	N	131	131	131	131
	S.D.	2.516	1.486	2.253	1.911
Total	Mean	2.05	3.05	3.17	1.82
	N	800	800	800	800
	S.D.	2.402	3.378	3.441	2.176

After running a few bivariate regressions, this researcher can be confident that, controlling for their differences in demographics and socioeconomic status, the yellow and the red supporters do differ on specific political topics, and according to expectations. In the Table below, the different democratic values among the red-shirt and yellow-shirt supporters are illustrated with a series of four bivariate regressions. The dependent variable is the yellow- red-scale, ranging from -2 to 2, where -2 is

yellow, 0 is neutral, and 2 is red. The independent variables, the *democratic values*, are measured by using the four survey questions, asking whether the respondents strongly agree (3), agree (2), disagree (1), or strongly disagree (0) with the statements that provide insight into the four democratic-value orientations—(1) *elections*, (2) *political ethics*, (3) *rule of law*, and (4) *redistribution through vote buying*.

Table 6.5 The relationships between the position on the yellow-red scale and attitudes toward democracy. Bivariate regressions. Dependent variable: yellow-red scale (-2 to 2)

Independent variables	(1) Election	(2) Political ethics	(3) Rule of law	(4) Socioeconomic equality
Unstandardized Coefficients	.050**	-.072**	-.154***	.085***
(Standard error)	(.025)	(.022)	(.027)	(0.26)
Constant	2.277***	2.429***	1.897***	.810***
R ²	.005	.013	.039	.013
n	799	797	783	799

Note: *P < 0.1 ** P < 0.05 *** P < 0.01

On *elections*, the respondents were asked how strongly they agree with the following statement: “Competitive and periodic elections are a necessary and indispensable element of sustained efforts to maintain the right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her country.” On *political ethics*, the respondents were asked how strongly they agree with the following statement: “Thailand needs an ethical leader,

regardless of how he or she gets into power, to take the country back from the corrupted politicians.” On *rule of law*, the respondents were asked whether how strongly they agree with the following statement: “When the country is facing a difficult situation, it is ok for the government to disregard the law in order to deal with the situation.” On *redistribution*, the respondents were asked how strongly they agree with the following statement: “Elections based on vote-buying by offering money to legitimate voters are a beneficial aspect of Thai politics because it is a matter of income distribution to Thai people.”

According to previous studies on the yellow-red divide discussed above, the yellow supporters, because one of their movement’s most featured topics is anti-corruption are expected to support political ethics as a key element of democracy to a greater extent than the red supporters. In contrast, the red supporters because their movement is driven by a consciousness of inequality, and they believe in elections as the most important right that can provide them with equality, are more likely than the yellow supporters to agree that elections, the rule of law, and socioeconomic equality should be the essential elements of democracy.

As expected, the more red or yellow the respondents are, the more they agree with the statement that competitive and periodic elections are a necessary and indispensable element of sustained efforts to maintain the right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her country. The simple model (1) above predicts that respondents with very red and yellow sympathies think that elections are an important element of democracy (2.54 and 2.35, respectively, on a 0-3 scale, where 3 is strongly agree). Neutral respondents express the lowest score of agreement with this statement (2.19).

While the red supporters are expected to support elections more than those who are not red supporters, the yellow supporters are expected to support the nation to be governed by an ethical leader. The simple model (2) above confirms this expectation. The more yellow the respondents are, the more they agree with the statement that Thailand needs an ethical leader, regardless of how he or she gets into power, to take the country back from the corrupted politicians. Respondents with very yellow sympathies prefer an ethical leader (2.46 on a 0-3 scale, where 3 is strongly agree) a little more than those who identified themselves as neutral and red supporters (2.45 and 2.32, respectively, on a 0-3 scale, where 3 is strongly agree).

Likewise, the more yellow the respondents are, the more they agree with the statement that when the country is facing a difficult situation, it is ok for the government to disregard the law in order to deal with the situation. The yellow supporters generally agree with this statement (2.19 on a 0-3 scale, where 3 is strongly agree) while strong red supporters show much more disagreement (1.70). On this point, it could be reasonably argue that the Yellow Shirt movement tends to support a Thai-styled democracy, which is a type of an electoral authoritarian regime which currently governs a number of countries in the Southeast Asia such as Cambodia and Singapore.

Finally, perceptions regarding vote-buying are also a colored issue in Thai politics. As expected, the more red the respondents are, the more they agree with the statement that elections based on vote-buying by offering money to legitimate voters is a beneficial aspect of Thai politics because it is a matter of income distribution to the Thai people. The simple model (4) above predicts that a respondent with very red sympathies (0.91 on a 0-3 scale, where 3 is strongly agree) tend to agree with this statement more than those who claimed they had no color inclination and those who are very yellow (0.81 and 0.70 respectively).

The findings about the differences in democratic values between the yellow and red supporters, as shown above, indicate that the struggle between the conflicting groups in this country is not just about competing interests and identities, but also about basic values underlying the rules of the political game. The question now arises as to whether these two conflicting groups of people have different attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation.

6.3 Yellow-Red Differences in Attitudes toward Conflict and Conflict Transformation

As mentioned earlier in the historical-background chapter of this dissertation, the current political conflict in Thailand is different from previous conflicts, which usually were conflicts between the Thai people and the government. However, the current conflict is a conflict between two mass groups of Thai people internally united as opposing social movements, the PAD and the PDRC on one side and the UDD on the other side. These two sides acquire mass support from large numbers of people because they link with the two largest political parties (i.e., the Democrat Party for the PAD and the PDRC and the Phue Thai Party for the UDD³⁹). Another reason to explain each side's huge public support is that both of these social movements own their own media outlets and gain support from other media channels. The political conflict between these two sides therefore is not limited to each side's direct supporters, but expands to almost all organizations throughout Thai society, such as families,

³⁹ In the 2011 House of Representatives election, the Democrat Party acquired more than 11 million party list votes, whereas the Phue Thai Party acquired more than 15 million votes. Thus, if only 10 percent of each party's supporters joined each side's protests, the members of each social movement would number more than 1 million people.

workplaces, and communities. For this reason, the current political conflict is not only a conflict between the people and the government as Thailand had many experiences of in the past, but also a deep-divided conflict between the people and the people, in other words, between Thais and Thais.

A large number of the previous studies have examined demographic and political-attitude differences between yellow and red. However, little is known about similarities and differences in attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation between these two groups of people. Bivariate analyses of this dissertation's survey data are developed in order to investigate whether the yellow and red supporters have different attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation. These analyses are divided into two parts. The first part uses a bivariate table to examine associations between the color inclinations of the respondents and their attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation. In this part, the measures of attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation rely on the respondents' level of agreement with the three categories of the seven conflict and conflict transformation statements presented above, ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree). Color inclinations of the respondents are recoded into three groups, where -1 is *yellow supporters* (a combination of those who identified themselves as strongly yellow and slightly leaning yellow), 0 is *neutral* (responses of those who identified themselves as no color/neutral), and 1 is *red supporters* (a combination of those who identified themselves as strongly red and slightly leaning red). As shown previously in this chapter a socioeconomic and political polarization along color lines and differences in attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation between people who identified themselves as affiliated to different colors could be observed, especially in relation to the topics that link to their political identities and democratic values.

6.3.1 Attitudes towards Support for the Use of Law and Regulation to Solve the Conflict Problem

Table 6.6 provides the range of responses given by different categories of respondents. The *yellow supporters* are more likely than the *red supporters* to agree or strongly agree that “without regard to the other factors, strictly conforming to the law will make Thai society peaceful” (92% v. 65%). As the correlation test results show, this difference is statistically significant. This finding shows that the yellow supporters tend to accept that law can be used to control or reduce conflict and to solve conflict problems.

Table 6.6 Support for the Use of Law and Regulation to Solve the Conflict Problem (1)

Question 1a: Without regard to the other factors, strictly conforming to the law will make Thai society peaceful.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Yellow	0.0%	7.8%	43.0%	49.2%
Neutral	0.8%	30.8%	53.2%	15.2%
Red	1.6%	33.9%	44.1%	20.5%

Spearman Correlation: -0.230, Prob: .000; n = 781

Table 6.7 gives the range of responses. Although 89% of the yellow supporters agreed or strongly agreed that the society has rules and regulations, so people who commit illegal practice deserve their punishment, a somewhat higher percentage of the

neutral and the red supporters, 98% and 97%, respectively, are agreed or strongly agreed. However, these differences are not statistically significant.

Table 6.7 Support for the Use of Law and Regulation to Solve the Conflict Problem (2)

Question 1f: The society has rules and regulations, so people who commit illegal practices deserve their punishment.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Yellow	2.3%	8.5%	52.7%	36.4%
Neutral	0.6%	1.3%	69.4%	28.8%
Red	0.0%	3.1%	64.1%	32.8%

Spearman Correlation: 0.012, Prob: .740; n = 799

Table 6.8 reports the results of responses to Question 1g. Although the yellow and the red supporters are a little more likely to agree or strongly agree that the best forgiveness is the forgiveness with no conditions compared to the neutral (87 and 88% v. 75 %), these differences again are not statistically significant, as the correlation test results show.

Table 6.8 Support for the Uses of Law and Regulation to Solve the Conflict Problem

(3)

Question 1g: The best forgiveness is the forgiveness with no conditions.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Yellow	3.9%	9.4%	48.4%	38.3%
Neutral	3.0%	22.1%	52.3%	22.6%
Red	0.8%	11.5%	46.6%	41.2%

Spearman Correlation: 0.022, Prob: .530; n = 798

6.3.2 Attitudes to Support for the Uses of an Intervention Process to Solve the Conflict Problem

Using some form of an intervention process, in particular a military coup, to solve the conflict problem in Thailand is one of the most controversial issues for the conflicting groups. Table 6.9 confirms this claim. It illustrates that while a little more than 40% of the yellow supporters agreed or strongly agreed that sometimes, using violence (such as in a military coup) to solve the conflict problem is necessary because it is a method that can rapidly solve the problem, more than 85% of their red counterparts disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. This finding, on the one hand, suggests that the traditional view of military intervention as a quick solution in situations involving violent protests, that may well be invalid in other countries in today's world, is still reasonable for many Thai citizens. On the other hand, the finding shows a sharp difference in the acceptance of the military coup as a method of conflict resolution between the conflicting groups and thus indicates that military involvement in the conflict transformation process in this country is seen as essential by some but is

rejected by many others, thus any legitimate government should be keeping the goal, long term sustainable peace, in mind.

Table 6.9 Support for the Uses of an Intervention Process to Solve the Conflict Problem

Question 1b: Sometimes, using violence (such as in a military coup) to solve the conflict problem is necessary because it is a method that can rapidly solve the problem.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Yellow	22.7%	35.2%	27.3%	14.8%
Neutral	9.6%	34.9%	45.1%	10.4%
Red	25.4%	60.3%	11.9%	2.4%

Spearman Correlation: -0.148, Prob: .000; n = 775

The findings in this Table along with those shown in Table 6.2 provide some legitimate justification for the past 20 successful and attempted military coups in Thailand since 1936. As a result of these findings, political reconciliation in Thailand is still a long way off since a substantial section of the Thai Society appears to favor the military intervention, rather democratic means, in settling the social and political polarization.

6.3.3 Attitudes to Support for the Uses of a Reconciliation Method or Mechanism to Solve the Conflict Problem

A public dialogue on peace topics, for example, past experiences with violent conflict, the methods of compensation to the victims, and the desired future so different people can coexist peacefully, is one of the key components of the conflict transformation and reconciliation process. Moreover, success or failure in applying this dialogue method of conflict transformation relies very much on the support of the people across the entire society and in particular the conflicting groups. Results presented in Table 6.10 show that while almost all of those who identify themselves as the neutral or no color agree or strongly agree that conflicts can be resolved by talking to each other, the percentage of the yellow and the red supporters who agree and strongly agree with this statement are very high and nearly equal (89.0% and 90.0%, respectively). These differences are statistically significant, as the correlation test results demonstrate. This finding does not show a disagreement with the use of a talk or dialogue as a conflict-transformation tool between people with different color inclinations. Rather, it reveals that almost all of the Thai respondents, whether they identify themselves as affiliated to any political color or not, accept and support the uses of a reconciliation method or mechanism, such as talking to each other, to solve the conflict problem. Moreover, none of the respondents who identify themselves as red supporters disagree or strongly disagree with this idea; while the degree of support for this idea of the neutral group is higher than that from the yellow supporters. Compared to responses to all other survey questions regarding attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation in all three categories, the degrees of support for this idea from the three color groups is the highest. This finding thus supports what the Ad Hoc Committee on National Reconciliation Building, based on the studies of the King Prajadhipok's Institute (2012), recommended to the Yingluck government to conduct public deliberations throughout the whole country to allow conflicting parties and people from

all sectors to dialogue about possible solutions for transforming the conflicts and to imagine Thailand's future.

Table 6.10 Support for the Uses of a Reconciliation Method or Mechanism to Solve the Conflict Problem (1)

Question 1c: Conflicts can be resolved by talking to each other.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Yellow	1.6%	9.4%	53.1%	35.9%
Neutral	0.2%	0.9%	66.3%	32.6%
Red	0.0%	0.0%	58.0%	42.0%

Spearman Correlation: 0.077, Prob: .030; n = 799

Table 6.11 displays the results showing the high percentage of the respondents in all three categories who agree or strongly agree that we can decrease the tensions of the conflict by forgiving each other. Similar to the responses to the previous question as shown in Table 6.10, almost all of the respondents who identify themselves as neutral or no color agree or strongly agree with this statement. However, at this time, this percentage is higher than those for the red and the yellow supporters by only 1 and 6%, respectively. Moreover, these differences are not statistically significant. This finding thus firmly indicates that people with different color affiliation believe that a reconciliation method or mechanism is helpful for dealing with the conflict problem.

Table 6.11 Support for the Uses of a Reconciliation Method or Mechanism to Solve the Conflict Problem (2)

Question 1d: We can decrease the tensions of the conflict by forgiving each other.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Yellow	2.3%	4.7%	52.3%	40.6%
Neutral	0.2%	1.1%	60.0%	38.7%
Red	0.8%	1.5%	50.4%	47.3%

Spearman Correlation: 0.077, Prob: .128; n = 799

However, there is a significant difference in support for the uses of a reconciliation method or mechanism, especially when and how the wrongdoers should be forgiven, between different color inclinations. As shown in Table 6.12, the red supporters are more likely than their yellow counterparts by nearly 10% to agree and strongly agree that if people do admit their faults, then we should forgive them. Although the percentage of the red supporters who agree and strongly agree with this statement is very close the neutral percentage, the differences in support of this statement between the three categories of respondents are statistically significant, as the correlation test results show. This finding suggests that a reconciliation method like forgiveness should be employed through a process where people across the entire society and especially the yellow and red supporters have an opportunity to meaningfully participate.

Table 6.12 Support for the Uses of a Reconciliation Method or Mechanism to Solve the Conflict Problem (3)

Question 1e: If people do admit their faults, then forgive them.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Yellow	5.5%	8.6%	50.8%	35.2%
Neutral	0.9%	5.2%	62.3%	31.5%
Red	1.5%	3.1%	51.1%	44.3%

Spearman Correlation: 0.085, Prob: .017; n = 799

6.3.4 Multivariate Models of Yellow-Red Differences in Attitudes toward Conflict and Conflict Transformation

So far, this chapter has only considered the bivariate connection between color inclination and attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation. But do these rough effects survive when color inclination is controlled for demographic factors? This chapter has previously described the socioeconomic and political identities of the yellow and red supporters. Now this chapter argues that it is reasonable to expect that gender, age, income, education, religion, employment status, residential location (region and rural-urban), party identification, and democratic values may independently shape individual's attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation. Thus, in the final part of this chapter, multivariate analysis is developed to test whether the color groups attitudinal effects are robust after controls for socioeconomic and political influences.

Three regression models are constructed in order to find the answer to this question. For the first regression model, the dependent variable, *attitudes of support for the uses of law and regulation to solve the conflict problem*, is now measured as an

index variable, created from the combination of the 4-point scale answers to the same set of the three questions used in the previous section's bivariate analysis. Cronbach alpha for this index is 0.404. The dependent variable in the second model is the responses to the statement: Sometimes, using violence (such as in a military coup) to solve the conflict problem is necessary because it is a method that can rapidly solve the problem. For the third regression model, the dependent variable is measured as an index variable, created from the combination of the 4-point scale answers to the three questions asking the respondents whether they agree with the statements showing *support for the uses of a reconciliation method or mechanism to solve the conflict problem*. Cronbach alpha for this index is 0.704. For the purposes of this analysis, all of these factor scores are converted into a standardized measure ranging from 0 to 100.

In each regression model, the independent variable is color inclination, measured as a yellow-red-scale, ranging from -2 to 2, where -2 is yellow, 0 is neutral, and 2 is red. Controlled variables for every model include eleven demographic- and socioeconomic-background, two party-identification, and four democratic-value variables. The demographic variables are: (1) *gender*, a binary 0-1 variable, which takes the value 0 for females and 1 for males; (2) continuous measure of *age*; (3) continuous measure of *income*; (4) a dummy variable for *employment status*, which takes the value 0 for not employed and 1 for employed; (5) an 8-point scale of education, ranging from 0 (no education) to 8 (higher than bachelor's degree); (6) a dummy variable for *religion*, which takes the value 0 for Buddhism and 1 for non-Buddhism; (7) a dummy variable for *resident of the northern region*, which takes the value 1 for northern residence and 0 for those who live in other regions; (8) a dummy variable for *resident of the northeastern region*, which takes the value 1 for northeastern residence and 0 for those who live in other regions; (9) a dummy variable for *resident of the central region*, which

takes the value 1 for central residence and 0 for those who live in other regions; (10) a dummy variable for *resident of the southern region*, which takes the value 1 for southern residence and 0 for those who live in other regions; (11) a 3-point scale of degree of *urbanization*, which takes the value 0 for rural residence, 1 for large-city residence, and 2 for Bangkok residence. Two party-identification variables consist of (1) an 11-point scale of the attachment to the *Democrat Party* and (2) an 11-point scale of the attachment to the *Pheu Thai Party*, which takes 0 for feel totally not close to this party and 10 for feel very much close to this party, with positive values indicating a closer attachment to each political party. Finally, the four democratic-value variables are those the same set of the 4-point scale variables used in the Table 4.5, all of which take 0 for strongly disagree and 3 for strongly agree with the statements that provide insight into the four democratic-value orientations—(1) *election*, (2) *political ethics*, (3) *rule of law*, and (4) *socioeconomic equality*.

Once controlled for other socioeconomic and political factors, color inclination loses statistical significance on all the three dimensions of attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation categorized by this dissertation. Firstly, the Model 1 in Table 6.13 shows the associations between six variables—*income*, three *regional*, and two *democratic-value* variables—and attitudes support for the uses of law and regulation to solve the conflict problem. Income and the two democratic-value variables (*election* and the *rule of law*) are statistically and positively related to attitudes of support for the uses of law and regulation to solve the conflict problem.

Table 6.13 Multivariate Models of Attitudes toward Conflict and Conflict Transformation Index

Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Beta	S.E.	Sig.	Beta	S.E.	Sig.	Beta	S.E.	Sig.

Color inclination									
Yellow→Red	-	1.212		.074	2.172		-	1.229	
Background									
Female	.049	1.088		.013	1.971		-	1.110	
Age	-	.052		.149	.094	***	.027	.053	
Income	.063	.001	*	-	.000		.031	.000	
Employment	.028	2.123		-	3.838		.030	2.143	
Education	-	.389		.040	.707		.012	.398	
Buddhism	.031	2.979		-	5.385		.013	3.059	
North	-	2.426	***	.088	4.405		-	2.484	
Northeast	-	2.159	**	.064	3.909		-	2.214	
Central	-	2.172	***	.102	3.944		-	2.228	
South	-	2.858		.019	5.157		-	2.921	*
Urban residence	.026	1.408		.001	2.555		-	1.441	
Party identification									
Democrat	-	.299		.140	.536	**	-	.302	
Phue Thai	.022	.262		-	.470	***	.157	.265	**
Democratic value									
Election	.168	.908	***	-	1.644	***	.125	.929	***
Political ethics	.001	.997		.119	1.807	***	.079	1.020	**
Rule of law	.223	.835	***	.098	1.499	***	.036	.847	
Equality	-	.835		.032	1.516		-	.852	
N		768			764			779	
Adjusted R ²		.125			.176			.052	
F-value		7.107			10.090			3.370	
Model-significance		***			***			***	

Note: *P < 0.1 ** P < 0.05 *** P < 0.01

All of the three regional variables—*north*, *northeast*, and *central* residences—also are statistically, but negatively related to attitudes of support for the uses of law and regulation to solve the conflict problem. From the standardized regression coefficients, among these six variables, *central* residence has the largest impact on attitudes of support for the uses of law and regulation to solve the conflict problem, followed by the *rule of law*, *north* residence, *election*, *northeast* residence, and *income*. This finding indicates that people who live in the central region are less likely than the

average to support the uses of law and regulation to solve the conflict problem. In addition, attitudes supportive of the use of law and regulation to solve the conflict problem are not driven by color inclination, but by other factors including income, region, and some democratic values.

Secondly, *support for the uses of an intervention process to solve the conflict problem* is again driven by *democratic values*. Model 2 in Table 6.13 shows the associations between three of the four democratic-value variables (*election*, *political ethics*, and the *rule of law*) and support for the use of an intervention process to solve the conflict problem. In particular, *election* is statistically and positively related to attitudinal support for the use of an intervention process to solve the conflict problem whereas *political ethics* and the *rule of law* are statistically but negatively related to these attitudes. *Age* also is statistically and positively related to support for the uses of an intervention process to solve the conflict problem. This makes sense because a coup has been used as a powerful tool to solve a political problem in Thailand on many occasions since 1932. The stronger support for this approach expressed by the older rather than the younger respondents is not a surprising result.

In addition, while *political-identification* factors have no systematic relationship to attitudes of support for the uses of law and regulation to solve the conflict problem, these variables play a crucial role in driving the respondents' attitude of support for the uses of an intervention process to solve the conflict problem although in a controversial direction between the two variables (positive relation for *Democrat Party* v. negative relation for *Phue Thai Party*). It also is quite clear from the standardized regression coefficients that *Phue Thai Party* has a little larger impact than the *Democrat Party* on the support for the use of an intervention process like a coup to solve the political conflict problem. This finding suggests that although an attitude of support for the use

of an intervention process to solve the conflict problem is not driven by color inclination, it is a problematic approach that could bring further conflict instead of peace because there is a sharp disagreement over how to deal with the political problems between the people who identify themselves as attached to the two largest political parties.

Finally, similar to the first two models, *attitude of support for the uses of a reconciliation method or mechanism to solve the conflict problem* is driven by *democratic values*. The Model 3 in Table 6.13 shows the associations between two of the four democratic-value variables (*election* and *political ethics*) and the attitude of support for the uses of a reconciliation method or mechanism to solve the conflict problem. Apart from these two democratic-value variables, *south* residence and *Phue Thai Party* are another two variables statistically related to attitudes of support for the uses of a reconciliation method or mechanism to solve the conflict problem but in an opposite direction (negative relation for *south* residence v. positive relation for *Phue Thai Party*). From the standardized regression coefficients, among these four variables, *Phue Thai Party* has the largest impact on attitudes of support for the uses of law and regulation to solve the conflict problem, followed by *election*, *south* residence, and *political ethics*. None of the background and color inclination variables is statistically related to attitudinal support for the uses of a reconciliation method or mechanism to solve the conflict problem. This finding signifies a great opportunity for the reconciliation process to be initiated and utilized by engaging the conflicting groups into each stage of its implementation.

6.4 Conclusion

The results obtained from this chapter's assessment of public opinion concerning conflict and conflict transformation showed evidence supporting that a reconciliation process could be initiated and successfully implemented because almost all of the respondents, whether they identify themselves as affiliated to any political color or not, support conflict transformation as an approach to dealing with the decade-long political conflict in this country. However, because the analyses carried out in this chapter also provided evidence showing a sharp disagreement over how to deal with the political problems between the people who have different democratic values and identify themselves as attached to the two largest political parties, the reconciliation process cannot be conducted without the understanding and acknowledgement of how the public views on the key elements of the reconciliation process and trust building. The next chapter will focus more intensively on this topic.

Chapter 7 Trust Building as a Key Success Factor for Thailand's Reconciliation

Previous studies have found trust to be a crucial component in relationship building and the peace building processes (Stein 1991; Kydd 2000b; 2000a; Mitchell 2000; Hoffman 2002). However, the reconciliation processes proposed and bought into practice by the Thai governments during past years, as mentioned in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, ignored trust building—both in terms of trust in institutions and trust among the people. This dissertation thus claims that such a gap has meant that the implementation of the reconciliation process in Thailand has never succeeded. In order to make this argument even clearer, this chapter tests the theory that trust is associated with variations in reconciliation, as in the hypothesis that those trusting in political institutions and other people are more likely than those filled with distrust to support elements important for the reconciliation process.

7.1 Public Opinions about the Key Elements of the Reconciliation Process

Advocates of the conflict transformation approach to the process of peace building have long accepted that the participation of all sectors of a society and the means for achieving a peaceful transformation are the key elements of the reconciliation process (Lederach 1997; 2003; Montville 1990; Saunders 1993; 1999). Meaningful participation in the reconciliation process, on the one hand, requires people to trust in institutions, in particular those institutions that play a key role in the reconciliation process such as the government, the legislative organizations, and the courts. Meaningful participation in the reconciliation process also needs trust among people in

society and in particular among conflicting parties (Govier 1997; Govier and Verwoerd 2002: 185). This dissertation used the survey questions to ask the Thai respondents to evaluate the six key elements previous research claimed to be important for the reconciliation process in general and in the case of Thailand's current political conflict, using a 0-10 scale, where 0 signifies "not at all important;" and 10 signifies "very much important." The six key elements were: the political will of the top political leaders to be committed to peace and reconciliation; strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process; a societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution; an inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders; a fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness; and punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence.

Table 7.1 shows that all of the six key elements of the reconciliation process, according to the Thai respondents' opinions, are important for transforming the current political conflict into peace, as the mean scores for each element are higher than 5, although none of them is higher than 7.5. According to the Thai respondents, more precisely, strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process contribute the most important element of the reconciliation process (mean = 7.033). The second most important element is the political will of the top political leaders committed to peace and reconciliation (mean = 6.833). The three contextual and mechanical factors—a societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution, a fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness, and an inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders—are ranked third, fourth, and fifth most important elements, respectively, with mean scores between 6.468 and 6.503. Strikingly, the least important

element, for the respondents, is the punishment of those who have killed or hurt others during political violence.

Table 7.1 Public Views on the Key Elements of the Reconciliation Process

Elements	Mean	S.D.
2h. The political will of the top political leaders that are committed to peace and reconciliation	6.833	1.547
2i. Strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process	7.033	1.583
2j. A societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution	6.503	1.625
2k. An inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders	6.468	1.603
2l. A fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness	6.473	1.631
2m. Punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence	5.965	1.953

These results suggest that in the Thai respondents' opinion, in order to accomplish the reconciliation process in the case of Thailand's political conflict, the

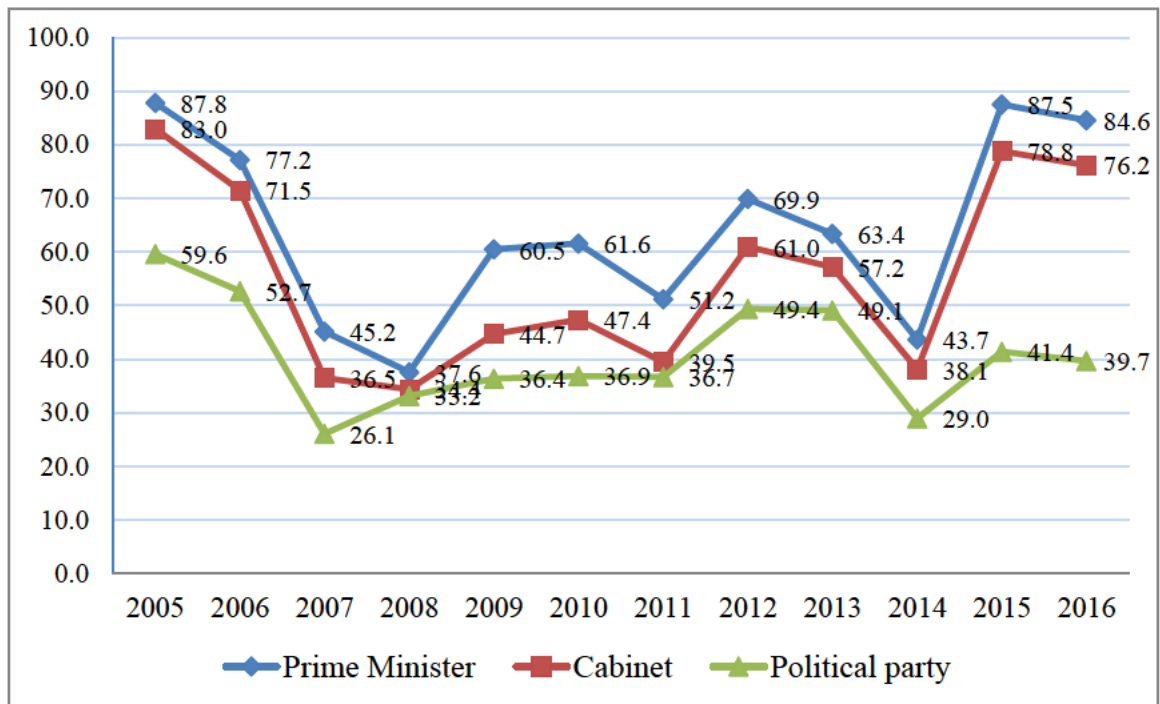
critical roles played by the key actors, both at the top-level and the grassroots, especially political leaders and social organizations, should come first, followed by the adoption of an appropriate reconciliation mechanism or tools, while the judgment whether the violent people will be punished should be the last consideration. Additionally, these opinions expressed by the Thai respondents are compatible with what many studies in the past have highlighted: the importance of the combination of a high level of civic engagement and a well-functioning state in producing the fertile soil necessary for social and economic development, which is one of the ultimate goals of a reconciled society (Colletta and Cullen 2000; Collier 1998; Narayan 1999).

7.2 Trust in institutions

In theory, trust in institutions is due to the fact that in modern life there is less dependency on informal communication and inter-personal relations, but more dependency on standards and social structures in which communication is implanted. However, trust in institutions seems to have both institutional and personal aspects. That is, people may trust both the system as such and individual actors they encounter or observe (Newton 1999; Rothstein 2001). In addition, trust in some specific institutions, such as the government, may be based on experiences over a long period of time, on the current situation or on expectations of such institutions (i.e., the government) in the future (Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2001:19). In this regard, the higher the level of trust inspired by the current government (or any other political institution), the more likely it is that a person will express specific support and trust, while long-term experience points more in the direction of diffuse support and trust (Besley and Persson 2010; Fjeldstad 2004; Levi and Stoker 2000).

As discussed earlier in the literature review chapter of this dissertation, research from various contexts has shown that trust is a crucial component in relationship building and reconciliation processes. However, levels of public trust in some specific political institutions, particularly the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, and the political party of the day, in Thailand have been low during the past decade, especially since the military coup in September 2006 up until another military coup in May 2014. More precisely and as shown in Figure 7.1 below, the levels of public trust in the prime minister, according to the continuous study by the King Prajadhipok's Institute (2017: 9), decreased from almost 90 percent in 2005 to lower than 50 percent in 2007, a year after the 2006 coup. Since then until the year 2014, the levels of public trust in the prime minister had never been higher than 70 percent.

Moreover, these levels have always dropped in the years after the major violent conflicts occurred. For example, the level of public trust in the prime minister decreased by 11 percent from 62 percent in 2010 to 51 percent in 2011, a year after the violent crash between Abhisit's government and the Red Shirts. Another example is the level of public trust in the prime minister which dropped by almost 20 percent from 63 percent in 2013 to 44 percent in 2014, a period after violent conflict between the PDRC and the Yingluck government's supporters, which eventually brought the military back into politics again where they remain up to the present.



Source: King Prajadhipok's Institute (2017: 9)

Figure 7.1

Public Trust in Prime Minister, Cabinet, and Political Party in Thailand
between 2005 and 2010

The same pattern can also be observed in the levels of public trust in the cabinet and the political party during the same period, although these two institutions received a lower level of trust than the prime minister. The association between this ebb-and-flow trend of the levels of trust in these three political institutions and the violent conflict events suggests that to measure trust and identify whether trust can be used to explain issues of reconciliation in the case of Thailand, as in many other countries' experiences, is very important.

Since a reconciliation process involves not only the political institutions in the executive branch, such as the prime minister and the cabinet, but also many institutions

in the legislative and judiciary branches, the public survey conducted for this dissertation also asked the Thai respondents to evaluate whether they trust the four most important democratic institutions, including the government, the parliament, the courts of justice, and the political parties, using a 0-3 scale, where 0 means trust not at all and 3 means strongly trust. Table 7.2 and Figure 7.2 present the percentages of trust in these four democratic institutions. The results reveal that the courts of justice obtain the highest percent of trust from the Thai respondents, with 72 percent trusting and 6 percent strongly trusting in the courts of justice. A little more than 70 percent of the respondents say they trust or strongly trust in the parliament. This percentage of trust is higher than those for the government and the political parties by 12 and 16 percent, respectively.

Table 7.2 People’s Trusts in Institutions—the government, the parliament, the courts of justice, and political parties

Institutions	Not at all trust	Don’t trust	Trust	Strongly trust
3a. The government	9.1	31.4	50.3	9.3
3b. The parliament	8.0	20.6	66.3	5.1
3c. The courts of justice	9.0	13.4	72.0	5.6
3d. Political parties	24.4	31.1	39.4	5.1

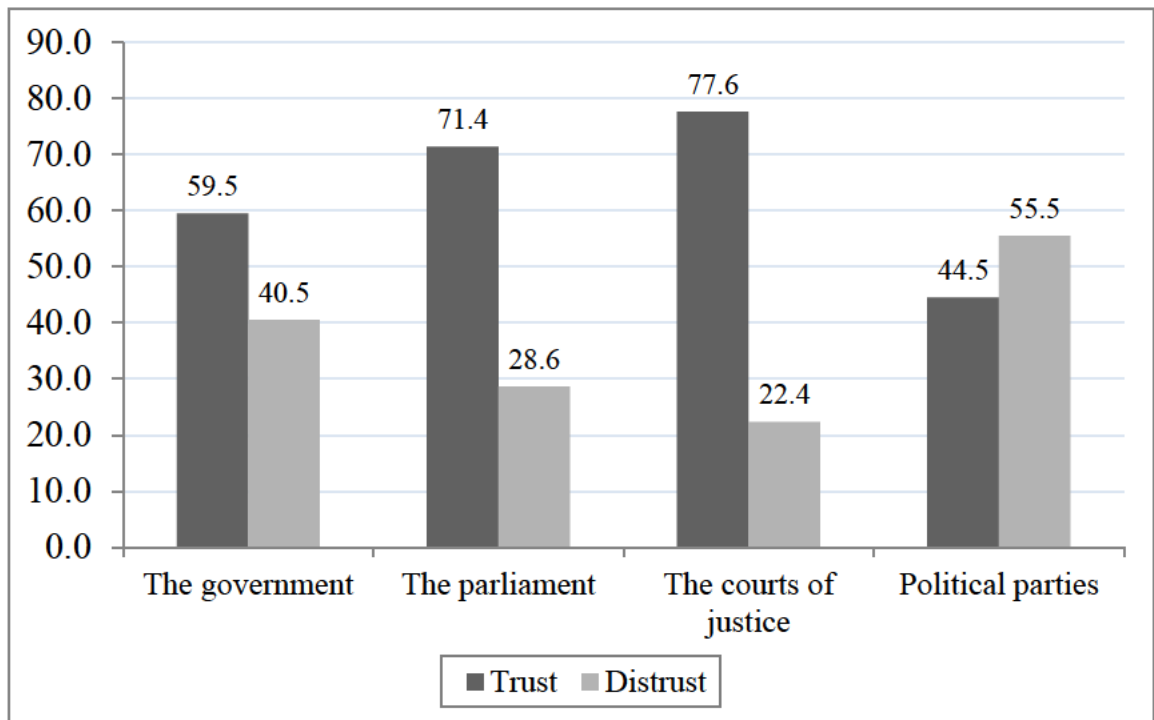


Figure 7.2

People’s Trust in Institutions—the government, the parliament, the courts of justice, and political parties

7.3 The Key Elements of Reconciliation Process v. Trust in the Four Political Institutions

It is quite difficult to test the causal hypothesis linking trust in institutions and reconciliation, since trust may contribute to reconciled attitudes, but reconciled attitudes may also make it easier for people to trust in institutions and trust in other people (Buford 2009: 80). To test the hypothesis that trust in institutions is associated with reconciliation, this chapter employs bivariate tables in order to compare the mean score of respondents’ opinions about the six key elements of the reconciliation process between those who trust in each political institution and those who did not.

Table 7.3 shows that Thai respondents who trust in the government are more likely than those who distrust the government to accept all of the six key elements as the key elements of a reconciliation process. In particular, the mean score for acceptance that the political will of the top political leaders that are committed to peace and reconciliation is a key element of a reconciliation process for the respondents who trust in the government is higher than those who did not by 0.73. In addition, the mean score for acceptance that strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process are a key element of a reconciliation process for the respondents who trust in the government is around 0.31 higher than for those who did not.

Apart from the political will of the top political leaders and support of strong civil society organizations, the views on the remaining four elements between the trust and distrust groups show significant differences. As shown in the table below, the mean score for acceptance that a societal atmosphere that provides a safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution is a key element of a reconciliation process for the respondents who trust in the government is higher than those who did not by 0.47. The mean score for acceptance that an inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders is a key element of a reconciliation process for the respondents who trust in the government also is higher than those who did not at 0.58. The mean score for acceptance that a fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness is a key element of a reconciliation process for the respondents who trust in the government is higher than those who did not by 0.43. The mean score for acceptance that punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence is a key element of a reconciliation process for the Thai respondents who trust in the government is higher than those who did not by 0.55.

Table 7.3 The Key Elements of Reconciliation Process v. Trust in the Government

Elements		Trust	Distrust	Sig.	Eta
The political will of the top political leaders that are committed to peace and reconciliation	Mean	7.13	6.40	***	0.232
	N	476	324		
	S.D.	1.52	1.48		
Strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process	Mean	7.16	6.85	***	0.096
	N	476	324		
	S.D.	1.62	1.52		
A societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution	Mean	6.69	6.22	***	0.142
	N	476	324		
	S.D.	1.68	1.51		
An inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders	Mean	6.70	6.12	***	0.179
	N	476	324		
	S.D.	1.66	1.45		
A fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness	Mean	6.65	6.22	***	0.130
	N	476	324		
	S.D.	1.70	1.49		
Punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence	Mean	6.19	5.64	***	0.138
	N	476	324		
	S.D.	2.01	1.83		

*, **, *** difference between trust and distrust is statistically significant at 0.1, 0.05, and 0.01 levels respectively.

Similarly to Table 7.3, Table 7.4 shows that respondents who trust in the parliament are more likely than those who distrust the parliament to accept all of the six key elements as the key element of a reconciliation process. The mean score for acceptance that the political will of the top political leaders that are committed to peace and reconciliation is a key element of reconciliation for the respondents who trust in the parliament is higher than for those who did not by 1.07. The mean score for acceptance that strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate for and support the process is a key element of a reconciliation process for the Thai respondents who trust in the parliament is higher than for those who did not by 0.28. The mean score for acceptance that a societal atmosphere that provides a safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution is a key element of a reconciliation process for the respondents who trust in the parliament is higher than for those who did not by 0.46.

The mean score for acceptance that an inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders is a key element of a reconciliation process for the respondents who trust in the parliament is higher than those who did not by 0.61. The mean score for acceptance that a fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology and forgiveness is a key element of a reconciliation process for the respondents who trust in the parliament is higher than for those who did not by 0.41. The mean score for acceptance that punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence is a key element of a reconciliation process for the respondents who trust in the parliament is higher than those who did not by 0.78.

Table 7.4 The Key Elements of Reconciliation Process v. Trust in the Parliament

Elements		Trust	Distrust	Sig.	Eta
The political will of the top political leaders that are committed to peace and reconciliation	Mean	7.14	6.07	***	0.314
	N	571	229		
	S.D.	1.40	1.62		
Strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process	Mean	7.11	6.83	**	0.079
	N	571	229		
	S.D.	1.48	1.79		
A societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution	Mean	6.63	6.17	***	0.128
	N	571	229		
	S.D.	1.58	1.69		
An inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders	Mean	6.64	6.03	***	0.173
	N	571	229		
	S.D.	1.54	1.68		
A fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness	Mean	6.59	6.18	***	0.112
	N	571	229		
	S.D.	1.59	1.69		
Punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence	Mean	6.19	5.41	***	0.181
	N	571	229		
	S.D.	1.87	2.06		

*, **, *** difference between trust and distrust is statistically significant at 0.1, 0.05, and 0.01 levels respectively.

Almost the same as for Table 7.3 and 7.4, Table 7.5 shows that respondents who trust in the courts of justice are more likely than those who distrust the courts to accept five of the six key elements as the key element of a reconciliation process. Only the mean scores for acceptance that strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process are a key element of a reconciliation process between the Thai respondents who trust in the courts of justice and those who did not are not statistically different.

Table 7.5 The Key Elements of Reconciliation Process v. Trust in the Courts of Justice

Elements		Trust	Distrust	Sig.	Eta
The political will of the top political leaders that are committed to peace and reconciliation	Mean	7.05	6.07	***	0.266
	N	621	179		
	S.D.	1.44	1.65		
Strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process	Mean	7.06	6.92		0.038
	N	621	179		
	S.D.	1.54	1.72		
A societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution	Mean	6.59	6.18	***	0.105
	N	621	179		
	S.D.	1.61	1.64		
	Mean	6.59	6.04	***	0.142

Elements		Trust	Distrust	Sig.	Eta
An inclusive dialogue process	N	621	179		
that is acceptable to all		1.59	1.59		
stakeholders	S.D.				
A fair mechanism for truth-	Mean	6.56	6.16	***	0.102
finding, sincere apology, and	N	621	179		
forgiveness	S.D.	1.61	1.68		
Punishing those who have	Mean	6.09	5.54	***	0.116
killed or hurt others during	N	621	179		
political violence	S.D.	1.90	2.06		

*, **, *** difference between trust and distrust is statistically significant at 0.1, 0.05, and 0.01 levels respectively.

Unlike the results presented in Table 7.3 to Table 7.5, Table 7.6 shows that respondents who trust in political parties are more likely to be positive than those who distrust political parties with reference to only two of the six key elements. That is, the mean score for acceptance of the importance of the political will of the top political leaders for the respondents who trust in political parties is higher than for those who did not by 0.38. The mean score for acceptance of the importance of strong civil society organizations for the respondents who trust in political parties is lower than for those who did not by 0.24.

Table 7.6 The Key Elements of Reconciliation Process v. Trust in Political Parties

Elements		Trust	Distrust	Sig.	Eta
The political will of the top political leaders that are committed to peace and reconciliation	Mean	7.04	6.66	***	0.121
	N	356	444		
	S.D.	1.45	1.60		
Strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process	Mean	6.90	7.14	**	0.076
	N	356	444		
	S.D.	1.51	1.63		
A societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution	Mean	6.50	6.50		0.001
	N	356	444		
	S.D.	1.59	1.66		
An inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders	Mean	6.52	6.43		0.028
	N	356	444		
	S.D.	1.53	1.66		
A fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness	Mean	6.52	6.43		0.027
	N	356	444		
	S.D.	1.56	1.68		
Punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence	Mean	5.97	5.96		0.004
	N	356	444		
	S.D.	1.84	2.04		

*, **, *** difference between trust and distrust is statistically significant at 0.1, 0.05, and 0.01 levels respectively.

7.4 Individual Trust

Since the mid-1950s, there have been over fifty national surveys about individual trust. The most commonly asked question is, “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?” (Newton, 2001: 203). This dissertation adapted this question and asked the Thai respondents, “Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: Most people can be trusted?” Table 7.7 presents the data on the Thai answers to this question. The results show that the proportion of the Thai respondents who agree and strongly agree that most people can be trusted is very close to the proportion of those who disagree and strongly disagree with this statement (52 percent and 48 percent, respectively).

Table 7.7 Individual Trust of the Thai respondents

Most people can be trusted?	Percent
Strongly disagree	10.1
Disagree	37.9
Agree	35.8
Strongly agree	16.3
	100.0

Compared to other countries around the world, according to the most recent survey data collected by the World Values Survey (2014), this level of individual trust expressed by the Thai respondents is moderate. But, it is higher than the proportion of those who agree and strongly agree with this statement in Thailand, according to the

World Value Survey 2014, by nearly 20 percent. This finding suggests that the level of individual trust expressed by the Thai people has changed in an increasing trend during the past few years. Since the political conflict in Thailand had become worse in 2014, it is no surprise to see this increased trust among the people in the survey that was conducted approximately three years after the violent conflict had been stabilized by the military coup and there was no critical violent conflict (except in the South) which had occurred since then.

7.5 The Key Elements of Reconciliation Process v. Individual Trust

To confirm that trust and reconciliation are conceptually connected, Table 7.8 presents the results of a principal-components analysis using the eight questions shown in Table 7.1. The result shows that Thai respondents who agree that most people can be trusted are more likely than those who disagree with this statement to accept all of the six key elements as the key elements of a reconciliation process. The mean score of acceptance that punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence is a key element of a reconciliation process for the Thai respondents who agree that most people can be trusted is higher than for those who did not by 2.06.

Table 7.8 The Key Elements of Reconciliation Process v. Trust in Individuals

Elements		Trust	Distrust	Sig.	Eta
2h. The political will of the top political leaders that are committed to peace and reconciliation	Mean	7.55	6.06	***	0.480
	N	416	384		
	S.D.	1.40	1.30		
2i. Strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process	Mean	7.95	6.04	***	0.603
	N	416	384		
	S.D.	1.27	1.25		
2j. A societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a possible solution	Mean	7.63	5.28	***	0.721
	N	416	384		
	S.D.	1.22	1.01		
2k. An inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders	Mean	7.57	5.27	***	0.716
	N	416	384		
	S.D.	1.21	1.01		
2l. A fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness	Mean	7.61	5.24	***	0.725
	N	416	384		
	S.D.	1.23	1.00		
2m. Punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence	Mean	6.95	4.89	***	0.527
	N	416	384		
	S.D.	1.84	1.44		

*, **, *** difference between trust and distrust is statistically significant at 0.1, 0.05, and 0.01 levels respectively.

7.6 Regression Analysis of the Influence of Trust on the Opinion about the Key Elements of the Reconciliation Process

Dividing into four models, this section used the ordinary least squares (OLS) method to analyze the effects of trust on the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process. In all of the four model, the dependent variable is *the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process*, measured as an index, relying on the respondents' self-reports of their opinions about the six key elements of the reconciliation process used in the previous sections' analysis. The variable thus runs from 0 to 10, with higher values indicating a higher level of importance. This set of items is highly reliable as a measure of the overall opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process, as the Cronbach's alpha for this index is 0.910. It appears that these various elements all represent a single coherent component of valuing the reconciliation process.

In order to know how powerfully trust has an effect on the opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process, Model 1 was created by excluding all of the trust variables and including eleven socioeconomic-background, three color- and party-identification, and four democratic-value variables. These variables were measured as below.

First, the *socioeconomic-background* variables are: (1) *gender (female)*, a binary 0-1 variable, which takes the value 0 for males and 1 for females; (2) continuous measure of *age*; (3) continuous measure of *income*; (4) a dummy variable for *employment status*, which takes the value 0 for not employed and 1 for employed; (5) an 8-point scale of education, ranging from 0 (no education) to 8 (higher than bachelor's degree); (6) a dummy variable for *religion (Buddhism)*, which takes the value 0 for non-Buddhism and 1 for Buddhism; (7) a dummy variable for *residence of the northern*

region, which takes the value 1 for northern residence and 0 for those who live in other regions; (8) a dummy variable for *residence of the northeastern region*, which takes the value 1 for northeastern residence and 0 for those who live in other regions; (9) a dummy variable for *residence of the central region*, which takes the value 1 for central residence and 0 for those who live in other regions; (10) a dummy variable for *residence of the southern region*, which takes the value 1 for southern residence and 0 for those who live in other regions; (11) a 3-point scale of degree of *urbanization*, which takes the value 0 for the rural residence, 1 for large-city residence, and 2 for Bangkok residence.

Second, three color- and party-identification variables consist of (1) the 5-point scale *color inclination*, which is measured as a yellow-red-scale, ranging from -2 to 2, where -2 is yellow, 0 is neutral, and 2 is red, (2) an 11-point scale of the attachment to the *Democrat Party*, and (3) an 11-point scale of the attachment to the *Pheu Thai Party*, which takes 0 for feel totally not close to this party and 10 for feel very much close to this party, with higher values indicating a closer attachment to each political party. Third, the four democratic-value variables are measured by using the four survey questions, asking whether the respondents strongly agree (3), agree (2), disagree (1), or strongly disagree (0) with the statements that provide insight into the four democratic-value orientations—(1) *election*, (2) *political ethics*, (3) *rule of law*, and (4) *socioeconomic equality*. The *election* variable is assessed by the statement: “Competitive and periodic elections are a necessary and indispensable element of sustained efforts to the right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her country.” The *political ethics* variable is assessed by the statement: “Thailand needs an ethical leader, regardless of how he or she gets into power, to take the country back from the corrupted politicians.” The *rule of law* variable is assessed by the statement: “When the country is facing a difficult situation, it is ok for the government to disregard

the law in order to deal with the situation.” The *socioeconomic equality* variable is assessed by the statement: “Elections based on vote-buying by offering money to legitimate voters is a beneficial aspect of Thai people because it is a matter of income distribution to Thai people.” As shown in the previous chapter that people with different socioeconomic backgrounds, party identification, and democratic values tend to have different attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation, public opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process was expected to be driven by some of these variables.

Model 1 in Table 7.9 shows the association between seven of the eleven socioeconomic-backgrounds, two of the three color- and party-identifications, and two of the four democratic-value variables and the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process. Income, urban residence, attachment to the Pheu Thai Party, support for elections and the rule of law as an essential element of democracy are significantly and positively related to the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process, while age, employment, northern, northeastern, and central residence, and the attachment to the Democrat Party are significantly but negatively related to the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process. From standardized regression coefficients, among these variables, the attachment to the Democrat Party had the largest impact on the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process, followed by support for the rule of law as an essential element of democracy and the attachment to the Pheu Thai Party. However, R^2 was only 0.096, indicating that only a small part of the variation in the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process index was accounted for by the variables considered in this model.

Table 7.9 Multivariate Models of Factors that Influence Opinions about the Key Elements of the Reconciliation Process Index

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	Beta	S.E.	Sig.	Beta	S.E.	Sig.	Beta	S.E.	Sig.	Beta	S.E.	Sig.
Background												
Female	.037	.098		.040	.095		.016	.067		.018	.066	
Age	-.109	.005	**	-.121	.005	***	-.032	.003		-.042	.003	
Income	.079	.000	**	.084	.000	**	.019	.000		.023	.000	
Employment	-.113	.190	***	-.126	.184	***	-.032	.131		-.042	.128	
Education	-.030	.035		-.030	.034		-.043	.024		-.042	.024	
Buddhism	.042	.270		.042	.262		.029	.185		.029	.181	
North	-.127	.220	**	-.142	.213	**	-.017	.151		-.030	.148	
Northeast	-.141	.196	**	-.160	.190	**	-.006	.135		-.022	.132	
Central	-.167	.197	**	-.201	.192	***	-.043	.136		-.067	.133	
South	.071	.258		.093	.251		.052	.177		.065	.173	
Urban residence	.078	.128	*	.069	.124		.069	.088	**	.064	.086	**
Political identification												
Yellow→Red	-.112	.108		-.082	.105		-.059	.074		-.042	.073	
Democrat	-.200	.027	***	-.238	.026	***	-.098	.018	**	-.124	.018	***
Phue Thai	.189	.023	***	.142	.023	**	.079	.016	*	.055	.016	
Democratic value												
Election	.125	.081	***	.136	.079	***	.047	.056	*	.056	.055	**
Political ethics	-.028	.090		-.044	.087		.007	.062		-.003	.061	
Rule of law	.199	.075	***	.222	.073	***	.094	.052	***	.111	.051	***
Equality	-.046	.075		-.054	.073		-.021	.052		-.026	.051	
Trust												
Trust in institutions				.245	.137	***				.146	.096	***
Trust in other people							.716	.066	***	.695	.066	***
N	781			781			781			781		
Adjusted R ²	.096			.150			.585			.594		
F-value	5.600			8.251			56.590			58.034		
Model-significance	***			***			***			***		

Note: *P < 0.1 ** P < 0.05 *** P < 0.01

Model 2 and Model 3 were then separately created by adding trust in institutions as the main explanatory variable to the Model 2 and trust in other people to the Model 3, respectively. The trust in institutions variable is measured as an index, calculated from the average level of trust in the four major democratic institutions—the government, the parliament, the court of justice, and the political parties. This set of items is highly reliable as a measure of trust in institutions, as the Cronbach's alpha for this index is 0.728. In the Model 3, the trust in other people variable was measured by the respondents' response to a 4-point scale question asking whether they agree or disagree that "most people can be trusted": 3 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 1 = disagree; 0 = strongly disagree. These two regression models are controlled for all the factors used in the Model 1. These regression analyses expected that people who have a higher level of trust in institutions and trust in other people are more likely to have a positive attitude supporting the key elements essential for the reconciliation process than those who have a lower one.

When trust in institutions was added within the regression analysis of Model 2, R^2 improved. As expected, trust in institutions factors was significantly and positively related to opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process. Age, income, employment, northern, northeastern, and central residence, the attachment to the Democrat and the Pheu Thai Party, support for election and the rule of law as an essential element of democracy remained significant with the same direction of association to the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process. However, based on the standardized regression coefficients, the attachment to the Democrat Party lost its position as having the most significant impact on the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process and was replaced by trust in institutions. Although adding trust in institutions into the regression model did not eliminate the significance of all socioeconomic-background, color- and party-

identification, and democratic-value variables, this finding indicated that trust in institutions is the most powerful factor driving public opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process.

When trust in other people was added within the regression analysis of Model 3, R^2 sharply improved. As expected, the trust in other people factor was significantly and positively related to the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process. More interestingly, almost all of the socioeconomic-background variables lost their significant association to the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process. Only urban residence, which is significantly and positively related to the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process in the Model 1, retained its significance with the same direction of association to the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process. As with the result shown in the Model 2, the attachment to the Democrat Party lost its most significant impact position on the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process and was replaced by trust in other people, based on the standardized regression coefficients. This finding indicated that adding trust in other people into the regression model not only eliminated the significance of almost of the socioeconomic-background variables but also reduced the strength of the impact of all color- and party-identification and democratic-value variables.

In order to confirm the powerful impact of trust on the opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process, Model 4 was finally constructed by including both *trust in institutions* and *trust in other people* as the main explanatory variables. The result of the regression analysis in Model 4 clearly showed that when trust in institutions and trust in other people were together added within the same model, R^2 improved. As expected, trust in institutions and trust in other people factors were both significantly and positively related to the opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation

process. Despite these two trust variables, urban residence, attachment to the Democrat Party, and two of the democratic-value variables—election and the rule of law—remain significantly related to the opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process. However, the relationship of urban residence and two of the democratic-value variables—election and the rule of law—were positive, while attachment to the Democrat Party was negative to the opinion about the key elements of reconciliation. Based on standardized regression coefficients, among these variables, trust in other people had the largest impact on the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process, followed by trust in institutions and then attachment to the Democrat Party.

In summary, the bivariate and regression analyses conducted in this chapter revealed that the people who trust in political institutions and other people are more likely than those who do not to support elements important for the reconciliation process. This finding also supported previous research indicating the essential nature of trust in making the reconciliation process successful.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

Scholars in peace studies have long accepted that building trust is essential and has a critical impact on the achievements of a reconciliation process in post violent-conflict societies (e.g., Besley and Persson 2010, De Juan and Pierskalla 2016, Fjeldstad 2004, Harvey and Stover 2004, Huyse 2003a; 2003b, Liwicki and Wiethoff 2000, Staub 2000). At the individual level, the existence of trust among the people, especially those who are conflicting parties, makes conflict resolution easier and more effective (Huyse 2003a; 2003b). Establishing trustworthiness is the key to solving the commitment problem because it makes the conflicting parties accept each other and perceive themselves as having strong common goals, values, and identities (Liwicki and Wiethoff 2000: 102). With mutual trust, conflicting parties are thus motivated to sustain the relationship and find constructive ways to transform the conflict (Staub 2000: 376).

At the institutional level, trust in functioning institutions, such as a new government established as a result of a peace process, an appropriate legislative structure, a non-partisan judiciary and an effective civil service, is important for the implementation of peace agreements (Huyse 2003b). A high level of trust in these institutions can help in linking a reconciliation policy to the many other tasks of a transition from violent conflict to durable peace, for example, by increasing citizens' compliance with the law, which in turn decreases the risk of conflict recurrence (De Juan and Pierskalla 2016). In addition, a high level of trust in the government and the civil service helps these institutions, enabling them to utilize their capacity in raising revenues, determining security, development, and the political stability of a country in the long run (Besley and Persson 2010; Fjeldstad 2004). However, creating trust and understanding between former enemies is a supremely difficult challenge.

This dissertation seeks to explain why successive Thai governments have failed in maintaining peace through conducting reconciliation processes. It argued that the

reconciliation process conducted by several governments during the past decade failed because trust building—both in terms of trust in national institutions and trust among the people—has been ignored. The neglect of the Thai governments to invest time and other resources in building trust has made the term reconciliation unpopular and created perceptions of the reconciliation process as being conducted as a means for the people holding state power to defeat the people of opposing groups rather than a means of resolving conflict problems and reconciling society. As a result, the political conflicts in this country may have been temporarily stopped by the use of the old Thai style of reconciliation, especially enacting laws to enforce peace and using a military coup, but such temporary measures have never been transformed to durable peace.

The previous chapters of this dissertation examined attitudes towards conflict and conflict transformation as well as public opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process. The results revealed evidence confirming the main argument of this dissertation that “trust building is a key success for Thailand’s reconciliation.” This chapter summarizes the central argument developed throughout the dissertation, highlights the key findings, and considers the implications for future research into trust and reconciliation in Thailand and perhaps in other post violent-conflict societies.

8.1 Attitudes toward Conflict and Conflict Transformation among People with Different Colored Affiliation

Division and polarized politics have defined Thailand since 2006. The colored-shirt confrontations caused physical damage and painful emotions among the people, and had seen the military step in to end the political turmoil both in 2006 and 2014.

Previous studies in Thai politics have illustrated the causes and results of the conflicts, and suggested factors that appear crucial to assuring the success of the reconciliation process in the case of Thailand (e.g., Asia Foundation 2009; 2010; 2013, Bjarnegård and Tønnesson, 2015, King Prajadhipok's Institute, 2012, Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand, 2012). The arguments in this dissertation have added insights to the question of whether Thai citizens, especially those who identify themselves as yellow-shirt and red-shirt supporters, agree or disagree with the proposed factors necessary for successfully implementing a reconciliation process.

Although the analyses carried out in this research showed evidence confirming what the previous studies described about the differences in demographic backgrounds and political attitudes between yellow and red supporters, this dissertation's findings also indicated that almost all of the respondents, whether they identify themselves as affiliated to any political color or not, support conflict transformation as an approach to dealing with the decade-long political conflict in this country. In particular, while the yellow supporters tend to accept that law and violence (such as in a military coup) can be used to control or reduce conflict and to solve conflict problems, the uses of a reconciliation method or mechanism, such as talking to each other, to solve the conflict problem obtained the highest degrees of support from not only the yellow and red supporters but also the respondents who identify themselves as neutral or no color.

Other ideas suggesting the utilization of reconciliation methods, especially the process that helps conflicting parties to forgive each other, also received a high percentage of support from the respondents in all the three color groups. Moreover, after controls for socioeconomic and political influences, the color inclination variable has no statistical significance on all the three dimensions of attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation categorized by this dissertation. This finding suggests that

attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation between people with different colored affiliation are not sharply different. Combined with the attitudes supporting the use of reconciliation mechanisms, this finding is evidence of a possibility for a reconciliation process to be innovated and successfully implemented. However, because the data also showed a sharp disagreement over how to deal with the political problems between the people who have different democratic values and identify themselves as attached to the two largest political parties, the initiation and implementation of the reconciliation process cannot disregard public opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process and trust building.

8.2 Public Opinions about the Key Elements of the Reconciliation Process

Apart from a lack of empirical data explaining attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation of conflicting groups and ordinary citizens, survey research focusing on public opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process in the case of Thailand has been rare. This research added statistical responses to the questions of whether and to what extent the Thai respondents view the key elements of the reconciliation process as important. Consistent with the lessons learnt from various post-conflict societies (Colletta and Cullen 2000, Collier 1998, Mihr 2018, Narayan 1999), the data indicated the importance of the combination of a high level of civic engagement and a well-functioning state in facilitating the processes necessary for the establishment (or re-establishment) of a reconciled society. As shown in chapter 6, according to the Thai respondents, the strong support and advocacy of civil society organizations (CSOs), the political will of the top political leaders committed to peace and reconciliation, and a societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all

parties to work together toward a possible solution are the top-three most important elements to accomplish the reconciliation process in the case of Thailand's political conflict.

8.3 Empirical Support for an Influence of Trust and Reconciliation

Previous studies have found trust to be an indispensable part in relationship building and the peace building processes (Stein 1991; Kydd 2000b; 2000a; Mitchell 2000; Hoffman 2002). However, the reconciliation processes proposed and brought into practice by the Thai governments during recent years have paid very little attention to trust building—both in terms of trust in institutions and trust among the people. This research shows findings consistent with previous studies, illustrating associations between public opinions about the six key elements of the reconciliation process and trust in several aspects. First, Thai respondents who trust in the government and the parliament are more likely than those who distrust these two institutions to accept all of the six key elements as the key elements of a reconciliation process. Second, the respondents who trust in the courts of justice are more likely than those who distrust the courts to accept most of the six key elements, excluding strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process, as the key element of a reconciliation process. Third, respondents who trust in political parties are more likely to be positive than those who distrust political parties with reference to only two of the six key elements, including the strong support and advocacy of civil society organizations (CSOs) and the political will of the top political leaders committed to peace and reconciliation. Fourth, Thai respondents who agree that most people can be

trusted are more likely than those who disagree with this statement to accept all of the six key elements as the key elements of a reconciliation process.

In addition, this research confirms previous research indicating the essential nature of trust in making the reconciliation process successful. As shown in the multivariation analyses of the chapter 6, when trust in institutions and trust in other people is put together with other potential variables, including socioeconomic-background, color- and party-identification, and democratic-value variables, in the same model, trust in other people had the largest impact on the opinion about the key elements of the reconciliation process, followed by trust in institutions. These findings are convincing enough for this dissertation to conclude that general ignoring of trust building in the reconciliation process conducted by previous Thai governments is problematic and one of the main reasons of their unsuccessful implementations of the reconciliation policy.

8.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research of Trust and Reconciliation

Using the public opinion survey and quantitative analysis, this research provided a clearer and more comprehensive picture of Thai citizens' attitudes and perceptions about peace and reconciliation, and the key factors, in their opinion, for bringing about reconciliation across the nation. However, since data for the empirical analyses in this dissertation were gathered during the period under the military government, some respondents may have felt uncomfortable to answer some survey questions which they view as sensitive, especially those relate to attitudes toward the coup, the political roles of the military, and affiliations to colored groups and/or political parties. Future research may benefit from collecting survey data in a societal atmosphere that is free and more

open than when this dissertation's public opinion survey was conducted. This limitation also reveals that context matters. Thus, this dissertation suggests further research that collects empirical data for several years and employs a longitudinal approach as its method of examination in order to monitor changes in attitude and opinion about conflict transformation and peace. The longitudinal analyses will also provide further answers to the question of how far the influence of trust on the reconciliation process varies across different times and circumstances.

8.5 What can be done to facilitate the reconciliation process that could transform political conflict in Thai society into peace?

More than four years after the most recent coup in 2014, Thai society is still divided. In the third year since taking control, the military government of General Prayut Chan-o-cha, the NCPO chairman, once again established a reconciliation committee working under the umbrella of the Committee for Reform, Reconciliation, and National Strategy. The good news is that this new reconciliation committee was created as a result of the Prayut government's awareness of the importance of the creation of national unity in stimulating national development. However, this new reconciliation committee is made up mostly of military officers and state officials with a minority of members with specialist experience in reconciliation and peace building. Concerns about the application of the Thai old style of reconciliation, particularly by enacting an amnesty law or using an authoritarian power to enforce peace is still in existence and widespread throughout the Thai society. Any achievement in reconciling the decade-long political conflict in this country from the work of this committee therefore is questionable and perhaps hardly to be expected. One of the critical examples supporting these concerns is the so-called "10-point social contract" released by the

military government in July 2017, as one of the final outcomes from the work of the Committee for Reform, Reconciliation, and National Strategy. This contract was promoted as a way to bring about reconciliation and unity to the country under a quasi-democratic framework designed by the junta. However, the critics generally regarded the social contract as only a cosmetic exercise to boost the junta's image and lacking genuine people participation and contribution in its drafting process. For this reason, the trust building is unlikely to be plausible so long as Thailand is still under authoritarian rule of the NCPO and General Prayut Chan-o-cha who may arbitrarily exercise his absolute power embedded in the current Thai 2017 Constitution (see section 265).

What can be done to facilitate the reconciliation process that could transform political conflict in Thai society into peace? This dissertation thus recommends that the government as well as any of those who have a responsibility in a reconciliation process must recognize that the process of reconciliation is relevant to, and has an effect on, not only the conflicting parties but all sectors and all people throughout the society. For this reason, any initiative by the government or political groups striving for reconciliation must consider the importance of meaningful public participation in the reconciliation process. As the analyses sustained throughout this dissertation highlighted the importance of trust, the government as one of the most important political institutions for the facilitation of a reconciliation process must seek the ways to increase its trustworthiness in the eyes of the public, for example, by revealing information and providing clear reasons to the public so that they understand what is being done and how earnestly the government is committed to the reconciliation process.

Moreover, the government and other political institutions involved must put a system in place for feedback from the public; especially from those who incurred losses

and were affected by the violent incidents. In order to build trust between the people, interactive channels must also be made available to the people to communicate together, to build understanding, and to exchange opinions; especially channels for broad-based discussions about the pathway to transform the conflicts and the future of this country. One of the communication channels that should be organized throughout the whole country is a public forum, deliberative dialogue, or public deliberation where conflicting parties and people from all sectors can express their opinions and listen to the opinions of others who hold different views. This kind of public forum would allow people to understand each other and to find a way to compromise and endeavor to view the issues that divide the society from similar view points. In this way, a peaceful society in which people who are past enemies and/or those who hold different political viewpoints can live together despite their differences could be expected.

This dissertation strongly agrees with previous studies in believing that reconciliation is a continual process. This dissertation thus suggests the government should create impartial mechanisms to support continuation of an efficient process of reconciliation, especially by providing the budget for the functioning of those mechanisms, and then not interfering in their work. In this regard, the reconciliation committee or a working group like the Committee for Reform, Reconciliation, and National Strategy that was appointed by the NCPO is essential to establish. However, unlike the membership of the Committee for Reform, Reconciliation, and National Strategy, such a committee should establish as a reconciliation network made up of groups of individuals who are impartial, who represent all sectors of society (i.e., the state, the private sector, and civil society groups, as well as the media and academic institutions), and who demonstrate an active desire to play a leading role in the peaceful process of reconciliation and democratization.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

**Public Opinion Survey under the Project
“Why Reconciliation Failed in Thailand”**

No. of Questionnaire

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Public Opinion Survey under the Project “Why Reconciliation Failed in Thailand”

Thank you for sparing your time to respond to the questionnaire. The public opinion survey under the Project “Why Reconciliation Failed in Thailand” is part of the Ph.D. dissertation conducted by Mrs. Wichuda Satidporn under the supervision of Professor Helen Ware. The objectives of the project are to survey Thais’ attitudes, perceptions, and opinions about politics and reconciliation in Thailand. The survey will lead to an understanding of the key factors for bringing about reconciliation in the case of the recent political conflicts in Thailand.

Your name will not be revealed in the questionnaire, and your answers will be strictly kept confidential. Your information will be used for statistical purposes only. No one can identify which answers are yours.

The survey will take approximately half an hour to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary; you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Are you willing to take part in the survey?

Thank you again. The interview will start now.

Part 1: Democratic Values [Attitudes toward democracy]

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree with the following statements:

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		I refuse to answer.	I don't know/ I won't answer.
	0	1	2	3		8	9
1a. Competitive and periodic elections are a necessary and indispensable element of sustained efforts to the right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1b. Thailand needs an ethical leader, regardless of how he or she get into power, to take the country back from the corrupted politicians.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1c. When the country is facing a difficult situation, it is ok for the government to disregard the law in order to deal with the situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1e. Elections based on vote-buying by offering money to legitimate voters is a beneficial aspect of Thai people because it is a matter of income distribution to Thai people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 2: Perceptions about conflict, reconciliation, and peace

2.1 Attitudes toward conflict and conflict transformation

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree with the following statements:

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		I refuse to answer.	I don't know/ I won't answer.
	0	1	2	3		8	9
2a. Without regard to the other factors, strictly conforming to the law will make Thai society peaceful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2b. Sometimes, using violence (such as in a military coup) to solve the conflict problem is necessary because it is a method that can rapidly solve the problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2c. Conflicts can be resolved by talking to each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2d. We can decrease tension of conflict by forgiving for each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2e. If people do realize their faults, then forgive them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2f. The society has rules and regulations, so people who commit illegal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		I refuse to answer.	I don't know/ I won't answer.
	0	1	2	3		8	9
practice deserve their punishment.							
2g. The best forgiveness is the forgiveness with no conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.2 Opinions about the key elements of the reconciliation process

How important are the following elements for the reconciliation process in the case of Thailand's current political conflict?

0 signifies "not at all important;" 10 signifies "very much important"

Elements													refuse to answer	don't know/ won't answer
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		98	99
2h. The political will of the top political leaders that are committed to peace and reconciliation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2i. Strong civil society organizations (CSOs) that advocate and support the process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2j. A societal atmosphere that provides safe and trusted space for all parties to work together toward a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Elements												refuse to answer	don't know/ won't answer	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			98
possible solution														
2k. An inclusive dialogue process that is acceptable to all stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2l. A fair mechanism for truth-finding, sincere apology, and forgiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2m. Punishing those who have killed or hurt others during political violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 3: Trust

3.1 Trusts in institutions

Do you strongly trust, trust, don't trust, and not at all trust in the following institutions:

Institutions	Not at all trust	Don't trust	Trust	Strongly trust	I refuse to answer.	I don't know/ I won't answer.
	0	1	2	3		
3a. The government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3b. The parliament	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3c. The courts of justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3d. Political parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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3.2 Individual Trust

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree with the following statement

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		I refuse to answer.	I don't know/ I won't answer.
	0	1	2	3		8	9
3e. Most people can be trusted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 4: Political identifications & Socioeconomic backgrounds

4.1 Political identifications

Color affiliation	no color / neutral	Red	slightly leaning Red	slightly leaning Yellow	strongly Yellow		I refuse to answer.	I don't know/ I won't answer.
	0	1	2	3	4		8	9
4a. If you had to choose one, which of the following would most closely describe your political opinion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How close do you usually think your political opinions are to the following parties?

0 signifies “feel totally not close to this party” 10 signifies “feel very much close to this party”

Party identification												I refuse to answer .	I don't know/ I won't answer .	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			98
4b. Chart Thai Pattana Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4c. Democrat Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4d. Pheu Thai Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4e. Phumjai Thai Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4f. Other parties (please identify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.2 Socioeconomic backgrounds

S .1 Gender 0 female 1 male

S2. Age _____ year/Year of birth _____

S3. Please state your average household's earn during the last 12 months _____ Baht

S4. Are you current self-employed, working in a family business or an outside employer?

0 not employed

- 1 self-employed
- 2 working in a family business
- 3 working for an outside employer
- 4 working in public sector

S5. Highest education level achieved (If you are a student, please identify the highest education you think you will achieve.)

- 1 No education
- 2 Not completed primary education
- 3 Primary education
- 4 Attended vocational school
- 5 Secondary education
- 6 First years of university
- 7 Bachelor's degree
- 8 Higher than Bachelor's Degree
- 9 Other please specify: _____

S6. What is your religion?

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhism | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Islam | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> No religion |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Christianity | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> I refuse to answer. |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know. |

To be filled by the interviewer

S7. Respondent's area of living:

- 0 village/small town (living outside a municipality area)
- 1 large city/metropolitan (living in a municipality area)
- 2 Bangkok

Province/District/Subdistrict/Village:.....

...

Date of interview:.....

Time of interview:.....

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE IN THAI

**Public Opinion Survey under the Project
“Why Reconciliation Failed in Thailand”**

No. of Questionnaire

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**การศึกษาความคิดเห็นของประชาชน เรื่อง
“การสำรวจทัศนคติการปรองดองในประเทศไทย”**

ขอขอบคุณสำหรับเวลาอันมีค่าในตอบแบบสอบถามฉบับนี้ การสำรวจการศึกษาความคิดเห็นของประชาชนโครงการทัศนคติต่อการปรองดองในประเทศไทยเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาระดับปริญญาเอกของอาจารย์วิชุดา สาธิตพร ณ มหาวิทยาลัยนิวยอร์ก ประเทศออสเตรเลีย โดยโครงการนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความคิดเห็นและความรู้สึกของคนไทยเกี่ยวกับประเด็นการเมืองและการสร้างความปรองดองในประเทศไทย ซึ่งจะนำไปสู่การสร้าง ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับปัจจัยสำคัญในการนำสันติสุขมาสู่สังคมไทยอย่างยั่งยืน

แบบสอบถามจะไม่ถูกระบุชื่อและคำตอบของท่านจะถูกรักษาเป็นความลับอย่างเคร่งครัด ข้อมูลจะถูกใช้เพื่อวัตถุประสงค์ทางสถิติเท่านั้น ไม่มีใครที่จะสามารถระบุได้ว่าเป็นท่านหรือคำตอบของท่าน

ทั้งนี้ แบบสอบถามจะใช้เวลาในการสัมภาษณ์ประมาณ 30 นาที การมีส่วนร่วมของในการตอบแบบสอบถามของท่านจะเป็นไปด้วยความสมัครใจ ท่านสามารถขอยุติการสัมภาษณ์เมื่อใดก็ได้ ท่านเต็มใจที่จะเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของสำรวจนี้หรือไม่คะ/ครับ?

ขอขอบคุณอีกครั้ง ต่อไป เราจะเริ่มการสัมภาษณ์แล้วนะคะ/ครับ

ส่วนที่ 1: ทักษะติดต่อประชาธิปไตย

ท่านเห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วย หรือไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่งกับข้อความต่อไปนี้

ข้อความ	ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง	ไม่เห็นด้วย	เห็นด้วย	เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง	ปฏิเสฐที่จะตอบ	ไม่ทราบ
	0	1	2	3		
1ก. การเลือกตั้งที่สมัครและมีการแข่งขันคือองค์ประกอบที่จำเป็นและขาดไม่ได้ในการสนับสนุนให้ประชาชนทุกคนสามารถเข้าไปมีส่วนในการปกครองบ้านเมือง	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1ข. ประเทศไทยต้องการผู้นำที่ดีมีจริยธรรมเพื่อปกป้องประเทศจากนักการเมืองที่ฉ้อฉลโดยไม่ต้องสนใจว่าผู้นำคนนั้นจะเข้ามาใช้อำนาจด้วยวิธีการใด	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1ค. เมื่อบ้านเมืองต้องเจอกับสถานการณ์ที่ยากลำบาก รัฐบาลสามารถงดเว้นการใช้กฎหมายบางเรื่องได้เพื่อจัดการกับสถานการณ์ต่างๆ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1ง. การเลือกตั้งด้วยการใช้เงินซื้อเสียง เป็นประโยชน์กับประชาชน เพราะเป็นการกระจายรายได้ให้กับประชาชน	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ส่วนที่ 2: มุมมองเกี่ยวกับความขัดแย้ง การปรองดอง และสันติสุข

2.1 ทศนคติต่อความขัดแย้งและการแปรเปลี่ยนความขัดแย้งไปสู่สันติสุข

ท่านเห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วย หรือไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่งกับข้อความต่อไปนี้

ข้อความ	ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง	ไม่เห็นด้วย	เห็นด้วย	เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง	ปฏิเสธที่จะตอบ	ไม่ทราบ
	0	1	2	3		
2ก. การปฏิบัติตามกฎหมายอย่างเคร่งครัดโดยไม่จำเป็นต้องพิจารณาด้านอื่นๆ ทำให้สังคมไทยมีความสุข	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2ข. บางครั้งการใช้ความรุนแรงในการจัดการปัญหา (เช่น การรัฐประหาร) ก็มีความจำเป็น เพราะเป็นวิธีการแก้ไขปัญหาที่รวดเร็ว	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2ค. ความขัดแย้งสามารถได้รับการแก้ไขได้ด้วยการหันหน้ามาพูดคุยกัน	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2ง. เราอาจทำให้บรรยากาศความขัดแย้งลดลงได้โดยการให้อภัยกัน	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2จ. ถ้าคนทำผิดแล้วสำนึกผิดก็ให้อภัยกันได้	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2ฉ. บ้านเมืองต้องมีกฎระเบียบ เพราะฉะนั้นคนทำผิดต้องถูกลงโทษ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ข้อความ	ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง	ไม่เห็นด้วย	เห็นด้วย	เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง	ปฏิเสหที่ จะตอบ	ไม่ทราบ
	0	1	2	3		
2ข. การให้อภัยที่ดีที่สุด คือ การให้อภัยโดยไม่ต้องมีเงื่อนไขใดๆ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.2 ความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับปัจจัยสำคัญในกระบวนการสร้างความปรองดอง

ท่านคิดว่าสิ่งต่อไปนี้มีความสำคัญต่อกระบวนการสร้างความปรองดองในประเทศไทยมากน้อยแค่ไหน จากคะแนนตั้งแต่ 0 คือ ไม่สำคัญเลย จนถึง 10 คือ สำคัญมากที่สุด

องค์ประกอบ												ปฏิเสห	ไม่ทราบ	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			98
2ข. เจตจำนงทางการเมืองของผู้นำระดับสูงในการสร้างความปรองดองและสันติสุข	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2ฉ. ความเข้มแข็งขององค์กรภาคประชาชนในการสนับสนุนกระบวนการปรองดอง	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2ญ. บรรยากาศของสังคมที่ทำให้คนที่ขัดแย้งกันทุกฝ่ายรู้สึกปลอดภัยและไว้วางใจกัน เพื่อร่วมกันแก้ไขปัญหา	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2ฎ. กระบวนการพูดคุยผู้มีส่วนได้	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

องค์ประกอบ												ปฏิบัติ	ไม่ ทราบ	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			98
ส่วนเสียทุกฝ่าย ยอมรับ														
2ก. กระบวนการ ที่เป็นธรรมใน การค้นหาความ จริง การขอโทษ และให้อภัย	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2ข. การลงโทษ คนที่ทำร้ายหรือ ฆ่าผู้อื่นใน เหตุการณ์ความ รุนแรงทาง การเมือง	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ส่วนที่ 3: ความเชื่อมั่น

3.1 ความเชื่อมั่นต่อสถาบันต่างๆ

ท่านเชื่อมั่นอย่างสูง เชื่อมั่น ไม่เชื่อมั่น หรือไม่เชื่อมั่นเลย ต่อสถาบันทางการเมืองต่อไปนี้

สถาบัน	ไม่เชื่อ มั่นเลย	ไม่ เชื่อมั่น	เชื่อมั่น	เชื่อมั่น อย่างสูง	ปฏิบัติ จะตอบ	ไม่ ทราบ
	0	1	2	3		
3ก. รัฐบาล	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
3ข. รัฐสภา	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
3ค. ศาลยุติธรรม	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
3จ. พรรคการเมือง	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

3.2 ความไว้วางใจใจกัน

ท่านเห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง เห็นด้วย ไม่เห็นด้วย หรือไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่งกับข้อความต่อไปนี้

ข้อความ	ไม่เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง	ไม่เห็น ด้วย	เห็น ด้วย	เห็นด้วย อย่างยิ่ง		ปฏิเสธที่ จะตอบ	ไม่ทราบ
	0	1	2	3		8	9
3ฉ. คนส่วนใหญ่ ไวใจได้	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ส่วนที่ 4: ภูมิหลังทางเศรษฐกิจ สังคม และการเมือง

4.1 ภูมิหลังทางการเมือง

	ไม่มีสี / เป็น กลาง	อยู่ ฝ่าย เสื้อ แดง อย่าง ชัดเจน	ค่อนข้าง จะเห็น คล้าย ตามฝ่าย เสื้อ แดง	ค่อนข้าง จะเห็น คล้าย ตามฝ่าย เสื้อ เหลือง / กปปส	อยู่ฝ่าย เสื้อ เหลือง / กปปส อย่าง ชัดเจน		ปฏิเสธ ที่จะ ตอบ	ไม่ทราบ
	0	1	2	3	4		8	9
4ก. ถ้า จำเป็นต้องเลือก ซัก 1 ข้อ ท่าน คิดว่าข้อใดตรง กับความคิดเห็น ทางการเมือง ของท่านมาก ที่สุด	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ท่านคิดว่าความคิดเห็นทางการเมืองของท่านสอดคล้องหรือใกล้เคียงกับแนวทางของพรรคการเมือง
ต่อไปนี้แค่ไหน จากคะแนนตั้งแต่ 0 คือ ไม่สอดคล้องหรือใกล้เคียงเลย จนถึง 10 คือ สอดคล้องหรือ
ใกล้เคียงมากที่สุด

พรรคการเมือง												ปฏิบัติ ที่จะ ตอบ	ไม่ ทราบ/ ไม่รู้จัก พรรค การเมือง นี้	
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			98
4ข. พรรคชาติไทยพัฒนา	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4ค. พรรคประชาธิปัตย์	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4ง. พรรคเพื่อไทย	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4จ. พรรคภูมิใจไทย	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4ฉ. พรรคอื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.2 ภูมิหลังทางเศรษฐกิจและสังคม

S.1 เพศ 0 หญิง 1 ชาย

S2. อายุ _____ ปี / ปี พ.ศ. เกิด _____

S3. ในช่วงประมาณ 1 ปีที่ผ่านมา ครอบครัวของท่านมีรายได้เฉลี่ย

ประมาณเดือนละ _____ บาท

S4. สถานภาพการทำงานของท่านตรงกับข้อใด

- 0 ไม่ได้ทำงาน
 1 ประกอบอาชีพอิสระของตัวเอง
 2 ทำงานในธุรกิจ/กิจการของครอบครัว

- 3 ทำงานในบริษัทเอกชน/กิจการของคนอื่น
 4 ทำงานในหน่วยงานของรัฐ

S5. ระดับการศึกษาสูงสุดที่ได้รับ (ถ้าผู้ตอบเป็นนักเรียน ให้ใส่ระดับการศึกษาที่สูงที่สุด)

- 1 ไม่ได้เรียน
 2 ไม่จบระดับประถมศึกษา
 3 จบชั้นประถมศึกษา
 4 จบชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้น
 5 จบชั้นมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลาย /จบสายอาชีวะ
 6 อนุปริญญา/กำลังศึกษาอยู่ในมหาวิทยาลัย
 7 จบปริญญาตรี
 8 จบสูงกว่าปริญญาตรี
 9 อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ_____

S6. ท่านนับถือศาสนาอะไร

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> พุทธ | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ_____ |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> อิสลาม | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> ไม่นับถือศาสนาใดเลย |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> คริสต์Christianity | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> ปฏิเสธที่จะตอบ |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> ฮินดู | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> ไม่ทราบ |

ส่วนนี้ ผู้สัมภาษณ์เป็นผู้กรอกข้อมูลเอง

S7. ที่อยู่อาศัยของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามตั้งอยู่ในเขตใด:

- 0 นอกเขตเทศบาล
 1 ในเขตเทศบาล
 2 กรุงเทพฯ

ตำบล.....อำเภอ.....
จังหวัด.....
วันเดือนปีที่สัมภาษณ์:.....เวลาที่ใช้:.....

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[newsid=1279607815&grpid=01&catid=\(http://www.matichon.co.th/news_deta](http://www.matichon.co.th/news_deta)

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