



COUNTRY REPORT: THAILAND

BY MICHAEL CHEN WITH ASSISTANCE FROM JOSEPH BRENNAN

I SITUATION



BRIEF COUNTRY FACTS

Thailand is situated on the Indochina Peninsula in South-east Asia. Since 1932 Thailand has been a constitutional monarchy and the current head of state is King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who has been in power since 1946. The government is currently led by the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), formed by the military junta that took power in 2014 after overthrowing democratically-elected Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in a coup. The country is overwhelmingly Theravada Buddhist, with approximately 94% of the country practicing. It has one of the leading economies in Southeast Asia and is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Its population is 69 million, with most of them being ethnic Thais and people with Chinese ancestry making up a significant minority.

CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION



Currently, Thailand is controlled by the National Council for Peace and Cooperation (NCPO), which is controlled by the generals that conducted a bloodless coup d'état in 2014. The current prime minister is General Prayut Chan-o-cha, the leader of the 2014 coup. General Prayut suspended the constitution shortly after coming to power, transferring all power to himself and promised elections in the future. However, the deadlines for elections have come and gone with the junta deciding to postpone them further into the future. This has led to Thailand essentially existing under an unelected military junta the past few years with few steps in the correct direction. In August of 2016 a new constitution was approved in a referendum that has been accused of being undemocratic. This constitution severely weakens democracy in Thailand and retains a lot of power for the military.



While the current situation is autocratic, recent Thai politics has actually been fairly democratic. Recent electoral politics in Thailand is closely linked to the Shinawatra family. Thaksin Shinawatra, and his sister Yingluck Shinawatra, were both populist leaders elected by overwhelming majorities but have both since been disposed of by military coups. After the promulgation of the 1997 "People's Constitution," Thaksin Shinawatra and his Thai Rak Thai party won the 2001 elections, leading to him becoming prime minister. Thaksin was a billionaire telecoms magnate and one of the richest individuals in Thailand. He had recently sold his company, Shin Corp, to Singaporean investors and paid no taxes on it. Additionally, many were angered that he had sold what had been viewed as a strategically important company to foreigners. In addition to his business practices, the public was also opposed to his incredibly heavy-handed actions during his war on drugs. Reports of numerous extra-judicial killings tainted his image.



In 2005 Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra again won in a landslide, thus becoming the first democratically elected leader in Thai history to finish a full term in office. In 2006, Thaksin called for new elections that were then boycotted by the opposition. There were several protests in Bangkok against Thaksin at the same time, led by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), which was composed of wealthier Bangkok elites and the opposition Democratic Party. The protestors on both sides used colors as symbols as their cause, with the pro-Thaksin camp calling themselves the "red-shirts" and the anti-Thaksin camp calling themselves the "yellow-shirts." After a court annulled the results of the 2006 elections, Thaksin was ousted in a coup.



Though banned from holding office, Thaksin's political party and its successors kept winning elections in Thailand decisively, largely drawing on his power base in north and northeast Thailand. However, backroom deals and court orders overturned these victories and led to rule by the opposition, the Democratic Party. After a few years with Shinawatra loyalists out of power, Thaksin Shinawatra's sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, led her Pheu Thai party to electoral victory in the 2011 elections. However, political instability began in 2014 following a controversial proposal put forward by Yingluck to grant amnesty to Thaksin, who was currently hiding in exile because of corruption charges. The People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC), formed of opposition members with the same goals as the yellow-shirt protestors that ousted Thaksin, organized and took control of several government buildings in Bangkok. The PDRC prevented a general election from taking place by blockading polling places, particularly in their southern strongholds. This led to even more political chaos and an uncertainty about the direction of Thai politics. Street fights broke out and at least eighteen people were killed and hundreds were injured. Claiming to want to restore order, on 20 May General Prayuth declared martial law to prevent riots and stop protests. Then, on 22 May, General Prayuth announced that the armed forces were mounting a coup, and declared himself the head of government. After taking power, the NCPO retroactively impeached Yingluck for failing to provide accurate data on her failing rice-pledging program and sought to destroy all remnants of her government by pressuring or arresting her ministers.

After the coup the military began taking over more sectors of society. The junta gave the military many police powers, including the ability to arrest and detain people. Combined with the increased use of military courts to try civilian matters, the military essentially moved the judiciary from civilian control to military control. The junta has adopted several measures that are incredibly heavy-handed. The NCPO runs "attitude adjustment" sessions and "training courses" at military camps in order to "correct" what they deem as inappropriate or politically incorrect ideas. These camps often meant that journalist, politicians, and academics were abducted and held in solitary detention at military camps for several days. Reports from former detainees say that these sessions often involved them getting blindfolded and lectured by senior military officers. The justification that the police give for this is that "people with different thoughts will have the tendency to create violence." In justifying these camps, Prime Minister Prayuth said that "everyone



whose comments cause division, bad intent to the government, criticizing the things the government didn't do, causes trouble and blames a government that's trying to improve the country, I will consider" to be fair game for "attitude adjustment." Thus we see that the NCPO sets itself up as the hero, providing security and stability in a time of chaos and justifies its abuses by claiming good intentions. However, all this has done is serve to create an atmosphere of self-silencing and curtailing of expression where people no longer feel free to be themselves. This atmosphere is not conducive to the conducting of a democratic government.

The coup has met widespread international condemnation. Many European and North American countries forcefully decried the coup, saying that usurping the democratic process was unacceptable. Thailand's neighbors in ASEAN were less forceful and critical but they still worried about the political stability of Thailand. Only authoritarian countries like China and some other regional allies supported the coup.

Three months after the coup took place, King Bhumibol endorsed General Prayuth and the NCPO. This endorsement was seen as an important legitimating factor for the NCPO since reverence for the king is so strong in Thailand.

MONARCHY

Officially, Thailand is a constitutional monarchy under the leadership of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, also known as King Rama IX. King Bhumibol has been the official head of state for the past seventy years, making him the longest-serving head of state in the world. He became king on 9 June 1946 after his brother died in an accident. Over his seventy years on the throne, he has seen nineteen constitutions, ten coups, and long stretches of political turmoil. He has been the one stable and constant aspect of Thai leadership and politics.



A visitor to Thailand will quickly notice that King Bhumibol's image is everywhere. Throughout the country and across all strata of society, the king is held in incredible reverence and respect. There is the perception that he cares deeply for the lives of everyday Thais, an image that he has cultivated through numerous years spent visiting the countryside and engaging in issues like agriculture. He has also launched many initiatives with helping the disabled, orphans, and the urban poor. In this way, he has very much become a father figure in the country, and a key pillar of support for any government. Every prime minister seeks his endorsement and views it as an essential legitimizing factor to get the citizenry to support the government.

There is the image of the king as a saintly figure who lives and governs by the supreme Buddhist virtues, the *dhamma*. Technically, the king is supposed to be above politics. However, King Bhumibol has had to intervene numerous times in politics, often seeking to promote



nonviolent resolutions and to restore stability. At times he has sheltered protestors whose lives were threatened and at times he has admonished those who he believes to have gone too far in pursuing their political goals. However, the monarchy has also often been the subject of politics. With the recent military coup, the NCPO has sought to paint itself as an ultra-royalist force in order to gain legitimacy. It is doing this because it hopes to tie itself to the king, who is politically untouchable. Thus, the king becomes less of an actual political actor and more of a “proxy” for factions like the NCPO to use in its political machinations.



However, the King’s health has been troubled recently, resulting in extended hospital stays and uncertainty regarding how much longer he will reign. This uncertainty adds another dimension to the convoluted and unstable nature of Thai politics. In the future, the public might not have this figure to assure them and to lend stability to the country in the midst of chaos. This is especially the case given the generally negative view most Thais have of their crown prince, Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn. King Bhumibol’s only son, Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn is far less popular among the Thai public than his father is. He has been involved in many scandals and is seen as an out-of-touch and irresponsible. Especially those involving the four women he has been married to at various points. However, open discussion about succession and the Crown Prince has been tightly controlled by the *lèse-majesté* laws. There are fears that if Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn becomes king, we could lack the legitimacy and authority his father enjoyed, thus leading to a situation where the monarchy is no longer able to be a stabilizing force in the country.



An important facet of the royal-ruled relationship is the *lèse-majesté* laws. These laws forbid defamation or any criticism of the monarch. They are particularly draconian, often carrying with them fifteen year prison sentences for violators. Any written, spoken, or drawn criticism of the royal family is forbidden. The severity and danger of the *lèse-majesté* laws have actually increased markedly after the 2014 coup. The Royal Thai Army and the ruling junta have used the *lèse-majesté* laws as a method for arresting people and suppressing media content that they do not like. Additionally, the trials for *lèse-majesté* offenses have been moved to military courts. These courts are problematic because they do not allow for appeals and tend to hand out much harsher sentences. The junta seems to have turned the *lèse-majesté* laws into a tool for them to legitimate repression and suppression of non-favorable news and opinions.



MILITARY

The Thai military, which is composed of the Royal Thai Army, Navy, and Air Force, has been a major political actor in recent Thai events. The military has also been involved in fighting a violent insurgency in the south from Muslim ethnic-Malays. Martial law still remains in the provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiw, and Sadao. There have been reports of numerous abuses by the military, including torture, in this conflict. Thus, because of this conflict, the military has been continuously active and strong, allowing it to have more power that it can wield in other areas such as politics.

The long string of coups over modern Thai history has led to a very powerful and political organization. Along with that, civilian control over the military and of elected officials has become eroded over time as the military has controlled everything for long stretches of time. Precedent matters, and the prevalence of coups in recent history assuredly makes them more common and almost accepted as part of the normal state of affairs. The most recent coup, in 2014, has led to the entrenchment of the Thai military over control of the government. The newly passed constitution drafted by the National Council for Peace and Cooperation gives the military a tre-

mendous power over elected officials through the establishment of an unelected senate that gives them a lot of say. The appointed body was filled with military and ex-military people, who occupied more than half of the seats. Additionally, the current prime minister was the head of the Royal Thai Army and lead the coup.

In addition to coups, the military also influences politics by taking sides in conflicts, sometimes protecting protestors and sometimes not. In the 2006 protests the military refused to remove anti-Shinawatra protestors from the Prime Minister's residence, showing their support for the yellow-shirts. At other times, they have violently attacked and arrested protestors that were aligned with Prime Minister Shinawatra and his Thai Rak Thai Party, showing clear favoritism towards quashing the red-shirts.



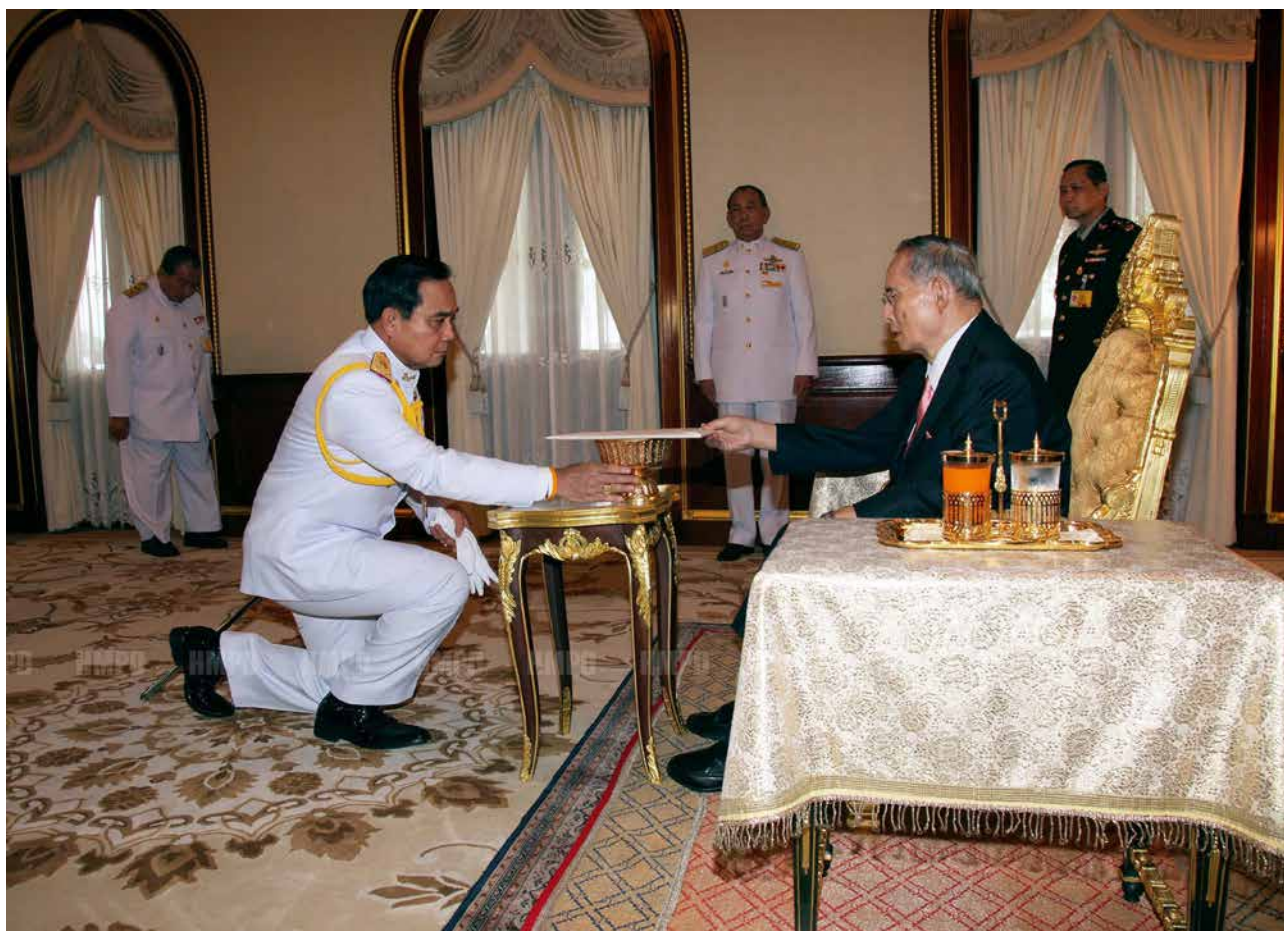
The military has been extremely effective in advancing its own interests. In every new constitution after a coup the military has made sure to include a clause exempting its members for crimes committed related to the coup. Blanket amnesty policies like this can lead to abuses of power and less accountability. Thus, the military that has committed abuses in its war in the South has also been granted reprieve for atrocities committed in the name of the NCPO. Thus, we can see that in modern Thailand, the military has become a powerful, political, and unaccountable force dangerous to democracy.

CONSTITUTION

In 2014 the military suspended all parts of the constitution except for the passage on the royalty. An interim constitution was drafted and there was no public consultation on the constitution or any referendum for approval. This interim constitution had many undemocratic features that the NCPO claimed were necessary to restore order in the country. After this, the NCPO announced that it would draw up a new, permanent constitution for Thailand. The NCPO convened a drafting committee to propose a constitution that would be put to the vote of the people to decide whether to accept or reject. The referendum was held in August of 2016 and was approved.



The drafting committee was filled with people opposed to Thaksin and they sought to make a “Thaksin-proof” constitution. In order to do so, they had to completely change the electoral system that had given him landslide victories and strong mandates. One way they did this was through the proposed switch to a proportional-representation (PR) system rather than a majoritarian system. The new electoral design that the constitution institutes is designed to stop populist movements like Pheu Thai and Thai Rak Thai from ever occurring again. Having a PR system means that parties that fail to win outright victories, such as the Democratic Party that opposed Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra, would still be given seats and representatives. This often leads to more parties represented in legislatures and smaller majorities for winning parties. This system would therefore dilute the power of populist parties that win elections. This maneuver would weaken the voices of the majority that supported Thaksin and Yingluck and give more voice to the minority that opposed them. The establishment of a PR system also generally leads to



coalition governments and politics. With Thai politics as divided and polarized today this means that any civilian government that comes out of an election will be fairly weak and divided. Thus, the transition to a PR system is viewed as an attempt for by the military to create a weak civilian government that it can still exert control over. In the interim before the new permanent constitution comes into effect, the constitution still provides for military control through an unelected national assembly. All its members are all hand-picked by the NCPO, leading to what has been called a "general's parliament." However, eventually this unelected body will be replaced by an elected one. But for the first five years after the new elected assembly comes into being, there will still be an unelected National Reform Steering Assembly which gives military ability to intervene in elected politics, essentially giving it veto power over any civilian government that can arise. This means that even if a fractured body politic can unite and form an effective civilian government, they would still only rule at the whim of the military.

In addition to electoral changes, the new constitution gives the NCPO the right to suspend human rights for



any host of reasons. Section 44 of the constitution says that "where the head of the NCPO is of opinion that it is necessary for the benefit of reforms in any field, or to strengthen public unity and harmony, or for the prevention, disruption or suppression of any act that undermines public peace and order or national security, the monarch, national economics or administration of State affairs," the head of the NCPO is empowered to "issue orders, suspend or act as deemed necessary...such actions are completely legal and constitutional." These kind of wide powers make the NCPO less accountable and far more powerful. This kind of thinking is putting such concepts as "peace," "order," and "stability" over concepts of human rights and rule of law. In addition to giving themselves power to do whatever they want to in the future, the NCPO also granted themselves immunity for the past with the constitution. Section 48 of the constitution says that all actions taken by the NCPO, including the coup, "shall be absolutely exempted from any wrongdoing, responsibility and liabilities." It is clear that the constitution just serves to justify and allow everything the NCPO has done and wants to do.

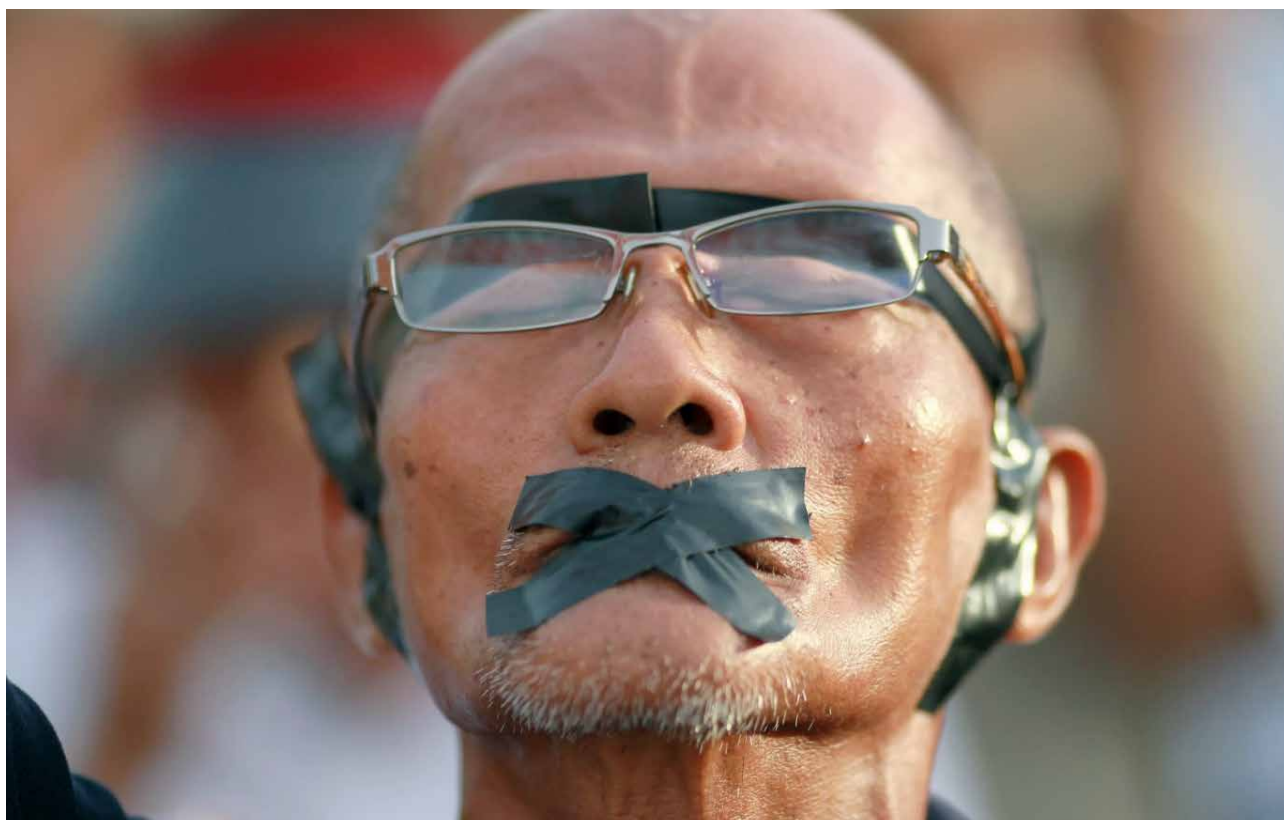


All this is a particularly important problem because the concept and definitions of rule of law are different/weaker in Thailand than they are elsewhere, making limits on liberties more problematic since the government is less used to following the rules. Also, rights are presented as being granted by the state rather than as inalienable to humans. This means that it is easier for the state to deny or bend rights since they come from the state rather than from human nature.



When drafting the new constitution the military has tended to focus on the notion of *prahachon* (the people) rather than on the concept of *phonlamueang* (the citizens). This is an important distinction that leads to a certain kind of relationship between the Thai people and the state. More liberal elements have tried to push for a conceptualization of “citizens,” which would lead to more political rights and liberty as citizens have a stake and a say in the government. However, the military has insisted on a different interpretation, that of the “people.” The military preferred a populace that was obedient to the state instead of being politically active and empowered. This kind of distinction is key in seeing how people are treated and valued in the new system. By setting up a system that treats Thais like “the people” rather than like “the citizens,” the military makes it easier to deny the active role that “citizens” have, instead focusing on the more passive “people.”

In addition to all these concepts of “citizens” versus “people,” the Thai constitutions have always been wrapped up in theories of moralism. There is a focus on ensuring that the people who rule are moral and good. This takes precedence over democracy and popular will. There was a creation of the National Morality Assembly to promulgate a code of ethics that would apply to all politicians. This is problematic because it is fairly subjective and would allow for the removal of popular politicians like Thaksin or Yingluck Shinawatra because of supposed ethical lapses.



The referendum on the new constitution was highly controversial. During the run-up to the referendum, people were not allowed to even discuss and debate the proposed constitution. The military had banned all criticism of the proposed constitution, which could hamper the process of debate that could arrive at a better document. The NCPO passed laws that said campaigning against the constitution carried a penalty of a prison sentence of up to ten years and a fine of up to 7700 USD. Thus, during the process of the referendum, the government had total dominance over the message and presentation. This stifling of free speech seems designed to give the military the result they want. And indeed, the result of the referendum gave the military exactly what they wanted.

As a result of the constitutional changes instituted by the NCPO, politics will be kept more weak and fractured and the military will be able to step in, appoint their own choice for prime minister, and rule the country. This is problematic because transitional periods like the one Thailand is currently going through are particularly sensitive times for a new government trying to get off the ground and for democratic consolidation. If the government lacks legitimacy and full control of the situation then it will find it harder to rule. Any civilian government coming out of the current system and situation is bound to be weaker and have a very difficult time by design.



THAI ECONOMY

One of the largest and most successful economies in Southeast Asia, Thailand's economy has three main components: rice harvesting, fishing, and tourism. Rice growing, which employs almost half of the populace, is the chief economic driver of the rural north and north-east. It's fishing industry, based in the southern part of the country, catches and processes seafood that is distributed all over the world. Through various image-burnishing campaigns and soft-power efforts, Thailand has painted itself as an idyllic paradise full of history and natural beauty to attract tourist from all over the world, primarily to Bangkok and its environs.

Rice growing is an integral part of the Thai economy. It employs roughly half of the populace and is the main food source for the country. Rice farmers are concentrated in the rural north and northeastern provinces. However, the growing of rice has become politicized recently as politicians seek to gain the votes of the farmers, which form a large portion of the population.

In order to win votes and curry favor with the rural Thai farmers, the government of Yingluck Shinawatra pushed through a rice subsidy scheme in 2011. The government guaranteed prices to farmers that were often 50% above global market prices. This led to a loss of approximately 21.5 billion dollars. Combined with increasing competition from Vietnam and India, the rice price fell and a hole was blown into the government's budget. Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra was accused of a lack of



transparency and was hit with a civil suit and impeached for it. Urban Thais in Bangkok were upset that their government and economic system was redistributive towards the farmers. Poverty in Thailand is concentrated in the rural, agricultural provinces. This is one of the reasons that Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra did so well in the rural provinces. By promising them economic populism and guaranteed prices for their rice, they would be transferring a huge sum of the government budget to the poor. Thailand also has more economic inequality than its neighbors. The residents of Bangkok are some of the wealthiest in Asia. Thus their concerns are very different than those of the poorer farmers in the north and east of Thailand. This has led to their general opposition to the populist policies of both Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra.



Tourism is also a large part of the Thai economy, accounting for 9% of GDP. Thailand has only recently become a tourist destination, mostly a result of an effort by the government to portray the country as a peaceful paradise. However, when this image has been challenged by political unrest, tourism falls off rapidly. Recently, because of the political unrest in the country, tourism has fallen 10% since the start of the coup. The finance minister in 2010 predicted a GDP growth rate a whole 2% slower because of a fall-off in tourism after the political unrest that rocked Bangkok after Thaksin Shinawatra was disposed. We see that this important sector of the Thai economy is vulnerable to politics and is also concentrated in Bangkok and the south where anti-Shinawatra sentiments tend to be strongest. Thus, it has potential to serve as a force to pressure anti-Shinawatra people to accept political stability and democracy if their livelihoods are being impacted by unrest and dictatorship.



Thailand is the world's third largest seafood exporter, shipping fish and shellfish products all over the world. It contributes about seven billion USD every year to the Thai economy and employs thousands of people in the south. However, the fishing industry has received condemnation for poor working conditions, human trafficking, and slavery. Reports state that men and children will be forced onto boats, where they are routinely kept out at sea for months with no rest and no chance to see family. They are often forced to work for over fifteen hours a day. Slavery is also found in processing plants in Thailand. The EU recently considered banning imports from Thailand because of this issue. Because of the human rights failings of the industry and what is often seen as government complicity, there is potential for the



seafood industry to also serve as a potential lever that international actors can use to pressure the government to accept reforms and establish a better human rights record. For example, after the threat of an EU ban the NCPO established a national taskforce dedicated to eliminating human trafficking in the industry. How effective they have been is disputed but at least there is an effort being made. Here we see that international pressure can work on the NCPO, forcing it to be better for its citizens.

Thus, we see that all three pillars of the Thai economy rest on shaky foundations. The government rice-pledging program has damaged the Thai budget and created perverse incentives for farmers. The fishing industry exploits slave labor and is vulnerable to international boycott. Additionally, the tourist industry relies on Thailand maintaining its image as a paradise, and political unrest or knowledge of its human rights abuses will severely hurt Thailand's image and thus its tourist business. People might be complacent about the regime's actions because their livelihoods are not affected, or perhaps even improved by the curbing of populism. However, if the economy has serious negative shocks resulting from international boycotts or sanctions of sectors of the Thai economy because of the junta, then even urban Thais in Bangkok will have cause to push for democracy and reform. As long as they are reassured that the rampant populism of the Shianwatras, they will find common cause with the farmers and worse-off in Thailand and can finally present a united front opposing autocracy. This front will be powerful enough to push for meaningful change to the Thai system.

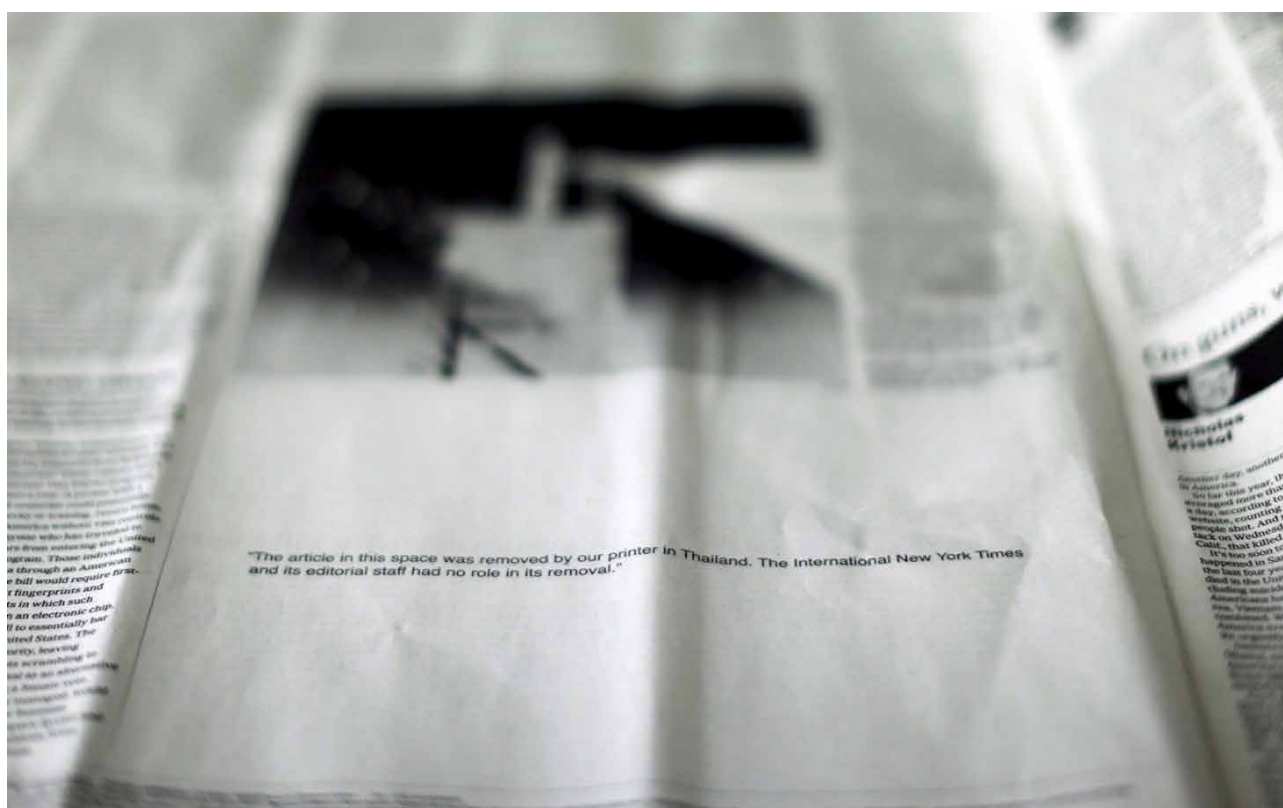
MEDIA AND THE INTERNET



Heavy media suppression has been one of the NCPO's main strategies for controlling dissent. According to Freedom House, after the 2014 coup the NCPO forbade "traditional media broadcasts, censored online news, and arrested or monitored hundreds of critics." It rates the media environment in Thailand as "not free." The junta gave itself many media powers after the coup, many of which were anti-democratic and restricted freedom of speech and expression. For example, the "banned news reporting that disrupts national security, peace, and order" and "asked social media users and operators to prevent content that incites violence or provokes protests, is illegal, or opposes NCPO rule" from being published. It also "ordered ISPs to monitor for, and prevent dissemination of, any information that distorts facts, could provoke disorder, or affects national security" and "mandated surveillance and monitoring of social media by military agencies." All these actions severely curtail media freedom and make the media environment less conducive to the honest creation and reporting of facts. Another part of censorship has been the removal of due process and the need of a warrant to ban something. Now any public official can block anything they want for any reason.

One prime example of how the government has moved against media is the story of "red radio" stations in the north and northeast. These small, local radio stations were generally pro-Shinawatra and populist, and thus perceived as a threat by the NCPO. The NCPO feared that the radio stations could serve as a way to rally the farmers who had voted for Thaksin and Yingluck against the NCPO and mobilize to oppose the regime. Thus, they set out on their largely successful task of dismantling all these stations. The network is very weak now and does not have the power to mobilize large sectors of society. The NCPO has used the excuse that the stations were not properly licensed to justify shutting them down, but by seeing that the government only targeted non-licensed "red" stations and not any of the other unlicensed stations, it is clear that this is a huge program of censorship.

In addition to formal censorship, self-censorship also plays a large role in Thailand. The threat of reprisals and government pressure has created a society where people do not feel free to express themselves. If somebody is brave enough to speak out, they are often slapped with a defamation lawsuit. In one prominent case, an NGO seeking to combat the atrocious human trafficking problem in the country's seafood industry reported that the Thai Navy was complicit in the trafficking. The NGO was



hit with a defamation lawsuit and received tremendous pressure from the government and armed forces to stop talking about what they found and recant. Eventually the suit was dropped because of international pressures, but we can see the power that the government has to intimidate people into silence.

Internet freedom has also been under threat from the NCPO. Since the coup, over 200 websites have been banned or shut down for “national security” reasons. Worryingly, the NCPO has announced that it will create a single platform to access the internet, thus allowing somebody to very tightly control it and even shut down the internet to the entire country if they so wish. Additionally, activists or opposition members who are detained are often forced to give over their social media passwords or sign statements promising that they will not publish anything critical of the regime as a condition for their release.

Thus, we see that the Thai media, internet, and social media is heavily fettered and does not exercise a lot of independence. This makes it hard for it to argue against the regime or inform to galvanize the public.

HUMAN RIGHTS



Since the military junta has seized power in 2014, human rights have taken a significant step backwards in Thailand. The NCPO claims that its new limits on civil liberties and rights are necessary to ensure peace and order and to prevent violent demonstrations from emerging again. For example, the NCPO has prohibited gatherings of more than five people in an attempt to prevent protests from happening. New Prime Minister Prayuth said, "Even if you feel pity, you can't [protest] anyway, because it's against the law."

The NCPO has also impinged on free speech on university campuses to ensure that students getting educated are kept in order and are not exposed to dangerous or revolutionary ideals. For example, a class on democracy at Thammasat University in Bangkok was shut down and its speakers were all detained by the NCPO.

Most dangerously, the NCPO's actions are also threatening the lives of people opposed to it. "Forced disappearances" have become more and more common, where regime opponents just disappear and the government does not make an effort to find or save them.

The detaining of many people, from activists to opposition leaders to journalists and academics, has created huge human rights problems in Thailand. They are often summoned and threatened with military tribunals if they fail to show. Detainees are routinely denied legal counsel and are often kept in the dark about the purpose for their detention. They are often transferred around secret camps for days with hoods on their heads and forbidden from communicating with the outside. In these military camps where people are detained, often harassed by military officers, and criticized for their political beliefs. These "attitude adjustment" sessions violate many basic rights including those of due process. If people are released from detention they often are required to sign agreements saying that they will not talk about politics or travel without permission or talk about their experience in detention.

Migrants, asylum seekers, and unregistered refugees also often have their human rights abused in Thailand. Many of these refugees are from neighboring countries, especially Myanmar, and especially the Rohingya. There are an estimated 2.5 million migrants in Thailand, of which 2 million of those are illegal. They are thus barred from having legal standings or rights and are denied basic benefits like healthcare and the minimum wage. They are often locked up or expelled and there is no law to deal with them as Thailand has not adopted the 1951

Refugee Convention. They are often imprisoned in illegal camps where they are forced to pay a ransom to their captors. Many die under the horrid conditions. If the survive, they are often sold off as slaves, especially in the construction, fishing, and seafood processing industries.



The conditions of migrants forced into labor are horrendous. It was estimated that at a single city in Thailand ten thousand children were forced to work peeling shrimp. Migrants were falsely lured with promises of jobs then dumped into slavery. They did not have proper documentation or legal status and thus could not seek help. Often if the authorities got involved, they would choose to deport the migrant and to not punish the business. According to the US State Department's 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report, in Thailand many people forced into slave labor on fishing vessels have to "remain at sea for several years, are paid very little or irregularly, work as much as 18 to 20 hours a day for seven days a week, or are repeatedly threatened, physically beaten, drugged to work longer, and even killed for becoming ill, attempting to escape, or disobeying orders." This is the tragic life they have to face. If consumers knew that this was behind the fish and shrimp they ate, they would probably move to boycott Thailand as a source for seafood.

Perhaps even more tragic is the sex trafficking trade in Thailand. Bangkok is an internationally known sex tourism destination, and many people from all over the region are trafficked into Thailand to serve as prostitutes. Among these are a number of underage individuals. The government still fails to provide any meaningful support or level of services to survivors of trafficking nor has it made great efforts to end it.

Though progress has been made, the government still does not meet minimum standards for eradicating the problem. Government promised to end slavery and human rights abuses on the boats, but they haven't actually done anything. Actually, arrests and prosecutions for slavery and trafficking have dropped because authorities are not putting as much effort into it. Thailand is also retreating from its international obligations to fight trafficking and improve human rights. Thailand is a signee of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is a treaty that binds it to a certain standard of respecting human rights. However, in 2014, the NCPO claimed a national emergency and suspended its obligations to follow the Covenant. It is clear that under the NCPO Thailand's human rights condition has worsened and several severe issues, chief among them human trafficking, have not been tackled with enough effort.



CIVIL SOCIETY

When looking for potential elements to unify Thai society in opposition to the NCPO, we need to examine the potential for civil society. In general, many segments of civil society remain weak and cannot or will not act as a source of resistance toward the NCPO. For example, even though they are legal, trade unions are very weak and strikes incredibly infrequent. Additionally, during the protests against Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra, large segments of people actually organized groups like the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) and the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) and mobilized against democracy by protesting against the government as part of the yellow shirt movement.



However, there are some potential pieces of good news about rural organization. Rural farmers have shown the ability to mobilize and unite for a common purpose and force the government to change. Much of northern Thailand is heavily forested and deforestation is a huge problem. The government has tried to use community forestry programs and the expansion of national parks to help protect the forests. However, many of the people living in the forest feared that such measures would undermine their way of life and restrict their opportunities. The government had plans to carry out forced relocation of communities living in forest reserves in order to protect the forests. However, this plan was halted after civil society groups organized protests. They were successful because they cooperated with NGOs and the local government, working with those with power to ensure that their voices were heard. They established their own community forests and committees to take care of them, thus eliminating the justification of government interference and control over their lives. As a result, the government has agreed to let communities already settled in forest reserves to remain there as long as they take

care of the forest, a compromise. The fact that these rural communities were able to protect their livelihood and oppose central government policies shows that rural populations in Thailand still have tremendous potential to organize and work together. Whether they will in opposition to the NCPO remains to be seen.



Another sector of society that can mobilize against the NCPO are the students. Through movements like the New Democracy Movement (NDM), students have been able to plan and stage several small acts of resistance to the regime. However, they as yet do not have the power or resources to totally challenge the regime.



However, not all civil society elements are would be favorable to democratic reform. For example the Community Organization Development Institution (CODI) is part of a network of civil society groups that mobilized against Thaksin Shinawatra in 2006. During the protests, they took on anti-democratic tones because they perceived the kind of populist democracy that delivered Thaksin into power as corrupt and not yielding results in the national interest. Likewise, powerful civil groups mobilized against Yingluck Shinawatra in 2014. The People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) and the United Front for People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), which demonstrated against Yingluck, joyously celebrated the coup and demobilized after the establishment of the NCPO. Thus, we see that the traditional view that civil society is a way to combat authoritarianism does not hold in the same way for Thailand.



Additionally, pro-democratic Thai civil society has typically focused on a different definition of democracy than just elections and votes. Instead, they have focused more on non-corruption, effectiveness, and other such qualities. They view creating good politicians and faithful stalwarts as a key part of the democratic process. Thus, when they see a person like Thaksin Shinawatra and oppose him, they do not necessarily view themselves as anti-democratic, they merely oppose him because they see him as corrupt and thus as bad for democracy. Some poor even feel that elections are just ways for powerful people to take power, and thus oppose them on those grounds.

So it seems that while civil society could help mobilize people, it is not clear if those mobilized would necessarily be in favor of restoring democracy. Additionally, the tight environment where the NCPO often has the military and police crack down on protests means that it is difficult to get a large movement started.

II PILLARS OF SUPPORT



PILLARS OF SUPPORT FOR NCPO

MILITARY:

As a military junta, the NCPO has the full and unconditional backing of the Thai armed forces. The fact that the entire NCPO leadership is either current or former generals and admirals means that these leaders are able to easily command both the NCPO government and draw support from the armed forces. As we have seen, the armed forces have been called upon to do work normally reserved for civilian forces, such as conducting trials and police work. They have also effectively broken up and repressed demonstrations against the NCPO. Thus the armed forces are tied to the NCPO and will not support any other actor.

MIDDLE AND UPPER-CLASS BANGKOK:

More urban, wealthy, and educated than the rural peasants of the north and northeast, the middle and upper-class Bangkok residents felt alienated and wary of Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra's blatant populism. Such schemes like rice-pledging threaten their economic livelihood and they are sensitive to the appearance of corruption in the Shinawatra family. They are the ones who took to the streets as part of the PAD and PDRC to protest Thaksin Shinawatra's government. However, they are also incredibly sensitive to political unrest. The damage that unrest does to the tourism industry, which is key to Bangkok, means that these people are generally in favor of avoiding trouble. Additionally, if the NCPO is shown to be corrupt as well, as recent scandals such as the construction of Rajabhakti Park suggest, then they could pull support away from the NCPO. Thus, they have tacitly accepted the NCPO as a guarantor of more stability and peace. However, if their economic interests could be threatened or if the NCPO is shown to be corrupt then perhaps they could find common cause with the rural farmers in pushing for democracy.



COURTS:

Now composed almost entirely of people appointed by the NCPO, the courts are very supportive of the junta. Additionally, many functions of the civilians courts are being taken over by military courts, actually further weakening the little power they had. They have also rigorously enforced the lèse-majesté laws that are used by the NCPO to gag opposition voices.

PILLARS THAT LEAN BOTH WAYS

KING BHUMIBOL:

The monarch of Thailand has shown sympathies to both sides of the conflict. While officially he has endorsed the NCPO as the legitimate government of Thailand, there is evidence that his feelings also swing the other way. The fact that it took him three months before endorsing the NCPO shows that there was likely some hesitation on his part. Additionally, he has traditionally shown great sympathy for the farmers and poor in the country, which is why he is so popular. Furthermore, in past coups he has sometimes sheltered civilian protestors against the military and has at times publically chastised the military for overstepping its boundaries. However, given his current state of health and age, it is unlikely that king Bhumibol will be able to play a role in ending the junta. The junta uses his image and the lèse-majesté laws to bolster their rule and garner legitimacy.



PILLARS THAT SUPPORT OPPOSITION

STUDENT GROUPS:



One of the few successful segments of society that have been able to mobilize despite the regime's oppressive nature have been the student groups. Mostly based in Bangkok, the student groups have remained fairly quiet because of fear of government repression. Student protest and activism has also been relatively subdued due to killing of students at Thammasat University in 1976 by the military. The main opposition group that has formed is called the New Democracy Movement (NDM). The NDM seeks to resist the regime in a variety of less confrontation methods that create a headache for the NCPO without giving it a reason to forcefully suppress the movement. It's protests of often sought to poke fun at the regime or tried to erode its legitimacy and authority. For example, the NDM organized a sandwich demonstration in 2014. Instead of creating huge rallies and protests, students handed out sandwiches to people on the street and turned it into a symbol for resistance to the NCPO. The NCPO immediately banned the eating of sandwiches. Tactics like this challenge the legitimacy of the junta while simultaneously embarrassing it. Cracking down on students handing out sandwiches looks ridiculous, overbearing, and helps turn people against the junta. Another clever protest involved a "doll protest" where dolls and toys carried signs opposing the NCPO, since people were not allowed to protest. Tactics like these are often the most effective method of protest under oppressive systems like the NCPO. The students have also explicitly avoided associating themselves with the redshirts and the violence that consumed those protests in 2006. While the students do not have enough power to topple the regime or completely change the system, they still act as a thorn in the side of the regime, making sure that its authoritarian tendencies still carry a cost and are resisted.

MEDIA/ACADEMIA:

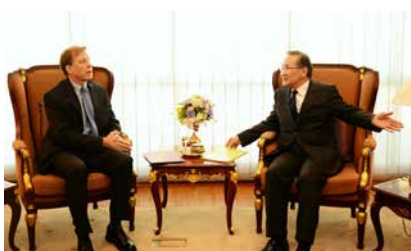
There have been signs that media and academics are sympathetic to democratic ideals. However, the incredibly oppressive laws passed by the NCPO since seizing power has lead to a stifling of voices. With the current way that the NCPO handles censorship, with the use of military courts, lèse-majesté laws, and "attitude adjustment" sessions, it is difficult for the media or academia to fully express their views. Pro-democracy/Shinawatra media outlets like "red" radio stations in rural Thailand have been repressed and shut down and academics educating pupils about democracy have been detained. Thus, while these communities would like to support democratization and oppose the NCPO, it is exceedingly difficult for them to do so since the NCPO fears that media and academia would help opponents to the junta mobilize.

FARMERS:



The chief electoral base that propelled Thaksin and Yingluck Shinawatra to their huge electoral mandates, the farmers of the rural north and northeast are opposed to the coup and generally in favor of populist democracy. They form a huge sector of Thai society numerically and can thus deliver elections. Realizing their importance and power, the NCPO has taken many actions to control the farmers. They have put tremendous amounts of money into rural areas, even continuing aspects of Yingluck's much-derided rice-pledging scheme. The NCPO has tried to buy their loyalty this way, though it has generally not worked. Additionally, the NCPO has rigorously shut down local media in the north and northeast in order to make sure that the farmers do not mobilize and organize against the junta. If properly mobilized by civil society or allowed to vote freely in elections, the farmers and rural residents in Thailand will most likely reject authoritarianism and advocate for direct populist democracy.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:



As a whole, the international community has responded negatively to the military coup on the grounds that it is a dangerous step back in Thailand's path toward democratic consolidation. Important partners from all spheres have started putting pressure on Thailand to reform. Since the NCPO is led by the Thai military, pressure from Western military allies like the US could be particularly effective. After the coup, the US announced that it would no longer supply military aid to Thailand and canceled future iterations of Operation Cobra Gold, a massive joint-military exercise. As Thailand's largest and most powerful ally, the US can exert a large force on the NCPO to change its authoritarian policies. In addition to military and political pressures, economic pressures can also force the regime to change. The EU recently contemplated banning Thai seafood imports because of human rights abuses. If governments in Europe and North America enact these kind of economic sanctions because of Thailand's poor human rights record and authoritarian government, it can drastically impact the fortunes of Thailand's wealthier citizens, who tend to support the NCPO, as well as the military itself. If governments change economic or military policy toward Thailand and adopt stronger sanctions because of the NCPO and human rights abuses, then it is possible that there could be enough pressure for regime change.

III FUTURE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND OUTCOMES

Predicting future developments at this critical juncture in Thai politics is difficult, especially given the state of the monarchy. Since King Bhumibol is old and will probably pass away soon, there is a degree of uncertainty and anxiety about what role the monarchy will play in the future. Could factions that claim the support of the royalty still have legitimacy and power if the royalty is no longer popular or respected in Thailand, as might happen if the Crown Prince becomes king? Additionally the actions that international actors take are hard to predict and can have a huge impact on what happens in Thailand. With those things in mind, we can still imagine many scenarios of how the future plays out.

One such scenario is business as usual. Perhaps the recent 2014 coup will end up like many of the other coups throughout modern Thai history. Through the new constitution the Thai military will cede power to a weak and fractured civilian government. The government will not be able to unify the various diverse interests and groups in society and will eventually be the focus of strife and protests. Then in order to stop the disorder the military will step in, proving that it is the only strong political actor. With the way it currently is, the military is so involved with politics and so powerful that it will probably never be willing to give up all influence and power, ensuring that the future civilian government will be weak.

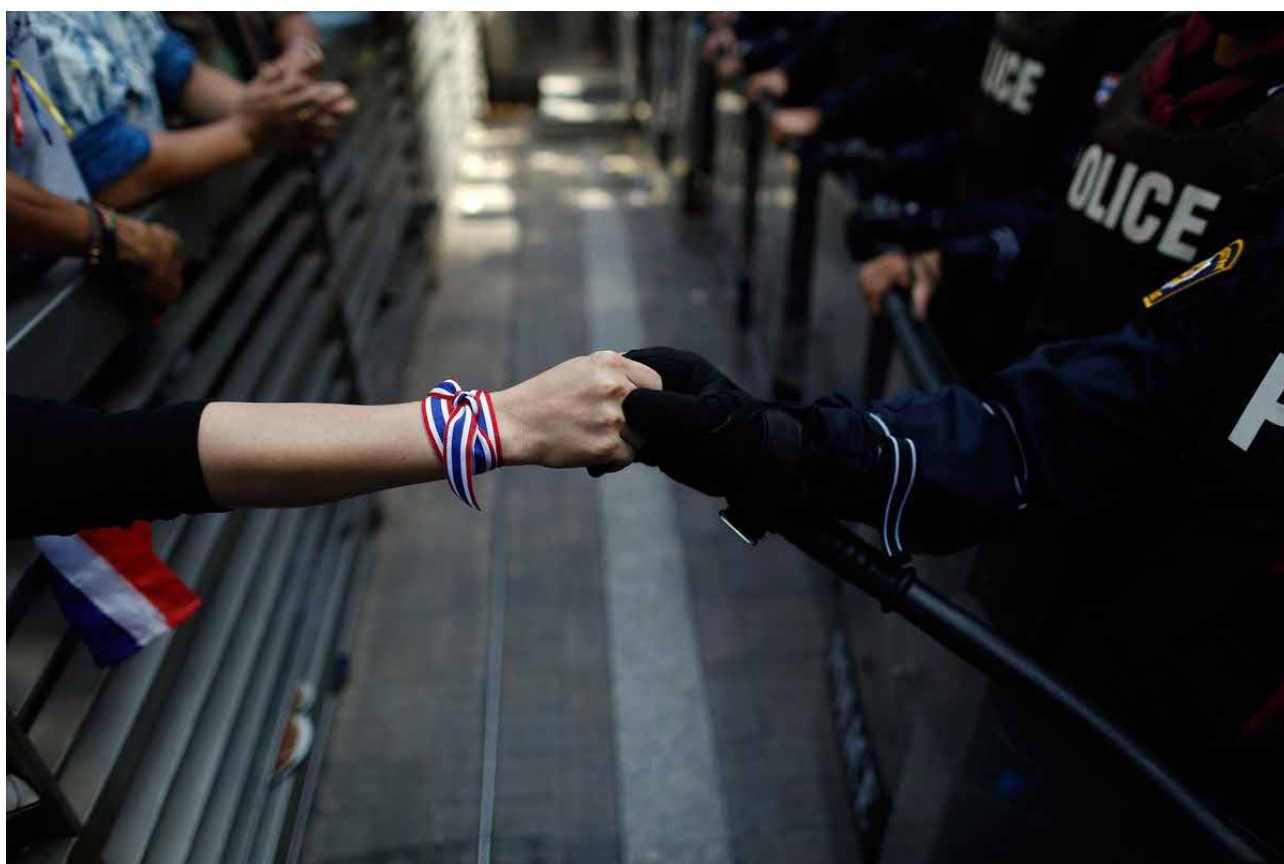
Perhaps instead of business as usual the military will instead try to take even more power, leading to one of the worst-case scenarios: the consolidation of military rule. Given how much stronger the military is than any other sector of Thai society, it is entirely conceivable that military rule ossifies and becomes permanent. The NCPO, though it claims to want to improve democracy and establish elections in Thailand, has repeatedly dragged its feet on reforms and democratization. The NCPO's complete control over the military, police, and courts give it tremendous coercive power to keep opposition in line and weak. If Thai society remains fractured and divided, then the military will likely not face enough pressure to reform and change. And if over time civilian government remains out of power, then the traditional norms that favor democracy and civilian rule will erode and become weaker and military government might be seen as the new normal. If this precedent is set, then it will be tremendously difficult for any civilian government or movement to amass enough power to control the country. Perhaps Thailand could fall into becoming a permanent military dictatorship, much like its neighbor Myanmar was.

However, other factors can lead to a more desirable outcome. A more favorable outcome would be the eventual removal of the military from politics and a reestablishment of separate military and civilian spheres and the subordination of military to civilian rule. This can only happen if the civilian sphere gains more power than the military, which will be tremendously difficult. To do so, the pro-Shinawatra farmers and rural poor would have to find common cause with the more wealthy and urban coup-supporters in Bangkok and unite. There doesn't seem to be an overarching grand

consensus view of human or political rights in Thailand, leading to some difficulty unifying the country around a moral message. Thus, when looking at a unifying factor, economic considerations are the most important left. These pocketbook issues are the most useful for galvanizing people.

Especially in such areas like tourism and fishing, political stability and authoritarianism hurt the economic prospects of those in Bangkok and the south, the stronghold of anti-Shinawatra forces. Tourists are likely to avoid Bangkok and the beaches if there are riots and protests, as they did in 2006 and 2014. Ineffective efforts from the NCPO to combat human rights issues in fishing and shrimping can lead to international sanctions that hurt the economy of the region. If anti-Shinawatra people's livelihoods are negatively impacted they will see that NCPO rule is not in their personal interests. Combined with the lower amount of support the NCPO is likely to give rice farmers in the north and northeast, all sectors of Thai society are likely to see their economic fortunes decline under NCPO rule.

Additionally, if international pressures bite into the Thai economy and hurt the military establishment, it is more likely that the military will step back. The aforementioned sanctions for human rights violations by the NCPO are the first step. If military rule continues and the NCPO seems to be not advancing the cause of democracy, additional sanctions can be opposed. Furthermore, since the NCPO is composed of the Thai military, withdrawal of military aid and cooperation from such countries like the United States can serve as a lever to pressure the military to change its ways. The optimistic case of military rule ending and the restoration of civilian rule is going to be hard to achieve, but there are ways to put pressure on the NCPO and incentives for combating sectors of Thai society to unite.



TACTICS MOVING FORWARD

When determining how to pressure the NCPO moving forward, the most important pillars of support to target are the more urban and wealthier Bangkok class. The most effective way to do this is through economic pressures to ensure that the authoritarian nature of the NCPO leads to actual costs for its supporters. By showing that Thailand is not this idyllic paradise that government officials portray it to be, protestors can affect the tourism industry. By bringing attention to the numerous human rights problems and abuses protestors can sway international support towards their cause and perhaps lead to sanctions against the NCPO. Once the pocketbooks of those supporting the NCPO are hit there are far more likely to join a movement against the regime. If these supporters can be peeled away, then practically the entire country will stand opposed to the NCPO, providing the opposition with enough power to change the situation.

Currently groups like the New Democracy Movement really cannot do any more large-scale protests because of the threat of retaliation. However, continuing with the mostly small-scale actions still has a lot of benefit. It keeps reminding people that the regime is undemocratic and abusive. It also raises some level of international awareness that helps them promote their cause.

Additionally, perhaps activists could try to start a conversation about values. While any kind of large-scale conversation is liable to be censored by the NCPO, perhaps the establishment of a more uniform conception of democracy and good governance will make it easier for the different political actors in the country to be united and agree on what the end goal is.

At times we have to think about how important the personalities of the Shinawatras were in the turn from democracy in Thailand. The spark that led to protests against Yingluck Shinawatra was her perceived move to grant Thaksin amnesty, thus allowing him to come back to Thailand and stand for election. It is clear that the more elite Bangkok urban class is not disposed to another populist Shinawatra government. Perhaps if there were guarantees made or political measures put in place that would prevent brazen populists from coming to power than democracy could once again command support among that class of Thais. A sort of compromise between the populists of countryside with their fellow Thais in Bangkok and the south could create a system of democracy and elections that is much better than military rule but still gives those without a voice during the Shinawatra era a say and power is probably the best path forward. This helps ensure that an anti-NCPO movement can get broad support.

In sum, there are a host of actions that the opposition can take against the authoritarian NCPO. None of these are the large-scale protests and marches that often characterize resistance movements because the NCPO just has too much power. Instead, actions should be aimed at subtly undermining their legitimacy, quietly challenging the status quo, exerting economic pressures on regime supporters, and leveraging international support to help end military rule.

SOURCES CITED

"Anger Over Coup Trumps Payouts to Thai Farmers. The New York Times, 27 May, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/28/world/asia/thailand-farmers-get-rice-payments-as-military-steps-up-propaganda.html?_r=0

Arnold, Michael. "Thailand's Political Unrest Deals a Blow to Key Tourism Sector." The Wall Street Journal, 22 May 2014. <http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2014/05/22/thailands-political-unrest-deals-a-blow-to-key-tourism-sector/>

Brennan, Joseph. "Kingdom of Instability: Electoral Confidence, Opposition and the 2014 Thai Coup D'état." Harvard College Committee on Degrees in Social Studies, May 2015.

Buchanan, James. "Thailand: Poking the Tiger." The Diplomat, 28 October 2015. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/10/thailand-poking-the-tiger/>

Chambers, Paul. "Thailand on the Brink: Resurgent Military, Eroded Democracy." Asian Survey, Vol 50, No.5, University of California Press, 2010.

"Dolls, Cartoon Figures, Balloons: Activist's New Tactics for Referendum Campaign." Prachatai, 30 June 2016. <http://www.prachatai.com/english/node/6311>

"Freedom of the Net: Thailand." Freedom House, 2015. <https://freedom-house.org/report/freedom-net/2015/thailand>

Fuller, Thomas. "Anger Over Coup Trumps Payouts to Thai Farmers." New York Times, 27 May 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/28/world/asia/thailand-farmers-get-rice-payments-as-military-steps-up-propaganda.html?_r=0

Ghosh, Nirmal. "Thai Military's Grand Design in Politics." The Straits Times, 4 April 2016. <http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/thai-militarys-grand-design-in-politics>

Glum, Julia. "Thailand Monarchy Crisis 2016: King Bhumibol Briefly Leaves Hospital After Lung, Blood Infection." *International Business Times*, 11 January 2016. <http://www.ibtimes.com/thailand-monarchy-crisis-2016-king-bhumibol-briefly-leaves-hospital-after-lung-blood-2259176>

Head, Jonathan. "Defaming a Dog: The Ways to Get Arrested for Lèse-Majesté in Thailand." *BBC News*, 16 December 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35099322>

Hodal, Kate. "Slavery and Trafficking Continue in Thai Fishing Industry, Claim Activists." *The Guardian*, 25 February 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/feb/25/slavery-trafficking-thai-fishing-industry-environmental-justice-foundation>

Holmes, Oliver. "Thai Junta 'Invites' then Detains Journalist." *The Guardian*, 14 September 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/14/thai-junta-detains-journalist-pravit-rojanaphruk>

Holmes, Oliver. "Thai Junta Criticized as Army Given Sweeping Powers of Arrest." *The Guardian*, 5 April 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/05/thailand-junta-gives-army-sweeping-powers-of-arrest>

Horn, Robert. "Thailand Tourism Devastated by Political Unrest." *Time Magazine*, 18 April 2010. <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1982555,00.html>

Marshall, Andrew. "Thai Crown Prince's Poodle, Air Chief Marshal Foo Foo, has Been Cremated." *The Guardian*, 5 February 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/05/thai-crown-prince-pet-poodle-air-chief-marshal-foo-foo-cremated>

Mason, Margie, et al. "Global Supermarkets Selling Shrimp Peeled by Slaves." *The Associated Press*, 14 December 2015. <http://www.ap.org/explore/seafood-from-slaves/global-supermarkets-selling-shrimp-peeled-by-slaves.html>

McCargo, Duncan. "Peopling Thailand's 2015 Draft Constitution." *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, December 2015.

McQuay, Kim. "Two Years After Thailand's Coup, Draft Constitution Stirs Controversy." The Asia Foundation, 18 May 2016. <http://asiafoundation.org/2016/05/18/two-years-thailands-coup-draft-constitution-stirs-controversy/>

"New Democracy Movement: Achievement and Future." Prachatai, 9 June 2016. <http://www.prachatai.com/english/node/6244>

"Overseas Business Risk—Thailand." United Kingdom Trade & Investment, 7 September 2015. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-thailand/overseas-business-risk-thailand>

"Overview: Thailand." The World Bank, April 2016. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/thailand/overview>

Permani, Risti and Vanzetti, David. "Rice Mountain: Assessment of the Thai Rice Pledging Program." Agricultural Economics, November 2015.

Pitidol, Thorn. "Redefining Democratic Discourse in Thailand's Civil Society." Journal of Contemporary Asia, 2016.

"Profile: King Bhumibol Adulyadej." BBC News, 9 June 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-29502450>

Roberts, Kimberly. "It Takes a Rooted Village: Networked Resistance, Connected Communities, and Adaptive Responses to Forest Tenure Reform in Northern Thailand." Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies, 2016.

Saiyasombut, Saksith. "Rajabhakti Park: The Corruption Case the Thai Junta Doesn't Want you to Talk About." Asian Correspondent, 17 December 2015. <https://asiancorrespondent.com/2015/12/rajabhakti-park-controversy/>

Sherwell, Philip. "Thai Junta Threatens Foes with 'Attitude Adjustment' Camps for 'Seditious' Red Bowls Bearing Message from ex-PM." The Telegraph, 4 April 2016. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/04/thai-junta-threatens-foes-with-attitude-adjustment-camps-for-sed/>

Stengs, Irene. "A Kingly Cult: Thailand's Guiding Lights in a Dark Era." *Etno-for*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1999.

Stout, David. "Former Thai PM Yingluck Shinawatra Impeached by Junta-Backed Legislature." *Time Magazine*, 23 January 2015. <http://time.com/3679760/thailands-impeaches-former-primer-minister-yingluck-shinawatra/>

"Thai Anti-Coup Protesters Say it with Sandwiches." *Washington Post*, 8 June 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/thai-anti-coup-protesters-say-it-with-sandwiches/2014/06/08/8d799f86-ef35-11e3-914c-1fd0614e2d4_story.html

"Thai Coup: Leader Gen Prayuth Receives Royal Endorsement." *BBC News*, 26 May 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27572726>

"Thailand: Authorities Silence 'Red Shirt' Community Radios." *Human Rights Watch*, 27 April 2011. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/27/thailand-authorities-silence-red-shirt-community-radios>

"Thailand: Interim Constitution Provides Sweeping Powers." *Human Rights Watch*, 24 July 2014. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/07/24/thailand-interim-constitution-provides-sweeping-powers>

"Thailand Unveils New Constitution Draft to Public." *Deutsche Welle*, 29 March, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/thailand-unveils-new-constitution-draft-to-public/a-19147871>

"Trafficking in Persons Report 2016." *US Department of State*, 2016. <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2016/>

"World Report 2015: Thailand." *Human Rights Watch*, 2015. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/thailand>