

CHAPTER II

THEORIES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1. Conceptual Framework

There are many theories and conceptual frameworks which can be used in describing the situation in the southernmost of Thailand, including the separatism theory of Tanes Apornsuan. In line with the concepts of Nation-Building during the period of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram and identity of Malayu-Muslims in the southernmost part of Thailand, two conceptual frameworks are adopted in this study of the conflict which arose in this area from the proclamation of Phibun's nation-building policy. These are the ethnocentrism and nation-building policy.

1.1 Ethnocentrism: William Graham Summer mentioned that the feeling of ethnocentrism is related to the feeling of one group that assumes itself as the centre of everything. (Summer, Graham: unknown year of publication)

According to Johan M.G Van Derman, the concept of ethnocentrism might be described as in-group and out-group differentiation with a stress on internal cohesion, relative peace, solidarity, loyalty and the devotion to in-group, and its sociocentric glorification related to the cosmology, ideology, social myth or one's own (such as the belief in the God) (Derman, Johan, M.G.V: unknown year of publication).

For Kellas (1991), ethnocentrism is basically a psychological trait which represents the linkage of the nationalism and racism. He also mentioned the difference between ethnocentrism and the nationalism. The nationalism focuses on the whole nation but ethnocentrism focuses on the ethnic group.

The feeling of ethnocentrism can express the behavior of the ethnic group which prefers to be in company with the people who are similar to themselves. They prefer to share the same values and to behave in similar ways. The psychology of ethnocentrism depends on the people's feeling of being the centre of all things and with their culture being superior to the all others.

The Malayu-Muslims in the southernmost part of Thailand have this character. According to many scholars, including Songkram Chuenpibal (1975), the Muslims in the southernmost of Thailand are ethnocentric group. They prefer to have an interaction with the people who are similar in culture, religion, life style. There is a saying that if the Muslims in the southernmost part of Thailand must choose to stay with the Buddhist or the Muslim-Malays, they would choose to stay with the Muslim Malays who are not Thai. This is due to the fact that they have the same religion and customs. Hence this thesis uses this concept to study the failure of the Muslim people in southern Thailand to integrate themselves with Thai society to accept the cultural policy of the Phibun government.

The ethnocentric sentiment is related to many factors. For the people in that area, the key factors include their **historical background**, as well as their **ethnic religious identities**.

1.2 Nation-Building: The term “nation-building” came into vogue among historically oriented political scientists in the 1950s and 1960s. Its main proponents included such leaders of the American academic community as Karl Deutsch, Charles Tilly, and Reinhard Bendix. It was primarily used to describe the processes of national integration and consolidation that led to the establishment of the modern nation-state--as distinct from various forms of traditional states, such as feudal and dynastic states, church states, empires, etc.

For Stephenson (2005) nation-building is a normative concept that means different things to different people. The concept of nation-building refers to the process of constructing or structuring a nation aimed at the unification of the people or peoples within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run. Nation-building can involve the use of propaganda or major infrastructure development to foster social harmony and economic growth. (Øyvind Østerud; 1978: 117)

This particularly involves the effort of newly-independent nations, notably the nations the Africa, to mould what had been colonial territories, carved up by colonial powers without regard to ethnic or other boundaries, into viable and coherent national entities. Nation-building includes the creation of superficial national

paraphernalia such as flags, anthems, national-days, national stadium, national airlines, national languages, and national myths. At a deeper level, national identity needed to be deliberately constructed by moulding different groups into a nation, especially since colonialism had used divide and rule tactics to maintain its domination.

To understand the concept of nation-building, we must start with the concept of “nation”. Anderson coined the expression “imagined communities”: the nation is a product of imagination in the sense that the members of the community do not know each other personally and can only imagine themselves to be in communion with each other. The concept of nation-building started from the nation. The attempts of being the nation need to gain the unity of the people who lived in the nation. The people must have the same sentiment -- the nationalistic sentiment.

Stein Rokkan’s model sees nation-building as consisting of four analytically distinct aspects. In Western Europe these aspects usually followed each other in more or less the same order. Thus, they could be regarded not only as aspects but also as *phases* of the nation-building process. The first phase resulted in economic and cultural unification at the elite level. The second phase brought ever larger sectors of the masses into the system through conscription into the army, enrollment in compulsory schools, etc. The burgeoning mass media created channels for direct contact between the central elites and periphery populations and generated widespread feelings of identity with the political system at large. In the third phase, the subject masses were brought into active participation in the workings of the territorial political system. Finally, in the last stage the administrative apparatus of the state expanded. Public welfare services were established and nation-wide policies for the equalization of economic conditions were designed.

In the oldest nation-states of Europe, along the Atlantic rim, the earliest stage of these processes commenced in the middle Ages and lasted until the French Revolution. While it is impossible to pinpoint exactly when the entire nation-building process was completed, it certainly went on for several centuries. In the ideal variant, each consecutive phase set in only after the previous one had run its course. This ensured the lowest possible level of social upheavals and disruptions. (Stein Rokkan: unknown year: p.570)

Like other countries, Thailand passed the process of nation-building. From the historical background of Thailand, nation-building in Thailand had begun since the Sukhothai period. But only in the reign of King Rama VI and the period of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram were nation-building policies consciously formulated. Even if Thailand had never been colonized, she must develop national unity in order to escape from the colonial encroachments of the Western countries and the Chinese influences. During the early Rattanakosin period the Western powers had already been expanding their influence all over Asia, and during the reign of King Rama VI, there was a concern in Siam about the influence of the Chinese people who had settled in this country and who had a strong economic influence. The nation-building policy of the Phibun government seemed to reflect modern nationalism that arose in the reign of King Rama VI.

Focusing on nation-building in this modern sense, we may divide the nation-building process in Thailand into two periods. The first period was related mostly to modernization efforts to make the nation “civilized” like the westernized nations. These efforts ranged from rail road construction to introduction of modern education. The second period of nation-building was related to the Thai government’s concern to strengthen the nationalistic sentiment of the people who lived in nation. It emphasized building the nation through the people. This effort was most evident in the period of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram. During that time, the government adopted a national cultural policy in order to eradicate diverse nationalistic sentiments among the people with different ethnic origins.

Evidently, while nationalism in the earlier periods emphasized the need to be free from Western colonization and other external influences, nation-building in Thailand was in the period of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram stressed internal solidarity. Many scholars viewed it as a turning point of Thai nation. This thesis focuses on nation-building in the period of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram, especially the first period of his government, which lasted from 1939 to 1945.

2. Understanding Phibun’s Nation-Building Policy

The regime of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram had to face many problems which seemed to put national stability and national security at risk. In order

to prevent such a condition, the government decided to embark a nation-building project.

The government of Phibunsongkhram saw nationalistic fervours in countries like Japan, Germany, and Russia. It thus wanted to persuade the people to follow the program that was called “cultural policy”, believing that this would serve as a tool for the nation-building project. It also initiated the project that was claimed as an assimilation policy to eradicate the differences among the diverse ethnic groups in Thailand by promoting Thai culture to be the main national culture that all citizens had to be practice. To raise nationalistic feeling, the government also tried to claim the territories lost to France and Britain. We could say that this period brought the big change to the Thai nation and Thai people.

So this chapter aims to describe the nation-building policy during the period of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram. The focus is on the Ratthaniyom or Statism which the government used to oblige all ethnic minorities and all Thai people to practice in the same way.

2.1 Phibunsongkhram and His Regime: Field Marshal P. Phibunsongkhram came to the power on 26 December 1938, after Phraya Phaholponphayahasena’s government. During that time Siam was still in a transitional period – that is a transition from absolute monarchy to military rule. Phibun was a charismatic leader. During his period, he always emphasized the role of the leader the people had to follow. He was also influenced by charismatic leaders such as Hitler and Mussolini.

When Phibun came to the power, he and one of his colleagues Laung Wichitwatakarn launched a campaign which persuaded the people to believe and follow the leader. His government worked had to mobilize the people to have the same belief. All media which were in the hand of the government, such as radio and newspapers, were used to promote the leader. Newspapers seemed to be the important source for mobilizing the people. They published the slogans in boldface on their front-pages.

“Believe and follow the leader and the country will prosper”, “The safety of the nation rests on your faith in the leader”, “Believe in Phibunsongkhram

and country would be safe” were the slogans which were published in all newspapers. (Thammsuk Numnontha: 1977:199)

It also had the radio program which called Man Chuchart and Kong Rakthai. This program aimed at promoting nationalism and love for the leader. There was evidence that Phibunsongkhram closely followed this program. He always asked for the script in order to follow the dialogue. There was one case that indicated that Phibunsongkhram was fascinated with this program. One day he went to Bang Pu resort. However, fearing to miss this radio program, he finally called to Bangkok to postpone this radio program until further notice.

The other materials the government used for its nationalistic campaign included patriotic songs and dramas. According to Thamsuk, these were aimed at reminding the Thai people not to be complacent and to remain firmly united. (Thamsuk Numnontha: 1977:p.200) This emphasized the importance of the leader. Their main objective was to promote the strong character of Phibunsongkhram and convinced the people that the strong leader could lead the country.

Phibunsongkhram mentioned that it was important for the country to have a strong leader who would lead the country. He raised an example of Japan that had strong leaders who could bring development and victory to the country and also Hitler who took Germany into war. He emphasized that, like those countries, Siam needed a strong leader in order to be a greatest country as in the past.

To campaign for this Follow the Leader program, the signs which represented the character of the leader were placed everywhere. Green, for example, became the popular national color, and the sign of cock appeared everywhere in the government house. Each family in the country was encouraged to hang a picture of the Prime Minister. (Thamsuk Numnontha: 1977: 201) The members of the audience in the theaters and cinemas were stimulated to stand in respect as the picture of the leader was projected on the screen, and the national flags fluttered everywhere on his birthday anniversary.

Beside the attempt to create a strong leadership cult in Thailand, Phibunsongkhram also a new nationalistic concept, that is, Phibun urged Thai people to realize that they were in a new society, “New Siam”, which relied on a new culture which put an emphasis in greater order and discipline. This was because Thailand

during that time lacked these things. Apart from this problem, Thailand faced the ethnic problem because each ethnic community still kept their ethnic identity and refused to accept Thai culture.

The nation-building policy during the period of Phibunsongkhram was aimed to bring a big change to the people who lived in Thailand. To promote the nation-building policy, Phibun and his team used many tools including advertisement and formal government authority as shown in the policies, royal decrees, emergency decrees and others. The government also used education to spread nationalism to Thai people.

There are the theses that show that the Phibunsongkhram government used education, especially adult education, to expand this idea, that is, to provide the people with knowledge on this sentiment. The Ministry of Education published the textbooks which consisted of the historical background of the heroes and heroines of the nation. The government also attempted to create nationalistic sentiments by building monuments such as those to honor to the people who had devoted themselves to the nation. There were the campaigns to invite people to sing a national anthem and pay respect to the national flag.

The government under Phibunsongkhram devoted itself to rebuilding nationalistic sentiment. The other attempts through which the government tried to convince Thai people included the retrieval of the lost territories such as those in Laos and Cambodia from the French and those in Malaya and Burma from Britain. All these attempts were aimed to give the Thai people a sense of the past greatness of their nation. As Prudhisana Jambala has pointed out,

“The widely publicized image of the military hero fitted in well with the nation-people had about great kings of the past. It was boosted by the success of Phibun’s much orchestrated military campaign in 1939 against French in Indochina which through subsequent Japanese pressure on the French led to the reannexing of lost territories in Laos and Cambodia in 1941. This went to demonstrate that the return to autocracy was paying of restoring the Thai “nation” to the greatness of the past, standing as an equal partner with expansionist Japan”. (Prudhisana Jambala; 1992; p.32)

In rebuilding the nation, Phibunsongkhram needed to create a new

national identity. He believed that “culture” was the crucial part of this nation-building effort. This “cultural progress” must be reflected in both law and order (through laws and regulations) in society as well as in its material prosperity, such as buildings and monuments. In particular, he wanted the people to follow the cultural policy.

Central to this policy was the focus on the ethnic Thai culture rather than acceptance of the multicultural reality. The change of the country’s name from Siam to Thailand was one significant move that indicated this land belonged to ethnic Thai Tai ethnic, that the ethnic Thai had authority over this land and the other ethnic communities had to follow up this ethnic majority.

Beside this emphasis on ethnic Thai, another important characteristic of this policy was the influence that it gained from the Western countries and Japan. Due to their cultural development and political stability, the Phibun government decided to follow them.

In short, the national cultural policy was significant to the nation-building policy during Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram regime. The government tried hard to create Thai people as a civilized nation. It did not only build the monuments, but the government also announced the regulations and the laws to control the citizens. The attempts by the Phibunsongkhram regime to accomplish nation-building policy may divide into two periods, as follows:

The first-period may be called the **soft nation-building policy**. It was arose in the earlier period of the Phibunsongkhram regime. It was “soft” in the sense that the government did not resort to penalty for the people who denied following the policy. The government only urged the people to follow the campaign and recognized their home land. The campaign that was launched in this period was well known as Ratthaniyom or Statism which was aimed to re-creating the sentiment among the Thai citizen of being Thai people. Ratthaniyom or Statism was the primary process of the government in the attempt to create the nationalistic sentiment.

The second-period of the attempt to create a nationalist sentiment was in 1940. The government used the **strong nation-building policy**. It was “strong” in the sense that a royal act was promulgated to enforce it. During the second period, the government used many tools, such as the Cultural Act, to enforce this policy. During

the second period, the government resorted to penalty on the people who broke the rules of the government.

2.2 Thailand during Phibun's Regime : To deal with his tasks, the government of Phibunsongkhram had to face many problems. The government of his regime had to work hard to develop the country and to deal with the situations that happened around the nation. His government had to face internal as well as external factors that compelled it to embark on the nation-building project. To more deeply understand this policy, we need to consider the context of Phibun's government. To understand why, Phibun had to use nation-building policy, two other factors, one internal and the other external, must be taken into account.

1) Internal Factors The political situation during that time was not stable; the old power group composed of the elite from the royal family was still waiting to act against the government. This could be seen from Phibunsongkhram's order to arrest some members of the royal family who were opposed to his government in the first nine months of his being in power. (David K. Wyatt; 2003; 242)

To him Thai society during that time still lacked order and discipline, and this would obstruct his efforts to develop the country so that it became "civilized" like other countries. The people still lacked the senses of belonging to the nation. The people in the rural areas still behaved in the same manner as their ancestors. They also kept their traditions and culture without accepting other cultures. As Bupha has put it,

"The population who lived in all regions of Thailand had no Thai consciousness. The people in the southern part of Thailand still recognized themselves as the Malay people. They kept going on their Malay culture by speaking the Malay language and respect Muslim culture much more than participate in the Thai cultural way. This is the same as other ethnic groups who lived in the northeastern part, who realized that they were Lao, and the people who lived along the borderlines of Burma, who also recognized themselves as Burmese."

In such a condition, Thailand seemed to lack unity among the citizens and this resulted in a gap between the government and the ethnic communities. There was an obstacle to national development which needed the cooperation from all

people.

Another problem was the influence of the Chinese in Thailand. These people had controlled the country's economy for many decades through their monopolies of various sectors in the economic system, such as concessions. They also engaged in money lending business. This control of the economy by the Chinese rid the Thai people of the opportunity to do these businesses and the quality of life of the Thai people seemed to be in poorer and poorer condition which was in contrast with those of the Chinese people.

This caused the government to control and limit the power of the Chinese people which might put national security and stability in danger. The government closed Chinese schools and then forced the children to study in Thai schools in order to teach them Thai culture.

All these factors were part of the reason for the introduction of the nation-building policy. They are the main internal factors that motivated the government to build and develop the nation. The impact of these factors may be summarized as follows.

Political Stability: The Phibunsongkhram regime was still in the period of transition from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy. Political power and government affairs were in the hands of the military. But political tension still appeared and there were attempts by the old power groups to interfere in the government such as in the case of Bowaradet Rebellion.

After the end of absolute monarchy, the military assumed political power. In order to limit the power of the old elite group, the government had to try hard to control them. During the Phibun's regime the government arrested 40 people and imprisoned them as political prisoners. Most of them belonged to the elite class who were accused of opposing his regime.

“Within a month he moved to quell all possible opposition by arresting some forty members of the royal family, old bureaucratic nobles, elected members of the assembly and army rivals, including Phrayasong Suradet on charges of plotting against the government”(David K Wyatt: 1984: p. 242)

This was part of the reason why the military government had to rush to build up a nationalistic sentiment among the people. The government wanted to create

unity that would assist it in developing the country.

Unity of the Citizen: During that time, Thai society was still in some sort of disunity. The people still adhered to their ethnic identities and the culture of their local communities rather than accept national culture. They did not recognize themselves as the Thai people. For example, the people in the northeastern part of Thailand still regarded themselves as Lao. The people, who lived along the Burmese borders, still recognized themselves as Burmese people.

Economic Stability: During that period, the influences of the Chinese people were widespread in Thai society. The expansion of the Chinese influence was shown in the economic system of Thailand. The Chinese people came to be the owners of the business sectors such as the money lending, and owner concessions which were authorized by the government of Thailand. Beyond that the Chinese government also tried to stimulate ethnocentrism among overseas Chinese to have the sentiment in loving their nation.

Cultural Outdatedness: The society of Thailand during that time still was regarded by the government as “culturally outdated”. The people still adhered to their own culture and customs. That was regarded as inappropriate things to follow when the country had to face the challenges of the world. The government of Phibunsongkhram thus aimed to develop Thai culture to be the same as those of the civilized countries such as Europe, United States and Japan.

2) External Factor: During the Phibun regime WW II broke out in Europe which finally came into Asia when Japan entered the war. The purpose of the Japanese army was to eradicate the influences of the West which during that time controlled all parts of the Southeast Asian region except Thailand. The exploitation of the western countries had already wakened up the countries in this region to fight for their independence. Finally, when the Japanese successfully attacked Pearl Harbor of the United State, the countries in this region seemed to be fully awaken to nationalism.

Thailand under the Phibun government was the same as other countries in Asia that would like to cut off the influences of the westerners. Therefore, when the Japanese Army would like to pass through Thailand, the government accepted to be an ally of Japan. However, although Thailand was already in the great alliance with

the Japanese military, the government under Phibun Songkhram was afraid of the influences of the Japanese. It thus launched the campaign in order to prevent the invasion of Japanese influences.

2.3 Phibun's Nation-Building Program

As we have seen, many factors motivated Phibun's government to initiate the nation-building policy to create the nationalistic sentiment. In practice, the government used several mechanisms for this purpose. This research has found that the nation-building policy was created and developed through various concepts. We will here consider some of them.

Building the Nation through Mind Development The government believed that everyone must work. An employment office was set up to help locate work. The beggars were rounded up and sent to training centers. The government also urged the people to engage in cottage industries. It put up the slogan "Thailand for Thai, or Thai for Thai" to arouse the nationalistic sentiment among the people.

During that time, the government campaigned for people to engage in, among other occupations, noodle vending and vegetable gardening, poultry raising, fish breeding, laundering and animal husbandry. It urged the people to build their houses with the hard wood or bricks which were indicative of a civilized nation.

Besides, the government stimulated people to recognize the need to have good health through exercises and other activities. The Thai people must drop their belief in the superstitions. The people had to be more self-confident. The government also urged the people to increase the population by minimum set at 40 million. (Pramuan Wan, 1943)

The people were taught to have good dietary habits and encouraged to eat nutritious foods such as meat, vegetable, and eggs, and to stop the traditional practice of eating rice and *nam prik*, leaves and salt.

Building the Nation through Custom and Culture According to Thamsuk Numnondha (1977:207), nation-building through the customs and culture had a tremendous effect on the everyday life of the Thai people. The government started with the declaration on the "National Day" which was June 24th. It encouraged the people to remember with the gratitude the role of the People's Party in bringing

democracy to the country. The government also changed the New Year Day from April 13th to January 1st to be the same as the international practice.

The other customs and cultural practices in this dimension were related to the dresses of the people. The government expected people to wear the western clothes; men were expected to wear hats, shoes, socks, coat, and long trousers, while women were expected to wear hats, skirts, and blouses which must cover the shoulders and shoes. The colors of their clothes must have colour shades such as gray, indigo, khaki or beige. These were used when working outside, while the navy blue was suitable for indoor work or work connected with machinery. (Thamsuk Numnondha: 1977: p.209)

The government also put up a campaign to encourage the male government officials to kiss their wives before leaving their houses for work. This practice was influenced by the western tradition. With regard to the hat wearing campaign, a slogan “Hats will lead Thailand to Greatness” or “Mala Num Thai” was adopted. The people who refused to wear hats could not be denied public services such as public transportation.

The people were prohibited to eat the betel nuts because it made one’s breathe smell. It also made one’s teeth protrude and caused cavities in one’s teeth. The government took drastic measures against betel chewers who were castigated as lacking culture. There was an order from the Ministry of the Interior prohibiting the betel chewers to contact and enter to the government office. There was the ban on the sale of betel leaves in the market place. There were many other behavioral traits that all Thai people had to change. For example, the Thai had to change from eating with their fingers to eating with spoons. Hence, in September 1942, the government issued a royal decree on national culture, which specified the good manner that Thai people had to follow in public places.

Building the Nation through Art The most obvious representative of this was the establishment of Silpakorn University in 1943. (Thamsuk Numnondha: 1977: p.214) It was aimed to serve as the nursery bed for budding talents in the arts as a way to revive arts. There were no tuition fees for a five-year course in painting and sculpture, art or classical dancing. The Department of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Education was transferred to the Prime Minister’s Office to facilitate closer co-

operation. The department was then divided into five divisions, namely, Architecture, Literature, Archeology, Music, and Dances and the Secretariat.

The government also promoted the “New Ram Wong” which was standardized for all occasions. It gained influence from Ram Tone in the northeastern part of Thailand. The new pattern of Ram Wong was developed by the Department of Fine Arts. In the performance according to this new pattern, the dancers must not touch each other. To promote “Ram Wong”, every Wednesday afternoon all official business was stopped in order to allow the government officials to practice “Standard Ram Wong”. There were 60 songs that were developed for the Ram Wong. (Thamsuk Numnondha: 1977: p.215)

Besides, the instruments which were un-Thai such as *Klong Yao* (one type of drum), *sor duang*, and *sor u* (string instruments) were banned because they did not true Thai origins and because they could not be adapted to the international musical scale. Folkplays such as Lakhon Chatri and Likay, and the puppet show, were also banned. The government considered that these performing traditions could bring disrepute to the nation.

Building the Nation through Literature The government appointed the committee chaired by Prince Wan Waitayakorn with Major Kuang Apaiwongs as an advisor. The duties of the committee were to encourage and revise literature in Thailand.

Thai society must be made up of literate people. The government thus attached much importance to adult education. The government also revised the Thai alphabet in order to make it truly Thai according to the leader’s belief. (Thamsuk Numnondha: 1977: p. 217) The Prime Minister emphasized that it was important to revise the language. It concerned the advancement of the country in the future. For us who are Thai, we need to have our own language. (Sri Krung: 1942) Hence, five vowels and 13 alphabets were not used. The characters adopted from Pali and Sanskrit were prohibited. A new spelling system was adopted, such as Japan: ญี่ปุ่น → ชีปน, or culture: วัฒนธรรม → วัฒนฉัม.

The government also had the new words such as Chan → I, Than → You, Cha → Yes, and Mai → No. These words gained the influence from the English words. The government also put up the campaign to mobilize people to have the

proper names such as women had to adopt names representing flowers or vegetables and men had to use names indicating strength or power such as Amnaj.

Building the Nation through women The Phibun government had the policy raise the status of the women to that of men. According to the prime minister,

“Women are the mother of every single Thai people, in every way. For she is the mould from which every child inherits its characteristics. Whoever becomes a brave warrior it is because this mother had so moulded him in his infancy. Whoever succeeds in business, it is because the trait has been infused into him from the cradle. Therefore the mother is undoubtedly the mould from which the greatness of the nation must be built. Without a mould we can never build Thailand into anything...” (Phibunsongkhram statement: Thamsuk Numnondha: 1977: p. 219)

The status of women was raised. The women could do anything that the man could. There was the founding of the women corps. This organization led by Than Puying La-iad, Phibun’s wife. The government ordered men to honor their wives. The Office of the Prime Minister even issued an announcement concerning the proper behavior of husbands and wives. The men who treated their wives as slaves or attacked their wives had to be punished by up to 10 years in jail without exception. The government also declared the “Six Thai ideal” or “Thai Heroism”. It specified the characteristics the Thai people should know and be proud of. A Ladies’ Cultural Office was established for the promotion of women’s status. (Thamsuk Numnondha: 1977: p.222)

Many opinions have been raised on the cultural and nation-building policy during the Phibun period. According to Bupha Thipsapagul (1986), this policy, especially the cultural policy, affected the Thai people. I seemed to interfere in the private life of many people.

For Pol Sanradee, this was the same as a sword. Because Thailand was composed of various groups of people with differences in culture, languages, and others. These people might not understand and did feel the same as the Thai people.

In Arun Thongpatchot’s opinion, this policy would most directly affect the Muslims who adhered to the Islamic culture.

For Phrayaprasongkasemrach, given the differences of the people in each region especially in the different religions of the country, this policy would

create problems if the people were forced to practice in the same way.

Finally, in Gowwings (1975: p. 21-23)'s view, Phibun's nationalism policy forced the people who were not Buddhist to be Buddhist. The government seemed to believe that being Buddhist was the same as being Thai people. He thus considered the core of this policy to be weird. How could Buddhism be used as the measure of whether or not one was Thai?

3. Conclusion

During the period of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram, the government aroused the nationalistic sentiment among the people through the promotion of its ideas about the leader, culture, art, literature and women. The government emphasized the characteristics of the leader which had to be strong and could lead the country when there was the accident. There were many slogans and campaign which the government used for mobilized the people to have the sameness perception in being Thai.

The essence the nation being built seemed to be a combination of traditional Thai and western cultures. It may also be characterized as a combination of Buddhist society and the western style. The nation-building policy during the period of Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram can be divided into two periods. The first was the soft cultural policy period, and the second was the hard cultural policy period.

One important move in this nation-building campaign was the change of the country's name from Siam to Thailand. The new name was meant to be suited to the ethnic majority in this country. The government used many means to cultivate nationalistic sentiment in the people, especially by emphasizing their ethnic Thai identity. This nation-building policy was a fast-track nationalistic campaign.

However, the policy affected various groups. It affected not only the ethnic Thai in general, but particularly other ethnic communities in the country. Those most adversely affected by this policy were the Chinese and the Muslims who had different life-styles from the ethnic Thai. Although the policy aimed to decrease the tension arising from the differences among ethnic groups, after the government launched this project, it seemed to create the separatist feelings among many ethnic minorities. And it is the impact on the Muslims in the southernmost part of Thailand

that is the focus of this research.