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**(RE)CRAFTING CITIZENSHIP:
CARDS, COLORS, AND THE POLITIC
OF IDENTIFICATION IN THAILAND**

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(Re)Crafting Citizenship: Cards, Colors, and the Politic of Identification in Thailand

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Abstract

This paper traces the genealogy of one type of state artifacts in Thailand, the Identification Card. Central to the research question is how the chaotic card system in Thailand has been historically invented and utilized by state agencies in different periods of time and how such invention has contributed to the crafting of differential citizenship in Thailand. The paper argues that throughout the history of ID card system, two kinds of citizenship have been produced: proprietary and contingent citizenships that serve as a means to differentiate the Thai from the non-Thai other. Yet, within the temporality of the ID card regime, pragmatic citizenship has been developed by people to rework national identification as something alive and practical. It is in this realm that the non-Thai other has strived to be both a subjectified and subject-making in the unstable state-ethnic relationship of modern Thai society.

Keywords: Citizenship, Identification Card, State-ethnic relation, Border Control

Introduction

On May 19, 2010, in response to the government's massacre of the red shirt protesters in Bangkok, a group of red shirts in Kalasin province, northeastern Thailand staged a symbolic protest in front of the city hall. "Return the ID cards" Prapas Yongkawisai, leader of the Kalasin's red shirts explained, was a symbolic act to denounce the status of being Thai and to cut the tie from the cruel Thai state who ordered the killing of its own people at Bangkok Ratprasong. Prapas also asked the Thai people in other parts of Thailand to join his campaign to "refuse to be Thai" as a form of protest against the dictator state¹

In Trad province, however, 81 displaced Thai people were excited to be granted ID cards from the Trad governor on Mar 31, 2015. After years of struggle to be verified as Thai, these displaced Thai people who used to live in Ko Kong, Cambodia and moved back to Trad province

¹Manager Online, <http://www.manager.co.th/Local/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9580000037098>, accessed 03/11/2015.

were re-classified as “Thai” by the Ministry of Interior. Samruay Thammachat, villager of Klong Yai district, Trad Province, told the reporter with joy that she was very happy to have her Thai ID card. She would now become full Thai and eligible for all the rights the Thai government grant to the citizen. Furthermore, she could also now travel throughout Thailand.²

The two ID card incidents, though opposite in terms of scenario, reflect an interesting state-people relationship in modern Thailand. On the one hand, it illustrates the constitutive effects of document—the way ID cards produce citizenship and citizen, who in turn use them. On the other hand, citizenship as a political construct has often been mediated through the everyday practice of artifact. ID cards, as with other kinds of formal document, strip away context, and hence enable the routinization of innovation (Hargadon and Sutton 1997 cited in Riles 2006), while serving as a tool to objectify and thus reify the social categories produced by the state. But as a cultural text, ID card can be read and interpreted by producers, its users, and various types of actors involved in the production and circulation of this official artifact. Social practice of ID card, like language, is a mode of communication, the expression of voices that render citizenship an arena of unsettling/constant negotiation and contestation of legitimate belonging in state-authorized national community (Strassler 2010).

Anthropology have long studied material culture, the object, its context, the way it was manufactured, used, and circulated in order to understand the culture in which it featured or to understand how cultures of human being have developed through artifacts. However, official artifact and its practice did not gain serious attention by anthropologists until the turn of the 21st century. In response to the call for agency and the mobility of materiality, anthropologists started to shift their focus from metaphors, texts, or symbols of artifacts to the practice of artifacts or what artifacts could do (Chua and Salmond 2012). As Chua and Salmond point out, instead of depicting artifacts as passive recipients of people’s actions, scholars have turned to the material practice, the hierarchical relationship between objects and subjects and persons and things in order to explore how materiality makes social action possible. Document as one form of artifact has entered anthropological and historical fields as a subject that provide a useful point of entry to the historical practice of modern state and the knowledge about modern bureaucracy. But far from being just state representation and instrument for collecting information and for surveillance, technocratic artifacts such as documents engage with everyday life of people and everyday practice of state agencies which generate collaborative effect of document production and appropriation that shape bureaucratic culture and popular responses.

²Manager Online, <http://www.manager.co.th/Local/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=9580000037098>, accessed 03/11/2015.

This paper traces the genealogy of one type of state artifacts in Thailand, the Identification Card. It analyzes the shifting and conflicting constructions of citizenship in relation to the complex apparatus of identification card system. Central to the research question is how the chaotic card system in Thailand has been historically invented and utilized by state agencies in different periods of time and how such inventions have contributed to the crafting of differential citizenship in Thailand. I argue that unstable card practices of the state reflects shifting ideas towards citizenship and state's anxiety towards mobility. Throughout the history of ID card system, two kinds of citizenship have been produced: proprietary and contingent citizenships that serve as a means to differentiate the Thai from the non-Thai other.

The paper also investigates the way in which the state graphic artifact of ID cards has been actively learned and re-interpreted into the local understanding of citizenship at the margin. It contends that the culture of identification in Thailand is characterized by tension and contradiction, the product of the interplay between shifting official forms of domination and control and minorities' experimentation and everyday practice. While state differentiation between Thai national and alien others has long been integral to the process of nation-building, such attempt has often been contested. Informal politics thus plays a crucial role in shaping citizenship discourse among the Thai as well as among non-Thai immigrants. Cards and colors, as a powerful technique of statecraft deployed to control mobility and fix the identity of border-crossing people, have often been employed by non-Thai subjects as an asset for circulation and a tool for negotiation. Within the temporality of technocratic artifact of ID card, pragmatic citizenship has been developed to rework national identification as something alive and practical--involving a multiplicity of actors struggling in an enlarged political sphere extending beyond the constriction of legality. It is in this realm that the non-Thai other is allowed the possibility of being both subjectified and subject-making in the unstable state-ethnic relationship of modern Thai society.

The Emergence of Modern Citizenship

When the idea of citizenship was first introduced in Thailand in the early twentieth century, it was not really clear what it meant. Since the reign of King Chulalongkorn, colonial expansion has made it inevitable for the Siamese elite to rethink the once diverse ethnic conglomeration of Siam as a homogenous Thai nation, employing a European ideology of race. The creation of Thai nationality was carried out in the form David Streckfuss calls "reverse-Orientalism"—the transformation of the other into Thai as a form of resistance against European colonialism. The materialization of "Thai nationality" was carried out by the subsequent King Vajiravudh (Rama VI). Interestingly, what concerned the him was not how to define citizenship but rather how to turn the non-Thai subject into a Thai citizen. The Naturalization Act was then implemented in 1911, prior to the first Nationality Act in 1913. As Saichol (2005) notes, competing Chinese nationalism, widespread among overseas Chinese in Siam, was alarming, and one way to suppress the increasing mobilization and politicization of Chinese nationalist sentiment was through assimilation. The significant requirement of official naturalization was that those eligible to be citi-

zens had to prove they had had at least five years residency in the Kingdom. At the same time, offspring of those with approved citizenship were automatically eligible to become citizens.

In the reign of King Rama VI, assimilation through legal naturalization served as a means to orient the people who the King defined as “born as Thai, being Chinese as vocation, registered as English” (Saichol, *ibid.*) and to transform them into Thais in soul and spirit. Legal naturalization was a characteristic strategy of “Thai-ization” (*kan klai pen thai*) and a state attempt at monopolization of the Thai nationalism. In keeping with the trajectory of transforming the multi-ethnic kingdom into an exclusive nation-state, the newly modern Thai state has continued to define Thai nationality by cultural qualities associated with the three elements of Thai language, Buddhism, and loyalty to the King. However, such effort at the homogenization of Thai national identity did not receive much of support by the Chinese, who constantly challenged the hegemonic notion of the Thai nation and thus rendered the project of assimilation problematic.

Despite the widespread propagation of Thai nationalism, Thailand’s 1911 Nationalization Act and 1913 Nationality Act did not define citizenship, nor its rights and obligations. If citizenship means “full membership in the community” (Marshall 1950), the nature of the legal bond between the members and their Thai community and an elaboration of what legal status of membership means is absent from the text. In the early period, citizenship was a somewhat ambiguous notion of incorporation that did not yet enter the realm of administrative apparatus. Although, a naturalization certificate was issued, it was not a national identification document and was not used by the state as a means for identity control. State attempts to regulate movement across national boundaries was also in its infancy. The unsettling notion of a means of embracing citizenship, with loosely regulatory mechanisms, thus allowed for the possibility of interpretation and negotiation. As a result, for non-Thai, particularly Chinese, to be Thai or not to be Thai remained a political and cultural choice which could be maneuverable. However, such possibility became increasingly difficulty with the development of a state identification card system in the middle of the twentieth century.

ID Card and the Proprietary Citizenship

Since 1932, in the post-absolute monarchy era, official thinking about citizenship has undergone a significant shift. Under the regime of Phibun Songkram, Thai race (*chonchat thai*) had been emphasized as the significant trait of Thai nationality. The emphasis on Thai race as the basis of nationalism served multiple purposes--to undermine the previous idea of Thainess centered around the allegiance to the monarchy, to exclude the Chinese from the political sphere, and to provide a protective ring against communist expansion (Saichol 2005, Keyes 2002). At the same time, the dream of a unified Thai nationality extended across national boundaries, culminating in a short-lived pan-Thai movement (see Keyes 2002, Crosby 1945). It was also in the

reign of Phibun Songkram that “Thai” was turned into an official identity making people’s identities and nationality within the boundary of the nation-state. In 1939, Siam was renamed Thailand, the country that defined “Thai” as its culture, citizenship, and territory. In 1943, the regime launched a first experimental identification card, authorized by the Identification Card Act. This card applied to Thai who resided in Pranakorn (Bangkok) and Thonburi provinces.

The invention of Thai identity cards used in conjunction with the household registration document represents a new method of the Thai state authority to circumscribe, register, regiment, and observe people within their jurisdictions. The identification card as a form of state power was necessary not only because of the bureaucratic control it entailed, but also because it implied the establishment of citizenship by binding body, identity, and citizenship together.

It is worth noting that state inscription on population is by no means a recently modern project. In pre-modern Siam, the most effective control of corvee labor was carried out through methods of body marking, the tattooing of the wrist of a *phrai luang* (commoner who worked for the King), identifying the name of city and master. The state inscription through body marking serves various objectives of regulating labor, identifying the patronage protection, and class differentiation. By marking the body as *phrai*, it automatically fixed the social status and class and thus prevented the possibility of upward mobility. New wrist tattoo was also added when the new King reigned the country. Criminals who had been found guilty of some offense against the state could also be tattooed on the face. Apart from normal tattoo for corvee, there were also tattoos that mark an exemption from stature labor for several groups of people. For example, exemption tattoo for disable people (*sak phikan*), and for the aged (*sak chaad*). However, in the old Siam, tattooing was only required for the Siamese while foreigners or non-Siamese subjects were excluded.

The pre-modern state inscription has undergone significant change when writing on the body gave way to reading off it (Caplan and Torpey 2001). But unlike tattooing and other pre-modern forms of registration, the purpose of modern state inscription through identification card is not for labor control but to ensure the national loyalty of the subject of the state. With a different mode of surveillance, the ID drew on a repertoire of physical signs and measurements by demonstrating them in written and visual records (*ibid.*). The card has also brought with it the notion of proprietary citizenship that allows the state to maintain direct, continual, and specific contact between its ruling bureaucracy and its citizenry. Modern concept of citizen came to replace the premodern idea of subject with the state’s inclusive claim over individual membership. Thai nationality based on Thai race forms the foundation for modern Thai nationalism. At the same time, citizenship connotes a proprietary relationship between state and its citizens in which the right to belong to the nation of a member is granted in exchange of his/her loyalty to the country.

ID card as a modern form of state inscription differs from the premodern method of surveillance in several ways. As Karen Strassler argues, the advent of identity photograph came

with the expanding reach of modern bureaucratic state and the global currency of a semiotic ideology in which the photograph serves as truthful legal and scientific evidence (Strassler 2010,129). Not only the new form of knowledge about state subjects has been established, but photography as a technology of identification has brought with it a new technique of visual control by effectively providing visual and material form to the state's simultaneously standardizing and individualizing gaze (ibid.).

However, one enduring problem the state faced in constructing a system of official identification was how to articulate identity to a person/body in a consistent and reliable way. As body and identity has never been in permanent or fixed connection, the task of describing identity accurately and consistently was a major challenge to the state. Thorough technologies must then be designed to facilitate the identification process. Binding identity to the body was thus done by technologies which included photographs, signatures, and fingerprints, and by the use of legal practices, for example, the requirement to carry identification cards at all time. The state's notion of proprietary citizenship through the enforcement of identification cards has not only served to fix identity and loyalty as subject to one nation-state, but has also been used as a powerful tool to discipline stubborn/bad subjects. In the history of suppression tactics, identification card inspection has been employed as a state's means of surveillance and punishment against popular demonstrations and political movements. The historical construction of official Thai identity epitomizes the state's attempt to establish a form of ownership over individual citizens, reflected in different technologies of identification. Proprietary citizenship has been exercised through the making of a permanent, indelible identity which is lasting, unchangeable, always recognizable and provable. Identification cards as a function of state capacity to create documentary evidence and bureaucratic records have enabled the state to recognize specific individuals. Official Thai identity acquires its meaning and power not only through the system of classification but also through the active interactions with the state machinery which constantly monitors, regulates and guides personal conduct, thus legitimizing the state's intimate bond with its citizen.

The first Thai ID card was first issued by the Phibun government in 1943. It applied to resident of Pranakorn and Thonburi. The card consisted of 8 pages of paper folded into 4 quarters with the size of 4"x3" per page. The expiration period was ten years while the information contained in the card includes various items such as name, date of birth, address, profession, complexion, mark, nationality, ethnicity, name of father, name of mother, photograph, fingerprint, and signature. The original purpose was to differentiate the Thai from the Chinese and to force the latter to be naturalized. The second Thai ID card came out in the Sarit era in 1962. In this Cold War period, the expansion of communist influence into Thailand was considered by the Thai state as the most contentious issue, especially the influx of immigrants across the Thai-Lao and Thai-Cambodia borders. The issuance of the second batch of ID card was first carried out in northeastern border provinces such as Nong Khai in order to differentiate the Lao and Indo-Chinese from the Thai (Nagai n.d.). It was then expanded to cover other border areas such as in the south where communism from Malaya was proliferating (Pirongrong 2000). With the assis-

tance from the US, especially the United States Operations Mission (USOM), the national ID card was developed and applied in 20 provinces through out the country (Nagai *ibid.*, Pirongrong *ibid.*) As a tool to counter communist insurgency and border crisis, this state artifact with a 6 year expiration period was developed as the first nation-wide identification card of the country.

An official marker of citizenship, Thai ID card carries with it not only the status of national belonging, but also the signifier of a “commoner”. In a hierarchical structure of Thai society, cards play a significant role in the unequal status and class relation. While the Nationality Law indicated that every Thai person must obtain an ID card at the age of 7 year old and carry it at all time, such rule has an exemption. Members of the royal family, monks and priests, prisoners, disable people, and those who are studying outside the country are not required to have ID card. Government officials have a different type of card called “*Bat Khaaraatchakaan*” (Government official card) which is considered possessing a higher status than an ordinary ID card. Most government officials therefore use *Bat Kaaraatchakaan* in place of National ID card in daily life, especially when dealing with bureaucratic procedures or accessing governmental service. In contrast to the national ID card, the government official card signifies the privileged status of the official holder who is often treated differently compared to the National ID card holder³. Some government officials never used a national ID card throughout their lives, the act that suggests the association with an official status than a commoner. In the early period of national ID card issuance, several groups of government officials negotiated an exemption to acquire an ID card. On 16 February 1949, a letter was issued by the War Veterans Organization of Thailand (WVO) to the Ministry of Interior requesting an exemption of ID card acquisition for veterans and family members. The letter was first declined by the Ministry of Interior. However, the WVO issued another letter for a reconsideration signed by Sarit Thanarat, acting Minister of Defense and the Prime Minister. The reason for this request was, as WVO indicated, to avoid redundancy as Veterans and family members have their own specific card. This request should not be confused as an act of denouncing a status of Thai citizen. On the contrary, it is an act that attempt to assert/negotiate a special kind of citizenship, a non-commoner “*Kaaraatchakarn*”.

The subsequent batches of Thai ID cards were developed in 1996, 2005, and 2008 respectively. Following the Scandinavian model of 11 digit ID card, Thai ID card has developed into a 13 digit PIN numbers which is computerized, installed with magnetic stripe and IC chip with high capacity of information storage up to 80 kbytes. The databank is now centralized in Bangkok in order to prevent fraud and purge false persons and multiple registrations from the system. In 2011, in the midst of the heightened political conflict and the expansion of the ultra nationalism in Thailand, the Abhisit government amended the Nationality Law to enforce an acquisition

³Similar case applies to the government official passport. At Suvannabhum airport, holder of the Thai government official passport (blue cover) has a privilege to enter a special to go through the immigration. This line is for Thai government officials only and is far less crowded than the usual immigration line.

of an ID card on every 7 year old child (moving the eligible age up from the original 15 years old)—an extension of the scope of Thai citizenship. The underlying rationale for this policy was evidently political, to indoctrinate nationalism to Thai citizens from age of childhood. However, the policy was widely criticized by both parents and government officials. While most parents felt the burden of this new scheme more than benefit, many district offices ran into budget problem due to the increase in card demand.

Bio-power, Body Politic, and Bureaucratic Gaze

On 24 May 2012, when I went into the Chiang Mai Province's Muang District office to renew my ID card, the district official informed me that a sleeveless shirt is not allowed to be photograph for the photo ID card. Unaware of such regulation, I asked for an explanation. The same district official responded that it was or politeness (Khwaam Suphaap). Watching me being perplexed, she quickly pointed to the rack behind her counter where several "traditional northern Thai shirts" were hanged and said "you don't need to go back home and change, simply put this shirt on and you'll be all set". Interestingly, this "sleeveless shirt being impolite" rule only applies to one gender: female. Besides the proper shirt to wear for the ID photograph, there are also several other questions often ask among women in their preparation to obtain an ID card. Since this is tacit knowledge which is not officially coded, people often turn to internet to seek consultation and suggestion⁴. Several inquiries include whether wearing a smile is allowed for an ID card photo (most answers said a smile that does not show teeth is considered acceptable)? Can one put on a facial make up? Does one has to remove contact lenses before being photographed?, etc.⁵

Unwritten rules regarding ID photograph depicts an interesting politic of gendered body control and the interface between bureaucratic practice and popular understanding of state artifact. Although an ID card is supposed to be an individual card that belong to the holder, most Thais treat ID card as a medium that represent official identification rather than a representation of their individual identities. At the same time, an ID card is considered a state asset that binds the ideology of proper "Thainess" with the physicality of its citizen, in this case the female body, through the technique of visual control. Photograph as one form of biopower (Foucault 1976) serves as a tool of bureaucratic gaze to subjugate and control the population. This type of bu-

⁴According to the Interior Ministry regulation no. 23/2011, identification photograph must be taken in specific postures. Straight face with no hat, no dark glasses. In case of religious necessity, veils and turbans are allowed but must reveal the face, forehead, eye brows, eyes, noses, lips, and chins of photographed. However, in practice, additional requirements are enforced by district officials responsible for ID card issuance and such requirements vary from on office to the other.

⁵ See for example, <http://guru.google.co.th/guru/thread?tid=3d0af0d44c5bd608>, accessed 03/15/2015.

reaucratic gaze and sexuality control is officially unscripted but internalized and integrated into the daily practice of Thai citizen in their interaction with bureaucratic institutes.

Cards, Colors and the Contingent Citizenship

Although citizenship is commonly regarded as a matter of the relations between individuals and the state to which they belong, it is also one of the markers used by states in their attempt to regulate the movement of people across borders. Citizenship at the border is often historically volatile, reflecting the state's changing view towards border and mobility. In its transformation towards the modern nation-state, government of people gave way to government of territory, so the need for clearly bounded divisions of ownership and control correspondingly increased, with the border becoming a state weapon (Wilson and Donnan 1998:8-9). Nevertheless, the effective control of territory also depends on the way in which identity can be effectively regulated.

Despite the fact that immigration has been always central to the process of nation-building, the historical connection between route and root (Clifford 1997) as basis of societal formation has often been written out of the collective memories of the modern nation-state. Fluid boundaries have been suppressed by territoriality as one of the first conditions of the state's existence, and the *sine qua non* of its borders (Wilson and Donnan 1998). As Castles and Davidson (2000) note, the regulation of immigration is only a recent phenomenon, dating from the late nineteenth century, while state policies to integrate immigrants or regulate 'community relations' date only from the 1960s. Yet, assimilation and differential exclusion have been made natural and inevitable processes of what Castles and Davidson call the controllability of difference (ibid.).

Whereas borders represent spatial and temporal records of relationship between people and state, such records often include the state's anxiety towards mobility across national boundaries. Contingent citizenship is therefore a product of shifting state-ethnic relations at and across borders as mediated by diverse ideological and political economic forces at different periods of time. Such forces, which oscillate between inclusion and exclusion, have been played out both symbolically and concretely, constituting a "politics of presence," as "an embodied enactment of toleration or intolerance" (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999:4). In the case Thailand, the politics of presence is well illustrated in the complex yet arbitrary systems of identification cards at the border.

The post-World War II borders of Thailand can be characterized by a tension between national security ideology and forces of economic integration. Between 1965-1985, borders have become highly politicized with the migration influx of refugees, displaced people, and political asylum seekers. It was in this period that the so-called "colored cards" (*Bat si*) were designed as a means of securing the borders through certifying individual identity and controlling movement across the border. Most of these diverse identification card programs (17 different kinds) were

poorly planned and lacked consistent rationales (e.g., what counts as immigrant can vary depending on date of entry into Thailand, ethnic identity, political ideology, elevation), resulting in confusion rather than effective measures of control. Throughout the two decades of “colored cards” and registration of people classified as non-Thai others, the implementation of differential exclusion has often been in a state of flux. For example, some cards might be eliminated, leaving the card holders with no future, while others were upgraded to a Thai identification card. After 1989, with the waning of the cold war era, borders acquired new meaning as a gateway to economic integration. New types of cards have been invented for “alien labor” (*Raeng ngan tang dao*), as a means to both regulate the flow of cross-border immigrants and reap benefits from new economic resources. As a result, restrictions on temporary residency and alien labor ID cards have become more extensive every year, with increasing fees required by state agencies. Moreover, in order to control the mobility of the alien subject, the card for alien workers is required to identify the name of the employer. Like the pre-modern practice of binding the body of the commoner (*Phrai*) to the master (*Munnaai*) through the inscription of the master’s name on the wrist, binding the worker with its patron through card is designed to prevent the free labor from unauthorized mobility.

Table 1 Chronology of Implementation of “Colored Cards” for Non-Thai Citizens in Thailand

Year	Identification Cards	Status	
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1967	Vietnamese Refugee ID Cards (<u>White Cards with a Blue Border</u>)	<p>Children of Vietnamese Refugees who entered into Thailand between 1945-1946 were eligible for Thai citizenship.</p> <p>Vietnamese refugees who have not acquired Thai citizenship must ask permission from governors before traveling out of residential provinces.</p> <p>Issued by Police Department</p>	<p><u>1st batch</u> Issued :24/08/1967 Expired:23/08/1973</p> <p><u>2nd batch</u> Issued:2/08/1980 Expired:1/08/1992</p> <p><u>3rd batch</u> extended <u>2nd batch</u> to 3/12/1988</p> <p><u>4th batch</u> Issued: 19/07/1990 Expired:18/07/1995</p> <p><u>5th batch</u> Expired:26/08/1997</p>
1969-1970	Hill Tribe Coins	<p>No longer in use.</p> <p>Issued by Depart of Administration</p>	<p>Used as verification of settlement in Thai Kingdome between 1969-1970.</p> <p>Widespread selling of coins and difficulty in establishing proof.</p>

1970	Former Kuo Min Tang Soldier ID Cards <u>(White Cards)</u>	Cabinet Resolution on 6/10/1970 assigned immigrant status to former KMT soldiers. Cabinet Resolution on 30/05/1978 allowed legal natu- ralization of former KMT sol- diers for their contribution to the Thai nation (fighting com- munists). Cabinet Resolution on 12/06/1984 allowed children of former KMT soldiers to acquire Thai citizenship. Those who have not yet ac- quired Thai citizenship must ask permission from governors before traveling out of residen- tial province.	Three batches of IDs have been is- sued.
1976	Immigrants with Thai Race from Ko Kong, Cambodia <u>(Green Cards)</u>	Issued for former Thai citizens and their children whose citi- zenship was removed when Ko Kong was returned to Cambo- dia.	Three batches were issued between 1976-1989

1977	Illegal Immigrants (with Thai Race) from Cambodia <u>(White Cards with Red Border)</u>	As of present date, no official status has yet been assigned.	Immigrants with Thai race from Cambodia who entered into Thailand after 15/11/1977. Thai government has used this date to separate legal from illegal immigrants from Cambodia. Most of this group resides in Trad Province.
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1978	Displaced Person with Burmese Nationality ID Cards <u>(Pink Cards)</u>	Cabinet Resolution on 29/08/2000 assigned alien sta- tus to Pink Card holders. Chil- dren of this group born between 24/12/1972-25/02/1976 were eligible for Thai citizenship.	Three batches were issued between 1976-1993) for eth- nic groups from Burma who entered into Thailand before 9/03/1976
1984	Haw Chinese Immigrant ID Cards <u>(Yellow Cards)</u>	Cabinet Resolution on 21/06/1984 assigned the status of legal immigrants to those who entered into Thailand be- tween 1950-1961. Children of Haw Chinese im- migrants whose citizenship were removed are eligible to regain their citizenship.	Four batches were issued. This card is applied to former soldiers of KMT and their fam- ilies who entered into Thailand between 1950-1961 and could not return home country for political reason. These immigrants resided mainly in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Mae Hong Son provinces.

1987	Nepalese Immigrant ID Cards <u>(Green Cards)</u>	Formerly classified as Displaced Person with Burmese Nationality. Cabinet Resolution on 29/08/2000 assigned a status of legal immigrant and children who were born between 24/12/1972-25/02/1992 were eligible for Thai citizenship.	Entered into Thailand in Thong Pha Bhum, Kanchanaburi Province.
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1988	<p>Independent Haw Chinese ID Cards <u>(Orange Cards)</u></p>	<p>Cabinet Resolution on 27/12/1988 assigned a temporary residential status. Cabinet Resolution on 29/08/2000 assigned a legal immigrant status for those who entered the country before 3/10/1985, and illegal status for those who entered afterwards. Children who were born between 14/12/1972-25/02/1992 are eligible for Thai citizenship.</p>	<p>Entered into Thailand between 1962-1978.</p> <p>This card is applied to relatives of former soldiers of KMT who migrated into Thailand between 1962-1978.</p>
1989-1990	<p>Former Malaya Communist ID Cards <u>(Green Cards)</u></p>	<p>Cabinet Resolution on 30/10/1990 assigned legal status and granted citizenship to children who were born in Thailand</p>	

1990-1991	<p>Highlander ID Cards <u>(Blue Cards)</u></p>	<p>Approved by Cabinet Resolution on 5/06/1999. Highlanders are classified into two types: 1. nine groups of hilltribes 2. non-hilltribes, e.g.,Shan, Mon, Burmese, etc.</p> <p>Legal status are granted to those who entered into Thailand before 3/10/1985 and are eligible for Thai citizenship. Children of those who entered before 3/10/1985 and born between 14/12/1972-25/02/1985 are eligible for Thai citizenship.</p>	<p>Surveyed and registered by District and Dept.of Administration.</p>
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1991	Malbri ID Cards <u>(Blue Cards)</u>	Classified as “highlanders”, considered as indigenous people of Phrae and Nan provinces. Entitled to Thai citizenship.	
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1991	<p>Displaced Person with Thai Race and Burmese Nationality <u>(Yellow Cards with Blue Border)</u></p>	<p>The Thais who resided at the borders between Siam and Burma before boundary demarcation in the reign of King Rama V. and refused to move across the border after the demarcation finished. Political tension between SLORC and ethnic insurgency along the borders resulted in the movements of these Thais into Prachaub Kirikhan, Chumporn, Ranong, and Tak provinces. Cabinet Resolution approved the naturalization of the people who entered into Thailand before 10/03/1976.</p>	<p>First batch used the same card with Displaced Person with Burmese Nationality but added a stamp indicating “with Thai Race.”</p>
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1991	Laotian Immigrant ID Cards <u>(Blue Cards)</u>	<p>The Laotians who moved to live with relatives in Nongkhai, Ubon Ratchathani, Loei, Nakhon Phanom, Mukdaharn, Utharadit, Chiang Rai, and Nan provinces (not the ones in refugee camps).</p> <p>As of present date, no official status has been assigned. Children are not eligible for Thai citizenship.</p> <p>Issued according to policies by the National Security Council and the Second Regional Army.</p>	First batch used the Highlander ID Cards (crossing Highlander and adding Laotian Immigrant), due to limited budgets).
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1994	<p>Thai Lue ID Cards <u>(Orange Cards)</u></p>	<p>Considered as Thai race originally resided in Sipsongpanna, Yunnan, China. Cabinet Resolution on 17/03/1992 assigned a legal immigrant status. Children born in Thailand are eligible for Thai citizenship.</p>	<p>Two batches were issued. Formerly classified in the same group as Displaced Person with Burmese Nationality (Pink or Blue Cards).</p>
1996	<p>Hill Tribe outside Residential Area ID Cards (Hmong refugees in Tham Kabok, Saraburi province)</p>	<p>Will be deported to third countries.</p>	<p>Two batches were issued. Population: 14,602</p>

1999	Highlander's Survey Cards <u>(Green Cards with Red Border)</u>	Issued according to the Master Plan for Development of Communities, Environment and Opium Control. Started in Tak Province in 1998. Cabinet Resolution on 29/08/2000 required that card holders verify their status within one year.	Surveyed and registered in order to determine appropriate statuses according to Nationality Law.
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1992-2004	Alien Labor Cards <u>(Bat Raeng Ngan Tang Dao)</u>	Cabinet Resolution on 17/03/1992 allowed temporary residency for illegal migrant workers in four commercial provinces—Chiang Rai, Tak, Kanchanaburi, and Ranong. Workers must have work permits. Cabinet Resolution on 25/06/1996 extended residency for illegal migrant workers for 2 years. This applied to workers of three nationalities including Burmese, Cambodian, and Laotian who work in 11 industries in 43 provinces, and workers must register and acquire work permits. Subsequent cabinet resolutions extend periods of stay for these workers every year.	Nine batches (nine extensions) were issued between 1992-2004
2007	Highland ID Cards <u>(Pink Cards:</u> Electronic with 13 digits and a magnetic stripe)		Fist batch started in 2007 and will replace the former highland ID cards (both for hill tribes and non-hill tribes)

Source: Adapted from Darunee Paisanpanichkul 2005

The state's "colored cards" regime implemented since the 1967 operated under the Col- lar logic of national security where cards served as a means for border control and national dif- ferentiation. Colored cards were officially called by the Ministry of Interior "*Bat Chon Klum Noi*" (Minority cards). The use of white color for the Thai card while other colors for the non-

Thai other also signifies the racial logic of differentiation where colors play a role in such discrimination.⁶ Since 1967 there have been at least 17 different kinds of ID cards imposed on the different groups of immigrants who entered into Thailand in different periods of time and with different reasons. The system of identity designation by cards is rather chaotic, inconsistent, and arbitrary. While different deadlines of entry into Thailand have been set to differentiate Thai from non-Thai citizens, types of immigrants were unevenly categorized, using random criteria of ethnicity, political ideology, or elevation. Discursive policies regarding border and border crossing have also been present. At a time of political pressure shapes by an ideology of national security, the attitude towards immigrants was restrictive, resulting in an assertion of clear separation of members of different categories from others, “us” from “them.”

However, in the post-Cold war period, economic liberalism often entails permissive approaches towards population movement and political rhetoric about the importance of open borders. The increasing demand for foreign labor has led to the production of another type of card regime, “Labor card” (*Bat Raeng Ngaan*). In an attempt to regulate both labor and border, immigration policies have been caught in the middle of the shifting motivations of the state, between limiting its obligation toward immigrants and ensuring the availability of human resources the immigrants supply to the Thai economy. Different types of labor cards have been invented with an objective to fix and control foreign labor in designated areas of industrial zone while restrictions on temporary residency is enforced and extensive fees are prescribed. Moreover, in order to control the mobility of the alien subject, the card for alien workers is required to identify the name of the employer. Like the pre-modern practice of binding the body of the commoner (*Phrai*) to the master (*Munnai*) through the inscription of the master’s name on the wrist, binding the worker with its patron through card is designed to prevent the free labor from unauthorized mobility.

The Coup, Border Paranoia, and the the Manufacturing of Card

In *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*, Donna and Wilson posit that since the end of the Cold War, the structure and function of border world-wide has undergone significant shift from political barrier to economic gateway (1999). However, such change has not been evenly developed especially in the case for the Thailand. Interestingly, political change within the country has often affected the dynamic of its border. In other words, securing the border has become a part of stabilizing the country’s politics. Following the 22 May 2014 coup d’état by the Thai military, the military government under the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) arrested and deported a number of Cambodian and Burmese undocumented migrants in border provinces of Thailand. Gen. Prayuth Chan-ocha, head of NCPO, also called on Thai employers to register their foreign workers, and threaten to punish officials involved in human traf-

⁶ Remark made by Pitch Pongsawat, April 15, 2015.

ficking and illegal migration. The news about the military crackdown on migrants has resulted in a massive exodus of Cambodian workers who are the key labor force in fishing, construction, and agricultural sectors. While border-crossing by undocumented migrant workers has been identified as the top priority “non-traditional security” threat by the military, tighter measure of registration has been issued in order to ensure social order. As Prayuth stated in his weekly “Return to Happiness” show on June 6th,

The establishment of factories and the control of daily, seasonal and yearly labour along the border areas should be looked into. Some of these activities have been assigned to security agencies and are being expedited. Some are being restructured to ensure more effective results.” (<http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/media-center/3756/46368-Unofficial-translation-National-Broadcast-by-Gener.html>, accessed 15/03/2015)

The main objective, according to Prayuth is to control the mobility of migrant workers, fixing them in the border area so that they would not integrate with the Thai people. As Prayuth explained in his late night show on June 13th,

We have already proposed this to previous governments on how to restrict people from coming into the inner parts of the country, prevent illegal and criminal activities, including those relating to drugs. If we can keep these people around the borders on a daily work basis, then both migrant workers and the local people will benefit from jobs and earn enough income to provide for their families. (<http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/media-center/3756/46368-Unofficial-translation-National-Broadcast-by-Gener.html>, accessed 15/03/2015)

In the eye of the government, undocumented migrant workers in Thailand has been categorized into two major types: 1) The worker under an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding), who came to Thailand through the border with a passport and with both countries’ agreement, and 2) Undocumented migrant workers who entered into Thailand without any document. Militarization of border represents the means to create a zone where the “alien other” of the second type and their mobility can be put under visual control and surveillance. At the present, 81 “One Stop Service” (OSS) have been established throughout the border towns in the northwest and eastern parts of Thailand by the army to enforce worker’s registration for work permit. In order to obtain a work permit, the migrant worker must apply for a Temporary Residential Status or TR 38/1 and a Temporary Work Permit or the Pink Card. The card must be authorized by the employer of the worker and is valid for two months. Up until March 2015, the temporary work permit card could be extended for the period of one year, for the charge of 3,080 baht. These expenses included the document fee, a medical check, and three months health insurance and are the basis for the three main documents: TR 38/1 paper, health insurance card, and temporary work permit card. After obtaining a work permit, the worker will have to go through another two processes including nationality verification and applying for the Certification Identity (CI) from the Embassy of the country to which the worker belong. These processes will be carried out through a recruitment agent which again involve a certain amount of fees. The CI will be the sig-

nificant document for the worker to apply for a worker's passport and a permanent work permit with a longer expiration period of 4 years. At the end of the whole process, foreign workers will have with them at least three kinds of documents that are required to carry with them at all time in order to prove their legal status: Work Permit that show the name of an employer, Passport for Worker, and Certification Identity.

The complex system of OSS identification for undocumented workers is believed to ensure certainty of identity verification. Although such system has often been claimed to be more efficient, it has produced more cards and documents through a more tedious process of constant proving of one's self. Fundamental to this bureaucratic system of identification card production is the belief that the more ID documents are used, the more effective the segregating technique will become and thus guarantee the "Contingency of Citizenship" for those who are situated outside the realm of Thainess. Prior to the military-made "Pink Card", there have already been a variety of ID cards for foreign workers being produced and used in the border areas. These include the ID card for agricultural labor, the ID card for the non-Thai status (often called by people the "10 years card" or "*bat sip pi*" as the expiration period is 10 years), and the ID card issued by the head of the village where the foreign labor reside. All of these are for different purposes and objectives and definitely not free of charge. The value of a paper-made artifact is higher than life itself, which is rendered insignificant without the presence of the ID object. Within this context, ID card has become another kind of self (About 2013), the various kinds of self as differently demanded by diverse sets of bureaucrat institutes that constantly change through time.

Pragmatic Citizenship and the Everyday Practice of ID Cards

Writing from a feminist perspective, Nira Yuval-Davis and Pnina Werbner propose to look at citizenship as a contested terrain (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999). As unsettling collective forces, the degree to which the political agency of subjects determines or is determined by such forces is key to everyday politics of citizenship. As they argue, rather than being simply an imposed political construct of identity, citizenship as a subjectivity is "deeply dialogical, encapsulating specific, historically, inflected, cultural and social assumptions about similarity and difference" (Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999, 3). Negotiating citizenship has brought about different cultures of identification in which the relationship between state and citizen and the non-citizen other is re-interpreted.

Everyday practice in the use of identification cards by Thai and non-Thai citizens challenges claims to authority in determining who belongs to the nation-state and who does not, as a central component of sovereignty. Throughout the history of citizenship making, wherever identification cards have been invented and implemented--as the state attempts to classify subjects residing within or attempting to enter state territories by controlling their mobility and demanding--total allegiance--such attempts have also been contested by local people. Various card practices ranging from discarding/returning the cards (*khuen bat prachaachon*), burning the cards

(*phao bat prachaqchon*), or refusing to apply for identification cards have become a symbolic protest against the hegemonic idea of what it means to be “Thai.” For over three decades, as the state has attempted increasingly to enforce the ID card system, the cards have also been turned into a battlefield by marginal groups in negotiating their position with the nation-state. The performative character of cards has become a subversive tool of local critique against a government which is often indifferent or weak in taking care of poor and marginal communities.

If citizenship is a product of the creation of the modern nation-state, one of the great paradoxes of such construction is that the process of control and constraint entails also constitutes a moment of emancipation. Like all hegemonic discourses, modern citizenship has never been absolute. While the identification card is fundamental to proprietary citizenship, it has been re-appropriated and used as a dialogical tool by people in expanding participatory politics which call for a righteous state. It is within this terrain that autonomy and the right to be different are pitched against the regulating forces of the state identification system and its demand for definite national belonging. Like state-formation itself, constructing citizenship has been not only a problematic and unfinished process of defining boundaries and identities but also a project of reworking social and political practices.

The Temporality of Identification

If the regime of paper document represents one form of “semiotic technology” (Hull 2013) of identity control, it is not simply the instrument of already existing social organization. As Matthew Hull points out, through the use and circulation of artifacts, bureaucratic materials come into being in heterogeneous relations that mediate their activities. (Hull 2013). Hull is interested in how documents build associations among people and draw them into bureaucratic practices as well as associations of objects as objects move and interact with people (*ibid.*,18). In the case of ID cards in Thailand, the manufacturing and circulation of cards have woven various actors together in the association of ID cards. Card practice of state agencies does not only enact control but can also generate the economy of surveillance in which official identification has been turned into commodity. As Michael Herzfeld succinctly remarks, “Bureaucrats are citizens, too. They care less about rational efficiency than their own survival” (Herzfeld 1993:5).

In the case of Thailand, collaboration between different levels bureaucratic agents and local people in ID card forgery and other form of card practices constitute the everyday practice of ID cards that render the state artifacts not only the state tool of legibility but also assets of economic speculation. ID card falsification business has become a lucrative business that involve a wide range of people from various sectors. In a crackdown of ID card forgery in Samu-prakarn, apart from fake “Green Card” (Work Permit with Nationality Verification), the police also confiscated a variety of government and other artifacts including a number of rubber stamps of a well-known hospital and a hospital doctor, as well as that of the Labor Department. Interest-

ingly, forgery seems to mushroom alongside the One-Stop-Service policy of the junta government. It is estimated that an annual profit of this underground business can be as high as a billion baht (\$US30 millions).

Far from being just a hegemonic tool that delineate the boundary of citizenship, ID card practices by both bureaucratic agents and the non-Thai subjects are fluid and take on different meanings. For government officials involved in the ID schematic scam, ID cards signify less of a national asset with political integrity than a medium of exchange, a valuable commodity that grows alongside the increasing demand in the citizenship market. For the undocumented migrants along the border, these state artifacts are “identity capitals” that have different values.

The Karen and Shan from Burma I interviewed in both Chiang Mai city and Mae Sot town, possessing multiple ID cards that enable them to move more freely across different local and national terrains. Multiple identifications are thus a nomadic strategy derived from the temporal idea towards citizenship. A Karen NGO worker who has lived in Mae Sot for more than ten years and has at least three kinds of ID card told me the reason he has so many cards is because he wanted to be independent and able to move freely. Some of the cards such as the one issued by the village head he uses only within the Mae Sot area but the other is for traveling outside the locality. All of his cards have different names. When asked whether he is afraid of being arrested and deported, he responded with a laid back manner, “I was arrested many times already. If they deport me, I will just pay some fine and come right back the next morning.” He also said he has many other cards that could not show them to me. For this Karen, identity and identifications are two different entities with different purposes. Another Karen from a refugee camp tried various channels in order to obtain the most beneficial card. These strategies include applying for a work permit (Pink Card) that has his Thai girl friend as an employer, paying 8,000 baht to a Karen broker in order to obtain a Thai ID card, and going back to Burma to apply for a passport. Interestingly, although he has a valid Burmese passport, he never uses it for border-crossing. Most of migrants from Burma use temporary border crossing pier where boats transport people between the two countries without any official documents.

Local reworking of citizenship is a usual practice that can be found in various border areas. As a counter-construction of citizenship (Cheater 1999), border crossing and multiple identities practiced by both individuals and families undermine the rhetoric of unified solidarity and singular national identity. In his study of ethnic minorities at the Thai and Malaysian borders, Horstmann (2006) notes that dual citizenship and the holding of multiple identification cards constitute an important strategy employed by the “trapped minorities” in response to the state’s rigid boundary surveillance and citizenship policy. Similar practices are also found among members of border communities and immigrants along the border between Thailand and Burma, where identities are fixed by different kinds of “colored identification cards.” Arranged adoption of children of immigrant parents from Burma whose legal status remains uncertain by Thai citizens is a fast-lane strategy to guarantee permanent citizenship for the youths. Through adoption

strategy, young children will also be able to have access to a better education, as they are entitled to with Thai citizenship. As different kinds of identification cards for immigrants are issued every year in different provinces and with different purposes, with no clear information about which cards will promote a more promising status, acquisition of multiple “colored cards” has been a speculative strategy among individual migrants. In my interview with a family of Piang Luang village, a border community between the Shan states in Burma and Wiang Haeng District in Thailand’s Chiang Mai province, four members in the same family, including father, mother, and two children, have obtained three different kinds of identification cards. While still residing in Chiang Rai province, the father used to have a “yellow card” (Haw Chinese Immigrant ID Card), the status to which he is entitled as a son of a former KMT soldier. After getting married to his wife, who lives in Wiang Hang district, he decided to keep the “yellow card” while applying for a “pink card”. His wife has had a “pink card” since she moved into Thailand. The two children, however, have been adopted by two different Thai families and thus have different last names from their parents and from each other.

For ethnic minorities at the border and immigrants from Burma alike, colored identification cards have become assets with different kinds of value which have been accumulated and used to upgrade their status. Some ethnic hill people who have settled in Thailand long enough might work as brokers who travel to many villages in order to buy Thai ID cards from relatives of the deceased and sell them to the new immigrants. Many Shan and Karen immigrants from Burma who have no card of their own might make deals with friends in the hill village, adding their names into the house registration documents in order to obtain ID cards for highlanders. It is common that people who live at the border or in a refugee camp such as the one in Mae Sot district, Tak province might carry more than one card and use each of them for different purposes. ID cards are therefore not only the state instrument of control but survival resources to be assessed, classified, and circulated according to a hierarchy of values which is usually predicated on the degree to which a given card has a negotiating power in dealing with police authority and how much freedom of mobility it entails.

Immigrants who have only a few obsolete cards are often considered as the poorest and most marginal, because if they are arrested they can be fined and immediately deported to their home countries. On the contrary, the longer settled migrants who have developed networks of connection with various district and provincial bureaucrats responsible for ID card production might turn themselves into a broker that help coordinate the economy of state artifacts and thus facilitate the fluid and pragmatist notion of citizenship. Negotiating mobility has thus become an integral part of redefining citizenship among immigrants and members of border communities in Thailand.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to capture the shifting and conflicting constructions of citizen-

ship and its complex apparatus of ID card systems. I have argued that the culture of identification in Thailand is characterized by its tension and contradiction, the product of the interplay between shifting official forms of domination and control and minorities' experimentation and everyday practice.

The state's chaotic system of classification of nationality is often actively learned and re-interpreted in the local understanding of citizenship. While state differentiation between Thai nationals and alien others has long been integral to the process of nation-building such attempts have often been contested. Informal politics thus plays a crucial role in shaping citizenship discourse among the Thai as well as among non-Thai immigrants. Cards and colors, as a powerful technique of statecraft deployed to control mobility and fix the identity of border-crossing people, have often been employed by the non-Thai subjects as assets for circulation and tools for negotiation. The population of immigrants has been turned arbitrarily into an ambiguous ethnic category of non-Thai minorities; such transformation has often been in flux, resulting in diverse translations of everyday-life notions of citizenship. Contested citizenship constitutes therefore a reworking of national identification as something alive and exciting--involving a multiplicity of actors struggling in an enlarged political sphere extending beyond the constrictions of legality. It is in this realm that the non-Thai other is allowed the possibility of being both subjectified and subject-making in the unstable state-ethnic relationship of modern Thai society.

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