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# Reconstruction of social ideology through the power of music: Case study of Suntaraporn band, Thailand



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## ABSTRACT

During 1939–1942 (2482–2485 BE), Thailand was governed by a junta led by Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram. Numerous traditional cultures were redefined based on the "Thai-ness" policy. *Suntaraporn* was the most outstanding band sponsored by the Thai government. On one hand, the band was used as a State apparatus for instilling the "Thai-ness" ideology. On the other hand, it created development discourses of civilization, modernity, and cultural discrimination. This article: 1) investigated the discourse of *Suntaraporn's* music and the establishment of social stratification in Thai society, and 2) illustrated the cultural power of music as a social-ideological mechanism to increase State power over the Thai people.

Documentary research was applied to identify the historical development, forms, and values appreciated in *Suntaraporn's* music. Social exclusion leading to a new form of social stratification was investigated. The author adopted semiotic analysis by focusing on the aesthetic level. To identify perception, cognition, interpretation, and reception history, the socio-cultural roles of *Suntaraporn's* music were highlighted as: 1) the establishment of modern Thai music as a symbol of new class differentiation, and 2) the role of music as a social mechanism to increase State power over the life of commoners.

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## Introduction

"The Thai-ness Policy" has long been used as major development propaganda by Thai junta governments. "The cultural mandates" issued by Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram's government during 1939–1942, for instance, were well known for the typical Thai-ness Policy. The so called *Ratthaniyom* (State preference) to "uplift the national spirit and moral code of the nation and to instill progressive tendencies and modern life style" was implemented in various forms (Ministry of Propaganda, 1942; Sivaraksa, 2002).

The definition of "Thai-ness" originated within the context of a centralized political structure. The policy later became the fundamental cultural ideology to maintain a centralized socio-political regime and to strengthen the hierarchical social structure in the following times (Sattayanurak, n.d.).

Under this policy, twelve State edicts were issued. By emphasizing "Thai" identity mightiness from the national to the individual level, numerous changes have been made. These included changing the name of the country from Siam to Thailand in the first mandate in 1939; promoting the royal anthem, and declaring a new Thai national anthem. The daily playing of the Thai national anthem at 8:00 am and 6:00 pm was also started during this period. In 1935, the royal anthem was played before theatrical shows. All audiences were required to stand up. Apart from this,

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the junta government legislated several regulations to control public behavior. A numbers of songs such as the national anthem and the royal anthem were played at the State's economics department and in the public arena. Various social ceremonies, and all kinds of entertainment venues in Royal Decree on National Culture B.E. 2485 (The Royal Gazette, 1942) were targeted (Chingnawan, 2006; Prachathai, 2008). Furthermore, the military junta government promoted Thai as a national language, forcing non-Thai ethnic students to learn and to use it in everyday life. The government prescribed Western-style dress as a preferable costume. Simultaneously, promotion of the uses of Thai products were announced in the fifth mandates (Reynolds, 2002, p. 31).

During 1938–1944, songs and music aesthetic modifications were a crucial part of cultural adjustment policy. “The cultural mandates” by *Suntaraporn's* songs were one of the most outstanding tools that served as the State's ideological apparatus to construct mainstream values. On the one hand, modern Western music and amusement activities such as *Pleng Thai Sakol* or *Pleng Lukkrung*, and ballroom dancing were promoted. As a result, the Bangkokness became the core value. This gradually alienated rural values and the native culture of local people.

*“Thai native culture should not appear at public gatherings, in public places, or in city limits without being appropriately dressed. Inappropriate dress includes wearing only underpants, wearing no shirt, or wearing a wraparound cloth.”*

*“Appropriate dress for Thai people consists of: 1) Uniforms, as position and opportunity permits; 2) Polite international-style attire; and 3) Polite traditional attire.”*

(The Royal Gazette, 1940c)

deculturalization. This included all forms of resocialization in formal education. To adjust preferable social behavior deemed to be proper for “modernity”, Western standards and livelihood were adopted. Thai cultures were reformed and reconstructed. These signified growth and beauty, orderliness, progress and uniformity, and the top-down morality model of the nation (Baker & Phongpaichit, 2005). Unfortunately, this policy discriminated against folk cultures and local traditions to exclude local culture such as chewing betel, traditional style eating, a casual lifestyle, consuming both culture and native leisure activities (Feangfu, 2011).

Simultaneously, *Suntaraporn's* songs were used as a tool to reconstructed new values and lifestyle for all commoners. The State launched propaganda based on an imaginary civilized, luxurious, urban lifestyle. Five major characteristics of the band were designed as the ideological State apparatus.

Firstly, the socio-demographic background of the band members recruited was based on their bureaucratic background, urban experience, and work related to the urban elites. For example, during 1936–1938, the band was a part of *Krom Kodsanakarn* (Public Relations Department) (Pataradetsipisan, 2013). The bandleaders and songwriters had government official backgrounds. Eua Sunthornsanan and Keaw Adcharyakul, for instance were former government officers of the Public Relations Department. Sa-nga Arampi was an urban elite and a senior military officer. Moreover, most of the band members had worked for the Thai Royal Family and members of the ruling elite. During 1946–1975, Eua Sunthornsanan and Keaw Adcharyakul were the bandleaders who closely worked with the Thai Royal Family and urban elites. For example, in 1946, Eua Sunthornsanan first played the Royal song composi-



**Figure 1** Government poster Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram-era (1938–1945) promoting the civilized form of dress  
**Source:** <http://thaiprogressive.blogspot.com/2008/07/preserve-or-nurture.html>.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the State reconstructed a new meaning of “Thai-ness” by dictating citizens' behaviors and tastes. This policy was based on nationalism, modernization, and Western perspectives. The Bangkokian values were adopted by the process of

tion *Yam Yen* (Evening) to bless Bhumibol Adulyadej. He composed and played Royal song compositions and worship songs for the Royal institution via the *Suntaraporn* band (Siriprasart, 2010). During 1942–1945, Sa-nga worked for Marshal Pibulsongkram, Luang Wijit

Watakarn, Khoon Wijitmatra, and Prajane Duriyang (Chan-geun as cited in Eamsa-ard, 2006). Later, he worked for the Asawin Phapphayon Company of General Major Prince Bhanubandhu Yugala (Phanuphan Yukhon), and the Lawo Phapphayon Company of His Royal Highness Prince Anusorn Mongkolkarn (Ayutthaya, 2003). The singers included those with well-educated backgrounds, of middle class and urban origin such as Sawalee Pakaphan, Pensri Pumchusri, and Charin Nanthanakorn. Suthep Wongkamhaeng, who was known as “The King of *Pleng Lukkrung*” was the most famous male singer of this band (Chan-ngeun as cited in Eamsa-ard, 2006).

Secondly, the band became the best contemporary band appreciated by the Thai urban class. In the late 1940s, *Suntaraporn*'s music was booming and being played by “big bands” performing *Pleng Lukkrung* or Western-style music at national events. Songs of *Suntaraporn* were promoted and broadcasted publicly via radio, television programs, movie soundtracks and at live performances at nightclubs and luxury hotels on Ratchadamnoen Road and those in Bangkok's downtown (Haiku, 2005).

Thirdly, the song lyrics employed formal language which identified the different levels between urban and local people by using words such as *wa-ja* (speech), *jumpit* (to kiss), *swat* (love), *nitha* (to sleep), and *napa* (sky) (Eamsa-ard, 2006).

Fourthly, the band became a cultural symbol representing modernity, being new-fashioned, and wearing Western-style clothes. The performance gestures were choreographed based on ballroom dances. This was appreciated among the high class, elites, and urban aristocracy (Jaroensuk, 1995).

Lastly, the band adopted several social mechanisms to serve the State's Thai-ness policy. For example, many of the patriotic songs were written based on nationalism (*Ratthaniyom*) such as *Thai samakkee* (Harmonized Thai), *Thai Ruam kumlang* (Combined Thai power), “*Phaendin Thong*” (Golden land) and “*Koet Pen Khon*” (Born to be a Human). Some songs were broadcast to support the State policy related to specific values. A song to support the good moral traits of a child's duties and responsibility was *Nathi Khong Dek* (Child's duties and responsibility). Songs to support State's recreation activities included *Ram Wong Pee Mai* (New Year Dance), *Ram Wong SongKran* (SongKran Dance), and *Ram Wong Loy KraThong* (Loy KraThong Dance) (Pataradetpisan, 2013).

While, the common way of urban life was reconstructed via music, the introduced model of State-defined enjoyment, merriment, national assiduousness, sufficiency ideology, peace, diligence and the romantic image of Thai's rural characteristics were imprinted. By this, the State policy established social control not only at the macro level but also within the spirit and individual lifestyle.

## Theoretical Framework

Louis Althusser's ideological State apparatus was applied as a conceptual framework (Althusser, 1971). The use of *Suntaraporn*'s music was investigated to identify the form of ideological State apparatus. Althusser's conception of the ideological manipulation mechanism was inspired by

Antonio Gramsci who emphasized the importance of ideological factors in the superstructure (Buddharaksa, 2014, p. 43). He emphasized the daily reproduction of productive relations in the consciousness of each subject by focusing on the State apparatus instrument of repression to enable the bourgeoisie to ensure domination over laboring classes (Geras, 1977). Two major State-exercised power mechanisms could be achieved. Firstly, the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) referred to people's physical control. It functioned by violence through several State administrative mechanisms such as the police, military, judicial system, political institutions, and government. Secondly, the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) implied a form of brain washing via the socialization process (Althusser, 1971, pp. 137–145).

For Althusser, ISA was a mechanism to manipulate the people's mindset via the religious and educational systems. He believed that humans were born under the installment of conventional social membership ideology. Socialization played a major role in the interpretation of the classes characterized in each social institution. It operated through a discourse on ideology where many social institutions naturalized the process of subjugation to certain rules, ways of life, and thought processes developed and sustained by the dominating classes to ensure their position in society. Later, people of all age groups had to accept those ideological functions according to the role they need to perform in the particular society so as to maintain the status quo (Althusser, 2001, pp. 142–144).

The authors employed Althusser's State ideological apparatus concept to describe Thailand's repressive State apparatus and ideological State apparatus under the regime of Thailand's junta government led by Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram (1939–1942). The state's mechanism or a so-called “Thai-ness” policy was adopted to control and to redesign people's mindset. These social mechanisms included regulations, punishment, unwritten contrition, and condemnation. Simultaneously, *Suntaraporn*'s music played a crucial role in enlarging the ideological State apparatus. Song was used as a power tool of the State to strengthen the reconstruction of values, beliefs, taste, and behavior among Thai citizens. Moreover, those who could not afford the modern lifestyle were excluded.

## Research Objectives

Two major research objectives were: 1) to investigate *Suntaraporn*'s music and its establishment of social stratification in Thai society, and 2) to provide a good example of cultural power using music as a social-ideological mechanism to increase the State's power over the Thai people.

## Methods

The authors employed documentary research to clarify ideas. Critiques and challenges were concluded using content analysis. Social and symbolic meanings in *Suntaraporn*'s music were highlighted. Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram's cultural mandates and Thai-ness policy (1939–1942) were investigated at the aesthetic level. In this way, the authors were able to interpret the perception

of social and cultural phenomena in Thai history. Later, the two major concepts of Althusser's State ideological apparatus were applied—the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA).

## Research Results

Two major research results are presented based on the repressive State apparatus and the ideological State apparatus.

### *Repressive State Apparatus*

Under Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram's cultural mandates and Thai-ness policy promotion, deculturalization was reconstructed based on modernization. By this, traditional local cultures were discriminated against. Three major State regulations were legislated to strongly enforce and control the people's behavior. Traditional local music performances were banned and replaced by songs on the State's security. Legislation included: 1) the cultural mandates 4, 6, and 8; 2) the National Culture Act, B.E. 2485 (1942) and the Royal Decree of National Culture; and 3) the Royal Decree on the national culture and the Royal Decree on culture and arts in 1942.

#### 1) Cultural mandates 4, 6, and 8

On 8 September 1939, the Thai government legislated “cultural mandate 4”. It focused on honoring the national flag, national anthem, and royal anthem. Persons who disobeyed this mandate were admonished and punished. As a result, the national flag, national anthem, and royal anthem became solely the symbol of a national royalty for all occasions (The Royal Gazette, 1939, Fourth cultural mandates). On 10 December 1939, mandate 6 was announced which focused on the music and lyrics of the national anthem. It required all Thai citizens to use the music of Phra Chenduriyang. The lyrics were designed by Luang Saranupraphan of the Royal Thai Army (The Royal Gazette, 1940a, Sixth cultural mandates). On 26 April 1940, the Thai government launched mandate 8 which concentrated on the context written in the Royal anthem. By shortening the lyrics and replacing the word *Siam* with the word *Thai*, the new anthem became another symbol of national royalty (The Royal Gazette, 1940b, Eighth cultural mandates). By this, an ideology of respectful nationalism was enforced in the people's daily life. This new anthem was regularly used in national security propaganda.

#### 2) National Culture Act, B.E. 2485 (1942)

In 1942, the government enacted the National Culture Act, B.E. 2485 (1942) section 6 and section 15. These consisted of the Royal Decree of National Culture section 6 concerning punishment for those who violated the laws. For example, a person not paying proper respect or honoring the Royal Anthem could be fined or punished (The Royal Gazette, 1942).

#### 3) Royal Decree on National Culture and Royal Decree on Culture and Arts, 1942

In 1942, the State strongly controlled both the lyrics and musical performances of *Pleng Phuenban* (Traditional local song). To achieve nationalism based on the “Thai-ness” policy, the State issued a Royal Decree as the major strategy. Furthermore, the Royal Decree on Culture and Arts covered musical performances, singing, or any entertainment environment. In order to further control the people's lifestyle, in 1943 the government announced regulations to manipulate all individual's taste. These involved musical performances, singing and dubbing. Later, State prohibition rules were announced to stop traditional culture (Wuttipong, 2011). For example, singing and a musical performance without permission from the Department of Fine Arts was prohibited. At each performance, singers and musicians performing in a traditional style were banned. Furthermore, each musical performance had to show the identification card of the performers. Each actor and singer had to be approved by the Department of Fine Arts (Khianthongkul, n.d.).

Nonetheless, resistance to the State program was reported, especially in the form of songs, including *Pleng Chiwit* (Life Song) or *Pleng Plaeng* (Parody Song). Most of lyrics were frankly satirizing tricky politicians. These songs were claimed to represent low class livelihood in urban society such as Sangnapa Boonrasri's *Khon Pad Tan* (Palm's Cutter) and *Khon Jon Mon Min* (The Poor), Sanea Komalashoon's *Sam Lor Khaen* (Tricycle's furious), and *Phu Tan Kwai* (Fool politician), and Kumron Samboonnanoon's *Mon Kkarn Muang* (Politics). However, singers were warned and intimidated. Some songs were formally banned by the State government. In 1953, Chan Yenkae's *Klin khlong sap khwai* (Smell of mud and buffalo) was first broadcast and became a public sensation. The song described tiredness, difficulties, poverty, and the enduringness of rural Thai farmers. However, it was later also banned by Phibunsongkhram's government. The junta government stated that the song provoked the wrong public perception. These songs were considered unhelpful for national security.

### *Ideological State Apparatus*

Ideological State apparatus monitoring used its power as a controlling mechanism. To prescribe and enforce people's behavior, it concentrated on interpellant people's identities, relationships between individuals, connections between individual and social institutions, and the socio-economic environment. In fact, these songs were used as a socio-cultural mechanism to manipulate the Thai people into one form of political preference that could be labeled as a compliant citizen. Laws and regulations were produced to frame a particular social ideology of the individual (Althusser, 1971). To achieve this goal, *Suntaraporn* was assigned a major role. The State's ideological reproduction mechanism was practiced through Thai-ness cultural reconstruction. The State's centralization policy was highlighted in order to maintain the dominant ideology of the ruling class. As a result, social class fragmentation through binary opposition perspectives between the urban and rural life were

drawn as a part of naturalization. Two major roles of *Suntaraporn's* music as the ideological State apparatus were exhibited:

#### 1) Role of reconstruction State power

To establish new class differentiation, music was adopted as a symbolic culture. *Suntaraporn* became Thailand's biggest band. It was best-known for *Pleng Lukkrung* and as the best band for ballroom dancing. The band was used to represent urban elite perspectives, values, and lifestyle. In contrast, *Pleng LukThung* became a rural and uncivilized Thai identity. It was best defined for lower class and rural people (Eamsa-ard, 2006).

There were three major roles for *Suntaraporn's* music:

##### 1.1) Representative of Western and modern lifestyle

From 1948 to the late 1950s, *Suntaraporn* was considered as the best exemplification of modern fashion by Thai urban elites. The band rearranged *Pleng Thai Sakol* or *Pleng Lukkrung* into ballroom dancing rhythms. These included using tango, beguine, rumba, cha-cha-cha, mambo, offbeat, waltz, slow and rock style ballroom dancing. As a result, "big band music", rich in brass and woodwind became the only band representing the modern lifestyle. The musical instruments included saxophone, guitar, violin, piano, double bass, and trombone (Jaroensuk, 1995). While, *Suntaraporn's* music boomed, *Pleng Phuenban* or *Kan Sadaeng Phuenban* (folk traditional songs and performance) were banned. The state claimed that these songs were obsolete and represented rural culture and the barbarity of low class citizens. Moreover, these songs represented the simplicity of the common poor and were only suitable for uneducated villagers. By this, traditional music and cultural performances became victims of development discourses.



**Figure 2** *Suntaraporn* band performances

**Source:** <http://www2.manager.co.th/Home/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9550000006790>.

##### 1.2) Changing values and taste

*Pleng Lukkrung* or "child of the city/urban song" represented Western-Thai style music. The six major conventions of *Pleng Lukkrung* were: 1) politeness and conventional singing style; 2) the rhythmic pattern of Tin Pan Alley (traditional music genres of New York); 3) the "big band" contained brass and woodwind instruments; 4) standard, formal, and urban style speaking—the lyrics usually applied the poetry and words of the educated middle class; 5) illustrated romantic love between urban men and women; and 6) usually associated with the Bangkok-ian elite's life style. For example, formal language was used to described social phenomenon, *wa-ja* (speech), *jumpit* (to kiss), *swat* (love), *pi-rom* (amusement), *pis-sa-mai* (adore), *nitha* (to

sleep), and *napa* (sky). This reflected the different levels and styles of communication between urban and local citizens (Eamsa-ard, 2006).

##### 1.3) Establishing new cultural standard of dressing and dancing

In late 1940s, *Suntaraporn's* music was booming at both national performances and provincial events. The songs were broadcast on national radio throughout Thailand as well as being performed on live shows. The "big band" with *Pleng Lukkrung* or Western-style music played extensively at nightclubs and luxury hotels around Ratchadamnoen Road and in Bangkok's downtown precinct. In order to exhibit a clear example of its popularity, three major elements of *Suntaraporn* performances were investigated: 1) the appearance of the singers—costuming, makeup, and hair style, 2) live performances and gestures, and 3) Westernized amusement culture and symbols.

Firstly, the singer's were mostly dressed in Western-style clothes making the clothes a material culture representing the civilized nature, modernity, standard, and politeness of urban people. Male vocalists and musicians wore short hair with pomade. They mostly dressed in a white shirt and the same style of black suit. Female vocalists had long dark, rolled or curly hair, decorated with flower hairpins or earrings. Colorful clothing, a short or sack dress with high-heeled shoes were preferable costume.

Secondly, the line performance and gestures were formally designed to show civilized and polite culture. Both musicians and vocalists were formally postured. In order to show their politeness and respect to their audience, musicians as well as singers sat on chairs. Those who were at the back needed to stand silently. Vocalists usually stood

still or used only slow movement. Slightly moving and standing still were the most preferable manners.

Lastly, the most popular dancing activity was ballroom dancing. These events were involved socially dancing with the urban privileges of time and space. The style was very popular among the high class, elites, and aristocracy. *Suntaraporn* was nationally admired by Thai scholars and musicians as the best ballroom dance band in Thailand (Jaroensuk, 1995). The band was very popular in schools, universities, the military, and government agencies. In special events of rival elites such as winter festivals, the Red Cross festival, and formal ceremonies, *Suntaraporn's* music became the sole symbol of Westernization and modernity.



**Figure 3** Suntaraporn band as the West's fashionista

**Source:** <http://www2.manager.co.th/Home/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9550000006790>.

In 1951, the Thailand Cultural Council established the Thailand Dance Sport Association. Afterwards, various ballroom dance schools arose throughout urban towns and national and international ballroom dancing competitions were organized. In the period of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, the Ministry of Education assigned ballroom dancing curricula to educational institutions at all levels (Thailand Dance Sport Association, 2014). Thus, the popularity of ballroom dancing became a dominant social phenomenon in both formal institutions and the social arena. By this, schooling became a tool to establish the process of “deculturalization”.

Originally, *Ram Tone* was a Thai native amusement. In order to set a standard for local performances, the Department of Fine Arts adjusted a variety of Thai folk dances such as *Ram Tone* to this native amusement as *Ram Wong*. This was later modified to *Ram Wong Mattratan* (standard Thai folk dance).

2) Power of music as a social mechanism

### 2.1) *Pleng Pluk-jai* (Propagandistic music)

Under the junta government of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram (1939–1942), various propagandistic musical pieces were expressed through *Pleng Pluk-jai* (nationalistic music or patriotic music). These songs were written by military figures or people in authority. To support the State's propaganda, *Suntaraporn* played a major role in public communication. These songs included *Pleng Pluk-jai* of Major-General Luang Wichitwathakan (1898–1962). Two major *Suntaraporn* composers were Eua Sunthornsanan and Keaw Adcharyakun. They produced three major types of *Suntaraporn* patriotic music:

#### 2.1.1) Patriotic music related to instilling nationalism

Music has long served as a tool to manipulate the national identity of the so-called “Thai-ness” of Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram. Patriotic songs were commonly used to communicate the nationalistic impulse to the Thai people, such as patriotic songs which developed from royal poems written by King Vajiravudh such as *Thai samakkee*

(Harmonized Thai), *Pluk Thai* (Wake Up Thai), *Thai R. kumlang* (Combined Thai Power), and *Rai Rak Rai Pol* (Without Love Without Success). These songs implied a strong sense of nationalism, militarism, heroic ideology of ancestors, collective feeling, and memory of the nation's grace.

Apart from this, patriotic music was developed from the poems of the noble class, such as *Naeo Lang* (The rear) by Princess Luksameelawan, *Sadudi Chatthai* (Praise for Thailand) by General Professor Luang Ranar Sitthi Pichai, and three songs written by Chamuen Manitnaret, Chaloeem Sawettanan and Sukrahit consisting of *Rak Sa-ngop* (Love Peace), *Thai Chuai Thai* (Thai Help Thai), and *Thai Mungna* (Go Ahead Thailand). These songs contained descriptions of nationalism and national values promoted by the State government.

Moreover, patriotic music produced by Eua Sunthornsanan and Keaw Adcharyakun such as *Thai Wiwat* (Developed Thai), *Bankoet Mueangnon* (The Homeland), *Thai Tong Tham* (Thai Must Do), and *Sadudi Banpaburut Thai* (Praise for Thai's Ancestors) also aimed to encourage a strong sense of “Thai-ness”. To achieve its goal, these songs gradually weakened the power people had over their own daily lives.

#### 2.1.2) Patriotic music related to Ratthaniyom policy

During 1938–1944, Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram launched a nationalistic development policy under the slogan “good culture, good morals, good sanitation, good dressing, good residence, and good earning a living”. This related to the Thai State's seventh mandate which was announced on 21 March 1940. The major objective of mandate 7 was to urge Thai people to reconstruct the strong sense of nationalism as well as capitalism. By this, those who were poor, unemployed, and uneducated were considered useless.

To support this policy, *Suntaraporn* composed “*Phaendin Thong*” (Golden Land) in order to encourage the Thai people to participate in national development ideology. The lyrics described the wealth of Thailand and the individual's responsibility to support the State's policy.

*“The golden land of Thailand, full of assets, Full of rice in paddy field,*

*Full of fishes in swamp, and many gold under the land*

*Any person know to earn a living, they would never starve to death”*

“*Koet Pen Khon*” (Born to be a Human) was another *Suntaraporn* song supporting the Rattthaniyom policy. Song lyrics fostered the binary opposition concept comparing sedulity and idleness. It illustrated that hard-working people would not be poor.

*“Woman: We are hard-working people, never avoid work*

*Man: Act as useful people like civilized people*

*Woman: If you fear to be poor*

*Man: You must be interested in work*

*Together: If thinking only enjoyment, it will make you become bankrupt”*

### 2.1.3) Patriotic music related to instilling a child's responsibility

In 1952, Eua Sunthornsanan and Cha-um panchapan were assigned by Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram to compose a song named *Nathi Khong Dek* (Child's duties and responsibility). In order to instill and foster the ideology of civic duty and responsibility in every child, 10 duties and responsibility were presented. They consisted of 1) paying full respect to Buddhism, 2) following traditions, 3) listening to parents and teachers, 4) speaking politely, 5) being grateful to others, 6) being responsible for their own duties, 7) being diligent, fluently practicing, and studying, 8) being frugal, 9) being honest, adapting to changes and becoming a good citizen, and 10) being productive. These songs were regularly broadcast via national radio stations and national ceremonies, especially on Children's Day. This song has remained popular on Children's Day in 2016.

Other patriotic music related to instilling duty and responsibility in children were, such as *Klom* (Sing Lullabies), *Klom Darun* (Child Lullabies), *Ta In ka Ta Na* (Grandfather In and Na), *Jong Tum Dee* (Must Act Good Deed), *March Yao-wachonchart Thai* (Thai's Youth March), *Nu lek* (Little Child Lek), *Nu Oei* (Oh Child), *Chong Tham Di* (Do Good), and *Lukkao Sakun Thai* (Thai's Heirs).

### 2.2) Celebratory music

Under Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram's Thai cultural mandates policy (*Rattthaniyom*), celebration songs were and broadcast. At least five songs came from *Suntaraporn*: *Ram Wong Pee Mai* (New Year Dance), *Ram Wong Ruenroeng Thaloengsok* (New Year Celebration Dance), *Ram Wong SongKran* (SongKran Dance), *Ram Wong SongKran Wan Chai* (SongKran Honey Dance), *Ram Wong Loy Kra-Thong* (Loy KraThong Dance). The songs were broadcast over the State radio station and governmental social media

in official places and later expanded to public spaces as a mannerism of Thai society (Pataradetpisan, 2013).

## Discussion

*Suntaraporn*'s music has long been used as a State mechanism to strengthen the “Thai-ness” policy. It was not only a tool to increase the ideological State apparatus. Rather, it also represented the State's power in its exercising. By this, music became a tool for generating social exclusion and as a result, the military junta government was able to exercise power over the socio-cultural lifestyle of individuals. Consequently, the State ideology apparatus based on the “Thai-ness” policy excluded poor, rural residents from taking part in the national image. Moreover, it led to a massive introduction of modern values, taste, lifestyle, and practices in Thai society. Only urban values and lifestyle were accepted and music and songs were used not only for entertainment but also to strengthen a top-down development policy and to power the State's control over the common lifestyle of all people.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

This article highlighted the power relations of music in the cultural and political spheres. The band *Suntaraporn* was used as a case study to illustrate the significance of music in socio-cultural and political terms. New ideologies under nationalism and Western culture which were produced by the Thai military junta government exhibited the influence of symbolic culture. On the one hand, *Suntaraporn* was used as a symbol of modernity to ensure that new class differentiation was established. In order to generate an ideological State apparatus, the junta government introduced Western music, modern cultures, and urban manners to Thai society. The cultural reconstruction was reinforced through regulations and armed forced to ensure that the urban identity and values were reproduced. By using *Pleng Lukkrung*, a modern style clothing, and Western rhythmic activities, the State was able to launch its modernization policy. On the other hand, *Suntaraporn*'s music was a major socio-cultural mechanism for the State to increase power through various social phenomena. New ideologies of nationalism, civic duty, and responsibilities as well as particular traditional cultures values and beliefs were reconstructed, reproduced, and embedded. Through these actions, the military junta government gradually reproduced a new form of power relations. To ensure the State's power, this led to exclusion, exploitation, extortion, subjugation, and class differentiation.

Moreover, the government applied a repressive State apparatus to control and to redesign the people's mindset, through the adoption of regulations, punishments, and unwritten contrition and condemnations. Song genres that were not suited to State's demands were suppressed and banned.

In sum, this article underlined how the *Suntaraporn* band and music were used as a new form of power relations by the military junta government. The authors suggest that to better understand the social mechanism of State power, it is crucial to focus on the semiotics. In order to reveal the social mechanism of the State, various forms of symbolic

culture need to be underlined. All hidden agenda which obstruct people from exercising their freedom should be considered as obstacles to democracy.

### Conflict of Interest

None.

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