The Lens of Micro Counter - Public in Authoritarian Thailand 2006-2016[1]

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Abstract

The public sphere in Thailand during 2006-2016 has limited and restricted freedom of expression under the authoritarian military regime. Many laws and promulgations were issued to enforce security. Military authorities extended their powers to excessively restrict rights and silence dissent in the name of security. Several laws actively proposed and enacted for decade such as Criminal Law Code section 112 or lese-majesty law, Internal Security Act (2008), Computer-related Crime Act (2007), Film and Video Act (2008),and Article 44 of the Interim Constitution 2007. This paper examines short film screenings during the Thai Short Film and Video Festival. These films criticized political issues based on rational-critical dialogues and inserted political messages aesthetically through rhetoric, metaphors, and satires. This paper found that these short films can be categorized into types, all of which utilize political symbols for representations i.e. idealized utopian or idealist ideas, inequality bias, relationship decline, symbolized conflicts, and resistance. Three types of amateur films were also selected to represent different political topics at different times. These films appeared in different genres such as short film, documentary film, and experimental film. The paper recommends public space in term of film screening or film festival is necessary for the young generation at the present because they can use it as counter public to debate and discuss a political issue with critical and rational thought instead of rally on the street.

Keywords

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Introduction

The article is divided into five parts: the introduction, background, theorizing theory, findings, and the conclusion. It will begin with the reason why short films are valuable to study. Thailand is in flux since the onset of the protracted political crisis in 2005, it has had 8 prime ministers, two military coups, five general elections (two of them annulled by the courts), three full-scale constitution-drafting processes, five rounds of huge and protracted street demonstrations (one culminating in mass violence), and two contentious national referendums. Few national democracies have experienced so much upheaval in just over a decade (McCargo, 2017, p. 4139). Under military regime, national security is very concern. Particularly, the public sphere in Thailand during 2006-2016 had suppressed freedom of expression through the law. This suppression occurred through the enforcement of both ordinary and special laws. Historically, the Thai military had a long history of political involvement, staging 18 coups since becoming a constitutional monarchy in 1932. The last one, in 2006, installed a military leader who pushed the elected prime minister out of his position. The September 19, 2006 coup is distant from the former coup in 1991 for 15 years. At once, the military leaders seized control of Bangkok, suspended the constitution 2007, and declared the martial law. (The New York Times, 2006).

During 2006-2009, unlike any time before, the Lese Majesty law Article 112 was enforced on people who had been charged with violating it. There were at least 765 Lese Majesty cases – an average of almost 191 per year (Streckfuss, 2011, p. 6). Then shortly after that, the sudden 2014 coup appeared. The coup was not too long after the crackdown of 2010 in Bangkok. Shortly after the military seized power on 22 May 2014 the number of Lese Majesty offenders increased. The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) who declared the coup and seized power brought about a new chapter of suspending access to social media and suppressing the freedom of expression. The NCPO declared 3 orders relating to the publicity of news and information, and the expression of opinion through the online media, including; order number 12, 17, and 18, which prescribed the obligation of internet service providers to not publicize any massage which incited, stimulated, or spoke out against the operation of the NCPO. The Les Majesty law, therefore, became a law that criminalized anything considered insulting, defaming, or threatening to the King, Queen, Heir Apparent, or Regent. The punishment is 3 up to 15 years of jail term for each offense. After the 2006 military coup, there was a significant increase in political division. This division caused a rise in using legislation as a weapon against activists following the 2014 coup.

There were at least 400 people summoned by using the NCPO orders. At least 3 orders were attempts to charge suspects or find more information relevant to the offense under Article 112. For instance, the NCPO order no. 5/2014 summoned certain scholars who had moved to amend Article 112, as well as the activists, who had moved. As iLaw had

collected information, from at least 94 accused who were charged under 112 under Lese majesty offense during the NCPO period, 57 people were prosecuted by military courts (iLaw, 2018).

Focusing on film can be used as small space of dissident expression. During this time, it appeared that a lot of short films and independent films were produced very much. At the same time, the screening of these films had also become a controversial public space to which the military authorities paid more attention. According to the suppression, the situation was reported in 2012-2013, Two films have been banned and censored. *"Shakespeare Must Die"* was banned by the Film and Video Act B.E. 2551 (2008) on the ground that the film might have caused social schisms. The second film, " *Boundary"*, was initially banned, but after the deletion of certain sentences, it was permitted to be screened. (Rithdee, 2013). Thereafter, the government had blocked access to more than 20,000 URLs. Leading to the initiation invoking the Computer-related Crime Act B.E. 2550 (2008) (Suksri et. al., 2012). Consequently, on 14 June 2014, the restriction screening of the film "*1984"* organized by *The Punya Movie Club"* in ChiangMai was banned. The police officers detained Badinh Teprarat (organizer) and canceled the event due to copyright infringement (Khaosod English, 2014). Later on, 8 August 2014, the restriction seminar of "Democracy Classroom: Unit 1, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (Interim) 2014" in Bangkok was asked to cancel because army authorities sent a letter to the Thammasat University Chancellor requesting cooperation to cancel the event as it may create political tension (iLaw, 2017). Moreover, on 23 April 2015, the restriction enforced again, at Bangsaen Rama Film Festivals 2015, Department of Films and Television, Burapha University, Faculty of Humanities and Science, Chonburi, Military officers contacted the teacher saying that the students have yet requested permission from soldiers and the provincial culture office to host the event. As a result, the student's self-censorship is partially made and they must send all the films to the military authorities to screen. Finally, the soldiers were asked to abandon the activity due to national security (iLaw, 2017). Then after the 2014 coup, in May 2015, DaoDin Group, Khon Khaen, students, and officers from Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR) appeared in public to hold Anti- coup banner and saluted three-finger like Hunger Game film. They were brought to the 23rd Military Circle by military and police officers and are charged with violating the NCPO's order No.7/2014 (BBC, 2014). After that, 23 June 2016, the Campaigning by distributing documents to promote people to exercise their voting rights outside the district of permanent residence and vote no of New Democracy Movement (NDM), it appeared that thirteen activists were arrested under the Referendum Act 2016 and at least 85 people who have been charged with participating in political demonstrations (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

The example of strictly limited public space of expression including film screening appeared continually under the military regime. The above phenomena of state repression cleared to see that film are one of micro public space which can be used to challenge the military regime in the view of government. The reason probably that can be presented the subculture of the counter-public to counter the dominant authoritarian power as well. Considering, a short film known as an independent film produced in term of political senses personally. When the increased number of domestic festivals and international screenings, short films are the most popular films which are screened as a social agency of the counter-publics at the same time as a result. The filmmakers occasionally criticized political issues based on rational-critical dialogues at film festival programs. Each political message is noted and inserted in films as usual. The filmmakers utilized films in the different ways of rhetoric, metaphoric, or satiric senses to counter authoritarian and injustice state mechanisms. Since 2006-2016, most films were circulated within their networks in micro public spaces such as the Thai Short Films Festival and Video or film festivals in the universities or bookstores, galleries, clubs, or particular groups.

Many venues of these films, were organized and exhibited including distributed in domestic and international public spaces parallel to the uploading, sharing, and discussing through social media online; Facebook, Vimeo, or YouTube. The turning point of the increasing numbers of short films emerged when the Thai Film and Video Festival started to establish in 1997. The continual festival paved the way to an open floor and became the main actors as opened spaces for amateur young filmmakers and audiences to exchange political conversations together through short film competitions and film screening. Since then, the festival still active to encourage young filmmakers up until now. For more than twenty years (Film Archives, 2020). The increasing numbers of films sometimes represented serious political problems strikingly day by day. The following film programs below can be proved to see that short films became to be the critical-rational spaces for debates and opinion expressions of the young groups of filmmakers and audiences significantly. The contents of the films from 2006 up to 2016 created a space to critical of Thai politics at that time significantly as a micro counter-public space. According to many festivals were produced quite suddenly after the coup or political violence such as "Spoken Silence" (2007) (Film Archive, 2020). "You Say You Want a Revolution" (Punya MovieClub, 2011) "Film Likely to be Banned project" (iLaw, 2013), and the program "Thai Aurora of the Horizon" (2014).

The internet, social media, especial Vimeo and YouTube, have allowed a young generation of filmmakers to utilize these channels to exhibit their suppressive visceral feeling and create a forum for communication for freewill. The following films are circulated and screened i.e. I'm Fine Sabai Dee (Thunwarin Sukapisith 2009), A Brief History of Memory (Chullayanon Siriphol, 2010), Myth of Modernity (Chullanon Siripon, 2012), and Mr. Zero

(NatchaTantivitayapitak, 2016). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to understand how short films play a significant role as a micro-counter public in the Thai Short Film and Video Festival under illiberal democracy for a decade and what kinds of political issues and styles of aesthetic forms that the filmmakers utilized and inserted into the short films.

Theorizing Public Sphere and the Idea of Counter-Public

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right of freedom, to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media. In general democracy country, the right to have freedom and expression should be concerned by state or government. The work of Jurgen Habermas (1962) suggests that political consciousness is developed in the public sphere of civil society which comes to be a public opinion as a result. The public rational-critical debate of political matters takes place predominantly in the private gathering of the bourgeois. The characteristic relationship of privacy-oriented toward an audience creates a forum for a critical debating public and discussion including personal exchange and opinion. Also, public opinion mostly is formulated in the *"public"* and *"public" sphere* as a political function. The public opinions should be conducted by private persons willing and letting arguments and decisions. The bourgeois public sphere probably institutionalized, not just a set of interest's opposition between state and society only but also a practice of rational-critical discourse on political matters. Therefore, the practice of rational-critical discourse on political matters is necessary for the process of democratization. The bourgeois ideal type is assumed that the audience-oriented subjectivity's well-founded interior domain a public sphere that would evolve in the world of letters and writing. But today it turns to the world of mass media which finally transforms into mass consumption instead (Calhoun,1992, pp. 1, 9).

The concept of "*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*" (1962) basically is based on the public sphere and provides a way of circumventing some confusions that have guided progressive social movements (Fracer, 1990, p. 56). However, Nancy Fraser (1990) carefully argued Habermas's problem from his work that it is the idealized liberal public sphere concern and failed to examine other especially non-liberal, non-bourgeois which will compete for the public spheres entirely. For example, the exemption was the women of various classes and ethnicities (Fraser, 1990, pp. 60-61). That means a public sphere is always constituted by conflicts. The emergence of a bourgeois public is never defined solely by the struggle against absolutism and traditional authority but addressed through the problem of popular containment as well. There is a plurality of completing publics and relations between bourgeois publics and other publics which are always conflictual. She named it "*Counter publics*". They contested the exclusionary norms of the bourgeois public, elaborating alternative styles of political behavior and alternative norms

of public speech (Fraser, 1990, p. 61). In the group of counter-publics, they were the members of subordinated social groups such as women, workers, people of color or gays and lesbians, etc. They constituted alternative politics known as *subaltern counter publics* to signal that they had formulated oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs (Fraser, 1990, p. 67). Fraser claimed that a critical theory should expose ways in which the labeling of some issues and interests as "private" limits the range of problems, and of approaches to problems, that could be widely contested in contemporary societies (Fraser, 1990, p. 77). Consequently, Nancy Fraser (1990) pointed to see the "bourgeois masculinist" which appeared in Habermas's conception as if there were social equals and the comprehensive public sphere was always preferable to a nexus of multiple publics (Fraser, 1990, p. 62). The contestatory function of subaltern counter publics in stratified societies was a complicated issue of separation as critical theory should expose (Fraser, 1990, p. 77).

So, after that, a work of later Nancy work (1992) turns to argue differently that the publics aimed to mediate between society and the state by holding the state accountable to society via publicity. So that state activities would be subject to critical scrutiny and the force of public opinion. That meant the transmitting of the "*general interest*" of bourgeois society needed to guarantee free speech, free press, and free assembly, and eventually through parliamentary institutions of representative government (Fraser, 1992, p. 112). She signaled that there were parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invented and circulated counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs. In particular, they are a variegated array of journals, bookstores, publishing companies, film, and video distribution networks, lecture series, research centers, academic programs, conferences, conventions, festivals, and local meeting places. They are armed with such languages of their own that we should not eliminate them (Fraser, 1992, p. 123). It sounded like the constitution of the public as a multi contextual space of circulation, that was organized not by places or institutions but by the circulation of discourses (Fraser, 1992, pp. 85-87*). Counter publics* discourse finally is far more than the expression of subaltern culture and far more than what some "reverse discourse", but counter publics incorporate the personal/impersonal address and expansive estrangement of public speech as the condition of their common world. Counter publics are "*counter*" to the extent that they try to supply different ways of imagining stranger-sociability (Fraser, 1992, pp. 87-88). Finally, public discourse, in other words, is poetic. A public is self-organizing, a kind of entity created by its discourse, or even this space of circulation is taken to be a social entity (Fraser, 1992, p. 81).

Fraser observed that actually public discourse was understood not only as a "single' comprehensive overarching 'public but members of subordinated groups also have no arenas for deliberation among themselves about their needs, objectives, and strategies. The

members of subordinated social groups were women, workers, people of color, and gays and lesbians. They had repeatedly found disadvantageous constitution of alternative publics. She named these groups as "subaltern counter publics" Which meant that they practice parallel with discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invented and circulated counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interrelations of their identities, interests, and needs (Fraser, 1992, p. 85). Sometimes, the following question may come to term that such a public "counter" or "oppositional", is more likely to display a thematic discussion of political opposition counter publics. They eventually formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests as well.

According to the cinema, it becomes the choice of collective experience. And then the question is how to organize collective experience. Alexander Kluge claims that cinema is a relationship of production that is the relationship between the experiences of the spectators and recreate the cinema's experiential horizon. This is a matter of the spectator who always acquires experience with others, collectively. Cinema is not a minority phenomenon but it relates to the experience of the author Alexander Kluge (1979). Cinema is not merely the form and condition under which the media exist but it is the true medium of experience, of desires, of phantasies including aesthetic appreciation as well. It is the horizon of perceptions and the medium of social produced experience (Kluge, 1979, pp. 208-9). It finally acts as importantly to produce a public sphere including politics, affections, resistances, protests, etc. Sometimes filmmakers could create self-confidence that considers everything as possible that will be the elements of social changes (Kluge, 1979, p. 214).

In particular, a short film is a film production type that makes effort to achieve the theme it addresses in a short time and therefore impressively arranges its structure. The short film provides a free field of study by its structure. Types of short films are fiction, documentary, experimental, animation and video-art, etc. The fact that film shooting technologies have become cheaper particularly handy cams have become widespread, and digital cameras and mobile telephones have the opportunity of shooting, they make short film production available for large masses (Kluge, 1979, p. 316). Alexander Kluge whoever participated with German new wave cinema. He was active as an author (short stories, novels, essays), film director and producer (short films, feature films, collaboration projects), television, and online contributor. (Wiegand, 2015, p. 3). He had also co-written with Oskar Negt in *"Public Sphere and Experience"* (1972) as responding to the movements of the 1960s. They developed a concept similar to Nancy Fraser as the so-called counter-public sphere (Wiegand, 2015, p. 3). Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt formulated a theory of the public sphere that adopted Habermas's historical analysis of the formulation of the public sphere. The examination was differentiated due to their conceptualized neo-Marxist adoption. They believed that the structure of the public sphere was interrelated with the organization of

experience, which was interwoven with the organization of media. As they considered a subject's possibility of experience anchored in the individual's context of living. Particularly, the development of mass media in the 20th century had led to the oppression of the possibility of gaining individual experience out of media productions (Wiegand, 2015, p. 8). To promote an organization of a public sphere that enabled a democratic mode of experience, they promoted a public sphere that engaged the viewer on the level of his/her own experience. The public sphere referred in which the individual who could autonomously regulate experience, meaning that an individual's experience could be created independently from the public (Wiegand, 2015, p. 9).

Therefore, cinema or film is not a personal and unique stamp. It is a relationship that exists in the experiences of the spectators which constantly recreates the cinema's experiential horizon. The multitude of films in the minds of the spectators will continue to be infinitely richer than what can be seen in the cinema. This is a matter of respect for the spectator who always acquires experience with others, collectively. The cinema is considered as a medium, true medium of experience, of desire, of fantasy, of aesthetic appreciation. He said that it is as important to produce a public sphere as the struggle itself and the element of social change (Kluge, 1979, p. 214).

How collective experiences relate to social change? When the film is a relationship of production that is relationship exists in the experiences of the spectators which constantly recreate in the cinema's experiential horizon. This is a matter of respect for the spectator who always acquires experience with others, collectively. If you want to develop amateur film, it is not merely the form and condition under which the media exist. It is the true medium of experience, of desires, of phantasies, and actually of aesthetic appreciation as well. It is thus the horizons of perception and the medium of social experience that is produced (Kluge, 1979, pp. 208-9). Most of all, it is just as important to produce a public sphere as it is to produce politics, affection, resistance, protest, etc. This means that the place and the pacing of the struggle itself as we know very well that it is too little right now. The filmmakers significantly may attempt to create self-confidence that considers everything as possible in this way. It hopes to be an element of social change (Kluge, 1979, p. 214). They propose a public sphere in which the individual can autonomously regulate experience, meaning that an individual's experience can be created independently from the public.

Also, Michael Warner (1992) stressed that the public discourse of the mass media had increasingly come to rely on the intimacy of the collective witnessing in its rhetoric of publicity (Warner, 1992, p. 386). From the sense of counter-public, it can be implied to see the emergence of the phenomena of micro counter-public by the following explanation. It is interesting to study the roles of short films in terms of micro-counter-public under Authoritarian Thailand 2006-2016 as follows.

Thai Political Background (2006-2016)

Under Thai Authoritarian democracy[2] for a decade, it is a convenient way to use power especially many laws and proclamations controlled and enforced for national security for discipline and order under the coups (2006-2016). According to the context of Thailand under an authoritarian government, the public sphere had shrunk and offended of thought and expression that threaten the moral order and public sphere. In the past ten years (2006-2016), many short films had been produced and publicly exhibited at least once in a major domestic or international film festival within social-historical contexts of relevant current events. Particularly, short films that are critical of serious undemocratic rules and violence had increased in number and intense in the issue in several festivals. Considerably, the internet, social media, especially Vimeo and YouTube also allowed the young generation of short filmmakers to utilize the channels to exhibit their suppressive visceral feeling. These films became a forum for communication on the topic of democracy and free will. Within the genres of short films, the scenes of political violence are replayed partly due to a series of trigger events, which revealed state violence and reminded to evoke democratization. These films became spaces of counter-public in the public sphere. Becoming a valuable micro counter-public space of the military regime during this period significantly. So, the aim of this study would like to examine short films as part of a social movement, possibly increasing the social agency of the marginalized through rational-critical discourses.

The political regime in Thailand was affected by severe conflicts for a decade. The consequent severe damages had led to the rise of public polarization, intolerant hatred of difference, and undemocratic legitimacy. The scenes of political violence were replayed partly due to a series of trigger events, which include new state censorship laws, expansion of the original lease majestic law (Section 112 of the Criminal Law Code, 1956, 2007) into the Internal Security Act (2008), Computer-related Crime Act (2007), and the Cinema Act (1930), military coups, and state violence. The public sphere, as mentioned, it is an area in social life where individuals can come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion influence political action, the 'public sphere'. In a political sense, arose at that time from within the private realm, specifically, connection with spanned the public and the private realms, and "through the vehicle of public opinion it put the state in touch with the needs of society.

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[2] Authoritarian democracy: Lend from Anna L. Ahlers and Rudolf Stichweh. They argue that the bipolarity of democracy rests on value patterns in the modern political system and both democratic and authoritarian traits coexist in the same political system. For instance, nowadays, we can see the "return of authoritarianism" or the resistance to the reinforcement of authoritarian claims to rule.

The 2006 military coup was a turning point; it appeared that short filmmakers utilized genres of satire, and historical documentaries to comment on the nation's politics. This is particularly important, as several filmmakers noted their hyper-politicization due to such events as the micro counter-publics of the past ten years during 2006-2016. This study found that short films have the attentions to produce several genres and aesthetics reflecting severe politics and state violence. Such Thai independent filmmaker had often screened short film relied on exhibition spaces in urban venues like the cafes in Bangkok or the others outside such as screening in book stores, galleries, seminars, and universities. Thai Film Archive seemingly played an important role in creating a space for short film programs through various activities such as production workshops, curated programs, and film screening festivals.

Considering, in the past ten years (2006-2016), notable trends under illiberal democratic regimes libel lawsuits were often used to silence opposition, but under authoritarian government mandated with fines and imprisonment accompanied by surveillance leave oppositional discord little public space. Thai independent filmmakers, regardless of political color, had engaged in representational practices and aesthetics. The role of independent filmmaking concerning "re-scripting" and reproducing scenes of political violence in a counter-public sphere. A short film, therefore, is simultaneous as an artistic endeavor, political expression, and niche market. And of hopeful significance, when counter-publics are cast as social movements, they acquire agency, perform rational-critical discourse that not only have the possibility of transforming policy/governmental politics but public life itself. Counter-publics assert an oppositional stance in dialogue against dominant hegemonic core beliefs and social hierarchies established by elites that are maintained by the state and market and are often expressed as a celebrated public culture. Therefore, the idealization of "counter" to the dominant society. Then, the particular counter-public in independent Thai short films I examine is democratic in message and practice.

Thai cinematic counter-public also mobilize criticism that resides underneath the surface of consciousness which Walter Benjamin noted that the "aura" of an original work of art was historically infused with sacred meanings used with religious ritual value, but with the age of reproduction-film and photography's diffused aura or "the function of art" in its exhibition value became a thing of politics (Water Benjamin, 1968). While in Southeast Asia, the 1970s marked the emergence of "new wave" independent filmmakers in the region (Lent, 2012) among a generation of filmmakers who were trained in the west and operated within the distribution structures of the national film industries, subsequent generations of indie filmmakers left the world of advertising and music videos with downsizing during the 1997 economic crash in Asia (Musikawong, 2007). When this generation of the filmmaker was able to further establish itself, they followed the previous generation of indie filmmakers and were

trained through art school or emerged out of the experimental and short film arena. To further explain the disjuncture of techno-scales, while regionally most Southeast Asian cinemas' challenges had historically been due to high production costs and unavailability of equipment, the advent of digital technologies or short film had democratized production practices in the region, shrinking budgets to a fraction of the costs of celluloid cinema budgets. Furthermore, some of the most important exhibition venues had been the university, cafes, bookstores, art galleries, television, open-access online platforms (YouTube or Vimeo), and domestic and international film festivals (Ingwanij, 2012).

The term of Thaksin's government during 2001-2006, the modernized and globalized Thai capitalism which is termed authoritarian populism or elected authoritarianism. As unwanted consequences occurred concerning him as a threat especially yellow shirts movement against him arose in 2005-2006 (Connors, 2012, p. 101). Taken up by the military junta seized the power from the government lead to the coup, 19 September in 2006. The Political mass rallied politics emerged from the two camps of Yellow Shirts (PAD), People Alliance For Democracy and Red Shirts (UDD), United Front For Democracy Against Dictatorship. The politics might be termed one of the "manufactured crises" or mobilized crisis" (McCargo, 2012, pp. 190-93). Leading to the violence of crackdown in Bangkok in 2010. Prayuth Chan-Ocha, the army commander in chief who had directed the violence dispersal declared martial law. He had staged the twelfth successful military coup on May 22, 2014. Soon after, he instigated a series of events; heavy repression, centralization of power, and judiciary interventions (Sopranzetti, 2016, p. 300). Post- a coup in Thailand had witnessed a troubling shift toward censorship, surveillance, and suppression in cyberspace. The atmosphere turned into an absolute digital panopticon. (Laungramsri, 2016, p. 195)

.When Thailand faced with political violence under the undemocratic and military rule of the coup in 2006 and a series of uprising/massacres from 2010 to 2014 ended by the 2014 coup; during this period, It turned to see the significant public space where was resisted for screening short films that were critical of serious authoritarian rules and violence continually for a decade. Particularly the number of submitted short films increased rapidly in numbers (Arunrotsuriya, 2014). The expansion of short films was also fueled by decade-long supports from the Film Archive and Thai Film Foundation. The role of the Foundation is vital because it is the Foundation that organized short films exhibition in a public space, particularly, Thai Short Film and Video Festival (TSF&V) that has been carried out since 1997. For 23 years, the festival allows all kinds of short film screenings, even the film transgression or prohibited contents. So, the question here is how the festival becomes a significant space for filmmakers to represented and circulate political issue as counter- public.

Methodology

This research article focuses on the period of 2006-2016 because during this time the government had enforced strong censorship and implemented many laws to suppress the political expression obviously in public spaces. The significant results found that there were many short films were screened and took the roles as small counter-public spaces in Thai Short Film and Video Festivals. They had played the significant roles providing young amateur Thai filmmakers spaces to express their political opinions rhetorically. This study examines the following aspects of the Thai Short Film and Video Festival.

1. There are ignificant short films filmmakers who directly inserted sensitive political issues in films at the festivals a lot.
2. Filmmakers who produced short films submit to Thai Film and Video Festival since 2006-2016.
3. A case studies of showcases show to see the rhetorics and styles of films which represented different political issues through the contents of these short films.

This qualitative study employed in-depth interviews with key informants and reviewed selected short films. Trying to analyze films by using the concept of the counter-public to understand the phenomenon. Thirty selected short films were reviewed and 15 interviews were conducted. Key informants included short filmmakers, three film critics, three film curators, and two film bloggers. The scope of the study focused on the decade of severe conflicts, confrontations, and violence from 2006 to 2016.

Findings

1) Public Sphere and Counter- Public

Focusing on the Thai context, the 2006 military coup was a significant turning point for several independent and short filmmakers. They utilized genres of slow cinema, satire, and historical documentaries to comment on the nation's politics (Rattanaphayon, 2015,July, 12; Tiengsirikan, 2015,July,1). During the past ten years, many Thai short films had been produced and publicly exhibited in a major domestic or international film festival a lot (Chalida interviewed). This is an important point as results of political polarization and divided politic of the mass caused several filmmakers noted their hyper-politicization in their films (three, interviewed). For instance, counter-publics, short films had been produced in several genres and aesthetics reflecting state violence and problem. Such Thai short films have often relied on exhibition spaces in urban venues like cafes, bookstores, galleries, domestic festivals, and universities. Short films acted as the micro counter-public space that represented the counter atmosphere of the young generation (Khumsupa & Musikawong, 2017). The organized space, as mentioned, Thai Film Foundation and Archive have played an important role in

creating a space for short film and encouragement of independent filmmakers in Thailand through its various production workshops, curated programs, and various festivals (Musikawong, 2007). The organizations have democratized film/digital film significantly (Uabumrungjit, 2012). Hence, the question has come to terms with what kinds of political issues are represented in a decade of illiberalism in the context of Thai society. What makes a particular expression within the Thai public sphere particularly becoming counter-public? Particularly, in the screening program of Thai film festivals and networks.

When Thailand faced with political violence under the undemocratic and military rule of the coup in 2006 and a series of uprising/massacres from 2010 to 2014. Thai Short Film and Video Festival (TSF&V) has been carried out since 1997. For more than 23 years, the festival allowed all kinds of short films screening, even the atmosphere of prohibited content. The increasing number of marginalized social agencies through rational-critical discourse in Thai short film festivals has increased day by day seeing through numbers and diversified issues. The TSF&V created a public space for the showcase of short films made by students and non-student alike. The festival is the area opening for an independent filmmaker to explore, express, and exhibit their creativities. Once the first festival was initiated in 1997 and continually launched for decades up to the present, it coupled with the creation of film schools and film courses influencing the outnumber of film students. Also, with the advent of digital cameras availability of cheap cameras, and editing applications on personal computers, the festival originated real open- the opportunity for the no-budget filmmaker (Uabumrungjit, 2012, p. 52). These films aren't concerned with the market or afraid of censorship. They are real art, culture, and protested individuality. These short film areas represented the vehicle of creativities and personal expressions for the persistence of artistic or critical sensibility and refusal as well (Ingwanij, 2012, pp. 167-8). And then, when the internet 4.0 partly assisted these amateur filmmakers to circulate their works via social media like YouTube, Vimeo, or Facebook significantly worldwide. It brought about TSF&V received more than five hundred submissions each year (Uabumrungjit, 2012, p. 52). This means TSF&V became a new captivating public space and then becoming a political encounter and transgression public space at the same time especially after the 2006 coup. These films significantly paved the way for the democratic culture of viewing including criticism. Someone perhaps was shaped by aesthetic receptiveness to difference and active critical engagement (Ingwanij, 2012, p. 169).

2) Short film as a Micro-Counter Public

The expansion of short films was fueled by decade-long support from the Thai Film Archive and Thai Film Foundation (Arunrotsuriya, 2014). Since 1997, the first "*Short Film Festival*" was organized, known as Short Film and Video Festival or *Thessakan Phapphayon*, (TSF&V Festival). It is a festival that has been permitted screening works whose content transgressed those alternative values and political prohibitions differently from TV and commercial screens. It showed all the entries that have been submitted as shown in the program "*marathon.*" It can be said that the festival became a space that nurtured the creativity of youth. Keeping with the self-proclaimed stance of the festival, it was an event that supported the artisanal or DIY (do-it-yourself) production ethos (Ingwanij, 2012). Let's take a look at the list of film screenings during the decade through the following table.

Table 1 Example selected short films in TSF&V 2006-2016

Years	Short films	Filmmakers
2006	Anthem(5min)	Apichartpong
	Memories (26.5 min)	Teerapol Suneta
	The Reflections Remains (17.30nin)	Deja Piyavhatkul
	The Bangkok Bourgeois Party (28.51min)	Prab Boonpan
	Lessons (1.30min)	Apid Busayasiri
	Enough (3.45)	Chawit waewsawangwong
	Circles (2.10min)	Sittisak jiampotjaman
2007	Silencio (17 min)	Sivaroj Kongsakul
	I'm Fine (Sa-bai-dee-kah) (4min)	Tanwarin Sukkhapisit
	Bangkok Tanks (6min)	Nawapol Thumrongrattanarit
	The Day Before Revolution(21.35min)	Pass Patthanakumjon
2008	Belief (9 min)	Sitthisak Kaeocharoenrungreang
	National Anthems (27min)	Autthawut Boonlaung
	Red man (8 min)	Chai Chaiyachit
	Prisoner (12 min)	Nuttaphong Homchuen
	Thai Family (15 min)	Prachaya Lampongchat
	Bodily Fluid is so Revolutionary (41 min)	Yingsiwat Yamolyong
	Colours on the streets (62 min)	Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke
		Weerapong Wimuktalop
2010	I am a Murderer (12 min)	Panit Jirawattananunt
	Its hard to say I love you (10 min)	Napat Treepalawisetkun
	On the Road (22 min)	Thepmanee Kittithawonkul
	We will forget it Again (9 min)	Thepmanee Kitivornkul
	My Father absences on Father's day (7 min)	Prempapat Plittapolkarnpim
	Humanity (15 min)	Chotika Parinayok
	A Brief History of Memory (14 min)	Chullayannon Siriphol
2011	Terribly Happy (30 min)	Pimpaka Towira
	Change (5 min)	Prempapan Plittapolkranpim
	Over the Rainbow (2.40min)	Phattharamon Urahvanichan
	Together (3.84)	Nalat Choravirakul
	Colormind (2.20)	Zaikwan Khaengkhan
	Kari Yuka (30min)	Eakapon Swttasuk

Table 1 Example selected short films in TSF&V 2006-2016 (Continued)

Years	Short films	Filmmakers
2012	Ashes (20 min)	Apichartpong Weerasewthakul
	True or False (3.14 min)	Boonjira Phungmee
	Millitary Solider Student the militatry (9.14min)	Theeraphat Ngathong
	Hope(4.56min)	Natha Sirinum
	Battle(8.49min)	Thai Pradithkesorn
	Dust (20 min)	Manasak Klongchainan
2013	The Witch (17 min)	Nacha Kittimongkolchai
	The Age of Anxiety (14 min)	Taiki Sakpisit
	Is Not Aviable In This Time (27 min)	Chullayarnnon Siriphol
	Her Motherland (26.28min)	
	Octoblur (29 min)	Akarin Ruengnaowaroj
		Patana Chirawong
2014	Myth of Modernity (16 min)	Chullayarnnon Siriphol
	What a Wonderful World (13.08 min)	Jirapat ThaweeChuen
		,Thanawat Noomcharoen
		Puton Thonglan
2015	In your Feeling (14.43 min)	Anittha Rintarasoontorn
	Memory (6.53 min)	Watthana Panyawee
	Motherland (16.28 min)	Varinda Narongrithikun
2016	Bangkok Ghost Stories (20.42 min)	Wachara Kanha
	Anonymous in Bangkok	Sineenart Kamaklot
	Mr. Zero (41.10)	
	Bangkok Stories (95 min)	Natcha Tantivitayapitak
	Devil Rules the City (13 min)	Attaphon Na Bang Yang
	Red Wish (29.59 min)	Manussak Dokmai
		Nath Kayanngan

To examine the short films screened at the festivals, it was found that they reflected the particular serious political issues at that time such as the year of violence after the 2010 government crackdown against red shirt protest. The Thai army stormed the red-shirt encampment in a bloody crackdown in central Bangkok. Forcing the anti-government fight to protest after that until the 2014 coup. The conflict and violence appeared and escalated into street rallies of the protesters. There were many dead people and injures. To consider the above table, the titled of films after 2010 involved murder, humanity, military, soldier, battle.

Especially in the year after the 2014 coup, some films also titled Bangkok as the area of ghost stories or place of devil rules.

1) Public Screenings and Networks of Short Films

To examine the development of short film festivals organizer and other parts which are cooperated. It found that they are close relation of each other especially network of the film organizers, filmmakers and film critics as film club or community which almost everyone known each other as well. Thai independent and short films have often relied on exhibition spaces in urban venues such as the Bangkok Art and Culture Center (BACC), and the National Film Archives theatre. On a few occasions, films have been screened by F*ilm Kawan* (Bangkok), *Punya Movie club* (Chiang Mai), *the Documentary club*, and *Lumiere Film Clubs* (Khumsupa & Musikawong, 2017). Inaddition the real-time physical venues, one cannot deny that many audiences may watch such films through open-access online platforms like Vimeo and YouTube. Film community communicated through the film journals, film columns in journal or newspaper. Particularly, many columns about film emerged and circulated radical political aspects in newspapers and journals increasingly. In particular *Prachathai, Bangkok Post, Ann journal*, and *Fa Diewkan journal.* The film magazine and film journal were energized at the same time such as *Thai Film Archive Journal, Bioscope magazine,* and *A Day magazine.* Additionally, the online blogs and facebooks built up increasingly (Tiengsirika, ,2015, July,13). The Thai Film Festival has become the most important for short filmmakers in Thailand. Thai Film Foundation created "*Salaya Documentary*"" and "*Short Film Festival"* as significant film screening venues since 1997 (Uabumrungjit, 2012).

These micro public spaces gathered with specialized groups to debate politics among a new generation of, filmmakers, audiences, and film critics including film fans and followers. Some of these young guys are studying production or film studies but some are not. Even short film Community is quite not large or equal to commercial film, but they are very active to discuss and debate within the community. Some online bloggers such as *Wise Kwai's*, Thai Film Journal. known as *http://thaifilmjournal.blogspot.com*/ or facebook named *The Experimental Film Society.* Reaching the audience is always a big issue, while the number of short films is growing rapidly, within the online community, a few bloggers have been writing about these independent and short films, in particular, *Jit Phokaew* wrote Thai and English in a personal way on his webpage (or Facebook). Short films help young generation filmmakers reflect their frustration and anxiety to evoke societal consciousness. The outnumber of short films in TSF&V was turned to focus on politics obviously since 2006 as mentioned (Nambenchapol, 2015, July,12). In 2007, one year after the 2006 coup, there are more films concerning politics more than 28 films. One outstanding program in the festival is Spoken Silence (Nang Niep Mai Mee Pak Mee Seang) composed of the following

films, The Duck Empire Strike Back, 3-0 Anocha (Sam-Soon), Letter from the Silence, The Love Culprit, and Silence in D minor. Spoken Silenceaesthetically satire the silence by questioning and shadowing the past to see and questioning why we still silent to the coup at the front. Violence and oppressive military regime seem to be the turning point of the emergence of political assertion in Thai short film significantly (Uabumrungjit, interviewed). The filmmakers tried to counter the 2006 coup by metaphoric styles, in particular, the Love Culprit, Sanchai Chotirosseranee represented through Karaoke singing along and repeat again and again likely to metaphor the pleasure repetition of coups as a love culprit. The aesthetic metaphor in different ways of these films is directly encountered in the coup. Accordingly, Chalida Uaebumrungjit's film, Silence in D minor, asked why there was no resistance from Bangkok bourgeois when the country fell back to the vicious circle. Why there was only the sound of silence. She wondered why the people kept silent. She introduced the viewer by listening to the voice of the past students who fought for democracy in the past 1970s. Another program in the festival also determined to name the program that "You feel, I feel, but no one says" (Bodin, interviewed).

Up to 2009, the short film festival played a major role to focus on Thai politics. Start with the film program created by the Thai Film Foundation (2009) known as Silapananapan, 3-5 November at Pridi Babomyong Library Thammasat University. After the crackdown in Bangkok in 2010, in 2011 directly. Let see the following programs are the example of small space to counter and voice of ordinary people. Besides, Bodin Tepparat (Punya MovieClub) and Wiwat Lertwiwatwongsa (Filmsick) created the program 2011 May–June 2011 at BACC. The program titled "You Say You Want A Revolution" is the following program. Known as Let's Change or Plain Thoed Chao Thai, a short film screening program hosted by Punya Movie Club showed many works of interesting filmmakers such as Chullayannon Siripol, Chalermkiet Chayong, Thanwarin Sukpisit, Nop Paknawin, Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit, Taiki Sakpisit, Prab Bunpan, Paisit Panpuksachad, Manassak Dokmai, Ratchaphoom Bun banchachook, Wiwat Lertwiwatwongsa, and Hamer Chalwala. These filmmakers later had paved the way for the young generation to turn to interest in short films much more later i.e. Thanwarin Sukpisit or Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit. While the peak of political confrontations and the emergence of Self-censorship the government issues Film Act (2007) (Suksri et. al., 2012) Shakespeare Must Die (2012), and Insect in the Backyard in 2010.

The initiated film festival in 2013, to counter with Censorship law, significant short film competition created short film contest, under the slogan "closer to the edge with artfulness," "What can I say, I haven't even watched them," *"If I don't censor myself, they will censor it for me anyhow*," and postulated, "*We can't speak about the truth in this society*?" To ban films that might undermine "public order and morality", or affect "*national security and the honor of Nation* (https://prachatai.com/english/node/3685) (Thanwarin, interviewed). Through

the language of the films, they are unmistakably counter-violence used in Thai politics. This group of filmmakers took action with their talents of film production to communicate with the public with direct political messages, which this group of young filmmakers is interested in. Conveying the political reality forced to create a network and later progressed into a movement that encompasses filmmakers, an audience, and a concerned general public. On nearly soon, May 22, 2014, when Thailand witnessed its twelfth military coup, despite a deficiency in democratic legitimacy, the junta has thus far sustained mass support, while challenging its rule are denounced as a threat to the restoration of national order. To understand why a security narrative functioned by that time; it probably to know that the creating fear of polarizing conflicts caused by representative democracy and a security narrative promising the reintroduction of political stability through military dictatorship and the anti-junta protests as they threaten to sabotage the order-restoration process (Sombatpoonsiri, 2015, p. 85). The new generation of poets, fiction writers, essayists, and intellectuals inside and outside the university brought sharp insights to inequality, rural-urban tensions, and the silences past as they began circulating their work in progressive literary and political print and online publications. Visual artists and musicians whose work critiqued the past and present and imagined possible futures for the countryemerged in the streets and new performance spaces (Haberkorn, 2014, p. 2). After the coup in 2014, the program Thai Aurora of the Horizon" Short Film project was suddenly created to ask for "Idealized " Thai Political Fortune". Headed by Suphakit Seksuwan. It is a political short film project produced by 15 Thai filmmakers. The slogan of the program proposed it should be the time of the Aurora light up at our horizon". This program was toured into many places especially in the university's place to initiate talks and discuss political issues and debates sending their messages to the public. Short films were the front row of the countermovement to counter the military. It was the program that countered the coup suddenly by using each individualistic style of the film. Therefore, the first aesthetic style of these short films probably assumed that it is the metaphoric symbolic style to metaphor the political crises with the idealistic democracy system. One of its unique activities is 'Marathon Screening' that screens all of the entries applied for the competition. Although the festival seems small in scale, it is a piloting event that creates awareness of the term 'short film' among Thai people.

2) The Genres of Aesthetical counter-public of Short Films

Therefore, short films shifted conveying the political message after the coup in 2006 significantly. The filmmakers do not lie to conceal violence or even respect only heroes. Their genres are presented and traced back to examine, to question, to critique for connecting the past with the present and future with the development of the dialectic line of critique. Specifically, short films are an example of the new interest in public space especially its public spaces in festivals including their networking through social media. By using the

aesthetic to encounter, to represent the independent spirit in independent film, trying to voice or asking for the Ideal of political justification and expectation as well. Significantly, under the authoritarian oppression of Thai society. If we examine short films from the film festival booklets 10 years (2006-2016), there are six issues that filmmakers represented the symbolics as the table showing below. To examine short films, it found that these short films utilized the relation between symbols and representation meaning to communicate through short films significantly.

Table 2 The Relationship between Symbolic Representations and Reflected Political Issues of Selected Short Films in TFF&V (2006-2016)

Symbolic Representations	Reflected Political Issues
Dream, nostalgia, Memory, Wishing	Idealist/ Utopian Democracy
spaces/ territories, town, hometown	Inequality and Biased Political Value
Family Relation Dad &Mom	Divided Society Apartheid Unification
Colors Red, yellow, Blue, Black, White	Conflict and Polarization
Military/Solider	Authoritarian regime
Political Situations Political Crisis	Realist Political system

Source: Thai Short Film and Video Festival Booklets (2006-2016)

The example showcase of selected short films from Thai Short Film and Video booklets for ten years above can be categorized into six types of film which utilized political symbols for representations. The first is the film which idealizes seeking for utopian or idealist democratic regime. The narrative of the story may be shaped in terms of memory, nostalgia, or dream. The second type seems to stress inequality and bias value in the Thai political sphere and, in particular, stressing double standard between the Yellow shirt group and the Red shirt group or the inequality economy between rural and Bangkok. The third type is the type of film focus on the division and conflicts emerging with the family relation. The obvious fourth type is the film which concerns conflict and violence by using color-coded to represent. The different symbolic colors i.e. Red, yellow, Blue including Black and White. The following fifth type chooses military or solider to present directly to authoritarian power. And the last type of film usually a scripted realist crisis of political crisis problems especially recording footage of violence and conflict in Bangkok from 2008-2014. The filmmakers represented it as not ambiguous meaning. The above six characteristics are the overview submitted films of Thai Short Film and Video Festivals for ten years at Thai Film Archive festival. However, it is also valuable to bring another significant 3 styles of films that screened and circulated as the significant micro-counter. Considering selected following showcases, their symbols, narratives, and contents are scripted and produced into 3 different styles if we scrutinize. It will be very helpful guided to see the messages represented in these films as the micro-counter public vigorously. Besides, the example of short films below also reflected four kinds of Characteristics in terms of different kinds of genres which each film can be acted as counter- public significantly. Finally, the showcases below are selected as the case studies which represented the different serious political issues. The first is the short film which is

satire Thai political atmosphere after the 2006 coup. The second film talked about the trauma history of the massacre in 1976. And the last short film tried to remind to recognize the life of mundane people who lost family member during the political conflict and violence.

(a) Metaphoric and satiric narrative

Figure 1 I'm fine. สบายดีค่ะ. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycZeXFwWhYY
10 December. 2014 (Sukkhapisit, 2009).

The first film style is aesthetically scripted in 2009. Tanwarin Sukkhapisit made this film, I'm Fine Sabai Dee Ka, a three-minute satirical film shot scene of the filmmaker who locked herself in a cage placed in front of the Democracy Monument. There are Passers-by take photographs and stop to ask her what happened. She smiles and repeats that "I'm fine Sabai (comfortable) in here". The message determined hidden script to satire the political atmosphere under the authoritarian of Thai society that people had no problem with illiberal. The film is a satire of the atmosphere under authoritarian Thailand with the feeling with a smile and comfortable (Lens, stage and paint, truth. Bangkok Post,10/12/201. https://www.bangkokpost.com/print/448775/)

(b) Documentary of Counter-Memory and Traumatic Past

Figure 2 "ความทรงจำ-ไร้เสียง" สารคดี 6 ตุลาฯ ที่ไม่ยอมเงียบ,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MeEqQ9L0xY&t=168s
23 December 2014 (Phoothong, 2010).

Another kind of short film produced an aesthetic form of documentary film. To recall the past is a simple way to remind the memory of the state's pain and violence. Patporn Phuthong, a document filmmaker asked for the painful feeling of traumatized memories of parents who lost their children in the 1976 massacre at Thammasat University. Trying to express the memory which is silenced for so long. Silenced Memories is a documentary film which is a part of oral history project listening to the voice of the victim. Filmmaker and her cameraman want to present about 6 Tula (6 October Massacre) in a different tone without violence or violent footage. She recorded voice over of two-parent of Mae Lek, mom of senior student from Ramkhamhang and Por Jinda, father of Jarupong Thonglsin, Thammasat student. Patporn points to the silence is core problem because it hides the truth under the rag especially concealing the violence. So, she titled her film like that. Trying to address about not to face the truth may led to the culture of impunity. That it is absence to learn lesson to avoid the violence. So, consequently, Thai society is inevitably face to the violence again in May 1997 and May 2010.

(c) An Experimental Film Counter State Violence

Figure 3 A Brief History of Memory

2010 / sound / black & white / experimental documentary / 14 mins

http://www.chulayarnnon.com/film2.html

Figure 4

ONARTO.com. https://onarto.com/chulayarnnon-siriphol-storyteller-and-visual-artist/

A Brief History of Memory (Siriphol, 2010)

The last above art film is the example of an experimental film known as "A Brief History of Memory". It bears the voice of the victim of state violence, in this case, it is the parent of those killed and memory as a character itself. The unscripted texture of voices communicating their emotions of loss gives an air of authenticity and the avoidance of the actual scenes of violence that took place. While acknowledging the violence, but it focuses on the sound of oral history that does not have a voice. A Brief History of Memory is an experimental film using still photography and distortions of video images. Then the final scene fuses both intentional and unintentional losses such that all loss of life is equivalent and the expression of justice is more about a demand for redress and compensation for her son's life.

The experimental film represented the voice-over of the lost reflecting the violence. The tragedy evokes the consciousness of violence and divided trust since the 2006 coup. Since the mobilization and confrontation between Yellow-shirt and Red-shirt flight for their political faiths. The conflict and confrontation appeared in Bangkok between two allies with the violence of weapons. The death of victims forced and inspired a young filmmaker Chullayanon Siriphol to produce a film that showed how this shameful event ruin innocent people, bystanders who lost their loved ones in the political battleground. In contrast with mainstream movies, Chullayannon's short Film, A Brief History of Memory, highlighted the violence that happened at that time. "A Brief History of memory" (Siriphol, 2010) went back in time to an earlier episode of violence at the beginning of 2009 in the Nang-Leng community, using a mother's narrative to tell her story through her voice, the film recalls the memories of the violence that created casualties among bystanders of the protests. A filmmaker produced the film to show how this shameful event ruins innocent bystander who lost her son in the political battleground. It is represented "From the perspective of an ordinary person bystander. (Chullayanon, interviewed). His short film is very progressive by techniques of experimental film and more complicated feelings touched him to express through the lens. His works have been displayed at numerous festivals and exhibitions.

Conclusion

Short films produced for a decade after the 2006 coup became significant micro counter-public spaces under Thailand's illiberal democracy. The Thai Short Film and Video Festival was a significant public space for young filmmakers who produced short films as counter-public for a decade. The films were produced to counter the junta government by utilizing political content related to controversial issues of each year. Some filmmakers submitted political films continually to the festivals. The genres of these short films sometime symbolized the conflicts and divined political attitudes through the differences of colors such as red or yellow. Some films try to compare the worse relation between the government and people. The short films reflect the political problems and political declination of respect and

trust in traditional political establishment significantly. Some of the political issues represented in films by the imagination of the idealist political system which will never come true to satire the political at the present. In other way, some films reflect the political realist sphere of prejudice and biases of injustice of government leaders, government authorities, and legal officers. Finally, the political sphere seems to be divined by the political practices which full of polarization and conflict under authoritarian regime for so long.

Here, the selected showcase of short films represent the problem of Thai politics in different issues the first trying to satire why Thai people did not worry about illiberal under the coup as Thunwarin presented in the short film; "I'm fine (Sabai Dee)". Another kind of aesthetic film is presented in the form of a documentary film that documented the feeling of trauma memories of parents who lost their sons which was covered with the silence so long after the massacre in 1976. The last form of the film is the experimental film which uses techniques to encounter politics by inserting the radical content to counter the public which reminded to recognize mundane people who lost the life in rally political violence in Bangkok in 2009.

That means the public sphere in Thailand since 2006-2016 has limited and restricted freedom of expression under the junta regime. There are many laws and promulgations are issued to enforce security under laws and orders, However, in the meantime, it is apparent that there is some significant micro counter- publics that appear to challenge the autocratic regime significantly especially many short films in Thai Film and Video Festival. For instance, many short films increased in numbers. Particularly, young filmmakers have criticized political issues based on rational critical dialogues, and politicized messages noted and inserted in their films as well as the political messages. They utilized these films in the different ways of rhetoric, metaphoric, or satiric senses of counter-publics. Many films were circulated within the networks such as domestic film festivals in the universities, bookstores, international film festivals, or online platforms significantly. The finding found that the filmmakers usually smart to use rhetoric to communicate about politics by using symbolic and rhetoric represented continually. There are six categories of films represented. The first utilized political symbols to represent the idealized idea of political expectation and the second is about the metaphoric terms of memory, nostalgia, or dream stressing on inequality and injustice of Thai political "double standard". The third type is comparing the Thai political sphere based on relationships in a family which is on the crisis of relationship. The fourth type focuses on conflict and violence by using color-coded representation. The fifth seems to present directly to authoritarian power by using military signs and symbolism. The last one is usually collecting footage of violence and conflicts in Bangkok from 2008-2014. Three styles of showcases were selected to show here to prove

that short films are the significant micro-counter public in form of a short film, documentary film, or experimental film.

In summary, during the decade of illiberal democracy in Thailand, meanwhile, the restriction of expression in public is limited under laws and orders. However, at the same time, the space of the Thai Short Film and Video Festival became the significant space of the emergence of the micro-counter public in terms of short films significantly. The research found the ways that short films utilized politics to express in public in forms of symbolic, metaphoric, and rhetoric of political meaning asserted in films to communicate and counter in public significantly and continually. The research figures out to see that the more government tried to limit the dissent in public space the more level of political frustration increase.

Noticeably from the numbers of political messages in short films that appeared above. To hear the dissent of young voices in public probably will decrease the conflict and violence in the coming future as well. Meanwhile, the process of democratization is not going well in Thailand, the research recommendation asks for the government should concern to open public spaces for the young generation to voice their opinion seriously because the public spaces will help to have rooms to dialogue and discuss the political frustration as well.

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