

Understanding Thailand Energy Policy; Trajectories and Changes under the Military Regime

A case study of the Power Development Plan
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Master's thesis
submitted to Aalborg University
for the degree of Master in International Relations
supervised by Johannes Dragsbæk Schmidt
May 31st 2016



Abstract

This thesis aims to examine whether the military government has been an influential actor in shaping a new trajectory in Thailand energy policy, hence creating the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint. In order to understand whether and how the intricate interrelation functions between the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint and the military government. The case study will be applied as research design to analyze, whether such process has undertaken. Firstly, a detailed and critical account of the historical and political relationship will be elucidated to examine Thailand's institutional development as well as the interconnection between the military coup and the insertion of the National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO) as the new government administration. Secondly, the thesis will look at Thailand's energy situations, including its future challenges; investigating the historical paths that have resulted in the establishment of the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint. Thirdly, three distinct theoretical tools derived from the historical institutionalist approach, are employed to comprehend, analyze and discuss whether such interrelation exists and if so to what degree.

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1. Introduction

Siam¹, a country in which colonialism has never officially set foot, has taken an alternative path to state building compared to its neighboring countries. Yet, the void left by absence of colonialism was filled by royal nationalism, which created a sense of belonging to the land of Siam for the Thai people. The evolution of royal nationalism was instigated through the establishment of the royal institutions during the rule of King Watchirawut in the year 1910-1925. The creation of the royal institutions resulted in the development of cumulative nationalism through propaganda, education and rewriting of the Thai history (Anderson, 1978). This paved the way for royal nationalism to prosper and become the central ideology in the country. The core values of the ideology included, loyalty to the monarchy as well as respect for authority and hierarchy. This ideology prominently became the foundation for the countries state building process (Kuhonta, 2011, p. 239).

However, in year 1932, the history of Thailand was changed drastically by a revolution in which led to an abolishment of the absolute monarchy and an establishment of the constitutional monarchy (Udenrigsministeriet, 2015). Even though the revolution undermined the power of the monarchy, it did not succeed in bringing an end to monarchy in Thailand. The monarchy instead created an unusual alliance with the military and maneuvered their way to shape and influence Thai politics for decades (Marshall, 2014, p. 79). Since the introduction of the constitutional monarchy in 1932, Thailand has experienced a total of eleven completed coups and seventeen attempted coups (Ferrara, 2012).

Military coups have played an important role in nation building, for better and for worse. Nevertheless, the strength of the military institution has often grown with the action of a coup (Janowitz, 1964). In Thailand the coups have also played an important part of the institutional development and the nation building. Through these roles, the Thai military has become one of the strongest institutions in the country, making them a part of a normative solution to balance the Thai Democracy (Rakson, 2010). By executing coups, the military has largely gained its institutional strength in

¹ Thailand's original name until 1948

the name of protecting the monarchy, hence received the royal blessing in legitimizing their actions (Anderson 1978).

In contrast, within this system, the political parties have not received the same blessing. Under the system of royal nationalism and its core values, political parties tend not to debate over any major political principles or ideologies² but instead fight in a battle for spoils. In other words, the parties in Thailand fight each other by damaging their opposition leaders' reputation. This type of political strategies has resulted in Thai politics to favor personalism where a single charismatic leader becomes the central part of the party, rather than a political ideology (Kuhonta, 2011, p. 167). Personalism perpetuated weak institutional parties because the parties only existed through the existence and support of the party leader. Without the leader, the party would crumble. The lack of ideology in the political system also implies that that party could move more freely in government coalition in order to gain influence, without protest from supporters. Nevertheless, such political system inevitably leads to a weak government coalition, and hence institution (Kurlantzick, 2011). Because of weak governmental institutions, corruption turns to be an inevitable solution for a weak government to run things more smoothly (Méon, 2010).

In the recent political trajectory of Thailand and after years of political turbulence between the red-shirts and yellow-shirts³, the military declared martial law nationwide to create peace and put an end to political deadlock in the country. The 22th of May 2014, marked as the official date, where the former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra was overthrown and the National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO) singlehandedly took the reign of the country. The following month resulted in the creation of two new institutions namely, National Legislative Assembly (NLA) and National Reform Council (NRC), the members of which were selected by the

² There are indeed strong ideological powers in the creation of the first political parties and during the development of Thailand, however in the later stage of modern Thailand ideologies have been a diminishing part of the current political struggle (Marshall, 2014, p. 4-5).

³The red-shirts represent the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) mostly consisting of rural dwellers and workers who are supporters of the ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The yellow-shirts represent the group formally known as the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) consisting mostly of royalists and the extreme nationalists.

military. With King Bhumibol's⁴ blessing to the newly made interim constitution it finally gave the military full legitimacy to the coup (BBC, 2014).

Additionally, the military choose to maintain control until the political crisis has been settled. The 21st august 2014 marked as a day of transformation in the political landscape by the introduction of General Prayut Chan-Ocha, a former Commander in Chief of the Royal Thai Army, as the new self-promoted Prime Minister of Thailand (Udenrigsministeriet, 2015). With the establishment of a new government, the state agenda was altered in its forms and content. Among countless changes that followed the coups, are, the creation of new institutions, rotation in the cabinet members, new state sanctioned regulations, tightened security measures, increased surveillance, numerous policy amendments across several sectors and a new constitution in the near future (Sriring, 2015).

In view of the changing political landscape of Thailand and the ensuing ramifications, this thesis focuses on the changes in the Ministry of Energy. One of the most noticeable developments in the Ministry of Energy is the rotation of the new cabinet, introducing General Anantaporn Kanjanarat⁵ as the new minister of energy. In his early period of work at the Ministry, he has initiated Thailand's new master plan towards a better future named: *the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint*. The plans' major purpose is to harmonize the Thai energy policy, which has had a history of ambiguities and inconsistencies. The Integrated Energy Blueprint consists of five revised energy plans across the different sub-ministries in the Ministry of Energy. These five revised plans include: Power Development Plan 2015, the Gas Plan 2015, the Energy Efficiency Plan 2015, the Oil Plan 2015 and the Alternative Energy Development Plan 2015 (Sutabutr, 2015).

⁴ Also named as King Rama IX, reign: 1946-present

⁵ General Anataporn has military background and held prominent positions in many different institutions, such as Government Expenditure Monitoring Committee (GEMC), Rehabilitation and Restructuring Subcommittee (SOE), National Anti-Corruption Committee (NACC) and is a member of the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). Furthermore he was an independent director in Krug Thai bank and Thai airway (Energyforum, 2015).

Figure 1: The Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint

Source: DEDE, 2015

Undoubtedly, institutional development has swayed depending on different circumstances in the Thai politics. The most notable institutional developments often depend on the type of system, which governs the country. In fact, it is dependent upon whether the governing system is democratic, quasi-democratic or a military regime. However, institutional change is a rare thing, but sometimes appears in an event, where a problem/crisis needed to be resolved. In this regards, it can be pinpointed that an intuitional change occurs predominantly during a regime change. This leads to a question: *whether the military government extends its influences in the newly formulated policy changes in the Ministry of Energy?* There are indeed challenges in the ministry of energy, such as, the current energy policy, which are threatened by the energy security⁶ issue Thailand is currently facing and the lack of institutional structure in the ministry (Changson, 2015). The issues the Ministry of Energy is currently facing will be explained in-depth in the later chapters.

Thailand with its unique state-building futures having the monarch of head of state has become the trailblazer for the development of the military institutions through the blessing of the royal nationalism ideology, aimed at guarding the King. The military institutions have established into one of the corner stones in the state-building process and have paved the way for many institutional changes in the country.

⁶ Brown defines energy security in four aspects, namely: (1) Availability of energy (2) Affordability of energy (3) Efficient consumption (4) Environmental stewardship (Brown, 2010).

It is illuminating to examine the ongoing institutional changes in Thailand and analyze, which paths such changes might take? This puzzling concoction has prompted the important questions on; *how institutions are formed in Thailand and how new policy is created and configured*. It is therefore the aim of this thesis to examine whether any influences were inflicted upon the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint by the current military government. This inquiry hence serves as a basis of the thesis' problem formulation.

2. Problem formulation

The brief overview articulated in the introduction has given a fundamental insight into the institutional development in Thailand and served, as an explanation on how royal nationalism, has become the fundamental ideology in Thailand. Royal nationalism entails a formation of the alliance between the two strongest institutions in the country, namely: the military and the monarchy. Together, they have steered the institutional changes and development in Thailand, transforming the military coup to become a normative solution for the country's problems.

Resting on this interesting yet confounding background, the thesis will examine how the military uses their power to influence and dictate the country's development. This attempt to examine such complex issue has created the foundation for the following problem formulation.

To what extent is the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint a result of influences by the military government?

3. Research Method

In this chapter, the chosen research design will be presented, followed by an argumentation for the selected field of research. Further, research limitations particularly in the context of conducting the study in Thailand will be explained. Acknowledging the limitations is useful in the application of the selected methodological tools, namely, document analysis to extract information from the empirical materials and in putting into perspectives, the credibility of these sources. Finally the method chapter will end by examining the validity of the research in the above-mentioned context and arguing whether this research upholds the required criteria as a valid research.

3.1. Research design

This thesis employs *case study* as its research design. George & Bennett define a case as “*an instance of class of events*” (George & Bennett, 2004, p. 17). An event is also known as a phenomenon, such as regimes, revolutions, economic system, etc. This make case study versatile and have the ability to capture complex understanding in the chosen case (Bryman, 2012, pp. 66-67). This is one of the reasons that case study has been frequently used as a way to examine historical episode, hereby developing and discovering historical explanation, which can be used to generalize on other events (George & Bennett, 2004, p. 5). Case study is a popular research design in the field of political sciences, since it can be used to examine individual persons as well as complex institutions.

There are many types of case studies and multiple ways to explore an answer to a given problem formulation. Case study can be studied both as a single case and as multiple cases. It serves to either examining a general cohesiveness or a unique phenomenon (Antoft, 2012, p. 31). However, examining similar events from multiple cases will increase the validity by supporting each other. Accordingly, it is crucial to discern a case that reflects all the essential aspects needed to get a vast enough picture of the phenomenon and ensure the most optimal reliable, repeatable and valid research structure (Bryman, 2012, pp. 66-68). A well-defined case is not a direct

historical event, but rather an aspect of a historical episode, which encapsulates the very essence of the phenomenon (George & Bennett, 2004, p. 18).

For this thesis, the selected case study is the recent military coup in Thailand, which has resulted in the establishment of military government. This is indeed a phenomenon, which needed to be better construed. By selecting the current military coup as the fulcrum of this study, it will be regarded as a single case. Nevertheless using multiple cases as an alternative approach to answer the problem formulation could give a more complete answer, hence increasing the validity of such study. Although a multiple case study could enhance this study and its validity, it has not been chosen as the research design, given time and other limitations endemic to this study. All in all, a single case study is chosen principally to keep the thesis stringent in its scope in examining mainly the current military coup and the current Thai energy policy. Moreover the selected case, the 2014 military coup is considered, within the scope of this thesis, to be the best case study that will generate, a trustworthy answer to the problem formulation because of its recent occurrence.

More specifically, the recent changes in Thailand energy policy and the launch of the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint, arguably one of the most important transfigurations of the national energy policy, have occurred under the current military regime. Thus the recent coup is determined as major force in changing energy direction of the country. Although previous military coups could be employed to answer the same problem formulation, it is highly likely that they would result in a different conclusion, since the 2014 military coup has different characteristics and motives compared to that of 2006.

In addition, to seek a lucid answer to the problem formulation, it is pivotal to identify the appropriate area of research to examine into. There are many fields of research, which could be examined in the realm of Thai energy policy. The most relevant and interesting fields include: Power Development Plan, Gas Plan, Oil Plan, Alternative Energy Development Plan and Energy Efficiency Plan, which altogether construct the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint. Each of these research fields contains considerable amount of information, which can be used for the analysis. Yet

it will be improbable to cover them all given the time and other related limitations for this thesis. Therefore, this study will concentrate on the Power Development Plan due to its roles as anchor and foundation of all other energy plans.

3.1.1. Research limitations

Doing research which touches upon Thai politics and contested area of national policies as a foreigner, entails some methodological disadvantages especially during the empirical gathering process. To begin with, language barrier poses significant challenge during research process. A large number of official documents and policy papers are written in Thai language. Consequently, empirical materials consulted for this thesis are limited to those written or translated into English. This inevitably can affect the findings of the thesis. It is although possible to overcome this barrier by using a translator. However, translation creates further methodological restriction, such as, the loss of the real meaning of terminology and of the original empirical material (Temple & Young, 2004, pp. 161-179).

Further research limitations include, the choice of the field of research in this thesis. Given choice made; it prioritizes a certain type of empirical materials, hereby excludes others. The selection of the field of research, namely, the Power Development plan favors empirical materials and data from this policy plan, hence disregards empirical materials from the other four policy plans, which are also a part of the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint. Since, the thesis will only view in the perspective from the Power Development Plan in regards to answer the problem formulation. There are indeed aspects of the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint, which are not fully clarified, such as, their oil policy.

Additionally, interviews are not chosen as research method for this thesis. Although interviewing high-ranking people would offer interesting insights on the topic. It is not being opted for because of the limitations including weak credibility, limitations on critical thinking and tendency to self-censor among the interviewees. Furthermore, getting access to the high-ranking individuals in the hierarchical system under the tightened reign of the military regime can be challenging and often impossible, not to mention the lengthy administrative processes required.



Freedom of speech

The most concerning obstacle lies in the sphere of the laws of Thailand and its ramifications on censorship where research on controversial subjects is prohibited. Specifically, after the 2014 coup, the academic freedom has drastically weakened in Thailand. The universities have experienced increasing military presence in the campus, including military personal monitoring lectures and discussion. Mechanism such as, the interim charter, lèse-majesté law, military presence, detention, punishment and pressure have hindered the academic freedom in Thailand (Chanwanpen, 2015). The most tangible and example of this constraint is the censorship in order to protect the monarchy, which is of the highest priority of the Thai government. On the Thai government official website, it is stated as follows:

“It is an extremely important duty of the Government to uphold, and protect the monarchy. Proper legal, psychological, and ICT measures will be employed to cope with those having malicious intent against the monarchy” (Thaigov, 2014).

The lèse-majesté law, which dates back to the year 1908, forbids defaming, insulting, accusing and threatening the King, the Queen and their heirs. Even though the law seems straightforward, the definition vis-a-vis types of crime is undefined and swings from case to case. This lack of clarity has caused the law to be “misused” and has been used frequently by the current military junta (Sabur, 2015), (ilaw, 2016). Hence, it is evident that freedom of speech does not fully exist in Thailand, which results in methodological complications for this thesis. Conducting research on and in Thailand with regard to sensitive subjects, such as: politics, human rights, class struggle and conflict, and corruption, etc., carries the risks, in a number of instances as witnessed in the past, to pertain the monarchy in some ways, since they are major figure in the country.

This implication instigates important questions: *how can you conduct research about Thailand without the risk of being called in by the authorities for “attitude*



*adjustment*⁷” or even imprisonment without compromising the academic values? This question has implications on the credibility of the empirical materials gathered for the analysis. To answer this question a categorization system will be applied to classify the empirical materials on Thailand. The categorization system has the purpose to facilitate the use of document analysis by dividing the empirical materials into two categories, which will be applied to determine the credibility of a document.

1. The first categorization are scholars who are currently based in Thailand where their critical thinking is considered in line with the Thai laws, restraining from expressing opinions on controversial issues, hence may compromise academic values.
2. Second, scholars who are living outside Thailand. They are therefore not in a dangerous position within the reach of Thai laws. This enables the scholars to be fully critical about Thai affairs without bearing deleterious consequence other than the possibility of not being able to enter the country.

The thesis uses empirical materials from the both categories. Yet empirical materials are treated differently depending on their topics, but their credibility remains dependent on its categorization. This will be further discussed in the following section on document analysis.

3.2. Empirical data gathering

The strength of case study is often associated with the use of qualitative method, however in reality case study can take multiple paths of empirical choices; meaning it has the possibility to use a diverse set of empirical materials both quantitative and qualitative (Bryman, 2014, p. 68). This thesis will not only utilize qualitative materials, but also combine it with quantitative data. By using empirical materials form both quantitative and qualitative sources, it also enlarges the possibility to better reflect and understand the field of research from more diverse lens.

⁷ Attitude adjustment is a method applied by the military government to neutralize critical people and their thinking especially the ones who oppose the regime. The critics are detained, interrogated and disciplined in a military camp (Rojanaphruk, 2015).

This thesis will be using a multiple set of empirical materials. Empirical materials from a number of primary and secondary sources will be applied. The primary sources include: the Thailand Ministry of Energy and its sub-ministries, such as, the Department of Alternative Energy Development and Efficiency (DEDE), The Energy Policy and Planning Office (EPPO). Furthermore, the secondary sources can be categorized among additionally studies conducted by specialist in both field of energy and Thai affairs made by international organizations, civil society, professors and other interest groups. Lastly, sources from news media, both Thai medias, such as, Bangkok Post, The Nations, Prachathai and international medias including: BBC, Al Jazeera, Economist, Telegraph and the Diplomats will also be part of the empirical material.

3.2.1. Document analysis

Document analysis involves the use of document. A document can be contracts, official documents, newspaper, biography, etc. The only true requirement for a document is that its context fit in the given researches that are being conducted to enable information extraction (Bryman, 2012, pp. 543-544). Document analysis uses three factors to judge, whether the document can be used for the later analytical work. These three variables include, authenticity, credibility and the meaning of the document (Duedahl & Jacobsen, 2010, pp. 52-68).

As mentioned above, empirical materials on Thailand have a range of implications vis-a-vis credibility issue, which necessitates a categorization to better judge the materials especially with the use of document analysis. This thesis will use document analysis respectively in the documents presented earlier. The majority of the empirical material comes from: official reports, presentation and other documents, including both quantitative and qualitative data from the Ministry of Energy and its sub-ministries, hence, The Department of Alternative Energy Development and Efficiency (DEDE) and The Energy Policy and Planning Office (EPPO).

The authenticity of the empirical materials gathered from the ministry of energy and its sub-ministries can be considered authentic, since it is primary official government document. However, the meanings of the document are sometimes

inconsistent in both data and statements, when comparing similar documents presented by different sub-ministries. This inconsistency in the content and meaning of the document will reduce the overall credibility of the empirical materials. It can be argued that the absence of centralized policy planning process among the different sub-ministries has contributed to this inconsistency. Even though the credibility of document presented by the ministry of energy and its sub-ministries are considered low; there is unfortunately no better alternative data, meaning that the empirical materials presented by the ministry of energy will be applied in this research to answer the problem formulation. In regards to the categorization system mentioned in the above section, the primary empirical material gathered from the Ministry of Energy and its sub-ministries are categorized as the first categorization; scholars who are based in Thailand. However, the empirical material from the Ministry of Energy and its sub-ministries are threatened differently, since their empirical material does not evolve around sensitive topics.

The authenticity of both Thai and international news media is considerably good, since all the news applied are from respectable and recognized media with good authenticity. However, the credibility among the Thai news and media is considerably lower than international ones. This was explained in the categorization system presented in the previous section. Since journalists working in the Thai news and media are most likely under the first categorization. To elaborate, the journalists' critical thinking is firstly self-censored to be in line with the Thai laws and secondly, re-censored by the military government before being published in the news and other forms of media. This undermines the overall credibility of the Thai news and media sources. Conversely, the international news and media are not as restrained by the same level of censorship, making them more credible than their Thai counterparts. Nevertheless, the news applied in this thesis is aimed to define timelines and clarify historical events. In other words, the application of the documents is for straightforward purpose and therefore less likely to be misunderstood. As a result, the low level of credibility in the Thai news media is being compensated by more credible sources from international news and media.

The authenticity of the empirical material gathered from various studies by both international organizations and researcher are considered authentic, due to their

expertise on the fields including both energy and Thai affairs. Yet, their credibility varies depending on whether a researcher can be categorized as either living in Thailand, hence is limited by the Thai laws or living abroad, enabling them to be more critical without fear of punishment. Although empirical materials from both categorizations have been applied. Only empirical materials from researchers who have the possibility to be critical without censorship are applied when analyzing the institutional development of Thailand to ensure good credibility.

All in all, there exist indeed credibility issues, when conducting research in Thailand. This can be summed up into two points. Firstly, the lack of full freedom of speech in Thailand, which reduces the level of critical thinking of researchers and journalists who restrain themselves for fear of punishment by Thai laws. Secondly, the lowered credibility can be discerned in the official documents presented by the ministry of energy and its sub-ministries who seem to have difficulties to streamline the numbers and the policy planning process. This bottleneck makes the policy reports complex to comprehend and synthesize. Nevertheless, it remains a negligible loss of credibility that needed to be sacrificed for this type of study to be accomplished, since there are no better alternative materials.

3.3 Validity

Validity is probably the most important criteria for a study, since an invalid study will not contribute to future research. Validity can be measured in two distinct ways: internal validity and external validity. Internal validity concentrates on whether the study is measuring the appropriate causality in the variable that is been examined (de Vaus, 2011, pp. 247-248), whereas external validity focuses on the generalization power in similar studies (Bryman, 2012, pp. 47-48). Case study has its ability to achieve solid conceptual validity owing to its ability to understand a given phenomenon.

In other words, case study can be used to identify and measure indicators, which causes or represents the phenomenon. In this regards, it is important to note that the phenomenon which social sciences often examine are those that are difficult to measure, such as: power, regime, institutions, etc. Therefore the researchers tend to

contextualize the phenomenon and compare it with equivalent events. These phenomena, which are difficult to measure is something that the qualitative study can effectively engage, which quantitative studies fails to. Case study can be used to examine a small number of cases and still achieve high validity (George & Bennett, 2004, p. 19).

This study uses case study as its research design with the dependent variables as “Thai energy policy”, which are affected by the independent variable ”the coup”. Examining these variables gives this thesis a good internal validity. This can be supported by the introduction explaining the role of military and the monarchy in the nation building process, which have resulted military interventions to be normalized in Thailand. Furthermore, implementation of the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint and the insertion of a military figure in the Ministry of Energy support the existence of such causality. Through the gathered empirical material from various sources and implementation of the theoretical approach of historical institutionalism the thesis will scrutinize, to what degree the causality exists between the coup and Thailand energy policy exists.

In regard to external validity, this study fulfills the required criteria for having good external validity among similar cases. Its explanatory power can undoubtedly be used to explain other field of research that is affected by military coup. An example of other field of research can be in the areas of national and macro level policies, which are largely influenced by the coup and the military. Yet this thesis’s explanatory power is confined within the chosen case, namely the 2014 military coup.

4. Thailand's institutional development

This chapter is built upon the content from introduction and will further explain the institutional development in Thailand. It is vital to understand the institutional development in order to scrutinize the relationships between the state, the military, the monarch and the political parties in the country. Firstly, this chapter will give an insight into Thailand development since the Siamese revolution to capture the creation of the military might and the modern Thailand. Secondly, there will be a concise explanation of the impact that the Asian financial crisis have instigated upon the country, followed by the rise of Thaksin⁸. Further, this chapter will elucidate the development of the current political crises, commencing from the influx of the military coup in 2006. Ultimately, Thailand political crisis in particular the resurgence of Thaksin and the recent military coup will be elaborated.

4.1. Building the military state

The Siamese revolution was initiated by an organized group of military officials, who created the first political party in Thailand. The party was named the Peoples Party⁹, which became the foundation of the elite society in Thailand. With peaceful manners, the coup d'état was carried out, stripping the monarch of the political power and placing the king under constitutional control (Reynolds, 1987). Later, the military was successful in gaining momentum within the people's party and was able to deter any uprising by hampering political parties to settle, hence political parties were therefore forced to operate under the shadows to avoid constant state interventions. This strategy led the military to become successful in creating a strong foothold within the Thai state. This highly constraining origin and environment ultimately created a weak institutionalization processes in the Thai political party system (Kuhonta, 2011, p. 38). More importantly, this overwrought condition shaped an antagonistic relationship between the state and the political parties.

⁸ Leader of Thai Rak Thai party and Prime Minister of Thailand in the period 2001-2006

⁹ People party or in Thai: Khana Ratsadon was formed by a small group of people, but gathered strength quickly resulting in a coup leading the first constitutions of Thailand.

After the reign of King Prajadhipok or Rama VII¹⁰, the mysterious death of the King Ananda or King Rama VIII¹¹ shocked Thailand. The newly founded Democrat party functioned as a conservative and royalist party opportunistically utilized the death of King Ananda to spread rumors and suspicions against the former Prime Minister Pridi Banomyong¹² to be the King's slayer. This event had shattered the monarch and resulted in the newly appointed King Bhumibol or King Rama IX to flee the country under the pretense of further education abroad. In the absence of a king, a military intervention had occurred, overthrowing the elected government in a move to protect the monarch. Through the use of the King Ananda's death and a letter of approval from the current King Bhumibol¹³, the military coup in 1947 was without difficulty legitimized (Marshall, 2014, pp. 75-76). The political demise of Pridi and the liberals, which was demolished along with the ideals they represented, became much easier for the military and the conservatives, each in turn, to shape the country's political system to their own tastes and requirements (Kobkua, 2003).

4.2. The development of modern Thailand

The coup in 1947 was successful resulting in the longest period of military ruling, which lasted for over 25 years. By blaming Pridi for the murder of the King Ananda, the military successfully buried the ideas of liberalism and democracy that he represented. The suppression of liberalism and democracy facilitated the military to shape the future political outcome with absolute legitimacy through the blessing of King Bhumibol (Marshall, 2014, p. 77). Yet it was not long before a new challenge emerged. In fact, there was a growing uncertainty vis-à-vis the loyalty of the newly flourished elites, mainly the Thai-Chinese families, who have overtaken a large portion of the Thai economy, including the financial and manufacturing sectors. These Thai-Chinese business people have also become an essential part of the Thai economy, since they have been a key component of transforming Thai economy away from primary sectors, such as, farming and towards modern industrialization. The influence that the Thai-Chinese families have gained through economic fortune began to contest the monarch and the traditional elites, including: the monarchy, the military, senior bureaucrats and allied businessmen (Haller, 2014). The unknowing

¹⁰ King Prajadhipok ruled in the period of year 1925-1935

¹¹ King Ananda Mahidol ruled in the period of year 1935-1946

¹² Pridi Banomyong the prime minister of Thailand in the period of year 1946 until 1946.

¹³ A letter sent to the coup groups on the 25th November 1947

fact about their stance towards the monarch posed major threat towards the traditional elites including the military government. In pursuit of a solution to neutralize the Thai-Chinese families, the traditional elites employed unfamiliar strategy by welcoming these families into the warmth of the Thai elite society and by providing them with the protection of the military in return of their loyalty and support to the King. This strategy paved way to the inclusion of these allied businessmen to become a part of the newly enhanced elite society of Thailand.

Even though the military government succeeded in keeping the Thai-Chinese families in check and benefited from their loyalty and economic power. The strategy used by the military had brought them double beneficial effects. By keeping the Thai-Chinese under the military's sphere of influence, the military government has also gained trust as well as support from the United States with whom they needed to secure alliance. Being able to get hold of the influential Thai-Chinese, the United States implied that the spread of communism was being contained¹⁴ (Mishra, 2010, p. 119). At the same time, the Thai-Chinese was also satisfied with being accepted and welcomed under the tutelage of powerful military regime. This power play by the military government worked magnificently, resulting in an enormous growth in the Kingdom of Thailand that made Thailand the fastest growing country in the world at the end of the cold war (Jory, 2014).

4.2.1. The bump on the road and the rise of Thaksin

Despite long period of spectacular economic growth, such growth was eventually disrupted. In the year 1997, the Asian financial crisis hit Thailand like a tsunami, leaving a devastated destruction in the country's financial system. Stock market plummeted while the currency was markedly depreciated after removing its peg to the US dollar. The fast-evolving crisis led to the loss of confidence in the Thai economy (Phongpaichit, 2009).

The beginning of a new 21st century was also a new beginning of Thailand. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, a new politician rose by the name of Thaksin Shinawatra. Thaksin quickly filled the void of future economic prosperity. Thaksin

¹⁴ The ban of communism led to a cooperation with the United States and the military regime, hence gaining American support through foreign investments.

was a successful businessman and was a billionaire through the establishment of a telecommunication company. Supporters of Thaksin and his newly created party named, Thai Rak Thai, consisted of two distinct groups of people. The first group was the business community, who shared the same vision to generate wealth. Nevertheless, Thaksin and his party acknowledged that the support from the business community was not enough to win an election. He turned towards a group of people who never had a voice in Thai politics, specifically, the rural people. Thaksin and his party gained support from the rural voters by running election campaign with strong appeal to the rural population through promising reforms that would enable distributions. This targeted strategy was somewhat a novelty in Thai politics. An elite engaging in politics was nothing new, but a politician who made it possible address the interest of the rural population was something never happened in Thailand before. The support from the business community and the rural people was more than enough for Thaksin to win his first election with a great victory in the year 2001. Through political reforms, he continued to gain massive support from the rural areas by introducing universal healthcare system, minimum wage and enabling social distribution, which secured Thaksin and his party a re-election in 2005 with a landslide win (Marshall, 2014, pp. 20-25, 154-165).

Certainly, Thaksin changed the way politics functioned in Thailand and with increasing popularity he swiftly became a challenger towards the traditional political elites. Even though the Thai Rak Thai party won the election by ample majority in 2005, there was an increasing opposition with skepticism towards Thaksin's ruling. The opposition was greatly dissatisfied with the election's result. They accused Thaksin and Thai Rak Thai party of vote-buying, disloyalty to the monarchy, violation of human rights¹⁵, corruption and of exploiting his position for personal rewards. This had led to widespread demonstration and protest against Thaksin regime. Eventually the protesters merged into a new political movement, namely, People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), also known as yellow-shirts. The yellow-shirts consist mostly of middle-class conservative royalists who self-represent as protectors of the monarch by wearing the symbolic color of the King Bhumipol

¹⁵ A campaign against drug on war, which resulted in over 2000 extrajudicial killings

(yellow). The yellow-shirts wanted to maintain the traditional status quo, where the political power remained in the hands of the traditional elites (Haller, 2014).

These accusations escalated to further political turmoil and heightened scrutiny of Thaksin and his party's political legitimacy. In response, Thaksin called for an early election. With the perspicuous victory from previous election, it was assumed that the early election would work in his favor. However, his strategy backlashed when the newly formed party, People's alliance for Democracy (PAD), rejected the election through blocking elections posts. The political crisis deteriorated and reached its peak, when it was revealed that Thaksin sold one of his own companies, Shin Corporation¹⁶. It was condemned that the so-called "Shin Corp. deal" was made through the exploitation of legal loopholes in the Thai taxation system. This opaque deal together with ever-growing dissatisfaction from the yellow-shirts triggered public outrage. The protestors then demanded that Thaksin step down from his position (Ferrara, 2011).

4.2.2. The fight for political legitimacy

The year 2006 became one of the most intractable political turmoil in modern Thai history; resulting in another successful military coup. The coup, with its immaculate design, took place during Thaksin's visit to New York for the UN General Assembly meeting. After the military have taken over the control of the government, Thaksin was charged for corruption and a dismantling process of the Thai Rak Thai party was initiated. Due to the charge and its severe punitive ramifications, he seeks a voluntary exile abroad. Over hundreds of Thai Rak Thai politicians were also indicted with corruption allegation, banning them for engaging in future politics for five years. As for Thaksin, he decided not to face the corruption allegation and opted for a self-imposed exile. Despite absence of Thaksin and the party, his supporters remained active through continuous demonstrations. The lasting loyalty made it possible for Thaksin to continue exerting his political influence in Thailand. Owing to this support, Thaksin was able, through the use of proxies, to gather his supporters and regain some of his shattered power. Later, a new political

¹⁶ Thailand's leading telecommunication company

party; the United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) was established by Thaksin's supporters (Marshall, 2014, pp. 154-165).

The battle of political legitimacy persisted culminating in a series of violent protests and confrontation between the red-shirts and yellow-shirts camps. In year 2008 within the context of political void and absence of election, Abhisit Vejjajiva was appointed as Prime Minister by the constitutional court of Thailand taking over the position of the military government in 2008. The political conflict in Thailand escalated to its climax¹⁷ when the National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) strategically started strategies of protest in Bangkok against Abhisit's legitimacy. In contrast to the yellow-shirts and their scrutiny of Thaksin regime, the UDD and Thaksin supporters known as "the red-shirts" demanded that the newly appointed democrat Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva, to step down from his position and call for a democratic re-election. Amidst the political quagmire, Abhisit was defeated in the general election in 2011(Thabchumpon, 2011), (BBC, 2011).

4.2.3. Yingluck and the embodiment of Thaksin

In the next election, Thaksin again employed the proxy strategy by using his sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, the founder of Pheu Thai party¹⁸ as a nominee. Pheu Thai party won the election on 3 July 2011 with tremendous victory as a single majority in the parliament. Yingluck and Pheu Thai party shared the same ideology/values as Thaksin. This commonality enabled Thaksin to effectively influence Thai politics with his sister and the Pheu Thai party as puppets despite being in exile in London (Marshall, 2014, pp. 196-198).

Nonetheless, another political conflict was looming large after Yingluck proposed an amnesty bill, which would dismiss almost all corruption charges among the 100 people who were banned from politics. It was believed that the bill proposal was staged to allow Thaksin to dismiss his crimes, restore his private fortunes and his political power (Marshall, 2014, pp. 197-200). This bill triggered demonstration,

¹⁷ This period became one of the most violent events in modern Thai history with thousands of injuries and over 90 people killed, consisting mostly of redshirts protestors. (BBC, 2015)

¹⁸ In the absence of Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai and Peoples Power Party in the year 2008 the Pheu Thai party was founded.

reigniting political tension. The protesters eventually merged into a new movement, named: Peoples Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) led by a former Thailand Democrat Party member of parliament, Suthep Thaugsuban (Haller, 2014). In spite of previous experience, Prime Minister Yingluck responded to the pressure from the opposition by taking a defensive maneuver and calling for an early election.

History seemed to repeat itself; with lack of political legitimacy, a political vacuum was created and the two symbolic colors of shirts, red and yellow, pursued aggressive demonstrations fighting against each other once again. Finally, the day of election was decided, however the yellow-shirts kept on demonstrating and insisted on the election boycott by blocking election posts, knowing their chance of winning was slim (Haller, 2014), the election took place as planned on the 2nd February 2014, the result of the election was annulled. Thailand once again faced political deadlock, which ended in military intervention on 22nd May 2014. The elected government was stripped of their governance by a military coup. The military have, after the coup, continued to run the country with the creation of the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). Since then promises of a future election by the military regime have been delayed. The drafting of a new constitution, which needed to be completed before election could take place, was proclaimed as an excuse for the delay (Al Jazeera, 2016), (Marshall, 2014, pp. 200-207).

4.2.4. A unique coup and a new opportunity

It has been argued that political conflict in Thailand and the inevitability of military intervention are rooted in the skirmish between colors and classes. Given the more proactive role and stance of rural population vis-à-vis politics, it has become increasingly challenging for traditional elites to maintain status quo.

Amidst ongoing political crisis and ambiguity, another critical but rather silent issue is the future of the Thai monarchy. This subject is so sensitive that Thai people rarely speaks about it. And when they do, the words are articulated to be as implicit as possible. This is particularly true for the subject of the forthcoming royal succession after the death of King Bhumibol. With his frail health and fragile condition at 90 years of age, succession is inevitable in the near future. Yet, the statue of King

Bhumibol is the pinnacle of the Thai society as he is the most respected person and in some cases, is referred to as God. His death will bring upon a long lasting period of grief, however whether the transition period will be a smooth or a rough journey towards the possible successor, the crown prince Vajiralongkorn, can be discussed (Marshall, 2014, pp. 107-109).

5. Development of Thailand's energy policies

This chapter will present the development of Thailand energy policies, followed by a brief explanation of the current energy situation in Thailand and its future challenges. Afterwards, there will be an overview of the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint explaining Thailand's future energy targets. Lastly, this chapter will delve into an in-depth examination to better comprehend the complexity of the chosen field of research, the Power Development Plan.

5.1. The foundation of Thailand energy policies

Thailand inevitably has fallen victim to the global energy crisis in the 70s and economic crisis in the 80s, leading to high inflation and unemployment. Given the lack of proper governmental structure and absence of cohesion between energy agencies, the energy issue remained intractable. This rendered it even more problematic for the government to control and monitor the energy-flow. This resulted in haphazard and incompetent administration, which detrimentally affect the formulation of future energy policies. The first step of Thailand energy policies started on 8th September 1986 under the military government with the establishment of National Energy Policy Council (NEPC) and the National Energy Policy Office (NEPO). Subsequently, Prime Minister Genereal Prem Tinsulanonda¹⁹ adopted the country's first energy policy; the National Energy Administration (EPPO. A, 2015).

Yet, it was only in the year 1992 that a more unified institutions was developed through the National Energy Policy Council Act appointed by King Bhumibol. The act introduced a permanent establishment of an office with a license to operate, develop and regulate energy policies. The members of the National Energy Policy Council (NEPC) consisted of the Prime Minister as chairman, Deputy Prime Minister designated by Prime Minister as vice-chairman and a minister attached to the office of the prime minister designated by the prime minister, including all head of the ministers and the Department of Energy Development and the National Energy Policy Office (Thailaw, 2010).

¹⁹ Genereal Prem Tinsulanonda was prime minister of Thailand in the period from 1980-1988.



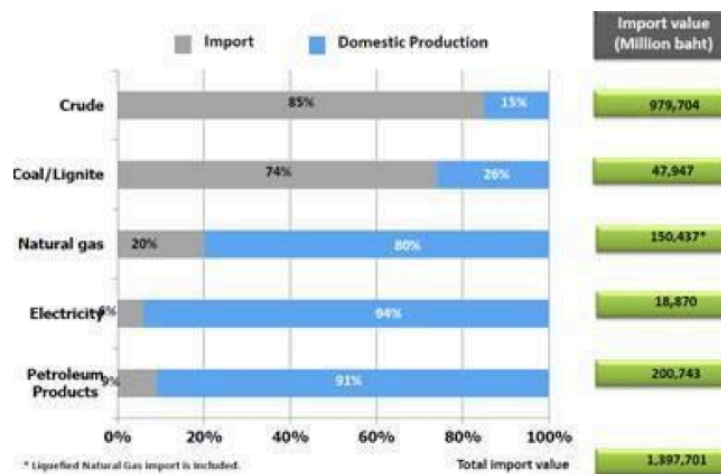
In spite of an establishment of National Energy Policy Council (NEPC) and National Energy Policy Office (NEPO), it was evident that a lot had yet to be improved concerning the government structure in order to maximize the potentials of Thailand energy sector. In the year 2002, under the Thaksin administration additional policy reform was undertaken with an aim to increase effectiveness of the government agencies. One part of the “restructuring of the government organization act” included an establishment of a government’s bureau of energy, which later became known as the Ministry of Energy (EPPO. A, 2015).

5.2. Thailand’s current energy situation and future challenges

Thailand’s energy demand has been increased drastically over the recent time. Despite its best effort to address this problem through different means, such as alternative energy and energy efficiency solution the problem remains and their dependency on imported fossil fuel has been the inevitable result (FAO, 2009). Currently Thailand is measured as the second largest energy consumer in the region of ASEAN. Additionally, they are measured as the second worst energy efficient country in the ASEAN region as well, measured by energy intensity²⁰ (Enerdata, 2014). Thailand is a net importer of energy, importing 44 % of the consumed energy in the country in year 2014 (DEDE, 2015). The dominant type of energy consumption is crude oil, which is mostly used in the industry and transport sectors and gas, which is used for electricity generation. Thailand is expected to have their energy demand double within the next 15 to 20 years (EPPO, 2014),(EIA, 2014). To meet the demand Thailand is forced to import energy resources through their neighbors, mainly: Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia and Myanmar, making them highly dependent on good foreign relations. The figure below, visualizes the ratio between imported and domestic production of various energy sources.

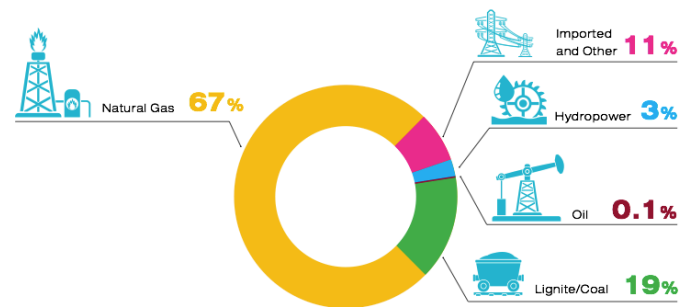
²⁰ Energy intensity is a measurement, which are used to examine the level of energy efficiency in an economy. It is measured by calculating the amount of energy consumed in order to create one unit of GDP.



Figure 2: Ratio of import and domestic production in 2014

Source: EPP0, 2014

As shown in the above figure; Thailand imports a majority of its crude oil and coal/lignite. However the country currently produces most of its natural gas and generates its own electricity. Since Thailand is a developing country, it is expected that the electricity demand will rise up markedly in the next decade. It is estimated, with the growth measured in 2013, that the electricity demand will double within 25 years (Nation, 2013). Thailand produces its electricity from various of sources, however gas have been prioritized throughout history because of its efficiency in electricity generation (EIA, 2016). The figure below shows Thailand's electricity generation mix in 2014. It can be seen that a dominant use of gas in Thailand's electricity generation is followed by coal/lignite as well as imported electricity. Despite that, Thailand has limited reservoir of natural gas, meaning if the country continues to generate electricity through gas in the future, it will be expensive and unproductive since gas needs to be imported through other costly means, such as, liquefied natural gas. Inevitably, when the natural gas reservoir diminishes, Thailand will become even greater net importer of energy. It is therefore pivotal for Thailand to find new alternative ways to reduce its use of natural gas in the future electricity generation in order to maintain competitive electricity resources and preserve adequately extent of energy security (Changsorn, 2015).

Figure 3: Thailand electricity generation mix in 2014

Source: EPPO, 2014, p. 49

5.3. The Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint

The military coup on 22nd of May 2014 caused significant changes across the politics and policy of Thailand. Among the most noticeable changes is the abolishment of the old institutions and with an interim constitution designed by the military government as replacement (Caryl, 2014). Nevertheless, there were many other changes that have occurred, which have not gained as much media attention. This includes eleven new policy suggestions across different sectors by the military government. Among the eleven new policy suggestions, a new energy policy was presented. With regard to energy policy, the policy suggestion emphasizes on the following five points (EPPO, 2015, c.3, p. 1).

1. Increase of the transparency in the ministry of energy and its policy planning process
2. Reduction of the environmental impact
3. Improving the cooperation cross neighboring countries
4. Implementation of new technologies and innovation to further enhance the energy efficiency and the development of modern infrastructure
5. Enhance the economic competitiveness

In view of these five points, the planning process of the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint was initiated. The purpose of Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint is to enhance the overall competitiveness both economic and energy supply, through a unification and increased development of an energy policy that are cohesive with each other (Sutabutr, 2015). To create a cohesive energy plan, the following five plans

have been revised: Energy Efficiency Development Plan (EEDP), Power Development Plan (PDP), Alternative Energy Development Plan (AEDP) and Oil & Gas Plan. Indeed, these plan have all been synchronized and adapted to calculate forecast variables from the year 2015 with a target of achieving the goals at the end of year 2035-36. In the table below, an overview of their purpose and targets is presented.

Table 1: The Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint

Plan	Description	Target
EEDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove subsidies to convey market price signals - Improve energy efficiency through, accountability, enforcement and better benchmarking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieve 30% energy intensity reduction
PDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the power mix by generating more electricity from clean coal technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reach 30% coal in power mix - Implement 20% clean coal
AEDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To achieve target of renewable energy sources three types of approaches will be focused upon: biomass and waste, solar and wind - Biofuels, increase yields and limit imported fuels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve zoning and competitive bidding - Reach 15-20% renewable energy sources for electricity generation - Achieve biofuel substitution to 20 %
Oil & Gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stimulus oil & gas policies to counter production decline - Control gas demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limit domestic gas decline rate at around 2-5% - Build LNG structure - Decrease/ remove fossil fuel subsidy

Source: Sutabutr, 2015

5.3.1. Power Development Plan

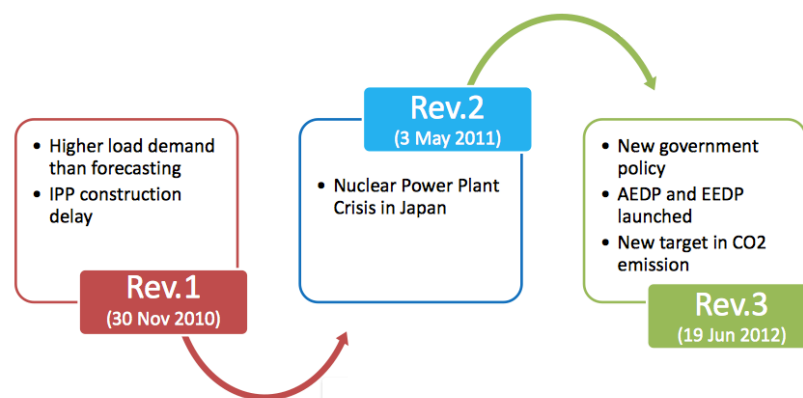
The Power Development Plan is a policy plan, which lays the foundation of Thailand's current energy situation and the outlook of the future. The plan is aimed to maintain a reliable flow of electricity supply while upholding the power system security, hence avoiding blackouts. Furthermore, it also serves the planning of future project to maintain the supply and enhance the overall energy structure (EPPO, 2012, p. 5). Prior to the year 2010, the Thailand Power Development Plan was formulated and managed by the state-owned enterprise, the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT).

EGAT generates the majority of the electricity in Thailand and functions as the single buyer of imported energy through their transmission network. EGAT determines the quantity and the quality of the energy production in Thailand,



including decisions on the type of project initiated, and the timing on when and where (Greacen, 2012, p. 7); since EGAT was the main investor and operator in future projects, it had held the authority, de facto and de jure, to organize and dictate the Power Development Plans. The first revision was created by EGAT to determine the policy planning process, however the second revision was created jointly with EGAT and the Energy Policy and Planning Office (EPPO) under Abhisit administration and the third and final revision was created under Yingluck Administration. In other words, each of the revision was created through a different actor. All three versions are called the Power Development Plan 2010, but to make it less confusing when referring to, the following terms: Power Development Plan 2010 for (Revision 1), Power Development Plan 2011 for (Revision 2) and Power Development plan 2012 for (Revision 3) will be used.

Figure 4: Development of Power Development plan



Source: Wongla, 2013

All three Power Development Plans has been approved and endorsed by the cabinet, however the plans have been revised several times to be in line with the demand forecast and the development of Thailand's economy. In the following sections there will be a brief explanation of the Power Development Plans: 2010, 2012 and 2015.

Power Development Plan 2010

The Power Development Plan 2010 focuses substantially on improving Thailand's energy security through extending the future outlook to plan 15-20 year

ahead (EGAT, 2010). The key assumption of the Power Development Plan 2010 can be confined into (Chimklai, 2012).

- Reduce fuel dependency from natural gas
- Uphold a reserve margin of minimum 15 % of total capacity
- Increase power imports from neighboring countries,
 - However, this import is limited to a capacity of 25 % of the total electricity generation
- Increase efficiency and clean energy from cogeneration and clean coal
- Implement nuclear electricity generation

The Power Development Plan 2010 was revised after the catastrophic nuclear power plant crisis triggered by the tsunami in Japan, leading to changes in the nuclear power plant programs in Thailand and postponing the nuclear project by three years. In other words, the Power Development Plan 2010 and 2011 resemble each other. In the table below, the details on how the energy generations are distributed across the different power plants are presented. The plants are planned to raise electricity generation capacity that would deliver 65,547 MW, at the end of year 2030. The forecast is measured with the values of year 2009 with the capacity of 29,213 MW and with an expectation of retired capacity of 17,671 MW (Chimklai, 2012).

Table 1: PDP 2010 added electricity generation capacity in 2030

Renewable energy power plants	16,798	MW
Power purchase from domestic	4,617	MW
Power purchase from Neighboring countries	11,669	MW
Pump-storage hydro power plant	512	MW
Combined cycle power plants²¹	16,670	MW
Thermal power plants	20,537	MW
Cogeneration ²²	7,137	MW
Coal-fired power plants	8,400	MW
Nuclear power plants	5,000	MW
Total	54,005	MW

Source: Chimklai, 2012

²¹ Combined cycle power plant is a gas power plant that uses steam turbine to increase the production and efficiency of electricity generation. The waste heat generated by the gas turbine is rerouted to a steam turbine to generate extra electricity.

²² Cogeneration is a combined power plant that generates electricity and reuse waste heat/cooling at the same time.



Power Development Plan 2012

A deadly flood, changes in administration and the shattering economic situation affected Thailand's growth rate, which resulted the administration to change the Power Development Plan to respond accordingly to the situation and to predict a better future output. The Power Development Plan 2012 is the final revised version of the Power Development Plan 2010. The 2012 plan was reworked entirely under the Yingluck administration. Among the changes created in the Power Development Plan 2012 was the creation of two new sub-plans with the purpose to achieve a better efficiency and use of alternative energy resources.

1. Implementation of a new Alternative Energy Development Plan 2012-2021 (AEDP) with the purpose to increase the share of renewable and alternative energy. The goal is to replace 25% of the fossil fuel in 10 years period.
2. A new power demand forecast, which incorporates a new energy efficiency program, the Energy Efficiency Development Plan 2011-2030 (EEDP), with focus on reducing the energy intensity by 25 % by 2030

Furthermore, there are implemented a new strategic framework to deal with the supply forecast. Focusing on six different measures to supply the future energy demand (EPPO, 2012, pp. 2-4).

1. To avoid blackouts and to supply in high seasons; a power system security with a margin consisting of 15 % of the calculated peak power demand value will always be available.
2. Diversification of energy sources, reducing the use of natural gas in power generation
3. The energy generated through future nuclear power plan should not excide 5 % of the energy generation. Additionally, the nuclear projects will first start three years later in 2023.
4. Increase in electricity generation through clean coal technologies
5. Energy purchase from neighboring countries should not exceed 15 % of the generation capacity.
6. Increase use of energy generation though cogeneration system.



The Power Development Plan 2012 anticipates the need for generating 70,686 MW of energy at the end of year 2030 (EPPO, 2012, pp. 3-6). In the table below, the details on how the energy generations are distributed across different power plants are demonstrated. The table presents the future electricity mix for the Power Development Plan 2012. The numbers are calculated based on the values of December 2011 with the capacity of 32,395 MW and with an expectation of retired capacity of 16,839 MW (EPPO, 2012, p. 2).

Table 2: PDP 2012 added electricity generation capacity in 2030

Renewable energy power plants	14,580	MW
Power purchase from domestic	9,481	MW
Power purchase from Neighboring countries	5,099	MW
Combined cycle power plants	25,451	MW
Thermal power plants	15,099	MW
Cogeneration	6,476	MW
Coal-fired power plants	4,400	MW
Nuclear power plants	2,000	MW
Gas turbine power plants	750	MW
Power purchase from neighboring countries	1,473	MW
Total	55,130	MW

Source: EPPO, 2012, p. 2

Power Development Plan 2015

The Power Development Plan 2015 is the latest plan that replaces the previous Power Development Plan 2012. On the 15th august 2014, the policy suggestions presented were approved by the National Energy Policy Council, which established the framework for the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint. The Power Development Plan 2015 became the centerpiece of the structure; functioning as a benchmark in order to streamline policies, adapt the development to respond to changes in economic, infrastructure development and the ASEAN economic community (AEC) (EPPO, 2015, c.3 p. 1). The Power Development Plan 2015 was approved and endorsed by the National Energy Policy Council (NEPC) on the 6th May 2015, followed by the acknowledgement by the cabinet on the 30th June 2015. Its main focus lies in energy security, economy and ecology (EPPO, 2015, c.3 pp. 1-3).

Table 3: The core strategy of Power Development Plan 2015

Energy Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure all power generating compounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an appropriate reserve margin to tackle power peak demand of 15 % • Construct new transmission and distribution infrastructure to support the development of ACE and GMS power integration • Maintain the other energy producing companies act on behalf of the power purchase agreement • Integration of smart grid technology to enhance the realbility of renewable energy sources • Improve the fuel densification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the use of natural gas in electricity generation • Replace with clean coal technology • Purchase electricity from neighboring countries, however this cannot excide more than 20 %of total electricity usage. • Encourage both public and private to invest in renewable power generation • Proceeded with nuclear power plants as planned • Manage the increasing power demand 	
Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain competitive pricing on the cost of electricity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement energy efficient solution • Reduce the use of subsidy on fossil fuel to better reflect the primary cost 	Ecology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce CO2 emission in power generation • Reduce environmental impact and social impacts

Source: (EPPO, 2015, c. 5, pp. 1-9).

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, a new forecast have been undertaken in order to predict and prepare for future demand. It is estimated with the growth values of 2014 that, there will be generating 70,335 MW of electricity, at the end of year 2036. In the table below, the details on how the energy generations are distributed across the different power plants are presented. The forecast is measured with the values of December 2014 with the capacity of 37,612 MW and with an expectation of retired capacity of 24,736 MW (EPPO, 2015, c.5, p. 7).

Table 4: PDP 2015 added electricity generation capacity in 2036

Renewable energy power plants	23,749	MW
Power purchase from domestic	12,105	MW
Power purchase from Neighboring countries	9,543	MW
Pump-storage hydro power plant	2,101	MW
Combined cycle power plants	17,478	MW
Thermal power plants	16,232	MW
Cogeneration	4,119	MW
Coal-fired power plants	7,390	MW
Nuclear power plants	2,000	MW
Gas turbine power plants	1,250	MW
Power purchase from neighboring countries	1,473	MW
Total	57,459	MW

Source: EPPO, 2015, c.5 p. 8

6. Theory

This chapter aims to explore, which theoretical approach is most appropriate to base this thesis' analysis upon. There will be a presentation of three distinct theoretical approaches, which could be used for this thesis and a discussion of the pros and cons of these theories. Lastly, there will be an explanation of the selected theoretical approach, explaining different analytical tools, which will be implemented in the later analysis.

6.1 Selection of theoretical approach

Understanding how influence and decisions inform and form any policy is a complex endeavor. Therefore it requires a suitable theoretical approach through which the intricacies of how any policy is formulated can be disentangled. There are several types of approaches, which could be adopted to examine the problem formulation of this study. Nonetheless not all approaches are well fitted with the chosen case and problem formulation. The approaches, which will be considered below are: economic-, social- and institutional approach respectively. Even though these three approaches do not cover every approach that can be used in this type of study, it does cover the commonly applied approaches in the case study that this thesis has dealt with.

Economic approach

Economy has been the focal area of many studies, which examine decisions in policy-making processes. Indeed, the economy is intrinsic to policy formulation process, since economic conditions often dictate what a government can afford to do or not. This condition creates an intertwining process when policy is planned, since economy is a dominant part of the calculation (Stastny, 2002). In this regards, public issues are often related to economic ones, such as: fiscal policy, industrial policy, agricultural policy, labor policy, energy policy, etc. This is particularly true for policy concerning production and distribution, which has a tighter relationship with governments, hereby economies (Stastny, 2002).

To illustrate such connection, the theory of cost-benefit analysis can demonstrate a straightforward decision-making process in policy formulation. Here,

cost, risk and benefit are measured to derive an optimal decision, based on economic reasoning. The theory functions best with economic variables, which are measurable in numbers; rather than non-numeric variables, are applied (Shachter, 2005). This foundation explains why an economic approach is one of the reliable ways to examine policy process.

Social approach

Secondly, the social approach could also be applied to give different perspectives on this study by viewing how behaviors affect the decision-making in policy process. The social approach is often associated with behaviorism, which focus lies on the individuals rather than on the institutions. Behaviorism uses culture and society formation as variables to comprehend decision-making process. Culture is formed as a totality of the individuals in a society, hereby enabling the use of culture as a way to generalize how people are thinking, acting and feeling. Whereas, society is a result of relationship crated by individuals through networking. Among politician these relationship is a big part of their work by mingling among powerful and influenced people (Dahl, 1961).

In this regards, Public Choice Theory combines behaviorism and economic rationality as an argument to examine how behaviors and decisions are constructed. Public choice is often associated with rational choice, since the fundamental assumption of public choice theory includes the concept of rationality. Public choice theory's starting point looks at how economy affect politics by delving into how personal rationality play a role in the decision-making process among actors. In sum, public choice theory uses rational choice theory as its basis to explain the individual behaviors in decision-making process. Individuals do what they can for self-maximizing purpose. Hence, based on this approach, politicians and voters value self-interests over anything. Their decision-making will then often be a result of self-maximizing interests in order to gain votes, wealth or other forms of influence (Mitchell & Simmons, 1994, pp. 46-50). The rationality of how these individuals behave lies within their border of self-interests, guiding them towards a decision, which will eventually benefit their ego (Bayreuth, 2005).

Institutional approach

The institutional approach is associated with the structural approach, because institutions are viewed as structures that organize human society. The institutional approach lays emphasizes on the role of institutions in shaping the society. It is widely adopted to examine important political phenomena (Taylor & Hall, 1996, p. 6). In fact, there are many types of institutionalism ranging from old to new institutionalism. However the use of old institutionalism is diminishing. On the other hand, new institutionalism is gaining popularity and commonly used in case analysis in the social/political studies.

Among the new institutionalist approach, there exist three types of theoretical approaches, which are wildly used: Sociological institutionalism, Rational-Choice institutionalism and Historical institutionalism. They are all unique in their analytical and explanatory power in finding answers to a specific phenomenon through their analytical tools. This also makes institutionalism an excellent choice for case studies, since institutionalism can be used in examining variety of case studies. These institutionalists have all one thing in common, which is institutions matters (Steinmo, 2008, pp. 118-119), however they differ in their perceptions on how actions/behaviors are structured.

The rational choice institutionalism argues from a standpoint that human being is rational individual who make conscious calculated choices. This calculation is often in a form of cost contra benefits, which steers their rationality towards self-maximizing purpose. Rational choice institutionalism uses this logical basis to elucidate a strategic behavior vis-a-vis why individuals sometimes co-operate with others and follow institutional rules (Steinmo, 2008, pp. 127-128).

Sociological institutionalism argues from a perspective that institution comes before individuals. Human being is not self-interested and also not rational in their decision-making, instead they are "satisfiers" in the society. They do not follow the logic of self-maximizing ground, but rather "logic of appropriateness", entailing that they will ask themselves what is appropriate to do in a given situation dictated by the institutional rules (Steinmo, 2008, pp. 127-129). Sociological institutionalism is commonly applied in the study of cultures where procedures, organization structure,

ceremonies are examined as a transmission of cultures practices towards creating more efficient institutions (Taylor & Hall, 1996, p. 14).

Historical institutionalism views humans as both rule followers and rational actors. Yet, how an actor behaves is still dependent on a context, rules and on that individual her/himself. Accordingly, historical institutionalism regards humans as complex creatures capable of making arduous decision, which is not always rational or rule abiding. Further, historical institutionalism uses history as a way to examine how an institution is developed and transformed over time. This makes historical institutionalism a very good theoretical approach to investigate, why a certain choice was made and why a certain outcome occurred, such as political outcomes/decisions (Steinmo, 2008, pp. 126-127).

6.1.1. Argumentation of theories

As presented above, there are a number of approaches, which could be applied to answer the problem formulation. Despite that, not all approaches are applicable to answer the problem formulation with this thesis' selected case and chosen field of research. Further discussion and justification for the choice of analytical approach for this thesis will be presented in this section.

Economic approach

There are several advantages in choosing the economic approach as mentioned previously. These advantages include an indivisible relationship between policy and economic condition of a country, and decision-making process shaped by economic reasoning. However, the economic approach has its limitation in understanding more complex decision-making process where other variables inevitably influence the process. In addition, in the context of Thailand, the lack of “perfect” market²³ in the Thai society makes decision relying solely on economic reasoning nearly unfathomable. Rather, in Thailand where corruption is part of everyday life, decisions are, to a large extent, made resting on social/institutional relations and other non-economic factors. This can especially be witnessed in the aftermath of the military coup resulting economic recession; where domestic security/stability is prioritized over economic growth (Economist, 2014). Given all these reasons, the economic

²³ Perfect market is an economic term, which includes condition, such as, perfect information, large number of buyer/sellers, homogenous products, no market barriers, rational buyers, etc.

approach and the theory of cost benefit analysis are not being used for this study as the theory is founded on economic variables and reasoning.

Social approach

Conversely, the social approach is deemed better suited for the examination of the chosen case study where behaviors are a part of the key variables in the analysis. This approach could potentially offer insights on how the individuals rationalize their decision. The theory of public choice could be applied enabling to discern how policy is made. This would allow a better grasp regarding the variables and behaviors that influence such decision. Nevertheless, there are a number of constraints that are intrinsic to the social approach and the public choice theory. Their tenet is constructed upon how individual actors behave; hereby underplay the institutional perspective, which is often indispensable in understanding any policy formulation and process. In similar vein, the focus of the public choice theory lies in the individual's self-maximizing choices; thus resulting in rationalized decision. The application of these approaches could offer an intriguing insight into an individual's behavior and his/her decision, such as, examining: General Prayut Chan-o-cha, General Anantaporn Kanjanarat and other important individuals. Given the circumstances of Thailand where government reshuffling is common, such application will only generate limited credibility, whereas viewing the ministry of energy and the military government as institutions will enable a more solid analysis and a conclusion to the study.

Institutional approach

The institutional approach conceives institutions as norms and rules that dominate policy-making process. Rational choice institutionalism combines economic reasoning with an institutional understanding, yet as it draws its analytical power from economic rationality, it is unable to escape from the weaknesses similar to economic approach. Likewise, sociological institutionalism argues that institutions shapes the individuals by determining what is socially appropriate for them. However what defines appropriateness in the "murky" Thai politics is rather vague. The murky and vague terrain of Thai politics makes it very complex to map out the culture and norms based on which policy is created. Certainly, this approach could be applied to this case. But examining culture-based approach will lead to a less tangible answer to the chosen problem formulation.

Against this background, historical institutionalism is most suited to the objective of this thesis, since it considers humans as both rational actors but also as rule followers. Hence the approach is very versatile to examine political process as well as its outcomes. Furthermore, in a country like Thailand where history tends to repeat itself, the historical argumentation through an investigation of patterns and recurring phenomena will be beneficial in answering the problem formulation. This serves as an analytical framework of previous process, which can be used to analyze future policy process.

Limitation of historical institutionalism

Institutionalism has its strength in examining and explaining complex policy structure through the argumentation of institutions. Nevertheless, the strength of this approach can also be viewed as its weakness. Critics of historical institutionalism criticize on a small number of samples that can be tested in a historical context. A small number of samples, the critics argue, impair the overall repeatability and validity of such research. More specifically, the cases chosen are not randomized. Rather there exists a selection bias, when choosing the dependent variables. This is because the theory is only applied in a context where an interesting phenomenon has taken place, hence ignores the cases that have not produced the so-called interesting phenomenon. Lastly, historical institutionalisms tend to look at causality of the big picture and are criticized for forgetting the simplistic association. This can be exemplified in the focus of institutions contra individuals. The critics point out that the individuals are the reasons for the existing of institutions; hereby not studying the individual level will invalidate any analysis (Pierson, 2002).

There are indeed pros and cons for any theoretical approach. A good historical institutionalist “*does not only look at the forest, but also the trees*” (Pierson, 2002). Historical institutionalism does indeed have some implications, especially on a small sample size of cases that can be studied, which often consists complex isolated studies. However, this implication is also the driving force for the historical institutionalists. Research made by historical institutionalists rarely makes great changes. Yet it provides a small step forward in creating a better understanding of the holistic view of a given phenomenon. These small changes, all together, contribute to a big pool of accumulated knowledge that is driven by problem solving. Therefore

questions, hypothesis and historical patterns are reformulated, retested and reexamined. Because historical intuitionism tends to focus on complex phenomenon, these studies are repeated several times over many generations. The repetition helps creating small progresses over a long period. Historical intuitionism has thus contributed to our understanding of the long-term transformation of society. *“Most of our knowledge about the relationship between democracy and various other factors (social classes, international conditions, elite behavior) has been derived through such step-by-step accumulation...”* (Pierson, 2002).

The section below deals with an in-depth explanation of the different analytical tools, which historical institutionalism offers conducting an analysis.

6.2. Historical institutionalism

In adopting an institutionalist approach, it is crucial to define what institutions are? For the purpose of this thesis, basic definition will be applied as working definition. Institutionalism, in this thesis, stands for both formal and informal procedures, rules, routines and norms that structure behavior, which is embodied by an organization (Steinmo, 2008, p. 126), (Taylor & Hall, 1996, pp. 6-7). The different variables created by the institutions shape society into diverse directions, depending the choices and events that have taken place. These diverse paths inevitably result in different political outcomes. Historical institutionalism is rested upon the above-mentioned understanding and applies it with the perspective of history to better capture and examines changes and adaptation over time. By looking back in history, it is possible to examine historical and institutional patterns, which can be used to pinpoint whether history will repeat itself (Pierson and Skocpol, 2007). In order to do so, this thesis will utilize three distinct tools as established in the theoretical approach of historical institutionalism. This includes: institutional distribution, institutional development and institutional ideas. These three tools will later be applied to frame the analytical work and to answer the problem formulation.

Institutional distribution

Pertaining to institutional power distribution, power plays a significant role in institutional operation and development. Historical institutionalist highlights how institutions distribute power. Within this theoretical underpinning, the concept of extractive and inclusive institutions will be used to examine the strength of the

institutions and how power can be distributed in an institution. An inclusive institution is regarded as better suited for people. This is because the institutions have a system of checks and balance, hereby distributing the institutional power over many. These powers are distributed through the means of different rights, such as, human rights, gender rights, property right, etc. With the system of checks and balances it keeps the politician abide to also follow the institutional rules. In contradistinction, extractive institution represents the opposite site of the scale, where the rule of law does not apply similarly to everyone. It is an institution type where the powerful actors rule and a handful of elites have opportunity in the system (Acemogly and Robison, 2012, pp. 429-432).

Institutional development

As for institutional development and the theory of path dependency, it explains different types and reasons for changes that happen in the institutions. It is assumed that changes in institutions are rare phenomena, since the rules of institutions are built upon each other, which limits the flexibility for institutional change. Because institutional rules are built upon each other, changing one set of rules can affect a different set of rules, which makes it difficult to transform existing sets of rules. In a scenario where it was possible to change a set of rules, such as, a constitution; it will create a rippling long-term effect that will either influence institutional development positively or negatively. The fear of negative development can frighten people to instead follow the current set of rules even though it is not the optimal solution.

On the other hand, if an institutional change appears this is also known as “critical juncture”. A critical juncture occurs when an institutional crisis arises. An institutional crisis can emerge from different sorts of reasons, such as: political turbulence, external influence such as war and economic crisis. When a crisis appears, strong institutions will try to seize the opportunity to create plans in their favor to shape a new trajectory that will favor their own institutional expansion. Critical juncture allows the opportunity for institutions to create new trajectory where institutional development can be built upon. An example of a new trajectory can be encapsulated in the commitment issues where an institution decides to create a new investment. An investment can take many different forms such as: projects, policy, election, etc. Because of the time, energy and money spent on creating this

investment, it generates an incentive to complete the investment to maximize profits/influence and minimize failures. Over time, this investment creates a new trajectory, which will inevitably be self-reinforcing and become part of the institutional development. (Taylor & Hall, 1996, pp. 9-10).

Institutional idea

Historical institutionalist rarely concludes that the institutions are the only variables in the result of policy and that critical juncture is not the only path for institutional change. They instead try to understand how ideas and options sometimes can guide the institutions towards a new direction over time (March and Olsen, 2006, p. 14). The understanding of institutional ideas and fashion wave can help explain why certain development or political outcome occur, which otherwise not could have been explained by path dependency. This phenomenon is also known as the fashion wave. Fashion wave describes how an idea can become the driving force of an institutional change where institutions try to mimic success from other institutions to create success (Greve, 2000, p. 27-29). An example of fashion wave can be seen in the way that the economy is structured, especially in the case that developing countries mimic institutional behaviors from developed countries in the hope to gain similar success.

The Historical institutionalist approach, including the above-mentioned three tools will now be used in the analysis in the chapter below in a combined with various empirical materials presented earlier. By analyzing empirical materials gathered from different sources, an understanding of Thailand's institutional development, including the development of Thailand's energy policies can be derived. It is anticipated that this will ultimately leads to an answer to the problem formulation of this thesis.

7. Analysis

The analysis will be constructed upon the theoretical foundation of historical institutionalism. By applying the theoretical framework to the gathered empirical materials, the causality between the dependent variable; “Thai energy policy” and the independent variable; “the coup” will be examined. However, before assessing to what extent, such causality exists and asserts itself, the analysis will also elucidate the reasons of the current political crisis and military coup. The analysis will be separated into three sections; each section examines a concept of the historical institutionalist approach, namely: institutional- ideas, distribution and development. The reason for dividing the analysis into three sections is to explore in further depth on; how each concept can assist each other in determining the institutional development and contribute to answering the problem formulation.

7.1. Institutional idea

Having an idea is facile; yet trying to understand how ideas can influence others from the institution lens can be a complex process. To simplify the process, the concept of fashion wave will be employed to analyze the monarchy and the military’s role in the development of Thailand’s current political turmoil. Ultimately the understanding of the aggregate picture will strengthen the grasp on Thai society.

7.1.1. Role of the monarchy

It is undeniable that the most influential person in Thailand is King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Since Thai people are taught from their childhood and through school education that the King is the wise monarch who singlehandedly and tirelessly initiated improvements and development for the nation. The King, as it was taught, has provided everything that Thai people needed and therefore they should be forever grateful. Everywhere in Thailand, pictures of the monarch are hung on the walls of public spaces and private homes to pay respect to the King (Marshall, 2014, pp. 183-185).

In the aftermath of 1997 economic crisis, the current King of Thailand, Bhumibol Adulyadej, coined the phrase “Setthakit Pho Phiang”, meaning “just-enough economy” to the people of Thailand (Kuhonta, 2011, p. 175). This speech became the framework for the development of the concept of “Sufficiency Economy Philosophy” (SEP) (Grossman, 2015, pp. 34-35). In his speech, he concurred that it is not important for Thailand to become the new economic tigers²⁴ of Asia, but “...*It is much more important to develop an economy where people are self-reliant and have an adequate livelihood for themselves.*” (Grossman, 2015, p. 34). Moderation is the key tenet in his philosophy; through a moderate behavior, resources can be maximized and the quality of life can be increased. King Bhumibol Adulyadej says:

“If one is moderate in one’s desires, one will have less craving. If one has less craving, one will take less advantage of others. If all nations hold this concept without being extreme or insatiable in one’s desire, the world will be a happier place.”
(Grossman, 2015, p. 35).

The moderation philosophy is synonymous to the concept of “the middle way” in Buddhism, which is one of three main pillars of Thailand including, the nation, the monarchy and Buddhism (Connors, 2007, p. 82). Thai people have through their life been taught to follow the King’s philosophy and his guidance; through the practice and guidance of the King’s Philosophy, it was maintained, success and happiness will be achieved in life. Propagandist messages are disseminated to emphasize how happiness and success can be achieved by pursuing the King’s philosophical mandates. The stories include, a boy becoming a great musician (like the King), a street vendor kid becoming successful businessman²⁵ (with the use of innovation like the King), a girl becoming a great designer (like the queen); all through the practice of King’s philosophy and his guidance (Fuller, 2015).

These stories play an important part in sharing success stories to the Thai people, hereby reinforcing the sufficient philosophy idea as a mean to success and

²⁴ An economic tiger is a country, which undergoes and achieves rapid economic growth. The term is originally used to describe the four Asian fast growing economies: South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

²⁵ The commercial of the innovative street vendor can be seen on YouTube; web-link can be found in the bibliography chapter (Youtube, 2014).

happiness in life. Through the spread of these success stories, the King's philosophy has evolved into a fashion wave and has been adapted as an everyday social practice that shapes the Thai values, norms and rules. When an idea evolves into a fashion wave and materializes as a practice, it will start asserting itself even further. Nonetheless, beneath the facade of good values and humbleness, there lies a more complex story of this maneuver. The sufficiency philosophy teaches the Thai people to be happy with what they have and to live a simple life without complaints, which helps perpetuate and legitimize the considerable gap and level of inequality in Thailand.

The progression of evolving the philosophy of the King into a fashion wave has contributed to the institutional development of Thailand. The King's idea has become so well embedded in Thai society not only as practice but also as institution. Furthermore, this idea has also become incorporated in Thai politics and can be discerned in the newly formulated agenda for sustainable development (SDG). The SDG is set out to, link economic, social and environmental issues together and to develop a more sustainable society (Grossman, 2015, p. 29).

Despite the success of King's philosophy, there are two new challenges to the King's self-sufficiency philosophy. The first challenge concerns the deteriorating health of King Bhumibol, which inevitably will result in the end of his ruling. The second challenge is the increasing politicization of the rural people (Jory, 2014). These two challenges jeopardize the powerful idea of the King's sufficient philosophy. With a dying King, there is no bewilderment for the military coup in 2014 including their actions, desperately trying to preserve the institution of the monarchy and its philosophy, which has for many decades sustained the capitulation of the Thai people. Resting on this premise, the development of the King's philosophy during the economic crisis has been a crucial institutional tool to perpetuate the submission of the Thai people. It is also a mean to justify an existence of unequal society and maintain the society's status quo. Indicatively, such ideas have also worked in favor of the elites in the Thai society and their financial status by enabling policies that favored them. As a result the gap between rich and poor is augmented even further.

7.1.2. Role of the military

The monarchy once had power monopoly before the Siamese revolution. However, with the creation of constitutional monarchy, some of the power was redistributed to other institutions, such as, to the democrat party and the military. Since then the monarchy has not been able to exert direct intervention as a powerful entity, but was instead forced to exercise its political influence through different measures, such as, the King's philosophy and through the use of proxies.

In the attempt to regain its lost influence, the monarchy utilized its network of alliances, which is composed of the traditional elites, in order to besiege the situations. The most important alliance became the use of military as a proxy to exercise its political influence. Through the usage of the respected King's ideas and godly status, the military successfully has legitimized intervention in the politics with the noble aim of protecting/saving the nation and the monarchy. As such, the military is viewed as the savior and the guardian of the nation. Through gaining the blessing of the King coups were legitimized, which established the military as indispensable institutional actor in Thailand.

Through the authorization of the use of law of *lèse-majesté*, it was possible for the military to maintain its control and status quo (Streckfuss, 2009). Indeed, the alliance between the monarchy and the military was a win-win situation. By supporting each other, it was possible to increase their overall power grip over Thailand. The King could bestow his acceptance and legitimacy in return for political influences. By working together it was possible for them to shape Thai society as they wished. Yet, there was a downside in the commitment to such alliance. More specifically, the interdependency puts them in a fragile situation when separated.

During the political crisis in the year 2005, the presence of the both the monarchy and military in the Thai politics has increased dramatically. The law of *lèse-majesté* has been used more frequently to maintain the status quo and to keep the politicization of the rural people at bay. Their presence continued as the political crisis lingered on, which led to another military intervention in 2014. There are several variables that played a role in the political crisis leading to the military coup in 2014. In this respect, the two most important factors are the two challenges explained

earlier, namely, the end of King Bhumibol's era and the increasing politicization of the rural people.

7.2. Institutional distribution

Distribution plays a significant role in the development of institutions and the establishment of institutionalized parties. This section, will examine whether Thailand can be categorized as an inclusive or extractive institution, which will help understand the characteristics of Thailand's democracy.

Countries that are characterized by, separation of power, opportunities for social mobilization, privileges to people, provision of basic rights, transparent election and acceptance of civil society organizations are categorized as an inclusive institution. Nonetheless, holding elections does not automatically imply that people's voices are heard. There are many more fundamental conditions that need to be put in place, such as, basic human rights and an enabling social environment to develop. An electoral democracy in a developing country is a good example of a lack of representation of the population; as a result, election becomes a tool for the elitists to exploit for their advantages and positions (Kuhonta, 2011, p. 19).

Thailand emerged as a newly industrialized country in the 1980s. The country had attained growth rate as one of the highest in the world. Although its economy has developed considerably, Thailand's affluent society has also been accompanied by irreconcilable gap between classes (Kuhonta, 2011, p. 119). Thailand is at present among the most unequal countries in Asia, where the 0.1 % of the richest owns over 50 % of the country's assets (The Nation, 2014). This inequality has formed what is known as *the champagne glass distribution*²⁶. In this regards, it is important to conceptualize the imbalance in Thai society and how the idea of King's sustainable philosophy has contributed to render it socially acceptable.

Inevitably this idea led to asymmetric growth in Thai society, both in social status and economic wealth, which has partially become the catalyst of the political turmoil separating the country into three distinct classes: elites, middleclass and the

²⁶ A term invented by Conley to illustrate the wealth distribution formed as a champagne glass.

rural people (Kuhonta, 2011, pp. 4-6 & 150-151). The absence of proper distribution mechanism in the society to counterbalance the formation of classes, has led to wealth concentration and a more noticeable appearance of class system.

Resting on the above argumentation, the Kingdom of Thailand can therefore not be categorized as an inclusive institution. With lack of proper representativeness, absence of freedom of speech and distribution mechanism, democracy in Thailand is built upon volatile election that are often hindered and prevented by either the opposition or by the military. This has resulted in Thailand being poorly institutionalized (Nelson, 2011), (Marshall, 2014, p. 8-9).

In other words, the institutions in Thailand are categorized as extractive institution, since their governance cannot be acknowledged as fully democratic compared to developed democracy. Their way of governance is largely different. The country allows undemocratic values to flourish and military intervention to be normalized. The way of governance has become so well accepted that the Thai people refer to it as *Thai style democracy* (Marshall, 2014, p. 79), or in a more correct term, quasi-democracy, where powerful actors rule and only a handful of people have the opportunity to prosper in the society. Through military interventions, it has been possible for the military government to weaken the institutionalization process among the political parties. The intervention produces detrimental effects as time and again, only, a weak governmental coalition, hence a weak democracy are forged.

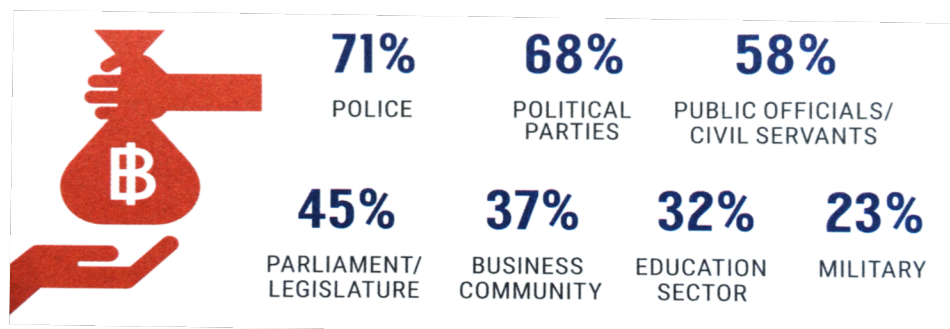
Owing to constant military interventions, institutionalization of parties was obstructed. Political parties flourished and disintegrated shortly after. The short-lived nature served as incentive for the political leaders to prioritize self-serving goals during the brief period in office. In fact, political parties and leaders in Thailand hold no solid ideological ground. Rather, catchall parties²⁷ characterize Thailand's political landscape while its function depends, to a great extent, on personal charisma of politicians. As such, personalism pervaded in Thai style democracy, which facilitates corruption at all levels. There are many examples in Thailand where bureaucrats

²⁷ A political approach in which, a party claims to be open to a wide spectrum of constituents and groups.

abuse their position for their own benefits²⁸. With Méon argues how weak institutional framework enables corruption, allowing the bureaucratic system to run smoothly with the help of favoritism and corrupt practices. Méon sheds light on this framework by comparing corruption to the grease automatically generated in a turning wheel, making it spin more smoothly (Méon, 2010).

Reiterating that corruption is perceived an unavoidable occurrence in a weak democracy like Thailand, the figure below shows whom the Thai public sees as corrupt. As revealed in the figure below, Thai people see the fusion of powers, namely, legislature, executive and the judiciary power, including the political parties as the most corrupt institutions. In addition, the interesting part is that the military, which have exercised all of the power, is considered least corrupt. The reason for such opinion can possibly be located, within the narrative of how the military tends to enter the political sphere in time of political crisis and helps remove the self-serving and corrupt politicians from position. In this type of discourse, the military, has become the protector and the savior of the nation. More importantly, through the blessing of the King, the coup is legitimized, hence ratifying the military's action as necessary to resolve any political deadlock making them as a more trustworthy authority.

Figure 5: Whom the public sees as corrupt



Source: Grossman, 2015, p. 155

The development of Thailand has evolved around the bureaucratic elitist society, that dismisses the rural population from politics (Kuhonta, 2011, p. 123), (Kurlantzick, 2011). Yet, given that the majority of Thai population comprises of

²⁸ For example, a case of corruption in 1995 led to a demise of Thailand's Democrat Party. A Member of Parliament used her position to distribute land rights to her relatives. The result of the land-reform scandal led to the end of the Chuan Leekpais administration and the democrat party (Shenon, 1995).

rural dwellers (approximately 80 % of population), it was only a matter of time before someone would acknowledge their voices and existence. The rise of Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party resulted in an unprecedented institutionalization process. The Thai Rak Thai party is carved based on a strategic combination of business communities and the rural people in its political representativeness. This strategic formation made it possible to win the election in the year 2001 and again in the year 2005 with remarkable victory. Yet, this newly constructed party had challenged traditional status quo. Intensified demonstrations and the competition for the political legitimacy then followed. The political battle for legitimacy was fought through a proxy of peoples, including the democratic yellow-shirts and the populist red-shirts as discussed in the chapter of institutional development.

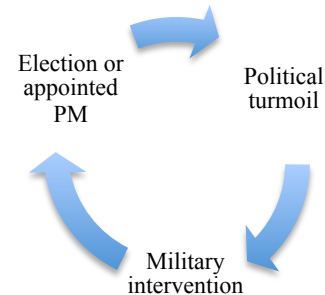
Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai party held tremendous success in Thai politics by constructing groundbreaking social reform, particularly the distribution of the country's wealth to disadvantaged section of the society. This has arguably moved Thailand towards a more inclusive institution. However, the pseudo-reform was merely a mere glimpse of hope for the people. In fact, Thaksin was no different than the traditional bureaucrats and utilized his position for private interests. This has ultimately cost him not only corruption charges but also exile and a loss of his power.

In sum, Thaksin's party strategies were craftily designed by campaigners with the purpose to maximize votes and gain influence. Thaksin sieged the opportunity to expand influence to the poor and uneducated population. This section of the Thai society has easily fallen prey to the campaigners who established connection and molded their decision; sometimes even evolving vote purchases (Nelson, 2011). In other words, the rural people were a sacrifice needed as a mean to achieve Thaksin's and his business communities' end.

Against a backdrop of a military coup in 2006 and later the designation of Abhisit Vejjajiva, a democrat prime minister, the political turmoil started all over again with intensified demonstrations for the fight over political legitimacy. Indeed, the history of Thailand's modern politics tends to be unraveled into the same pattern. The rise of Thaksin's supporters; the red-shirts defied the traditional elites, culminating in a military intervention. The coup is normally followed by an election,

selection or an appointment of a new Prime Minister chosen by the King (Marshall, 2014, pp. 182-185), with the purpose to re-establish the traditional elites' status quo.

Resting on the above analysis, the Thai style democracy tends to evolve around the same political turmoil. Democracy in Thailand can be encapsulated into a number of characteristics, which are: acceptance of inequality, military interventions, elitist society, weak parties, weak democracy, and self-serving practices in politics and corruption.



7.3. Institutional development

Through the analysis of the above two sections, the complex institutional development in Thailand was explained and disentangled. Combining the understanding of, the King's philosophy, the development of the traditional elites and the characteristics of Thai style democracy, different causations that led to Thailand's current political crisis were analyzed.

This chapter will examine the chosen field of research, the power development plan, by comparing the strategies and targets of the Power Development Plan 2010, 2012 and 2015. It will emphasize on the characteristics between energy policy formed under EGAT jointly with the Abhisit administration, the Yingluck administration and the last one under the administration of National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO). To conclude the analysis and answer the problem formulation, there will be conducted further analysis with use of the concepts of path-dependency and critical juncture.

7.3.1. Comparing the Power Development Plans

It was coined out in the empirical chapter under the section of the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint that the current military government actively pushed for the development of Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint through a policy suggestion. However, this does not capture to what extent the influence expands. Since the

drafting and synchronizing each of the five plans, was made throughout different subdivisions of the Ministry of Energy, it remains unclear whether the plan was influenced by the military in the first place. To better comprehend to what degree the military government has influenced on Thailand energy policy, a comparison of the power development plan 2010, 2012 and 2015 will now be undertaken.

Comparing strategies

Generally, the strategy of all three Power Development Plans has its main fulcrum on the improvement of the energy security of Thailand. This includes the following measures; increase the energy efficiency²⁹, increase the use of renewable energy sources³⁰ and increase the diversification of energy resources. Nevertheless, there are some differences concerning how these three plans attempts to increase the diversification of energy resources and to what extent it aims to do so. Given that Thailand is exceptionally dependent on natural gas for electricity generation and that gas resources in the country are depleting; subsidies for electricity generation are needed in the future to provide for the growing energy demand.

The Power Development Plan 2010 addressed the issue of energy diversity through increasing energy imports from its neighboring countries. However the purchase of electricity from its neighboring countries could not exceed the margin of 25 %. Additionally new power plants will be implemented, such as, clean coal, cogeneration and nuclear to generate cleaner and more efficient electricity.

The Power Development Plan 2012 focused mainly on addressing the issue of energy diversity, through the implementation of new power plants. These power

²⁹ The difference in the strategy of energy efficiency is slim when comparing the two plans. Their strategy can be derived from the Energy Efficiency Development Plan (EEDP), the targets vary around 5 % when comparing the two versions. The 2010 and 2012 plan set its target to reach 25 % within the year 2030, whereas the 2015 plan set its goal to reach 30 % within the year 2035.

³⁰ Whereas, the strategy concerning the increased use of renewable energy sources has been more challenging to compare, since the Alternative Energy Development Plan (AEDP) 2008, 2012 and 2015 have been formulated differently. In order words: the numbers, graphs and the categorization are radically different from each other, making it almost impossible to compare the plans. The 2008 have no goals, but try to include renewable energy as part of national agenda. The 2012 plan set its main goal to achieve a 25 % reduction of fossil fuel consumption within 10 years, whereas the 2015 plan aims to reach 15-20 % of energy generation mix from renewable energy sources. However, these targets cannot be compared since they measure different information.

plants include; clean coal technology, cogeneration system, nuclear generation and lastly, through purchases from neighboring countries. Yet these purchases cannot exceed 15 % of the total energy generation.

The Power Development Plan 2015 shares similar features in addressing diversity issues, through the implementation of, clean coal technology and nuclear generation. Nevertheless, cogeneration system was left outside of the main strategy. Additionally, energy purchases from neighboring countries have been prioritized as a mean to tackle diversity issues. The purchase, as a result, increased the margin of energy import by 20 % of the total energy generation capacity. Aside from addressing the issue of energy security through diversity, the Power Development Plan 2015 also emphasize on additional features. These features are the construction of new transmission and distribution infrastructure to its neighboring countries and the introduction of the smart grid technology. Both enable a better-integrated, reliable and secure use of renewable energy in the electricity generation mix.

Comparing targets

The table presented below is a simplified version of future energy mix, as shown the table 1, 2 and 4 under the Power Development Plan section of the empirical chapter. In the table below, the target percentage that the Power Development Plan 2010, 2012 and 2015 try to achieve is shown. However, it is important to keep in mind that the target of the Power Development Plan 2015 is set up to the year 2036, whereas the target of the Power Development Plan 2010 and 2012 was set up to the year 2030. Yet, the data from all three plans are considered comparable as the final expected energy generation in all three plans are similar, denoting 54,005 MW in the 2010 plan, 55,130 MW in the 2012 plan and 57,459 MW in the 2015 plan.



Table 5: Target of Electricity Generation PDP 2015, 2012 and 2010

Electricity Generation Type	Power Development Plan 2010	Power Development Plan 2012	Power Development Plan 2015
	Target 2030	Target 2030	Target 2036
Energy import	20 %	10 %	15-20 %
Clean coal and lignite	23 %	19 %	20-25 %
Renewable Energy	6 %	8 %	15-20 %
Natural Gas	40 %	58 %	30-40 %
Nuclear	11 %	5 %	0-5 %
Diesel / fuel oil	-	-	-
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %

Source: Sutabutr, 2015 and Chimklai, 2012

At the first glance, marked differences can be discerned in regards to: natural gas, renewable energy, nuclear and energy imports from neighboring countries. Comparing the Power Development Plan 2010 with 2015, the similarities on several targets with the expectation of renewable energy and nuclear are evident. The 2010 plan focused on a higher amount of nuclear generation and focused less on renewable energy. In other words, the Power Development Plan 2010 and 2015 shares similar characteristics on most parameters. Nonetheless, the major difference can be found in the Power Development Plan 2012. Comparing the Power Development Plan 2012 with the 2010 one; a significant difference between the target of energy import varying from 20 % in 2010 plan to 10 % in the 2012 Power Development Plan is observed, including substantial differences between the use of gas in electricity generation.

When comparing the Power Development Plan 2012 with the one of 2015, clean coal including lignite and nuclear are almost identical in both plans. Looking at the difference between natural gas, a difference of between 18-28 %% is observed. This entails that the 2015 plan prioritizes a higher degree of electricity generation mix, compared to the 2012 plan. Yet, the energy generation, which is reduced from natural gas in the 2015 plan, will have to be substituted from different sources. In the Power Development Plan 2015, the energy generation that substitutes natural gas comes dominantly from renewable energy sources through purchase from neighboring countries. This is also demonstrated in table 1, 2 and 4 as presented in the Power Development Plan chapter.



In all three tables, a significant difference between energy purchases from neighboring countries can be discerned. More specifically, in the Power Development Plan 2010, it is estimated that renewable energy power plants would generate a value of 16,798 MW, where around two-third; 11,669 MW, of the renewable energy consisted of energy purchase from neighboring countries. Whereas, in the in the Power Development Plan 2012, it was anticipated that renewable energy power plants would generate a value of 14.580 MW, where around one-third; 5.099 MW, of the renewable energy consisted of energy purchase from neighboring countries. As for the Power Development Plan 2015, the renewable energy will generate a value of 21,648 MW of which nearly half of the value, 9.543 MW, is energy purchased from neighboring countries.

In other words, renewable energy imports was prioritized in the 2010 and 2015 plans as a means to achieve energy diversity, whereas in the 2012 plan it was redefined to a lesser part of the strategy of achieving energy diversity. These priorities have resulted in the power development plans 2010 and 2015 to generate higher value of energy diversity, hence reduce a degree of dependency on natural gas as electricity generation for the future. In contrast, the Power Development Plan 2012 put its focus on diversifying its energy generation mix through domestic projects, including: improved and efficient cogeneration power plants and combined cycle power plants.

7.3.2. Path-dependency and critical junctures

Through the comparison of the all three Power Development Plans, it can be concluded that their strategies share similar characteristics, which are their focus on improving the energy security of Thailand through energy diversification. In this regards, the Power Development Plan 2012 prioritizes more effective gas and coal power plants, such as cogeneration and combined cycle power plants, whereas the Power Development Plan 2010 and 2015, prioritizes outsourcing the electricity production to its neighboring countries, namely: Lao, Cambodia and Myanmar.

To finalize the analysis, the last two concepts of historical institutionalism will be applied to examine and discuss to what degree the military government has



influenced in the changes in Thailand energy policy. Through the application of the concept of path-dependency, there can be argued whether the Power development plan and the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint is a continuation of an already posited path or a diversion from a path, meaning it can be categorized as a critical juncture.

Does the Power Development Plan continue on an already posited path?

The Power Development Plan 2015 can be regarded as continuous process of the previous Power Development Plans 2010 for a number of reasons. Firstly, both Power Development Plans share a common goal of improving Thailand's energy security by lowering the use of gas in electricity generation. Secondly, the means to improve energy security coincide with energy diversification targets that resemble each other. The Power Development Plan 2010 and 2015 are characterized by a more drastic measure to improve energy diversity through a subsidy of imported electricity, hereby increasing the margin of electricity import by 25 % in 2010 plan and 20 % in 2015 plan. This measure was anticipated to help reduce the use of gas in the electricity generation mix by 30-40 % in the year 2036 for the 2015 plan and 40 % in the year 2030 for the 2010 plan. Thirdly, it can be argued that the power plant projects created through Power Development Plans are heavy on investment, which requires long-term commitment particularly once the investment is approved. This is because the approved investment needs to be completed and to yield proven return. Several of new power plant projects have already been preceding based on the previous energy policy plans, such as, the Xayaburi dam, which was preceded and included in the Power Development Plan 2010 (Deetes, 2012), hereby making them part of all three plans.

While the Power Development Plan 2010 and 2015 share similar structures. It appears that the Power Development Plan 2012 has its own uniqueness in prioritizing investment in efficient domestic gas power plants. This is manifested through the implementation of a lower margin of imported electricity, which consists of 15 % of the total electricity generation capacity. This would have resulted in 58 % gas mix in the electricity generation mix by the end of year 2030.



Furthermore, there appears to be a general resemblance in all three Power Development Plan concerning the under prioritization of nuclear power plants and the prioritization of increased use of renewable energy sources. Indeed the investment and risk in building nuclear power plants is remarkably higher, as witnessed in the catastrophic nuclear crisis in Japan. The lesson-learned from the tragedy in Japan has resulted in a revision of the Power Development Plan, which debunked future hope for nuclear power in the country. In contrast, renewable energy generation has become more competitive enabling it to better compete with other electricity generation sources. In fact, renewable energy accounts for a larger part of the Power Development Plan 2015, compared to any previous plans. This situation is indeed unprecedented.

Taking into account the above argumentation, it can be concluded that the direction of the Power Development Plan 2015 has already been embedded in the previous Power Development Plans, particularly the 2010 one. In other words, the 2015 Power Development Plan is not a trailblazer creating groundbreaking changes in Thailand energy policy. Rather, the Power Development Plan 2015 is fortifying the already existing path through its emphasis on the strategies to amplify energy diversity. This trajectory is further enhanced through the implementation of new transmission and distribution infrastructures in Thailand's neighbors and regions, including the introduction of smart grid. To sum up, the Power Development Plan 2015 is redirecting the 2012 plan back towards its original path and targets. Therefore the Power Development Plan 2012 can be considered as a failed attempt in changing the trajectory of future energy policy.

Can the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint be considered as a Critical Juncture?

Before a critical juncture can manifest itself, an institutional crisis must firstly be present. When a crisis emerges, institutions are pressured to devise innovative ideas to pursue new ways to ensure its survival, hence developing an institutional path that favors them. From the military and the traditional elites' perspectives, the current political turmoil triggered by the politicization of the rural people is perceived as the first crisis that challenges their position. Kuhonta explains how a crisis creates new

opportunities for changes to happen. But this also creates an increased pressure for the traditional elites to find new ways to ensure their influence in the future.

”During moments of crisis, opportunities open up to advance innovative policies: under conditions of perceived crisis, the likelihood of change occurring may be greater than when the policy reform is considered a matter of routine” (Kuhonta, 2011, p. 42).

The crisis triggered by the growing politicization of the rural people led the military to respond with a military coup in the year 2006. The coup, made it possible for them to maintain their influence for a period of time, allowing them to test the water. *“A crisis may stimulate action and hence learning on a problem on which insight has been low and which for that very reason has not been tackled as long as it was in a quiescent state.”* (Kuhonta, 2011, p. 42). Yet, with another approaching challenge, namely, the weakened King Bhumibol and the succession of the Crown Prince, the military is urged to once again seize the opportunity of the political crisis to retain the governmental power under the transition period. It was therefore necessary for the military and the Thailand’s traditional elites to find innovative solutions to maintain status quo.

If the politicization of the rural people had been left to persist, it would have hampered the influence and future survival of the military and the traditional elites. Ultimately it would result in a critical juncture that would instead favor the newly formed institutionalized parties and the rural people. But instead of watching from the sideline, the military backed by the traditional elites, seized the opportunity through a military coup. The military finds repression through reforms a less costly way to pave a path for institutional development, hence influencing and shaping the future institutional trajectories

This has led to a series of bold moves that involved rewriting of the institutional rules from top-down approach, hereby forcing changes throughout the Thai society. These bold move involves rewriting the Thai constitutions. Through the revision and rewriting process, the military tactfully integrated its strategies and interests within the constitution.

The ultimate goal is in fact to dismantle populist policies introduced under the Thaksin administration, such as, minimum wages and the universal healthcare (Somjittranukit, 2016). *“It is clear that the military wants to establish itself as a political institution enshrined in the constitution. Or, to put it another way, the military wants “longevity” in the political system.”* (Somjittranukit, 2016). Therefore it can be argued that the eleven policy suggestions put forward by the National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO), including the framework for the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint, is an extension of the bold moves to develop a new institutional path for Thailand.

Indeed, the process to approve the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint is materialized over a long period of time, since all five plans needed approval. The last plan to be approved was the Power Development Plan. The plan was endorsed through the National Energy Policy Council (NEPC) on the 6th May 2015, followed by the acknowledgement by the cabinet on the 30th June 2015. As explained previously, the members of the National Energy Policy Council consist of the Prime Minister, which in this case is the military-junta, General Prayut Chan-o-cha, accompanied by a group of chairmen and ministers, all designated by the Junta himself.

That is to say, the Junta himself dictates the chain of decisions, therefore making it easy to endorse and enforce any bold policies he planned. It can then be hailed that the policy suggestion presented by the National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO) is part of the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint. All five strategies of the policies are to be achieved:

- **Transparency** (*the creation of a more cohesive energy policy*),
- **Environmental impact** (*Increased renewable energy output and import*),
- **Cooperation with neighboring countries** (*Creation of better distribution infrastructure including the implementation of several new power plants projects*)
- **Technology & innovation** (*The use of clean coal technologies*)
- **Economic competitiveness** will defiantly improve if the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint becomes fully implemented and reaches its targets.



Despite the fact that the military is successful in maintaining control of the government and postpone elections through different means³¹ the critical juncture has not yet occurred. Firstly, the new constitution needs to be enforced through a referendum or by other means. After the implementation the constitution must be practiced, hereby enabling a new trajectory to be erected. This will make it challenging to redirect investments and overwrite written policies, in order to divert the trajectory towards a new path. With the rewriting process already in motion, the newly revised constitutions will be voted on the 7th august 2016 through a national referendum (Niyomyat, 2016).

Nevertheless, many of the bold policy reforms that the military government is currently pursuing are not built upon creating collective benefits or increasing the distribution of institutional power. Despite a possible dismissal of the constitution at the national referendum on the 7th August 2016, there are some fundamental issues that exist in Thai style democracy, which hampers democracy to prosper. In actuality, the reforms require tremendous behavioral adaptation of the Thai population and it will be much more difficult to embed the changes through the referendum.

All in all, as Thailand is categorized as extractive institution, the referendum is unlikely to have genuine impact. It is likely that the new constitution will be rewritten under the guidance of the military and this vicious cycle will continue as long as the real democratic system and values have not been institutionally embedded in the country and its people. However, unlike the constitution which requires certain democratic filters like a referendum, there exist a number of key national policies, such as, the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint that lack democratic filters, which can intervene policy plans and keep it in check³².

³¹ The military government maintains their presence and power in the government through a rejection of the new constitution. The Junta appointed the National Reform Council (NRC), which pushes back the election until April 2017 (Niyomyat, 2015).

³² The Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint plans lack public reviews. Only a half-day event was allowed for general public to give its feedbacks. Many of the invisible costs of projects are viewed with blind eyes and it is rare that the feedbacks are taken into consideration. The reports made by the Thai energy experts, Chuenchom Sangsari Greacen and Chris Greacen, in 2012 is a good example illuminating the lack of communication and transparency between the people and the government (Greacen, 2012),(Meetam & Kiatiprajuk, 2014).

To sum up the above discussion; it can be concluded that Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint can be considered as a part of the countless of bold moves that have been set in motion and imposed by the military government. These bold moves are a result of continued political crisis, which has been pressuring the military and the traditional elites to take swift and radical action. These bold moves can therefore be viewed as a reaction to the crisis, hence considered as a critical juncture with the purpose to create a new institutional trajectory that favors the military and the traditional elites, if it becomes successful.

8. Conclusion

Thailand's democracy is a puzzling phenomenon; the constant rise and fall of political parties and continuous political turmoil make it complex to comprehend. Despite its complexities, the political trajectory in Thailand appears to be repetitive. Indeed, it is the power struggle between the traditional institutions versus the newly formed and emerging institutions. There are unquestionably several factors that play an important role in the recent political crisis ending once again with a military coup. However, the reasons behind the coup are evident. The coup was engineered in view of two immanent challenges lingering underneath Thailand's political landscape. These challenges include: the politicization of the rural population and the deteriorating health of King Bhumibol.

The two challenges contested the traditional elites, mainly the military and the monarchy. As a result, a bold strategy to maintain their status quo was pursued. These strategies involved, sieging the government position through a coup, implementation of an interim constitution and self-legitimization through the blessing of the King. Nonetheless, to further secure their position in the future; additional changes were initiated, including the drafting of a new constitution and the implementation of several new policies like the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint, hence the Power Development Plan.

Rested on background of the above analysis, it can be concluded that The Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint can be considered as a critical juncture in Thailand Energy policy. This can be argued on three grounds: The first ground lies in the absence of democratic filters in the planning process of energy policy. Throughout the decision-making process of the Thailand Integrated Energy Blueprint, the policy was initiated, endorsed and enforced singlehandedly by the National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO). In fact, the insertion of a military general as a new minister of energy further enhances this skillful maneuver. Secondly, the Power Development Plan 2015 is re-correcting and re-steering the deviation attempted in the 2012 plan. In this respect, it can be argued that the Power Development Plan 2010 was created under the supervision of the traditional elites, since it was formulated under the Prime

Minister Abishit's administration. Thirdly, there exists a general tendency for the current military government towards demolishing any key policies shaped under the Thaksin era, including the Power Development Plan 2012.

Indeed preference, an arguably, favoritism of Thailand's traditional elites towards energy policy strategies that outsource the country's energy production to its neighboring countries, mainly through hydropower plants is immanent. This favoritism raises an important question. "*Whether there are any personal motivations ingrained in the process of creating future energy policy and the planning of the future power plant projects*" that can explain the immanent preferences in outsourcing electricity production to the neighboring countries.

All in all, there is an additional perspective from a research point of view, which need to be further explored to enhance the result of this thesis. This includes a more in-depth analysis on the individual level, which has been underexplored through the use of an institutionalist approach. However, the historical institutionalist approach has an undeniably explanatory power in explaining complex institutional processes by investigating the causality link between the military coup and Thailand energy policy. This enables systematically tracing process and provides a step forward in understanding the complexities of Thai style democracy. Certainly, it entails the importance of the roles of the traditional institutions, namely the traditional elites: the monarchy and the military and their influences in Thailand energy policy.

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