



**Linnæus University**

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Bachelor's Thesis

# Democratisation and antidemocratisation:

The historical cases of governmental changes in  
Thailand



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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis was to examine the 1970s democratisation and antidemocratisation processes in Thailand, more specifically the 1973 Thai popular uprising and the 6 October 1976 massacre. Its point of departure was Erica Chenoweth's 2023 research on how societal pillars, if incentivised by activists, can realise democratisation and the research gap on media reports affecting people's perception of protesters which she also addressed. It also investigated the fine line between uncontroversial and controversial subjects in the context of protests and how to overthrow a régime using its weaknesses.

The methods which have been used are a combination of a qualitative research approach, a congruence method, process-tracing and a case study. Popovic and Miller's method of choosing an uncontroversial subject when protesting and Sharp's ideas about the Achilles' heels of a régime were used as supplementary analytical frameworks.

The 1973 case resulted in democratisation taking place, partially due to the protesting students having King Bhumibol's full support, partially due to the disunity of the Royal Thai Armed Forces (henceforth RTARF) and partially due to the ruling military junta's failed attempts to, through media, manipulate the masses into turning their backs on the students.

The 1976 case, on the other hand, led to antidemocratisation, because of the general dissatisfaction with the achievements of democracy, King Bhumibol's support of authoritarianism, the influence of right-wing media on its consumers and the police, military and paramilitary alliance crushing the pro-democratic demonstration at the Thammasat University campus and the Village Scouts' subsequent antigovernment protest.

## Key words

Chenoweth, research on societal pillars, democratisation, antidemocratisation, case study, 1970s, Thailand



## Table of Contents

<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Literature Review.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Analytical Framework.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. Methodological Framework.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5. Contextual Background: Thailand in the 1970s.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>6. Previous research on the cases chosen: The 1973 Thai Popular Uprising.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>7. Previous research on the cases chosen: The 6 October 1976 Massacre.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>8. Current research on the cases chosen.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>9. Analysis.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>10. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>11. References.....</b>	<b>37</b>

## List of Abbreviations

BPP	Border Patrol Police
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
FFT	Farmers' Federation of Thailand
ISOC	Internal Security Operations Command
NARC	National Administration Reform Council
NSCT	National Student Center of Thailand
RTA	Royal Thai Army
RTAF	Royal Thai Air Force
RTARF	Royal Thai Armed Forces
RTP	Royal Thai Police
RTN	Royal Thai Navy
UN	United Nations



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XR

Extinction Rebellion



# 1 Introduction

The 1970s was a turbulent decade in Thailand, as it was then the country began taking its first steps towards democracy. The most significant event in relation to the emergence of democratisation at the time was the 1973 popular uprising which coincidentally occurred before and not after the beginning of the third wave of democratisation which, as stated by Huntington, started at the same time as the 1974 Carnation Revolution began in Portugal in the aftermath of which authoritarianism was replaced with democracy. Having briefly described the beginning of the third democratisation wave and its relation to the 1970s' Thailand, the debates which it seeks to make contributions to now need to be outlined.

Regarding the debates which are of relevance to the thesis, that on antidemocratisation and that on democratisation are those which it primarily intended to contribute to through its presented research. This was done by making generalisations based on argumentation.

In order to be able to make such contributions, a hypothesis consisting of two questions was formulated. The first question concerned how one's group belongingness affects one's views on democracy. The second one, however, revolved around the monarchy's role as a societal pillar either working in favour of democratisation or of antidemocratisation.

Its theoretical starting point was the research conducted by Chenoweth in 2023 on what tactics are the most beneficial when intending to make the societal pillars an ally of the opposition and the subsequent research gap concerning media's influence on the results found by her. The thesis aimed to critically dissect her recommendation of using non-violent methods to accomplish democratisation. As complementary analytical frameworks, Sharp's reasoning about locating and using a régime's Achilles' heels and Popovic and Miller's strategy for finding a subject about which there is no controversy were selected.

The results of the first case study demonstrated that democratisation could be realised. That success could in return be explained by four concurrent factors. The first one was the ability of the National Student Center of Thailand (henceforth NSCT) to persuade other universities, other societal groups and the common people to join the protests. The second one was King Bhumibol taking the protesters under his wing. The third one was the general dissatisfaction with the military junta led by Thanom Kittikachorn (henceforth Thanom). The fourth and last one was the conviction which many of the personnel employed by Royal Thai Air Force (henceforth RTAF), Royal Thai Army (henceforth RTA) and the Royal Thai Navy



(henceforth RTN) in particular had that they should aid the students in toppling those in power.

Those of the second case study, however, indicated that antidemocratisation can prevail, should the circumstances drastically change. Similarly to the 1973 case, people were discontented with those governing the country, although this time those concerned were conservatives and royalists rather than left-wing students. King Bhumibol had also abandoned NSCT and instead supported Thanom, who had returned from his exile. In addition, there was a consensus in all the three fighting services on protecting the monarchy which they incorrectly perceived to be threatened and by all means necessary crushing the demonstration taking place at the Thammasat University campus. The reason for that being that those launching it had been falsely accused of committing *lèse-majesté*. Finally, the antidemocratic protest staged by Village Scouts made the return of authoritarianism inevitable.

## 1.2 Objective and Research Questions

The objective of the thesis was primarily to test a hypothesis about Chenoweth's research on the impact societal pillars have on facilitating democratisation processes. Secondly, it was about proving using non-violence both worked and failed. Thirdly, it was about examining how media reports affect the public perception of protests. Fourthly, it was about investigating how choosing an unproblematic subject contributes to the success of such protests and how the weaknesses of a régime can lead to its downfall once they have been discovered.

Therefore, a case study had to be undertaken, concentrated on the 1973 Thai popular uprising and the 6 October 1976 massacre.

Hence, two formulated questions need to be answered, those being:

1. How does one's group belongingness affect one's attitude to democracy?
2. How does the monarchy, as a societal pillar, determine whether a country will transform into a democracy or a dictatorship?



## 1.3 The relevance of the research to Peace and Development Studies

The research done is relevant to the subject of Peace and Development Studies principally because of its examination of democratisation and antidemocratisation processes. By doing this, it contributes to the general understanding about how the first can be made more prevalent globally through the involvement of societal pillars. Additionally, it brings some of the mechanisms of the latter to light, thereby improving the knowledge of it and hopefully leading to it being easier to predict and to the right measures being taken at the right time before it is too late. Besides this, it also details violations of human rights, which is another aspect of a country's democratisation process and which the country in question, in one way or another, has to reconcile with in order to be able to move on, for instance through truth commissions being set up, through amnesty being granted or through trials taking place (Theissen, 2004:2-8).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Democratisation and its three stages

The concept of democratisation is at its core about three different stages of democracy: its establishment, its continued persistence and the occurrence of its improvements (Welzel, 2018:22). It is also about making the concept of citizenship more inclusive by making it more inclusive and more equal, allowing the people to influence the decision-making process and ensuring they are protected against actions arbitrarily taken by the state against them (Tilly, 2000:1). Nevertheless, it is worth bearing in mind that a state which to a large extent functions properly is the key to achieve all of this (Ibid:1). With that being said, all of these changes require citizens being able to enjoy their rights of protection and participation, given that they are the result of a successful democratic institutionalisation having taken place in the particular country (Welzel, 2018:22). The amount of initiated and completed modernization projects, the achievement of equality and the particular characteristics of the nation-state, as well as the alliance forming between actors are some ways in which one can comprehend the creation of democracies (Ibid:36-37). The category of democratisation which undoubtedly is associated with most sustainability is the one involving responsibility for the masses, which, in return, is established when there is a combination of an advantageous availability of resources, a highly motivated





people, actions intentionally being taken by the unified population and important events occurring in an unjust context (Ibid:37-38).

Having now described the three stages of this phenomenon, attention must now be directed towards its three waves and the factors contributing to their occurrences.

## 2.2 The three waves of democratisation and their causes

There have been three waves of democratisation and simultaneously two democratic reversions in the world (Huntington, 1993:16). The first wave swept across the globe between the years 1828 and 1926, although there was also a notable backsliding of it taking place between the years 1922 and 1942 (Ibid:16). The second wave, which began in 1943, was in comparison with the first rather short-lived, considering its abrupt end in 1962 (Ibid:16). Similarly to the previous one, however, there was a reversion between 1958 and 1975 (Ibid:16).

The third wave began exactly on April 25 1974 in the Portuguese capital of Lisbon when the event which later would be known as the April 25 coup occurred (Huntington, 1993:3,16). The coup was successful and it led to the overthrow of the Estado Novo régime and to the re-establishment of democracy (Ibid:3). In the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution, the same thing happened in Spain and Greece (Ibid:21-22). During the later half of the 1970s and during the first and second half of the 1980s, multiple countries across the globe, all of which had been authoritarian, now turned democratic (Ibid:22-24).

The reasons why these waves occur in the first place are the following ones: a single cause which can be attributed to the emergence of a new superpower, a sudden change in the existing world order or the outbreak of a war, a parallel development meaning economic progress for example can facilitate a shift towards democracy, a snowballing effect where the occurrence of something positive in one nation may possibly trigger something similar in another (Huntington, 1993:31-33). Finally, there is the prevailing nostrum which is based on the idea that even though there is an occurrence of something similar in multiple countries simultaneously, that does not mean its causes are identical (Ibid:33). Although, if the joint response of the respective national elites is, that could lead to them participating in the democratic transitional process (Ibid:33). By doing that they can



simultaneously solve difficult problems, e.g. a galloping inflation or riots (Ibid:33). Fundamentally, a democratisation must contain these three ingredients: an autocratic régime's fall from power, the subsequent inauguration of a democratic government and lastly that very government's consolidation of power (Ibid:35). Their nature is, however, defined by their differences and contradictions (Ibid:35).

Having described the still ongoing debate on the three waves of democratisation and their causes and their reversions, it is now time to move on to the debate of non-violence.

## 2.3 The debate of non-violence

Mohandas Karamachand Gandhi (later known as Mahatma Gandhi) has been recognized as one of the most important voices heard in the debate of non-violence, as he was the first person putting that method into practice to make an impact politically (Aklan, 2020:115-116). He also believed that God, Truth and Love all were indistinguishable from one another (Ibid:116). Therefore, since equality encompassed all human beings and countries, it should lead to there existing a similar one politically in these countries and to them in consequence being sovereign (Ibid:116). Since nobody wants to harm those one loves, non-violence is a rational choice (Ibid:116). Between the 1950s and 1960s, his philosophy inspired Martin Luther King whose commitment to the Civil Rights Movement was largely influenced by a combination of Gandhian principles and Christian theology (Ibid:119). Sharp would later in his research both theoretically and practically show what activists and the people sharing their views can achieve when possessing these abilities (In:Novak, 2023:1). When using non-violence, it would be a choice made on the basis of rationality, tactics and strategies (Ibid:2,8). Two other researchers who have contributed to this discussion are Ackerman and Kruegler, who in their book *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict* have argued that the success of nonviolent actions depend on the beliefs, dedication and development of those who take them (In:Tkach, 2013:11).

Vinthagen saw it differently, stating that non-violence at its core is characterised by a complete contradiction (Vinthagen, 2005:425). Although this paradox does not disappear when it is communicated, despite this, it is liberated when its practitioners decide what needs to be done (Ibid:425). That being said, the existence of rationality and motivation is not itself a guarantee of favourable results (Ibid:425).

In her 2011 book *Nonviolent Revolutions*, Erickson Nepstad listed six techniques which can be used by activists and dissidents both to distance themselves from and to topple a despotic régime (In:Smithy, 2014:270). These are: Depriving the state of the ability to punish those opposing it, practising civil disobedience against the unjust laws of the régime



alternatively ending their collaborations with it, openly questioning the legitimacy of the people in the corridors of power, rejecting any participation in operations carried out by the government, disputing the mechanisms of obedience mentally and ideologically and making vital funding unavailable to the régime (Ibid:270). One aspect of how the declared enemies of the state can undermine its influence is by convincing the members of the police and armed forces to switch sides (Ibid:271). This is a view she shared with Chenoweth and her colleagues (In:Smithey, 2014:271;Chenoweth, Hocking and Marks, 2022).

## 2.4 Chenoweth's 3.5 'Rule' and how it contributes to the debate of non-violence

Another contemporary participant in this debate is as briefly mentioned above Chenoweth, who has argued that it suffices with a large quantity of a population turning out a man and protesting against their authoritarian leader to turn the tables to their advantage, toppling the oppressive régime and replacing it with a democratic government (Dartmouth, 2012). If between 2,5 and 5 % do this, they have a 50-50 % chance of turning the tide, provided that they use non-violence and not violence to accomplish their goals (Ibid). The central argument made here is that the higher the percentage of the people actively showing their discontentment, the higher the chance of success (Ibid). That is because intrastate and extrastate conflicts (also known as civil wars and military occupations) in which the opponents of the régime use violence as a means to try to achieve their goals tend to be less successful than the non-violent ones (Ibid).

In 2022, Chenoweth and two colleagues introduced a model intended to be used on computers which aims to empirically explain the success of nonviolent protests discussed in the paragraph above (Chenoweth, Hocking and Marks, 2022). The model contains a total of 4 different indicators, Civilians, Activists, Pillars and Police (Ibid). The first indicator, the Civilians, is the common people either becoming active by joining forces with the protesters or remaining passive (Ibid). Assuming they become a part of the movement, they will alternate between being active and inactive (Ibid). It is also possible that they abandon it (Ibid). Similarly to the Civilians, the second indicator, the Activists, are sometimes active and sometimes inactive, although they differ from them in the sense that they wholeheartedly believe in the cause (Ibid). The third indicator, the Pillars, are the actors which society socially, economically and politically depends on and it is them who can preserve the status quo but also change it (Ibid). The fourth and last indicator, the Police, are a combination of the national police and the armed forces tasked with combating and quelling the resistance by eliminating or apprehending its members (Ibid). It is also possible that they choose to desert and ally with the demonstrators (Ibid). Based on these indicators, five different rules (C, NV, M, P and D) could be presented (Ibid).



In 2023, Chenoweth elaborated her previous research in an article in which she discussed which tactics should be employed in order to persuade the societal pillars to turn their back on the régime (Chenoweth, 2023:69). Depending on the circumstances, either taking non-violent actions or inciting riots may be recommended (Ibid:69). Although, deciding which path to choose requires understanding what demographically, economically and systematically characterises those pillars (Ibid:69). Furthermore, she suggested that future research should focus on media's descriptions of the protests and those organising and joining them (Ibid:70).

## 2.5 The criticism directed towards Chenoweth's reasoning

A critic of Chenoweth's, Matthews wrote in an article about the Extinction Rebellion (XR) and its incorrect representation of works written by academics that a mobilisation of 3,5 % of the population not per se guarantees a victory in all cases (Matthews, 2020:606). By studying the XR, he concluded that it is not applicable to all demonstrations launched by activist groups seeking to change society for the better (Ibid:606). Another person who has criticised her reasoning is Anisin, who pointed out that it becomes impossible to statistically ensure that there is a variation in the intricacy of the studied social relations to prevent these interactions from becoming too generalised and simplified (In: Onken, Shemia-Goeke and Martin, 2021:1200). He also believed that the dichotomy of non-violence and violence employed by Chenoweth and her colleague Stepan was flawed and therefore proposed that two additional categories, those of reactive violence and unarmed violence, should be introduced to make the picture less black and white (Ibid:1200).

## 2.6 Research gap

The research gap which was discovered was related to the research conducted by Chenoweth in 2023. As mentioned in 2.4, she discussed the two ways in which pro-democratic activists can make the societal pillars become an ally instead of remaining an enemy, the first one being through the practice of non-violence and the second being through protests. More specifically, it was about the consequences of the usage of those tactics.

The willingness and the motivation of these societal pillars in general and the monarchy in particular needed to be explored in more detail as it may be the one which, through its actions, directly determines in which direction a country would be heading in the near future. Moreover, it may also be holding the balance of power and may therefore be interested in preventing conservatives and liberals from clashing with one another by either showing its support to the first or to the latter when no middle ground can be found or



when the two parties are involved in a conflict. However, it may also hinder a democratic transition and further consolidation, should it regard its existence as a threat to its power or as something associated with outside threats of any kind.

In addition to inquiring into this very institution's effects on the democratisation and antidemocratisation processes, the successes and failures of non-violent methods and how media's reports of a demonstration either makes the ordinary people feel sympathy or antipathy for those participating in it also needed to be looked into.

## 2.7. Clarification on the examination of the monarchy

Due to the intertwined nature of the two roles which the Thai monarchy played at the time in its capacity as both an actor and an institution, this thesis was delimited to solely having an actor-centred perspective (Ivarsson and Isager, 2010:6,18). By doing that, both the 1973 and the 1976 intervention could be investigated, as the term 'network monarchy', after all, applies to direct and indirect interventions alike (Ibid:18).

## 3. Analytical Framework

### 3.1 How to identify the weaknesses of a despotic régime

In his book *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, Sharp claimed that the appearances of dictatorships are deceptive (Sharp, 2010:25). Contrary to one might think, they can be harmed (Ibid:25). Although, to do as much harm as possible to them, their Achilles' heels, that is their weaknesses, must be found and identified (Ibid:25). Among those, the scepticism and antagonism of the great masses towards the régime, the different agendas of the security forces vis-à-vis the people in power and the restlessness of students and the intelligentsia because of the restrictions and the oppression can be noted (Ibid:26-27).

With respect to the independence of the police and military discussed above, examining how large their loyalty to their antidemocratic leader actually is will provide the opposition with an excellent opportunity to overview the situation (Sharp, 2010:63). This will tell them if there is a significant dissatisfaction with the current system or not (Ibid:63). Another method which can be used to make the members of the armed



forces or the employees of the law enforcement more sympathetic to the adversaries of the despot is communication (Ibid:63). This communication ought to be manifested symbolically, conversationally and through the reactions of this movement (Ibid:63).

His thoughts on undermining a régime by using its weaknesses are vital to the thesis because they give a logical explanation to how the NSCT was able to defeat the Thanom-led military junta in 1973. They succeeded in doing that because they did exactly what he advised pro-democratic activists to do, that is, taking advantage of those Achilles' heels. The three points made by Sharp which are central parts of the analysis are the disagreements between a dictator and his security forces, the contempt for the régime as such and the boredom experienced by the opposition and the students and the intellectuals because of the oppression and the restrictions. In addition to that, the use of this particular framework helps to shed light on one of two reasons explaining why the protest taking place in 1976 failed. That particular reason is the NSCT's miscalculation of the possibility of a coup being carried out due to the security forces being united and the second one is the government, i.e the former opposition, turning its back on it.

## 3.2 How to use non-violence to topple an autocrat

In their book *Blueprint for Revolution*, Popovic and Miller developed Sharp's reasoning by addressing the question about how to successfully turn a dictatorial régime into a democracy using non-violence (Rogers, 2015:31). The actors who should be those being at the leading edge of realising that transformation should in the authors' opinion be small activist groups whose backbone should be made of honourable and caring citizens (Ibid:31). They argued that non-violence trumps violence although winning that ultimate victory over the autocracy requires planning, persistence and performance (Ibid:31). Should the activists resort to violent methods instead, they would most likely be crushed by for instance the riot police or other security forces (Ibid:31). Furthermore, such a choice could also be counterproductive from a strategic point of view as violence inevitably creates fear which unintentionally can make the very people they want to overthrow more appealing to some of their fellow countrymen (Ibid:31). The battles fought should be chosen wisely meaning they should be small in size but also of vital importance hence the movement should be able to easily triumph over its enemy (Timcke, 2017:350; Rogers, 2015:31). The demonstrations should therefore be centred around a subject which the masses are familiar with and



about which there is no controversy to gain their support and to make a phenomenon which originally was a local one a national one (Timcke, 2017:349). The activists should also solve difficult problems thereby incentivizing the man on the street to combine his efforts with them (Timcke, 2017:349). Lastly, by showing a dedication to coordination, inclusion, constructive criticism and a diversity of political opinions, more people will join them (Ibid:349-350).

This framework complements that of Sharp's since it answers the question about how the NSCT chose what to protest against in order to gain support for its cause. Moreover, it explains when an uncontroversial subject starts to be regarded as a controversial one by people in general and the right in particular and what contributes to this drastic change in attitude. Most importantly, it indicates that there is a fine line between what is considered a controversial one and what is considered as an uncontroversial one in this very context.

It also shows what fundamentally separates a prodemocratic protest from an antidemocratic one. Last but not least, it aids in highlighting the completely different motives of the actors protesting on 6 October 1976 in regard to the possible orchestration of a coup and what democracy as a system of government was associated with, depending on the group one belonged to, e.g students or paramilitaries.

## 4. Methodological Framework

### 4.1 A qualitative research approach

The research approaches which are appropriate when examining the 1970s in Thailand are first and foremost a qualitative one. This quality displayed in Bryman's opinion several signs, for instance these three: an attention to details and descriptions, an interest in the context of the chosen subject and a willingness to see what has been done and what has happened from the perspective of those being studied (Bryman, 1988:61-63). These detailed and descriptive accounts are however intended to change shape and become more associated with the environment in which the research is undertaken (Ibid:62-63). Likewise, by viewing the subject through the eyes of others, more comprehension will be gained both about the people living there and the subject's context (Ibid:61,63).

Berlin argued that what distinguishes history from social science is that the first is concerned with how situations which happened in the past differ from one another while the latter is interested in drawing parallels (In:Buckley, 2016:880). Gaddis added that history as a discipline is about finding out what



makes variables interdependent whereas social science is more about figuring out what makes a particular variable independent and once that is done, determining how it makes the remaining variables, all of which are dependent, change in their character (In:Buckley, 2016:880). Moreover, the approach will be epistemological, meaning the purpose of asking certain questions is to find the truth behind something by learning how to discover it, e.g by looking for facts which are historically correct (Porra, Hirschheim and Parks, 2014:544). There is a consensus among the historians of today about the state of the subject they study which is reflected in them recognizing that it is a matter of contemporariness and the present, at least a partial one (Ibid:544). Hence, their mission is trying to see the logic of a reality which previously used to exist, a reality which is both fractionally external and fractionally internal by deciphering its physical remains (Ibid:544).

In addition, conducting a historical case study on the matter is of relevance considering the nature of the topic. One such case study can be defined as the examination of either one or more events or individuals from the past using a concept and by limiting the period of time during which it was active (Petrina, 2020:1;Widdersheim, 2018:150). It then becomes a question of locating it on the timeline of the past and present (Widdersheim, 2018:150). The reason why it is done in the first place is either to verify, falsify or illustrate a theory or a hypothesis by providing proof supporting one's claim (Petrina, 2020:1).

Having a qualitative research approach when searching for relevant information about the two events permitted an analysis from the perspective of the people who were there when they happened, to be made (Bryman, 1988:61-63). Consequently, the door was opened for the subject in question to be understood more clearly in regard to its context and the people who experienced them, perpetrators and victims alike (Ibid: 61, 63).

## 4.2 Case studies

A case study can, from where Bryman, Clark, Foster and Sloane were standing, broadly be understood as an examination of a particularly complex case and its characteristics (Clark et al, 2021:39, 59). This very case must, in return, meet the criteria of reliability (the possibility of conducting an identical study and thereby being able to present identical results), replication or replicability (the ability to repeat a conducted study either because there is a distrust in the correlation between the evidence presented and the results produced or because its consistency has to be evaluated) and validity (making sure the conclusions drawn are logical and contains neither errors nor flaws)





(Ibid:40). There are many different kinds of case studies, one being the critical one (Ibid:60-61). More specifically, this approach is characterised by the use of a valid theory and the case chosen will therefore be one which makes it possible to either falsify or verify the formulated hypothesis (Ibid:60).

Two other authors who additionally have been researching this subject were George and Bennett who stated that a case study also can be for example disciplined configurative or theory testing in its nature (George and Bennett, 2005:75). The first is centred around the use of one or many already existing theories to find explanations to the characteristics of the case in question and it can simultaneously serve the purpose of disputing the theoretical framework chosen when its weaknesses are discovered (Ibid:75). In contrast, the latter focuses more on the assessments made when testing the reliability and the applicability of the theory or theories (Ibid:75).

By using the critical case study, a theory could, at the end of the day, either be verified or falsified when being tested (Clark et al, 2021:60-61).

## 4.3 The congruence method

Besides being two of many authors who have taken an interest in how case studies are to be conducted, George and Bennett were also interested in when and how various scientific methods are used. One of the methods they suggest can be used when doing a case study is the congruence method, which can help the researcher either in giving an explanation to or in anticipating how the results of a theory will look like (George and Bennett, 2005:181). A utilisation of the method necessitates the existence of a discrepancy between the dependent and the independent variable, the latter must have its value established before the outcome of the first is predicted (Ibid:181). Assuming there is indeed a consistency, it can be concluded that a causal relationship possibly exists (Ibid:181). While it is true that it is known for being adaptable, flexible and time-saving, it still requires precision given that there is a possibility that the Causality of C (Cause) and E (Effect) in fact can be attributed to a third factor called Z (be it an identified or an unidentified one) or that C, despite being the catalyst of E, still relies on Z in order to cause E (Ibid:182,185). Similarly, C may become a redundancy if it can be demonstrated that Z, no matter if it actually is separable or inseparable from it, creates E itself (Ibid:185-186).

Lange, who unlike George and Bennett is particularly interested in how scientific research methods are employed in the work of a historian, maintained that among the comparative-historical methods, historiography is an efficient way of analytically determining what



happened in a specific location during a particular period of time or what a phenomenon whose presence was noticed then and there looked like (Lange, 2013). In order to use the method correctly, instructions must be given to facilitate the data being collected as this is a very complicated and time-consuming assignment (Ibid). Likewise, recommendations are needed to ensure the subsequent interpretation and presentation of that data (Ibid). Thereby the researcher can demonstrate the reliability of the selected materials, although it risks falling short on describing how the person concerned should move on from there with the performance of the analysis (Ibid). It is more suitable if one will be giving an ideographic explanation to something rather than a nomothetic one, in other words it is about specifying and not generalising (Ibid). This is worth bearing in mind as one needs to provide proof supporting one's case before drawing a conclusion (Ibid). This method can for instance be combined with process-tracing (Ibid).

To summarise, it constituted two variables, one dependent and one independent, and knowledge of the value of the latter was a prerequisite for the analysis to be performed of the variable relations and their causality (George and Bennett, 2005:181-182, 185). Furthermore, depending on the relationship between C, E and Z, it could be suggested that C, as a variable, either was proven to be inessential when solving that equation when taking the importance of Z into account or that it was not as independent as it may appear to be at first glance, should Z be the factor on which it depended to be able to create E (Ibid: 185-186).

## 4.4 Process-tracing

Process-tracing is in return, according to George and Bennett, ideal when looking for interconnections between a multitude of effects which in return can be traced back to a certain number of independent variables which in total either are two or three (George and Bennett, 2005:206). In order to be able to distinguish the relevant variables from the irrelevant ones, questions must be posed which to large extent facilitate the process of sorting out potentially challenging mechanisms which have been stumbled upon (Ibid:207). However, this is not done without a problem arising considering human actions make it considerably more difficult to locate these causal processes due to the fact that they on purpose disguise as them (Ibid:207). Therefore, all options available must be taken into consideration when investigating which ones are in line with the presented proof and outcome and which ones are not (Ibid:207). A variant of the method can be used analytically when altering the narrative of history, thereby allowing it to describe the cause from a theoretical perspective (Ibid:211). Hence it may revolve around selectivity, thus giving the researcher an opportunity to direct his or her attention to what



they consider to be the most appealing parts of an adequate or inadequate explanation (Ibid:211).

What nevertheless separates process-tracing from historiography is that the first can be categorised as a secondary within-case method whereas the latter can be classified as a primary within-case method (Lange, 2013). This means that the primary ones are used when making an argument on the basis of the analysis in its entirety and of the general evidence found (Ibid). It also means that the secondary ones serve the purpose of assisting the researcher in assembling and integrating the facts collected earlier into a context before a summary is made about what has been presented to the reader (Ibid).

All in all, it provided the researcher with the opportunity to examine a plethora of variables, from which a great number of effects originate by asking questions leading to the conviction that some of these variables are more important than others (George and Bennett, 2005:206-207). The person concerned can also trace the phenomena in question back to its origin, when splitting up its seemingly intricate and complex structure into smaller parts (Ibid:206-207). Having done that, each and every one of those parts can be studied separately and those considered to be irrelevant can be simultaneously excluded (Ibid:206-207). The result of one such action is a deeper understanding not only of the phenomena in its entirety but also of its constituents as all the facts about it at this moment make perfect sense (Ibid:211).

## 4.5 Digital research

One author who wrote about methodologies used by historians was Bob Nicholson, who in the anthology *Research methods for history*, argued that there is more to it than meets the eye in regard to the subject of history than just visiting physical archives and libraries (Nicholson, 2016:170). As a matter of fact, the increased availability of digitalised materials such as books or photographs have opened new doors for conducting research on it (Ibid:170). An inevitable consequence of that very digitalisation is the possibility of searching for specific words, idioms or sentences in a written text (Ibid:170).

Nicholson advised that one has a narrow approach when searching on for instance Google for different kinds of digital archives (Nicholson, 2016:172). While this may not necessarily guarantee that the results of that search immediately will turn out to be of relevance, it is most certainly worth making that effort because one will, at the end of the day,



always find something useful (Ibid:172-173). Social media and library catalogues can also be used as a complement to these traditional search engines (Ibid:173). On a university library's website it is also possible to find out which databases it has access to (Ibid:174).

A digital archive consists of three constituents, those being the data, the metadata and the interface (Ibid:177-178). The first of these components, the data, is what the digitalised materials themselves are referred to (Ibid:177). The second, the metadata, is what the descriptions of those very materials are called, for example when and where that particular photograph was taken (Ibid:178). The third, the interface, is essentially the platform used to access them, for instance it can be done on a website (Ibid:178).

In order to find what one is looking for in one such archive, one has to count on being forced to type in very specific keywords considering these have little in common with any of the traditional search engines (Ibid:184). Therefore, to be able to save time, one should write down the keywords instantly associated with the topic in question and then search for them (Ibid:185). Having consequently gained knowledge about which ones worked and which ones did not and discovered new ones in the midst of it all, one should subsequently repeat the procedure (Ibid:185). Thereafter, one should make an evaluation and remove those not worth keeping (Ibid:185). Having made that decision, one should optimise the others, for example by combining them (Ibid:185). It is preferable to keep those keywords short and to make an advanced search rather than a basic one, because that intricacy in fact gives one more control since one does not have to sort out multiple useless results (Ibid:185-186). Instead one can focus on those that matter (Ibid:186).

By combining it with the digitally accessed books and archives, it largely facilitated and effectivized the research and writing process by enabling first a basic and then a very advanced search to be done, rapidly narrowing down the numbers of results and in consequence making it possible to only focus on those considered relevant (Nicholson, 2016:185-186).

## 4.6 How relevant written materials will be accessed

The written materials which formed the scientific basis of my thesis were accessible either electronically through the internet or physically at the Linnaeus University's university library. The accessed digital libraries included JSTOR, Sciencedirect, Taylor & Francis Online, ProQuest Ebook Central, eBook Collection, Wiley Online Library, Berghof Foundation, Project MUSE and Cambridge. The web search engines which were used to



gather relevant information were primarily Google Scholar, Linnæus University's university library's search engine OneSearch and Google. In addition to those, various online archives served the purpose of providing me with primary sources, including Archives Direct of the National Archives in the UK, the ASGL Digital Photo Archive- Asia and Middle East of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the UN. These were an excellent complement to the already existing secondary sources which consisted of a plethora of books and articles. They also provided the thesis with an invaluable historical substance.

## 5. Contextual Background: Thailand in the 1970s

Having won the 1969 elections, Thanom, Narong Kittikachorn (henceforth Narong) and Praphas Charusatien (henceforth Praphas) consolidated their power in 1971 by declaring martial law and by altering the constitution (Zachari, 2020:25). Their opponents, including the NSCT therefore mobilised, culminating in the 1973 Thai popular uprising and the troika's overthrowing (Zachari, 2020:25-26; Browne, 1973; Prizzia, 2019:79). Historically, October 14 1973 is therefore commemorated as a day of democratic advancement (Zachari, 2020:26).

While it is true the 1974 constitution gave the population more liberties and that the 1973-1976 period is referred to as one of democracy, an established fact is that it was not characterised by that per se, since it was not about emphasising elections or parliamentarism but about ensuring political inclusion and participation (Zachari, 2020:28; Prizzia, 2019:5). But even though the political diversity flourished, activists, workers and farmers active in Farmers' Federation of Thailand (henceforth FFT) were more openly exposed to violence after 1973, as exemplified by the attacks on and assassinations of the FFT leaders (Haberkorn, 2011:159-163; Zachari, 2020:29). From 1973 to 1976, NSCT also informed the public about the 1972 thang daeng murders and the 1974 Ban Na Sai burning, both of which targeted alleged communists, demanding that the responsible should be brought to justice, something which was not done (Haberkorn, 2017: 79-80, 95, 97). The same pattern could be distinguished in regards to those attempting to quell the 1973 popular uprising and those perpetrating the 6 October 1976 massacre (Haberkorn, 2017:21, 219).

After the occurrence of the latter, Thanom staged a coup and repression soon followed in his footsteps and those of his successors (Zachari, 2020:32; Wichakul, 2020:31; Ungphakorn, 1977:9; Haberkorn, 2017:133). In October 1977, there was another successful coup, and until 1991 the leaders



of the régime would all have two things in common, they would all be generals and they would all aim to be perceived as more benevolent (Neher, 1992:592-593, 595). That being said, Neher remarked that the fragile democracy temporarily existing between 1973 and 1976 had affected the minds of the junta leaders, as indicated by their use of strategies of integration, of moderation, of manipulation and even of compliance (Ibid:595). Haberkorn strongly disagreed with this, arguing political enemies still were attacked (Haberkorn, 2017:133).

## 6. Previous research on the cases chosen: The 1973 Thai Popular Uprising

### 6.1 Prelude

In an article, Flood wrote about the rise of left-wing politics, particularly among the intelligentsia, university students and professors living in Bangkok, stating that the intellectuals who had been forced to go underground and to work in secret during the 1950s and 1960s when their like-minded friends either had been executed or put under arrest now were making their voices heard, together with students (Flood, 1975:60). He partially attributed this emergence to the visits of these individuals to universities abroad where they had been inspired by an aggressive rhetoric and partially to the repressive régimes of Thanom and his predecessor Sarit Thanarat (henceforth Sarit), both of which were sanctioned by United States (Ibid:60). Both of these collectively contributed to the national political opposition getting a chance to spread its wings and to it becoming more open to radicalization and militancy (Ibid:60). Besides their similar political orientations, these groups were also united by their mutual distaste for the decadent behaviour of the stationed American soldiers and their great frustration with the profits Taiwanese, Japanese and American companies had made at the expense of their own increasing inflation (Ibid:60). There was in addition a likewise deep anger towards the war crimes committed by American troops during the Vietnam War, Thailand's participation in that very war, the military junta's reluctance to govern constitutionally, the rising rates of crime and drug addictions among the cities' young inhabitants, the government and police corruption and the economic inequalities existing between the rich population of the suburbs and the poor ones of the cities and the countryside (Ibid:60).



Another reason why the uprising started was the widespread discontent among the Thai population with the autocratic governance of Thanom (Haberhorn, 2017:74). There was also dissatisfaction with the use of Article 17 (Ibid:55,74). The article in question dated back to the 1950s and it had given the previous autocrat of Thailand, Sarit, the mandate of ordering his enemies to be arbitrarily apprehended (Ibid:55). In addition, he was given every mandate to protect the country, the national peace and the monarchy from all kinds of threats, outside and domestic (Ibid:55-56). As a consequence, detentions, executions and extrajudicial killings were tolerated and rationalised (Ibid:55,65). Following Thanom's 1971 autoup, it was expanded in the 1972 Constitution (Ibid:73).

The third and last reason why the uprising commenced was a helicopter crashed in a wildlife preserve in the proximity of Thung Yai in the Western part of the country on April 29 1973 (Heinze, 1974:494). When pictures of it began circulating two days later, the public learned that it had been carrying representatives of the government who had been hunting animals in that very area (Ibid:494). The government attempted to excuse the actions of its employees by stating that they had carried out a covert operation, something which was quickly disputed leading to demonstrations on the streets of Bangkok (Ibid:494). What is interesting to note is that it appeared that King Bhumol already back then had shown that he was on the students' side when he provided them with shelter and food (Ibid:494). In addition, he explicitly told the RTP to not intervene violently (Ibid:494). His motivation for this was firstly that he could be assured of their fidelity and secondly that he found that they did not commit a crime when demanding the National Executive Council led by Thanom to remove the martial law and to shortly present a new constitution (Ibid:491-492,494). Nor did he believe that they should stand trial because they protested against governmental corruption (Ibid:493-494).

## 6.2 The National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT)

The NSCT, an organisation formed in 1970 as a direct reaction to the internal problems discussed in 6.1, e.g the economic cleavages, played a central role in what happened on the streets of Bangkok (Flood, 1975:60). A factor which undoubtedly had contributed to its growing political influence between 1972 and 1973 was the leadership of its secretary-general Thirayunth Boonmee, which had led to an expansion and a centralisation of the organisation (Heinze, 1974:492). It was led partially by an elected student (referred to as the secretary-general) and partially by three different administrative



committees representing the students of 11 of the nation's higher educational institutions (Heinze, 1974:492,498;Prizzia and Sinsiwasi, 1975:16-17).

In a paper which was widely distributed and which was written by NSCT's leader Thirayuth Bonmee, the relationship between the students and the masses of people was described (Prizzia, 2019:74). In Bonmee's opinion, the two were inseparable and therefore a violent attack on one would be an attack on both (Ibid:74). That is because the mothers and the fathers of the students were a part of it, hence making it natural to the people to trust these individuals and to these individuals, in return, to show gratitude towards the people paying for their education (Ibid:74). In addition, these two actors would remain a force to be reckoned with for the government since the students aimed to find solutions to the social problems the country struggled with and for as long as they continued to do that, the general public could count on their resistance (Ibid:74). As the students had got their backs and vice versa, it would become considerably more difficult for the government to make big decisions without the students not being able to impact the decision-making process (Ibid:74). The fruitful collaboration between the students and the workers also contributed to the success of the revolt as they relied on the transportation system when gathering in Bangkok (Ibid:41).

## 6.3 The symbolic importance of the area in Bangkok in which the universities are situated

The core of the activism to which the students devote their time can be traced back to the place which one spontaneously would associate with higher education, that is the universities (Prizzia, 2019:43). Both Thammasat University and Silapakorn University are located in the proximity of the Old Palace, which is the former residence of all the monarchs preceding Bhumibol on the throne (Ibid:43). In front of said institutions, there is a field named Pramain Ground (Ibid:43). Historically this is where the royalties used to be cremated, yet presently this is where one, among other things, organises festivals when for instance celebrating New Year's Eve (Ibid:43). Behind it runs Rajdamnern Avenue, which is one of the capital's most renowned streets (Ibid:44). If one follows it, one will eventually arrive at the national parliament and the prime-ministerial office (Ibid:44). Traditionally, if one intended to march to show one's dissatisfaction with the government, no matter if one's final destination was the first or the latter of the two mentioned buildings, one would still start at Pramain Ground and





subsequently walk down Rajdamnern Avenue (Ibid:44). Given that it is both rather short and large, it allows such demonstrations taking place there to, without difficulty, rapidly grow in size (Ibid:44). On the other hand, should the RTP and/or the RTA want to quell them, they would not find the location optimal, as it is an open area, preventing them from retaliating with full force (Ibid:44). In addition, not far away from Rajdamnern Avenue, the Democracy Monument is situated, which is a commemoration of the 1932 coup d'état which resulted in the abolition of the absolute monarchy (Prizzia, 2019:44; Ferrara, 2012; Forman and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1960). Lastly, three other universities and one college are within walking distance, being only kilometres away (Prizzia, 2019:44). These are Mahidol University, Kasetsart University, Chulalongkorn University and College of Education respectively (Ibid:44).

## 6.4 The uprising in numbers

In the beginning, it was merely a question of smaller protests but on October 9 1973 they rapidly began increasing in size by thousands when roughly 2,000 individuals gathered on the campus of the Thammasat University in Bangkok, from where they marched to Bang Khen, which was where the leaders of the NSCT had been incarcerated by the RTP just a few days prior (Heinze, 1974:494-495; Race, 1974:197; Zimmerman, 1974:511). The day after 2,000 protesters had become 3,000, which the day after had increased to around 50,000 (Heinze, 1974:497; Race, 1974:197).

At its peak, approximately 400,000 people participated in the protests in Bangkok, making it the largest demonstration at the time to take place in national history (Race, 1974:198). A demographic estimation made of the country's population in June 1973, indicated it had about 40 million inhabitants, hence that number equaled 1 % of the total population, both sexes included (United Nations and Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1974:104; Race, 1974:198).

## 6.5 The chronology of the event

Even though the uprising officially started on October 6 and ended on October 15 and consequently lasted for a total of six days, it can be argued that it indirectly began way earlier than that (Heinze, 1974:492, 496,502,504). For instance, already back in November 1972, students planned to assemble at the Thai Daimaru, which was a department store of Japanese origin located in the capital of Bangkok, with the intention of showing their dissatisfaction with how largely intertwined the Japanese and Thai economies were (Heinze, 1974:492; Feeny, Vongpatanasin and



Soonsatham, 1996:39; Sievers and Australian Department of Trade and Industry, 1966). According to Heinze they did not call for a boycott of said commodities, instead they advised the consumers to buy more domestically produced merchandise (Heinze, 1974:492). However, Zimmerman stated that it in fact was a boycott and that it was done with the military junta's consent (Zimmerman, 1974:509). The organisation of this demonstration was important because by staging it, they could improve their knowledge of organisation and tactics (Ibid:509). In retrospect, the action can be regarded as the embryo of the uprising which commenced almost a year later as they understood what they wanted to achieve (Ibid:509). It was about limiting the influence of the Thanom régime and pushing for a new democratic constitution to be drawn up considerably decreasing its power (Zimmerman, 1974:509; Zachari, 2020:25). The lessons learned there would turn out to be valuable in other future protests (Heinze, 1974:493; Zimmerman, 1974:509-510).

During these days in October, it is worth bearing in mind that the students collaborated with bus drivers who aided them in transporting people intending to participate in the demonstrations to Thammasat University (Heinze, 1974:498-499). They also had the support of the masses, who provided them with economic support and provisions (Ibid:498-499).

Heinze wrote that the uprising began on October 6 1973 following the apprehension of the former leader of NSCT, Thirayuth, and ten other students who were accused of violating Article 17 which prohibited a group consisting of more than five individuals from assembling and doing something in anyway related to politics, be it a discussion or a demonstration (Heinze, 1974:494-495). Their houses were also searched (Ibid:494). Zimmerman, however, claimed that they were apprehended on the day before that, the reason being that they had been distributing pamphlets in which they called for a new constitution to be drawn up and presented (Zimmerman, 1974:511). Thanom and Praphas both suspected that these persons had been acting on the orders of the communists, although it is in fact more likely that they had been influenced by their teachers (Zimmerman, 1974:511; Heinze, 1974:495).

The day after, on October 7, another student was placed under arrest and Praphas had personally decided that they would only be released if they were admitted to bail (Heinze, 1974:495). In the aftermath of these events, students began protesting and holding speeches in front of an audience (Zimmerman, 1974:511).

When Praphas made an announcement on October 8, he said that the evidence which had been found in the houses of the detained had proved that they were associated with both Chinese and Thai communists (Heinze,



1974:495). In addition, he stated that they had intended to orchestrate a coup d'état and launch an insurrection targeting the Thanom-led military junta (Ibid:495). Therefore his subordinates were ordered to be vigilant (Ibid:495). The same article which a few days earlier had been used as a pretext to arrest a total of 11 students was used once again on October 9, although this time by the national government to justify using whatever means necessary to end the disturbances regarded as an existential threat to the nation (Ibid:495). The same day about 2,000 students initiated a rally on the campus of Thammasat University, where they were joined by thousands and thousands of its students, forcing it to cancel the first examinations of the semester (Ibid:495-496). On October 10, the mentioned rally continued, a rally in which many students participated, making demands for the NSCT leaders to be released and a new constitution to be introduced (Ibid:496). The participants now consisted of not only Thammasat University students but also students belonging to the nearby Chulalongkorn University and the teachers training colleges of Suan Sunatha, Ban Domsej and Thombori (Ibid:496). During this public gathering, rumours began circulating about the mobilisation of the RTP (Ibid:496).

In the meantime, the rectors and vice rectors urged the military junta to de-escalate the situation (Heinze, 1974:497). The day after, student delegates met Praphas and gave him an ultimatum, their imprisoned friends were to be set free immediately (Ibid:497). Praphas responded that the new constitution would soon be implemented and that those wholeheartedly demanding a new constitution were not their enemies, solely those who would take advantage of them to topple the military junta (Ibid:497). However, nationally soldiers were given the order to mobilise and stand by (Ibid:497). The development worried King Bhumibol (Ibid:497). At the same time, NSCT stated that it would be entirely responsible for what would happen when the students began protesting and when the teaching in the majority of the city's higher seat of learning was indefinitely paused (Ibid:497). The day that followed, students and teachers from two other universities, Ramkaening and Chulalongkorn, arrived at the campus of Thammasat University (Ibid:497). The detained NSCT leaders were on this day also given the offer of being set free, should they accept that it would be temporarily and not permanently, an offer which they subsequently declined (Ibid:497).

At 12:00 on October 13, the NSCT set a time limit which was to expire in 24 hours for the time at which their leaders were to be released (Heinze, 1974:497). The RTA then responded that they would not intervene with force against the protesters, although at the same time they advised the residents of Bangkok to stay away from Thammasat University and its surroundings, stating there was a traffic congestion in that area (Ibid:497). Having been granted bail the day before, their superiors were on this day, against their will



as it would be on a temporary basis, permitted to leave their prison cells (Ibid:497). Being completely unaware of what the next move of their organisation would be, they decided to wait until it had come to their attention (Ibid:497).

Given that both their demands and their ultimatum had been entirely disregarded by the régime, the NSCT members and their allies chose to march towards partially the end of the Rajdamnern Avenue partially to the Democracy Movement (Heinze, 1974:498; Zimmerman, 1974:511). Now the cup was full to the brim, they were frustrated and made threats of using violence (Zimmerman, 1974:511). Their demands, however, were still standing (Ibid:511). They showed their support for King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit by publicly carrying pictures of them (Heinze, 1974:498). In addition, they showed their patriotism by waving national flags (Ibid:498).

On this day nine NSCT delegates obtained an audience with the King who encouraged them to focus on cooperation and they were additionally told that a new constitution would be presented at the latest in October the next year (Heinze, 1974:499). Believing they now had emerged as victors, they had emissaries notifying their sympathisers about the results of that meeting (Ibid:499). But on the next day, malicious rumours about the alleged deaths of the NSCT leaders were spread, forcing them to set the course to Chitralada Palace where they once again met the King in person (Ibid:499-500). But they were not the only ones being there, the RTP was there as well and a violent culmination of the demonstrations was imminent when the protesters were told to leave the area, although while many people did, some stayed (Heinze, 1974:499-500; Zachari, 2020:26; Prizzia, 2019:76). The people who eventually engaged in the eventual confrontation with the RTP and RTA between 14 and 15 October were in fact a minority and they acted both without the support and the consent of the NSCT (Heinze, 1974:500-504; Prizzia, 2019:75-79). NSCT had given them the order to go home, not to attack (Heinze, 1974:504). Having been made aware of what had happened to the students, King Bhumibol granted them protection on the grounds of his palace (Ganjanakhundee, 2022:84).

During the last two days of the uprising, the state media was extensively used by the ruling junta to spread lies about the capabilities and the intentions of the demonstrators on the street (Prizzia, 2019:77). For example, it was incorrectly stated that they were communists (Ibid:77).

In a speech which he held on October 14, which was broadcasted on the national television, King Bhumibol made it clear that he supported the student movement when appointing Sanya Thammasak as the new Prime Minister of Thailand (Haberhorn, 2011:12). He was not a military officer like the members of the triumvirate, but the rector of the Thammasat University



and that meant that the government which thereafter would come to rule the country would be a civilian and not a military one (Ibid:12).

In the aftermath of that speech there was according to Paribatra officially a restoration of order when the crisis was solved (Paribatra, 2003:291). However, Haberkorn argued that just because the crisis had been resolved, that did not per se mean that the violence on the streets ended instantly, instead it would continue until the day after (Haberkorn, 2011:12). When it became known that the King had decided to side with the protesters, that automatically deprived the RTA of the opportunity to retaliate against them (Paribatra, 2003:291). It is therefore possible that the RTA, in its capacity as the monarchical protector, then had no other option but to stand down considering the tables had turned leading to the monarchy having more power over the RTA and not vice versa as previously had been the case (Chambers and Waitoolkiat, 2016:426,429). In other words, since the crown was neither weakened nor threatened, any protection of it would be redundant (Ibid:426,429).

Thammasak himself also held a television and radio speech in which he declared that Thanom, Praphas and Narong all had gone into exile (Browne, 1973;Prizzia, 2019:79). The national press, having previously been oppressed, ceased the opportunity to both condemn the triumvirate and to endorse the students (Ibid). The event resulted in about 1,000 injured and 77 estimated casualties (Zachari, 2020:26).

## 7. Previous research on the cases chosen: The 6 October 1976 Massacre

### 7.1 Prelude

In September 1976 the exiled despot Thanom returned to Bangkok and upon his arrival he was transported to Wat Boworniwet, a Buddhist temple, where the royal family provided him with protection (Haberkorn, 2011:150). This event was in Haberkorn's opinion the most important one, calling it a catalyst for what inevitably was to come (Ibid:150). She added that his mere presence in the country made many people who were in favour of democracy concerned since they in that moment understood that those days were numbered and that it was only a matter of time before the dictatorship would be re-established (Ibid:150).

At the time there had also been a drastic change of political climate (Haberkorn, 2017:109). While the society as a whole had become more



inclusive when for example workers and farmers no longer had to bear witness to the same kind of discrimination they had experienced before the uprising, one still has to remember that there was a great reluctance among certain groups to wholeheartedly welcome and accept these changes (Ibid:109). Because conservatives, élitists, royalists, magnates and property owners not only opposed the possibility that workers and farmers had been given to make their political voices heard, they also in particular questioned the purpose of holding the perpetrators of the 1972 thang daeng murders and the 1974 Ban Na Sai burning responsible, in particular opposing the prosecution of those who had committed the first (Ibid:79-80,109). According to Farrelly, it also appears that many people in general were dissatisfied with the direction in which the country was going, associating the very phenomenon of democracy with disarray and ferocity and therefore trusting the authorities was rational (Farrelly, 2013:285).

Six days after Thanom's return, on September 25, the hanging of two labour activists in the central province of Nakhon Pathom attracted attention when it was revealed that they had been hanged because of them distributing flyers when demonstrating (Haberkorn, 2017:110). Allegedly, their murderers belonged to the RTP and as a consequence of this crime, thousands of people gathered on the campus of the Thammasat University where they criticised the RTP's abuse of authority by restaging the event on October 4 (Ibid:110).

The day after, Dao Siam, a right-wing oriented newspaper, falsely accused the students of committing lèse-majesté when incorrectly stating that they had hanged a statue of the Crown Prince and because they had done that, it concluded that they intended to overthrow the monarchy and kill its representatives (Haberkorn, 2017:110). This move can be understood as a reaction to the fear of communism and that of a Cold War escalation, both of which had dramatically increased among Thais with right-wing sympathies living there and elsewhere as an immediate consequence of the transformation of the neighbouring countries of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam into communist states the year before, a development which had frightened many of those individuals (Haberkorn, 2017:110; Connors, 2005:63). On the basis of the newspaper article and a photograph which was rumoured to portray this hanging, these individuals first criticised the actions of the students, then they argued that they should be the subject of oppression and ultimately they made serious (albeit false) accusations against them, referring to them as either Chinese, communists or both, alternatively Vietnamese (Haberkorn, 2017:110). Regardless of what they were called, all words were synonymous with un-Thainess and thereby the students were regarded as traitors (Ibid:110).



The students reacted by strongly rebuking this article, asserting that they did not criticise the King, his family or the monarchy as an institution, but by then the right-wing press had already convinced its readers to punish those accused of offending the monarchy (Ungphakorn, 1977:5).

## 7.2 The Red Gaurs, Village Scouts and Nawaphon

The three paramilitary groups Village Scouts, Red Gaurs and Nawaphon would come to play a crucial role as perpetrators in the 6 October 1976 Massacre (Haberkorn, 2011:126). Although, it is worth remembering that this was not the first time that these groups brutally had made their presence known to their political enemies (Ibid:126). In fact between the years 1973 and 1976, they perpetrated various attacks against these people, for example, Nawaphon was suspected of assassinating leaders of the FFT while the Red Gaurs was known to have participated in the ruthless quelling of student demonstrations between 1974 and 1975, demonstrations which both concerned some of articles of the 1974 constitution and the American military bases established in Thai soil (Haberkorn, 2011:xi,126;Ungphakorn, 1977:10). It is interesting to note that the Red Gaurs were permitted to carry arms, as well as persecuting, attacking and menacing their adversaries without neither the RTP nor the RTA intervening, despite them fundamentally being civilians (Ungphakorn, 1977:10).

Red Gaurs and Nawaphon had many things in common, for instance both of the organisations were founded by the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), which besides being one of the branches of the RTA, also was closely connected to the CIA (Ungphakorn, 1977:10-11). It was ISOC which in return trained, armed and coordinated them (Ibid:11). But there were differences, for instance the Red Gaurs, among others, attracted students, no matter if those had graduated, if they had not or if they had not studied at all, while Nawaphon in comparison aimed to unite conservative tycoons, Buddhist monks and vendors (Ibid:10-11). In addition, Nawaphon was subordinate to the Red Gaurs when collaborating and conducting operations with them (Ibid:10-11). Their core objectives were also quite dissimilar, for Nawaphon it was about waging war psychologically whereas it for the Red Gaurs was about acting as a riot police (Ibid:10-11).

The last of these three organisations, the Village Scouts, was unlike the two other ones more associated with the support it openly gave to conservative politicians and military officers during the 1976 elections (Ungphakorn, 1977:11). It described itself as being loyal to the monarch, to Buddhism and



to the country and it also acted on the orders of the Ministry of the Interior (Ibid:11).

## 7.3 The event in numbers

On the night before October 6 1976, more precisely at midnight, approximately 2,000 students accompanied by rickshaw drivers and workers assembled at the campus of Thammasat University (Ungphakorn, 1977:5). These numbers would later that day increase to between 4,000 and 5,000 (Winichakul, 2020:27). A demographic estimation by the UN made in June 1976, shows the country had around 43 million inhabitants, meaning roughly 0,01 % of the entire population gathered on that location (United Nations and Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1977:140;Haberhorn, 2017:110). In comparison, around 30,000 people belonging to the Village Scouts would convene at Equestrian Plaza to protest against the students later that day, meaning the demonstration involved 0,07 % of the inhabitants (United Nations and Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1977:140; Ungphakorn, 1977:9).

## 7.4 The chronology of the event

NSCT, the organisation which had played a central role in the ousting of Thanom, Praphas and Narong following the popular uprising three years earlier, was once again the organisation which initiated the 1976 demonstrations (Ungphakorn, 1977:5;Flood, 1975:60;Browne, 1973;Prizzia, 2019:79). Its leaders stated that they had the intention of protesting against Thanom and urging the people in power to apprehend and prosecute those responsible for the September 25 murders (Ungphakorn, 1977:5;Haberhorn, 2017:110). They also saw the scheduled protest as an opportunity to bend the bow (Ungphakorn, 1977:5). In addition, they argued that one such activity should take place exactly at this time of the year because they hoped that the RTA's organisational change, an event which occurred annually, inevitably would give rise to a general dissatisfaction among the people in their own ranks, leading to the orchestration of a coup (Ibid:5). Therefore, a demonstration of the strength of the NSCT would, as the students saw it, potentially be the catalyst of both a coup which would force Thanom to once again step down and a trial of the murderers of the two labour activists (Ungphakorn, 1977:5;Winichakul, 2020:27).

NSCT had originally planned that this demonstration was to take place as early as possible that month, although since a market would be taking place during that weekend, it was postponed to October 4 (Ungphakorn, 1977:5).





The people who subsequently gathered there were unarmed, the only exception being their protectors (Winichakul, 2020:27). This contradicts the Armour Radio's announcements and the police reports, both of which claimed that the students carried pistols (Ungphakorn, 1977:6). Later on, it was additionally falsely maintained by the RTP that they used assault rifles (Ungphakorn, 1977:6; Winichakul, 2020:27). In comparison, the policemen, border policemen, militaries and paramilitaries were all heavily armed (Ibid:6-7).

When the students and their allies assembled on the grounds of Thammasat University, police officers were stationed at its gates and alongside right-wing oriented individuals, they were encouraged by the RTA to intervene (Ungphakorn, 1977:5). The incentive given to the latter was that there were plain-clothes policemen hiding among the students (Ibid:5) The rally held by the NSCT infuriated Armour Radio, a right-wing radio station, which as a reaction insisted on Village Scouts and other paramilitary groups organising a counter-rally (Ibid:6).

At 04:00, the first shots were apparently fired in the proximity of the Thammasat University, one hour later the Red Gaurs commenced an offensive, assisted by the RTP (Ungphakorn, 1977:6). An hour prior to that, the area was surrounded (Ibid:6). In addition, the Chief of Police said that everyone present at the campus was to leave it and that those who had committed supposed *lèse-majesté* were to be arrested (Ibid:6). At the same time, persons who had congregated at the gates of the university tried to make a provocation, to which the students did not respond (Ibid:6).

At around 5:30, Armoury Radio advised the students to capitulate when all escape routes had come under the control of the policemen, militaries and paramilitaries (Ungphakorn, 1977:6). However, once the NSCT and its leaders were made aware of this serious development, they reached out to the secretary of Prime Minister Panoj, saying they wanted to negotiate, although upon arriving at his residence, they were detained (Ibid:6-7, 9). They tried to call for an armistice twice and said they were willing to capitulate, but in vain (Ibid:6-7).

The RTP, the three paramilitary organisations and the RTA were not the only ones preventing the students from escaping from the encircled area, the Border Patrol Police (BPP) and the RTN were also involved in the perpetration of the massacre (Ungphakorn, 1977:6-8).

At 07:00, the paramilitary groups made another attempt to storm the campus, succeeding this time (Ungphakorn, 1977:6-7). When it, 10 minutes later, became apparent to the NSCT that the number of injured students was dramatically increasing, they said they would voluntarily surrender, but no



response was given (Ibid:7). About an hour and a half later, the BPP and the Red Gaurs commenced a full-scale invasion of the university campus (Ibid:7,9).

The RTP, having called in reinforcements which arrived regularly, screamed for blood, and having been permitted to fire at will, the violence escalated (Ungphakorn, 1977:7). Even though this order at least on paper solely concerned the policemen, every uniformed person carrying an arm was practically given it (Ibid:7-8).

This directly paved the way for the massacre as the future perpetrators now did not have to fear facing any legal consequences for their actions, meaning mutilations, hangings, assassinations, rapes, lynchings and batterings were both justified and legitimised as it was only their surviving victims who would be incarcerated, not them (Ungphakorn, 1977:8; Haberkorn, 2017:110; Zachari, 2020:57).

Winchakul argues that the massacre came to an end sometime between 9:30 and 11:00, while Ungphakorn states that it happened sometime between 10:30 and 11:00 (Winichakul, 2020:30; Ungphakorn, 1977:9).

Around 10:30 and 11:00, a large crowd assembled at the Equestrian Plaza, urging the democratically elected government led by Seni Pramroj to take drastic measures to fight the communists being active in their country, both real and alleged ones (Winichakul, 2020:30-31; Ungphakorn, 1977:9).

However, it is worth bearing in mind that these individuals were not only discontented with the anticommunist actions taken by it, but also with the government itself (Winichakul, 2020:30-31). When the crowd regrouped to the Government House and its surroundings, the government had no other choice but to publicly make an announcement, in which Prime Minister Panoj accused the students of having committed lèse-majesté and of provoking the violent confrontation themselves when they had chosen to open fire on the RTP (Ibid:31). During the press conference he also defended the measures taken by the RTP (Ungphakorn, 1977:8).

At 18:00, it came to the public's attention that the Panoj's civilian government had been formally replaced by the National Administration Reform Council (NARC), that is a new military junta, following a coup, hence the pre-1973 status quo was restored when martial law was reintroduced (Wichakul, 2020:31; Ungphakorn, 1977:9). According to the RTP, there had been 46 fatalities, yet NARC claimed that there had been 41 (Wichakul, 2020:31; Ungphakorn, 1977:8). Nevertheless, the majority of the deceased were students and the minority were police officers and/or people belonging to the mob (Wichakul, 2020:31).



## 8. Current research on the cases chosen

### 8.1 The 1973 Thai popular uprising: Factors contributing to its success

The success of the uprising can, according to Prizzia, mostly be attributed to the students and their actions (Prizzia, 2019:79). He, however, points out that it was not solely the students who contributed to the uprising becoming a success, even though they undoubtedly were playing a significant role in making that a reality (Ibid:79). The intelligentsia, former politicians in opposition and for instance facilitated it, as did the workers who had been striking during the two preceding months (Ibid:79-80).

Moreover, he argues that the RTARF as an organisation was far from united at the time of the event taking place, stating it was clearly divided on whether it should remain an ally of the Thanom régime or if it should give its support to the students instead (Prizzia, 2019:79). Because of this evident disunity among their own ranks, the ruling military junta had been severely weakened (Ibid:79). RTAF and RTA personnel in general and RTN personnel in particular were reluctant to aid the RTP when it was attacked by protesting students and requested assistance (Ibid:79).

The reason why the RTN had chosen to publically take this stance and side with the students had to do with the Manhattan Affair, also known as the Manhattan Rebellion, an incident which occurred 23 years earlier, in June 1951 (Prizzia, 2019:79; Fineman, 1997:147).

Back then its admirals had planned to seize power by overthrowing the government led by Prime minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram (henceforth Phibun) (Fineman, 1997:12, 147-148). The motive was that the then chief of the RTP, Phao Siyanon, wanted to have his own men patrolling the national coasts, something which up and till then had been one of the RTN's assignments (Ibid:37, 147). He also wanted to take advantage of the lucrative opium trade, but the RTN objected to this (Ibid:147). But things went sideways when their subordinates, without having been given any explicit orders to do so, violently abducted Phibun during a ceremony and took him to the defence branch's flagship Sri Ayutthaya (Ibid:148). The RTN's radio station and headquarters were simultaneously occupied (Ibid:148). While the armed naval officers on the ground and those clandestinely conspiring to topple Phibun did have the same ambitions, there was apparently no established communication between them which would be proven to be a fatal mistake (Ibid:148). This led to the organisational top



echelon becoming passive and to their subordinates being abandoned and being forced to fight against the combined forces of the RTP, RTA and RTAF when they counter-attacked (Ibid:148). In the aftermath of the failed rebellion, the RTN was not only deprived of all its prestige and political influence, the alliance consisting of these three above-mentioned players also moved forward their positions at its expense, making it revengeful (Fineman, 1997:148;Prizzia, 2019:79). When the uprising began more than two decades later, the RTN therefore saw the opportunity to retake what it once lost by siding with the students (Prizzia, 2019:79).

Since the monarchy, aside from the RTA, was and is considered the most important societal pillar in Thailand, the event also marked a shift of power in their relationship, before it was the RTA which was the most influential of the two, now it was the monarchy which had the upper hand (Chambers and Waitookiat, 2016:426).

## 8.2 The 6 October 1976 massacre: Factors contributing to its perpetration

In his book, Ganjanakhundee implied that the King and the royal family largely facilitated the perpetration of this massacre partially because of how they beforehand encouraged and mobilised the members of these aforementioned paramilitary groups to fight communists partially because of the King's silence and passivity when the tragedy became a reality (Ganjanakhundee, 2022:85). Add to it, it appears that royalism ideologically was regarded as a manifestation of those anticommunist sentiments (Ibid:85). He also writes that the subject is something which ought not to be discussed due to the unclear extent to which they were implicated in the orchestration of it (Ibid:102). However, this is contradicted by Winichakul who argues that the support which the monarchy gave to the Village Scouts never was a secret (Winichakul, 2020:34).

In addition, Haberkorn stated that King Bhumibol and his family also had close ties to the BPP, itself a paramilitary force subordinate to the RTP (Haberkorn, 2017:137). She also states that BPP had another thing in common with the Red Gaur, the Village Scouts and Nawaphon besides being an irregular force, the fact that they all were backed up by the CIA (Ibid:137). Moreover, the American involvement in the massacre ought to be understood as the result of almost five decades of intelligence collaboration intended to aid an oppressive and elitist minority consisting of military officers in ruthlessly defeating a majority constituted by peasants and workers which had been deprived of all their rights and influence (Ibid:137-138).



In her book Haberkorn referred to David Morell, active at Princeton and who when testifying about the event, explicitly said that the motive of the royal family for changing sides originated from a fear of the nation potentially becoming a communist state just like the neighbouring countries (Haberkorn, 2017:138-139).

The conservative radio stations, particularly Armour Radio, Patriotic Peoples Groups and Free Radio were instrumental in instigating the hatred and the violence following in its path, using a rhetoric pathos to gain their listeners' attention (Ungphakorn, 1977:7,9). Having made them emotional, they subsequently took advantage of their knowledge about ethos and logos to manipulate their audience into committing these atrocities (Ibid:9). They achieved this by explicitly persuading them to perpetrate murders of the students, by deliberately creating an atmosphere of hostility and by spreading lies presented as facts, for instance that the students had betrayed their country (Ungphakorn, 1977:9;Haberkorn, 2017:110). In addition, as discussed in 5.8, this explains the general disappointment and resentment due to the perceived failures of democracy, which made authoritarianism more preferable (Farrelly, 2013:285-286).

The open collaboration between the paramilitary groups and the RTP was also a contributing factor (Ungphakorn, 1977:9). That is because the first, with the latter's consent, undoubtedly was given every opportunity to act as provocateurs to an unjustifiable conflict (Ibid:9). Once it became clear to the police officers stationed at the location that it was only a matter of time before one such conflict would erupt, they quickly had the entire campus area encircled, thereby catching the students in a trap (Ibid:9). Moreover, the RTP's attempts to hinder the enraged mob from relentlessly killing these defenceless individuals were evidently unsuccessful, judging by their passivity and/ or indifference (Ibid:9).

Finally, lèse-majesté was also effectively used as a pretext by the military to order an attack on the university and they justified that decision by referring to a law called Ordinance 42, which was a renamed version of Article 17 (Mérieau, 2018:374; Haberkorn, 2017:55).

## 8.3 The state of the research undertaken

It ought to be emphasised that the research done in the two of preceding chapters (8.2 and 8.4) is what has currently been undertaken on the matter. That being said, the results of it need to be further examined and compared. This is what the purpose of the succeeding chapter below fundamentally is.



## 9. Analysis

### 9.1 The purpose of including these two cases

The cases of the 1973 Thai popular uprising and the 6 October 1976 massacre served two completely different purposes in the thesis. The 1973 case was used to demonstrate what happens when people in favour of democracy show their discontentment with the ruling régime and when the King gives his support to them.

The 1976 case, on the other hand, acted as its antithesis as it showed what happens when a pro-democratic demonstration is quelled by an anti-democratic coalition and when the King supports authoritarianism. The role the media plays in attempting to divide and conquer the people were of interest in both cases.

### 9.2 Sharp's relevance to the cases

As previously maintained in 3.1, Sharp states that an autocratic system has plenty of weak points, it is just a matter of finding them (Sharp, 2010:25). Three of the examples he gives of such deficiencies are particularly relevant to this analysis, those being the irritation felt by intellectuals and the students because of the restricted liberties, the ordinary people's contempt for individuals controlling them and the different opinions held by the dictators on the one hand and the employees of the security apparatus on the other (Ibid:26-27).

Both in 1973 and 1976, there was, generally speaking, a disdain for the political system, albeit for completely different reasons (Haberkorn, 2017:74;Farrelly, 2013:285). In 1973, the discontentment was caused by the existence of Article 17, which legitimised the imprisonment and the killing of the enemies of the Thanom régime with motivation being that the nation and the monarchy had to be protected and the peace preserved (Haberkorn, 2017:55,65). In 1976, in stark contrast, there was a displeasure with democracy (Farrelly, 2013:285).

Concerning the impatience experienced by the students and the members of the intelligentsia, that led to the first being assisted by the latter when the uprising began in 1973 (Prizzia, 2019:79). They were also aided by the former political opposition (Ibid:79-80). Although three years later, the civilian government which the students indirectly had helped to come into



power, following the success of the uprising, was forced to abandon them when the crowd of Village Scouts members marched towards the Government House and put pressure on them (Haberkorn, 2011:12; Heinze, 1974:495; Winichakul, 2020:31). Then it had become clear that those individuals would not be satisfied with a change of the anticommunist policies, instead they wanted the government to be replaced (Winichakul, 2020:30-31).

Lastly, there are the opposing views held by the autocrat and the security forces he depends on. In the 1973 case, the disunity existing within the RARF led to RTN helping the protesters (Prizzia, 2019:79). The RTAF and fractions of the RTA had a similar point of view (Ibid:79). As a result of this disagreement, only parts of the RTA helped RTP (Heinze, 1974:500-504; Prizzia, 2019:75-79). Although, in the 1976 case, there were no signs of any organisational conflicts at all, considering all defence branches, except the RTAF, together with the RTP perpetrated the massacre (Ungphakorn, 1977:6-8).

## 9.3 Popovic and Miller's relevance to the cases

As stated in 3.2, Popovic and Miller advise activists to choose a subject not surrounded by any controversies whatsoever in order to gain the support of the masses (Timcke, 2017:349).

Put into the contexts of the 1973 and the 1976 case, it can first and foremost be noted that this exactly what the NSCT did when they organised their first public demonstration against Thai Maduru in 1972, to protest against their national economy being dependent on the Japanese one (Heinze, 1974:492; Feeny, Vongpatanasin and Soonsatham, 1996:39; Sievers and Australian Department of Trade and Industry, 1966). While Heinze and Zimmerman disagree on whether it was a boycott or not, it can nonetheless be argued that they learned what they at end of the day wanted to accomplish, that is, undermining the strength of the Thanom-led junta (Heinze, 1974:492; Zimmerman, 1974:509). As an immediate consequence of that, they shifted focus from economies to the said actor's dishonest practices (Heinze, 1974:493; Zimmerman, 1974:509-510).

During the days of the 1973 uprising, more precisely on October 10, the NSCT issued two demands, the first one being the release of their incarcerated leaders and the second one being the drawing up of a new constitution which was to replace that of 1972 which contained Article 17 (Heinze, 1974:496; Haberkorn, 2017:55,73-74). The reason why many



people despised that very article was because it legitimised repression (Haberkorn, 2017:55,65).

Regarding the imprisoned NSCT leaders, they were later permitted to leave, although only temporarily, something they objected to as they wanted it to be permanent (Heize, 1974:497). When meeting King Bhumibol on October 13, they were in addition told a new constitution would be presented in a year or prior to that (Ibid:499). The speech held by him the day after made the junta's defeat inevitable since a new civilian prime minister was announced, forcing its leaders to flee the country (Paribatra, 2003:291; Haberkorn, 2011:12; Browne, 1973; Prizzia, 2019:79).

The demonstration staged by the NSCT on the campus of the Thammasat University on October 6 1976, was not only a demonstration against the autocrat Thanom who recently had come back but also indirectly against the government which had failed to initiate a prosecution for the individuals who had murdered two labour activists 11 days earlier (Ungphakorn, 1977:5; Haberkorn, 2017:110).

Moreover, their intentions were to make some of RTA's officers stage a coup against Thanom, therefore they had timed their protest with the planned restructure of that organisation to create opportunities for one to occur (Ungphakorn, 1977:5; Winichakul, 2020:27). If one such coup would be orchestrated, that could optimally lead to Thanom's fall and justice being done (Ungphakorn, 1977:5; Winichakul, 2020:27).

The Village Scouts who after the massacre got together at Equestrian Plaza aimed to do something entirely different (Winichakul, 2020:30-31; Ungphakorn, 1977:9). They wanted to show their disappointment with the students and the government's fight against communism (Ungphakorn, 1977:9; Winichakul, 2020:30-31).

The reason why the NSCT demonstration failed and why the Village Scouts one succeeded had to do with the unwillingness of the right to welcome the new inclusive policies benefiting for instance workers (Haberkorn, 2017:109). Furthermore, the connotations of the word 'democracy' were, as they saw it, negative (Farrelly, 2013:285). These sentiments can be attributed to the fear of communism and escalation of the Cold War, which terrified many right-wing oriented Thais, making them long to return to the stability of the dictatorship (Haberkorn, 2017:110; Connors, 2005:63).





## 10. Conclusion

The purpose of the thesis was to test a hypothesis, consisting of two questions, about the research made by Chenoweth in 2023 which was centred around the role societal pillars play in undermining or assuring the continued existence of autocratic régimes and what it takes to make those actors abandon them. The approach taken was critical to Chenoweth's recommendation about the use of non-violent methods. Additionally, it was about investigating how media described the events in question, and how Sharp's argument about revealing and utilising a régime's flaws as well as Popovic and Miller's strategy of focusing on a non-controversial subject to protest against could be a decisive move.

The answer to its first question is that in the 1973 case, those protesting were either students belonging to the NSCT, non-students, ordinary people sympathising with their cause or workers, all of whom preferred democracy to dictatorship. In the 1976 case, however, there are two answers to that question. On the one hand, the pro-democratic protesters gathering at the Thammasat University campus were either workers, students associated with the NSCT or rickshaw drivers. On the other hand, those convening at its gates were right-wing oriented individuals from the masses while those assembling at Equestrian Plaza to show their dissatisfaction with the NSCT demonstration belonged to the conservative paramilitary group Village Scouts. These people also considered democracy a failure, hence they wanted the dictatorship to be re-established, since it, as they saw it, was a guarantee of security.

The answer to its second question is that the actions of King Bhumibol clearly showed which side he was on when it all came to it. In 1973 he sided with the pro-democratic protesters when expressing support for them, granting them protection and when appointing a new civilian prime minister in his televised October 14 speech. However, in 1976, he changed sides as indicated by him protecting the ex-dictator Thanom upon his return from exile. In addition, he mobilised and supported the Red Gaur, Nawaphon, the Village Scouts and the BPP, all of which participated in the perpetration of the massacre. The explanation for his changed political opinions was his fear of communism.

Based on these answers, it can be generally concluded that the societal pillars, while undoubtedly being crucial to the democratisation process, are more than capable of reversing it, should their political views change dramatically, inevitably raising another question. What other historical and contemporary examples are there of them doing exactly this?



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