The Causes of Military Insubordination: Explaining Military Organizational Behavior in Thailand

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Introduction

Why do certain militaries comply with government orders to use force on political demonstrators while others do not? This is the central question of this paper which seeks to elucidate the conditions under which armed forces are likely to be subordinate or insubordinate to orders to shoot protestors.

I test three propositions in this study. The first applies principal-agent models and suggests that militaries are likely to be subordinate to orders to use force on domestic opposition if governments possess the institutional capacity to monitor and deter errant behavior within the armed forces. The second contends that the degree of military subordination is contingent on the existence of an organizational culture that is permissive to such actions. The third proposition suggests that the military's insubordination of government orders to use force against demonstrators should be seen as a manifestation of inter-factional conflict within a military organization. Specifically, the act of insubordination is one faction's response to dissatisfaction with another faction within the armed forces. I test these propositions by examining the Thai military's responses to demonstrations in the capital city Bangkok in 1973, where the armed forces complied with orders to shoot on demonstrators on October 14 but later refused to do so on October 15.

I argue, that of the three propositions, the inter-factional competition hypothesis best explains the extent of military compliance with orders to shoot on domestic political opposition. As I demonstrate in the paper, in 1973 the ruling junta did not have the requisite institutional capacity to monitor and deter errant behavior within the military, and neither did the armed forces have an organizational culture that was permissive to the use of force on domestic opposition. What then explains the apparent schizophrenic behavior of the Thai military – complying with orders to shoot protestors on one day (October 14, 1973) and disobeying orders to do so the following day (October 15, 1973)? The inter-factional competition proposition, though it challenges a commonly accepted depiction of armed forces as cohesive entities that are driven by a strong sense of a corporate ethos, explains this conundrum.

The essay will be divided into three main parts. The subsequent section outlines the theoretical approaches of the paper. Here I operationalize the level of military subordination, and explicate further the principal-agent, organizational culture and inter-factional conflict propositions. The next part of the paper is the

empirical portion. Here I detail the circumstances behind the Thai military's initial decision to support the crack-down of demonstrators on October 14, 1973 and its subsequent disobedience of orders on October 15.

The Degree of Military Subordination

The dependent variable is the degree of military subordination. Military *insubordination* occurs when the deliberate non-compliant actions of key individuals, a group, or groups within the military organization results in the failure to shoot political protestors. Militaries are *subordinate* when:

(a) Key individuals, a group, or groups within the military organization do what the government asks it to do, particularly in instances when the government has expressed a preference on both the "what" and "how" on the use of force.

(b) Key individuals, a group, or groups within the military organization work to fullest extent of their duties and capacities to carry out what the government has tasked.

These two indicators help us to assess whether the prescribed operation has diverged from what the government leaders wanted. If the military circumvents government directives that are explicit about the "what" and "how" on the use of force, and/or evades from it prescribed orders through bureaucratic foot-dragging, although not overt, these are actually instances of insubordination. Indeed, the use of delay tactics or "slow-rolling" may impede operations so much so that the undesired policy will never be implemented (Feaver 2003, 68). An example of such behavior occurred in Kosovo in spring 1999 when the US Army, in an attempt to forestall to likelihood of a ground invasion, did what it could to slow down the delivery and use of Apache ground attack helicopters (Feaver 2003, 279; Richter 1999; Halberstam 2001, 466). Military insubordination may also manifest itself in the following ways: [1]

1. When members of the armed forces abandon their assigned military units or evade assigned duties.
2. When members of the military abandon or give up operational command to dissident groups or opposition movements.
3. When members of the military aid opposition groups or dissident movements with materiel or intelligence. Military officers may in some instances also come out in open support and publicly ally themselves with such groups.

[1] The following indicators were adapted from codes found in the *Manual for Courts-Martial United States* 2002, IV-10-41.

Proposition 1: The Principal-Agent Model and Military Subordination

Within the civil-military relations context, the agency relationship is that between governments (principals) and the armed forces (agent). In this relationship, governments delegate the task of the use of force to defend the governments' interests to the military. The need to entrust this protective function to the military arises from a paradox, or what Peter Feaver calls the civil-military problématique – in fearing others, states have developed institutions of violence (militaries) to protect themselves but this also creates fear in the very institutions that were established for their protection (Feaver 1996, 1999). As such governments will want to monitor the actions of the military intently not only because there may be problems of adverse selection but more importantly, governments want to rein in the main instrument of coercive violence within the state (moral hazard).

Assumptions

Three assumptions underpin my application of the principal-agent model. First, the military-agent refers to the officers within the armed forces. These are likely to be the chiefs-of-staff, the service chiefs, and the divisional, brigade, battalion and other commanders who control the troops that have been delegated to suppress the demonstrators. Second, I assume that both the government and the military-agent are rational actors. I presume that the actors are aware of costs and benefits arising from their actions and they will rank order outcomes according to some subjective estimate of the benefits minus the costs. Third, I assume that the government and the military officers conceive of themselves as principals and agents respectively. This may be a controversial presumption in the civil-military relations context since the heart of the civil-military problématique is precisely that of military-agents rejecting the superior-subordinate relationship. Indeed, this stipulation seems to assume away the potential of *coup détats*. However, it should be noted that the principal-agent framework does not assume agent obedience. Instead, the key assumption is that actors share a common conception of the agency relationship, in which the government is supposed to be superior to the military, even if this is not in fact the case (Feaver 2003, 97). [2]

Preferences

[2] While such an assumption is not problematic for the case of democracies, it is probably accurate to point out that this supposition is also becoming more valid even for traditionally coup-prone military dictatorships as the consolidation of third wave democratization continues (Feaver 2003, 97; Pion-Berlin 2001, 4-9).

I assume that the main interest for a government-principal is staying in power. It follows therefore when governments are faced with widespread political protests, if the regime gives orders to use force on demonstrators, they expect militaries to comply with these directives.

The military-agent on the other hand, is materialist and actively seeks financial and political rewards. [3] This highly materialist predilection is consistent with several studies on the causes of coups in the developing world that attribute that attribute military putsches to the officers' desire to protect or enhance his/her political position or access to material rewards. [4] This view of a materialist military-agent likewise mirrors theoretical understandings of public officials (Niskanen 1971; Downs 1967; Wildavsky 1979).

Adverse selection and moral hazard problems in this agency relationship thus arise from the principal and agent's divergent preferences. Although the government-principal may "stack the deck" and appoint loyalist officers to key command positions, they can never be entirely certain that these appointees are not acting in support of the officer's own materialist interests.

Transaction Costs and "Police Patrols"

One of the key considerations in the choice of institutional frameworks to ensure agent compliance is the costs of development and maintenance – what Ronald Coase (1937) and Oliver Williamson (1985) refer to as transaction costs. I argue that these considerations though salient are less compelling for authoritarian regimes such as Thailand. Given the centrality of militaries in the genesis and preservation of authoritarian regimes (Linz 1964; O'Donnell 1973; O'Donnell & Schmitter 1986a; Geddes 1999), one can assume that authoritarian leaders will often put in significant resources to ensure their acquiescence despite the high costs and finite resources. Indeed, in almost all authoritarian regimes since the post-war period, most of these governments "stack the deck" and use "police patrols" rather than "fire alarms" (Brooks 1998, 32; Migdal 1988, 214-226). "Police patrols" controls though more costly, are more intrusive and effective in detecting non-compliant behavior. As quantitative studies from American politics indicate, bureaucrats (agents) tend to be more constrained in the

[3] Allison 1971; Perrow 1986, 119-156, 219-257; Posen 1984, 41-59.
[4] See for example Thompson 1976 and Nordlinger 1977; Geddes 1999; O'Donnell et al. 1986a, 96-133; O'Donnell et al. 1986b; Haggard and Kaufman 1996, 31-32; Kolkowicz 1967; and Colton 1979, 240.

activities/more compliant to directives when principals use coercive or "muscle" techniques for oversight (Gormley 1989; Ringquist et al. 1997; Furlong 1998).

In the civil-military relations context and especially in authoritarian regimes, "police patrols" are usually dedicated internal security agencies. These are combat, intelligence, or counter-intelligence units regimes create to monitor the attitudes and activities of the military, other security services and civilian opposition groups. They may make arrests and interrogate those suspected of 'subversive' activities. (Brooks 1998, 36-37). The political commissars in Communist militaries are examples of such agencies (Kolkowicz 1967).

Incentives vs. Punishment

Authoritarian regimes may employ a wide array of incentive structures or "carrots and sticks" to induce military compliance. Authoritarian leaders could disburse material incentives in the form of disproportionately high wages to officers relative to other civil servants or the rank and file; housing and transport subsidies; or access to scarce consumer goods or the toleration of illicit activities, such as corruption, drugs, protection, and prostitution rackets (Brooks 1998; Wintrobe 1998; Remmer 1989; Nordlinger 1977). Governments could also disburse political incentives such as the appointment to key political positions; and allowing giving wide-ranging political prerogatives in areas such as: military budget planning, arms production and procurement, intelligence gathering and internal security (Stepan 1988; Pion-Berlin 1995).

"Sticks" which governments could use to punish the armed forces include cutting budgets, reducing the political prerogatives military officers enjoy, and withholding promotions or assignments to financially or politically lucrative command posts (Stepan 1988; Pion-Berlin 1995). Another method would be to remove "undesirable" officers or segments within the armed forces – the military equivalent of firing.

Of these two ex-post mechanisms, I argue that military officers are more likely to be responsive to the use of "sticks" rather than material-political inducements. Specifically, the government's manipulation of personnel decisions – firings, withholding of promotions or reassignments – to ensure military compliance are particularly widespread (and effective) in the developing world where promotions or assignments to command positions are routes for personal aggrandizement (Migdal 1988, 214-226).

Steve Rosen's work on how military organizations innovate corroborates the assertion that the government's use of personnel assignments is one of the most important measures to ensure the military will be

responsive to directives. Rosen in his analysis of innovation in the American and British militaries in peace and war time argues that:

> Power is won through influence over who is promoted to positions of senior command. Control over the promotion of officers is the source of power in the military. The intellectual struggle concerning theories of victory is not irrelevant to that of control, but must be supplemented by a hard headed, concerted effort to gain control over whatever mechanisms determine who becomes an admiral or general (Rosen 1991, 20)

The importance of assignments for individual aggrandizement can also be illustrated empirically. In Thailand, cabinet and bureaucratic appointments held by senior military officers provided unfettered access to budgets, personnel and commercial activities, (Morell & Samudavanija 1981, 59-64). As Fred Riggs argues:

> Board memberships [of businesses] were utilized by members of the Thai elite to enhance their income, not to augment their power. They gained power in a different way, primarily with reference to bureaucratic resources at their command, including military forces. They were invited to join business boards in order to extend the mantle of their protection to the economic activities concerned … Whereas the Chinese leaders had to rely for instance upon their ability to pay, so that their membership on boards of directors could be taken as a direct measure of their relative power, the Thai leaders depended on direct forms of bureaucratic control, so that their board memberships were a consequence, not a cause of their power (Riggs1966, 297).

Hypothesis

A principal-agent argument explains the military-agent's compliance to government orders to use force against unarmed civilians, by the effectiveness of the government's mechanisms for monitoring and sanctioning. The military-agent's decision to comply with current directives is based on an evaluation on the efficacy of both controls. Specifically, the military-agent asks:

(a) Will I be caught if I do not comply with orders?

(b) Will I be punished – fired, have my promotion withheld, or reassigned?

From these premises, I hypothesize that:

> ***Hypothesis (Principal-Agent): If the government has institutional capacity to detect malfeasance and control personnel decisions within the military organization, the military-agent is likely to be subordinate to orders to use force against political demonstrators.***

Proposition 2: Organizational Culture and Military Subordination

The principal-agent proposition posits that highly rationalist and materialist logics guide the actions of military organizations. The organizational culture approach focuses instead on ideational factors to explain military behavior. Specifically, explanations based on organizational culture ask what the beliefs and values of the officer corps are with respect to the use of military force on political demonstrators.

I define the military's organizational culture as the set of basic assumptions, values, norms, beliefs and formal knowledge that shape the collective identity of the organization (Kier 1997, 28; Taylor 2003, 16). The military's organizational culture also prescribes how the organization should adapt to its external environment and manage its internal affairs (Legro 1997, 35). Essentially, this approach analyzes the "norms" that dominate organizations – culture is a set of collectively held prescriptions about the right way to think and act.

This definition focuses on the normative content of organizational cultures. Norms are collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity (Katzenstein et al. 1996). Norms have both constitutive and regulative effects. Norms are constitutive in the sense that they operate like rules defining an identity – they specify the actions that will cause relevant others to recognize and validate a particular identity and to respond to it appropriately. Norms are "regulative" in that they operate as standards for the proper enactment or deployment of a defined identity – norms prescribe or proscribe behaviors for already constituted identities (generating expectations about how those identities will shape behavior in varying circumstances). Taken together, then, norms establish expectations about who the actors are and how these particular actors will behave in a particular environment (Jepperson & Swidler 1994; Katzenstein et al. 1996; Thompson 1993).

Akin to other "total" institutions such as prisons and monasteries, military institutions are likely to inculcate its members with a common culture (Goffman 1984). Indeed, in the armed forces, all aspects of life (work, play, sleep) are carried out under one roof, with almost complete isolation from the civilian world. Military activity is in groups and strictly scheduled, and is planned to suit a rational goal. Military organizations may be the "complete" of any total organization. Unlike other civilian organization, the armed forces do not hire people with experience outside the military to become part of the core organization (Kier 1997, 29).

Organizational culture, as Ann Swidler argues, can be regarded as "tool kits" or "repertoires" that construct "strategies of action (Swidler 1986)." Culture creates an organization's "strategies of action" in two ways – cognitively and materially (Legro 1996, 121-122). Cognitively, culture acts as a heuristic for collective perception and calculation, in much the same way a theoretical paradigm can shape intellectual thought (Kuhn 1970) or a schema individual thinking (Khong 1992). Organizations that are shaped by specific cultures tend to discount the environmental data and facts that contradict the existing orthodoxy. These biases are akin to the cognitive and motivational distortions discussed by Robert Jervis (1976) and Khong (1992). The difference is

that cultural biases are not only based in the information processing capacity or emotions of individuals but also in collective understandings.

Second, culture also has material consequences in that it affects how organizations choose to allocate resources (Legro 1996, 122). Collective beliefs dictate which stratagems are inherently better and should receive support. Organizations will channel resources to methods suited to its culture, which subsequently appear more feasible than those that are incompatible and hence deprived of funding and attention.

Drawing from these premises, a military organizational culture that is permissive to the use of force on demonstrators not only infuses its members with a common cognitive frame, but the culture will also induce the organization to allocate its resources in certain ways in order to achieve this end, hence making the armed forces more likely to be subordinate to government orders to crack down on political protestors. In other words, the normative content of the military's organizational culture creates both the strategies for cognition and action. From this I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis (Organization Culture) 1: If there exists an organizational culture that is permissive to the use force against political demonstrators, the military is likely to be subordinate to government orders for such actions.

Hypothesis (Organization Culture) 2: The military is permissive to the use force against political demonstrators if it:

(a) Views the domestic political environment as conflictual, threatening, and in zero sum terms;
(b) Perceives political opposition as adversaries.

I use an interpretative approach to determine the military's organizational culture. Culture can be discerned by examining military organizational symbols, rituals, heroes, myths, and discourse. These aspects can be uncovered by examining curriculums at military training institutions, training and operational manuals, internal memoranda, biographies and military journals.

Proposition 3: Factionalism and Military Subordination

In the principal-agent model, the focus of the argument is the relationship between the regime and the officer corps, and the institutional mechanisms that are employed to ensure the military-agent's acquiescence. The emphasis in the organizational culture approach is on institutional "repertoires" that construct "strategies of action" for military officers. In this model, I examine patterns of intra-organizational conflict – how competition among cliques or factions within a military organization leads to the insubordination of orders to use force on protestors.

What are Factions?

A faction can be defined as a "relatively organized group that exists within the context of some other group and which (as a political faction) competes with rivals for power advantages within the larger group of which it is a part (Beller & Belloni 1978, 419)." Factions are based on clientelist ties, which are two-person relationships founded on exchange, and in which well-understood rights and obligations are established between two parties. Clientelist ties are akin to patron-client relations, a type association in which "an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services to the patron. (Nathan 1973, 38; Scott 1972, 92)."

Factions arise in villages, bureaucracies, legislatures, or other settings when a leader mobilizes a set of followers (who may in turn mobilize their own followers) to support him or her on the basis of expected rewards of office, influence or money. An isolated corrupt pay-off arrangement between two parties can also be thought off as a faction, paralleling the old-boys network and cooperation among kin as ways for an individual to mobilize influence through personal connections.

Factions operate on an *exchange-based* mode of association and *noded-dyadic* pattern of coordinative communication. In an *exchange-based* mode of association, individuals are motivated by the pursuit of tangible and immediate incentives, such as money, goods, office or protection, and "are cultivated by the constant exchange of gifts or services." As such, a faction depends for its growth and continuity, the ability of the leader (patron) to secure and distribute rewards to its followers (clients) [Nathan & Tsai 1995, 171-172].

The exchange-centered relationship in a faction should be distinguished from generic exchange relationships in that these ties are relatively stable and persistent, entails well-understood but seldom explicit rights and obligations (reciprocity), and is purposively cultivated by the participants. Individuals enter into these relationships because as Peter Blau explains, one party (patron) is often in a position to unilaterally supply, goods and services which the other party (client) needs for survival or well-being. The demand for such goods and services tend to be highly inelastic – an increase in their cost will not diminish its demand proportionately (Blau 1964, 21-22; Scott 1972, 93) This imbalance in the patron-client relationship consequently creates a sense of debt or obligation on the part of the client as he is unable to reciprocate fully, and gives rise to the creation of a "store

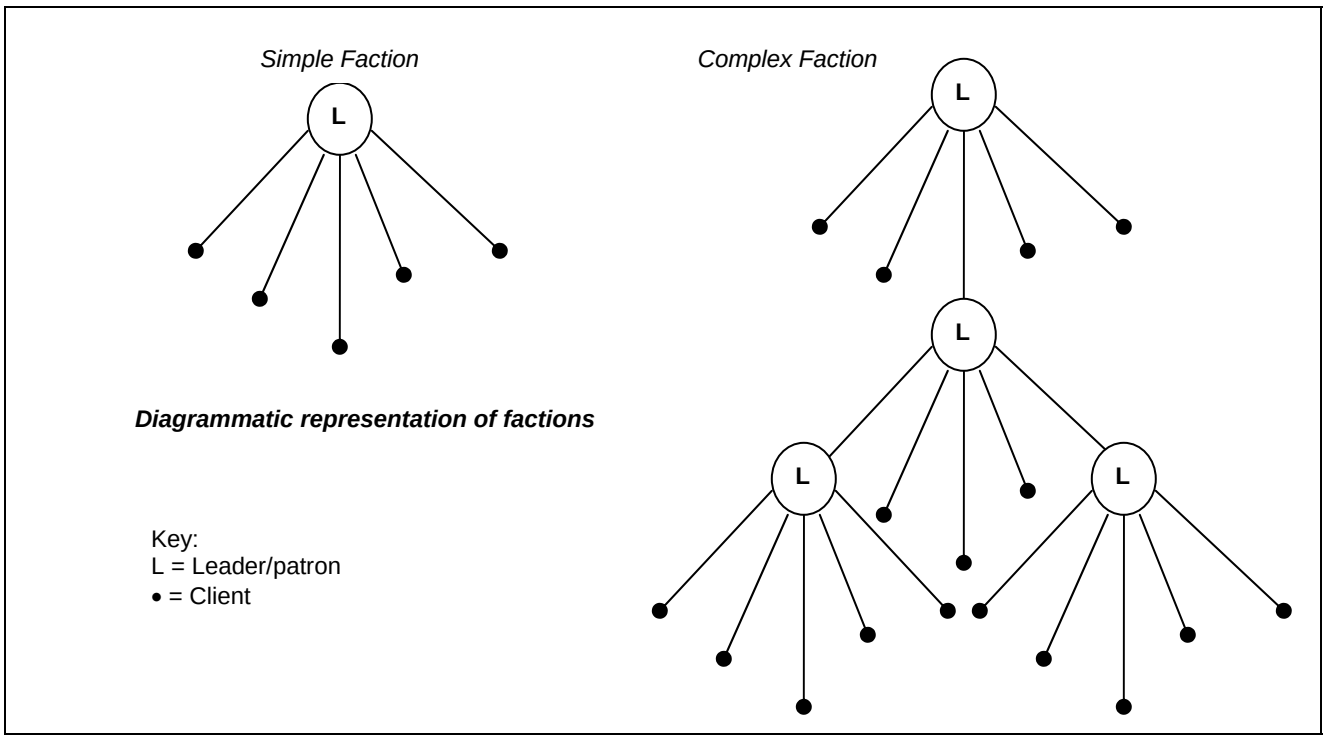
of value" – a form of "social credit" that the patron can draw on to obtain advantages at a later time. This "social credit" likewise allows the patron to build up savings of deference and compliance which enhance his status and creates a capacity for the mobilization of supporters when the need arises (Scott 1972, 94).

The degree of compliance a client gives to the patron is therefore a direct function of the extent of imbalance in the exchange relationship – how dependent the client is on the patron for his services. However, it should be noted that affiliating with a patron is not a relationship of pure coercion or formal authority. Although a patron may have some coercive power and may possibly also hold important official positions, if force or authority alone is sufficient to ensure the compliance of another, he has no need of patron-client ties which instead requires reciprocity. Indeed, in many instances, factional ties are not exclusive; members are free to establish other simultaneous ties so long as they do not involve contradictory obligations. A factional tie can also be abrogated by either member at will (Scott 1972, 93-94; Nathan 1973, 37).

In a faction, the *noded-dyadic* pattern of coordinative communication involves the transmission of information through a network of two-person links. However, communication is disproportionately routed through certain individuals, who thus stand at the foci or nodes of the network. Groups with this communication pattern are likely to have unclear membership boundaries. Yet these groups are internally differentiated, since the individuals standing at the communication nodes have greater power and are perceived as leaders (Nathan and Tsai 1995, 173; Nathan 1973, 40-41).

A key feature of the *noded-dyadic* pattern of coordinative communication within factions is the face-to-face, personal quality nature of the relationships (Scott 1972, 94-95). Factional ties are unlikely to have developed incidentally. Because of the high levels of mutual obligation involved in the relationship, factional ties are likely to emerge from familial connections, common geographical origin, shared experiences or shared loyalty toward the same patron (Lieberthal and Oksenburg 1988, 156).

Factionalism can thus be defined as a struggle (competition) among interest groups within an organization or a larger group, that band together in order to compete for favorable allocation of some goods or values desired by all the competing groups. Competition refers to the allocation of elite positions within the system (Pang 1975, 897).



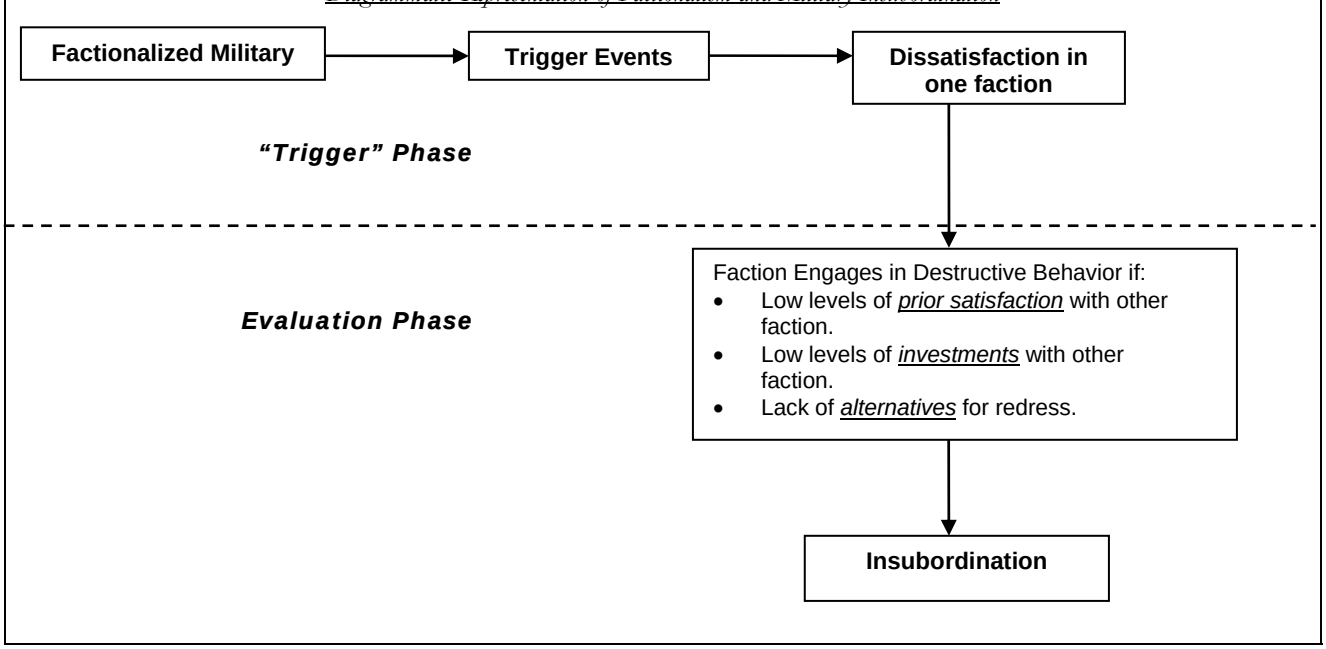
Factions are difficult to observe in a systematic manner, especially in military organizations where much of its activities is intentionally left opaque. As outsiders, it would be difficult for us to observe factions systematically, but we can certainly observe what are commonly thought of as the bases of factions. It is possible infer that those military officers with shared ascriptive ties, including birth, school, and work ties, are more likely to be in a faction together than those without such ties. The implicit argument here is that when an officer searches for a faction leader or faction followers, it is less costly if he or she has some shared experience or shared primordial ties with the potential target. For one, shared experience and primordial ties provide some information about the character of another person, decreasing the cost of searching for a suitable candidate. It is also socially less awkward to approach someone with whom one shares common experience or primordial ties (Shih 2004, 7).

Inter-factional Conflict and Military Insubordination

In this model, I argue that the military's insubordination of government orders to use force against demonstrators should be seen as a manifestation of inter-factional conflict within a military organization. Specifically, the act of insubordination is one faction's response to dissatisfaction with another faction within the armed forces.

Military insubordination is best depicted as a two-step process, encompassing "trigger" and "evaluation" phases. The path toward insubordination begins with a factionalized military organization. In this study, the military is factionalized if, relatively organized groups, that compete with each other for power advantages, exist within the military organization. In addition, in a factionalized military, key officers in the armed forces (the chiefs-of-staff, the service chiefs, the divisional, brigade or battalion commanders) belong to or are leaders (patrons) of these sub-organizational groups. The "trigger" phase begins when a factionalized military organization encounters two "trigger events." [5]

Diagrammatic Representation of Factionalism and Military Insubordination



- Trigger Event #1: Conflicting Ideas Event

This is a phase where relative harmony among factions is destabilized. This occurs when a faction within the organization begins to embrace practices that are at odds with the status quo. These practices may revolve around issues of organizational strategy (e.g.: How should the military deal with insurgency?), organizational governance (e.g.: How much decision-making power of the armed forces should be centralized?) and/or cultural-doctrinal differences (e.g.: How much emphasis should there be on professionalism? What role should religion play in the armed forces?).

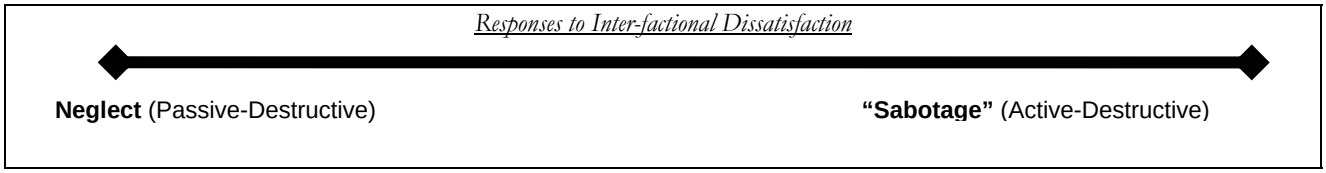
[5] This discussion of "trigger" events draws amply from Dyck & Starke 1999, 792-822.

- Trigger Event #2: Legitimizing Event

In this phase, an authority figure, which may be key military commanders or a country's political leaders, legitimize new ideas by endorsing these views in public and/or in intra-military discourse. A legitimizing event may also manifest itself when authority figures appoint initiators (e.g. Young Turks) of new ideas to prominent positions within the armed forces.

These "trigger" events typically augments the status of one faction and marginalizes the position of another group within the armed forces. Over time, as the repute of one faction rises at the expense of another, dissatisfaction brews. However, why is insubordination to preferred factional response to dissatisfaction vis-à-vis another faction?

I posit that military insubordination is a response to inter-factional dissatisfaction. Insubordination should be regarded as a military faction's "destructive" response to dissatisfaction, a reaction that occurs along a continuum, with *neglect* on one end, and overt *sabotage* on the other. [6]



A "neglectful" (passive-destructive) form of military insubordination would include acts such as the use of delay tactics or "slow-rolling" to impede operations so that the government orders will never be implemented. The more "active-destructive" form of military insubordination would be behavior such as that of abandoning assigned military units and/or assigned duties; aiding of opposition groups or dissident movements with materiel or intelligence; and declaring support and publicly allying themselves with opposition groups.

The contention that military factions will respond "destructively" to dissatisfaction mirrors the findings of several studies by social-psychologists about satisfaction in interpersonal relationships, and job situations in the private and public sectors. These studies demonstrate that persons involved in "distressed relationships" (defined as low levels of satisfaction) are engaged in more conflicts, and exhibit more negative and fewer positive

[6] Discussion of active-destructive and passive-destructive forms of responses to dissatisfaction is adapted from Hirschman 1970 and subsequent applications of Hirschman's model. See for example Rusbult, et. al. 1988.

problem-solving acts (e.g. more hostile-dominant, rejecting, and coercive attacking behaviors) [Rusbult et. al. 1986, 745-746].

Under what conditions will a faction within the armed forces engage in active-destructive and passive-destructive forms of behaviors in response to dissatisfaction? The faction in the military organization that has low levels of ***prior satisfaction***, ***investment***, and lack of ***alternatives*** for redress, is likely to be the group that will be insubordinate to government orders to shoot on demonstrators. [7]

First, to the extent that a faction within the armed forces was *satisfied* with the organizational status quo prior to the onset of "trigger" events, destructive behaviors are less likely. That is, greater prior satisfaction should promote constructive behaviors (voice or loyalty) while inhibiting destructive reactions (neglect or sabotage), since a satisfied faction should feel greater motivation to revert back to the previous state of affairs.

A good place to gauge to the extent of prior satisfaction a faction within the military has vis-à-vis the organizational status quo is to examine public and intra-military discourse prior to the onset of the "trigger" events. Satisfaction or the lack thereof might be reflected in murmurings to the media or in internally circulated military publications or forms of communication. Another measure of a faction's level of prior satisfaction is to examine maneuverings within the military organization – evidence of coup and other clandestine plots, secret alliances or deals with opposition and dissident groups.

Second, greater *investment* size between factions should encourage constructive responses to dissatisfaction. Conversely, a faction that has low levels of investments with another faction has less to lose if the relationship were to end, hence a greater likelihood of a destructive response to dissatisfaction. Investment size refers to the magnitude of resources a faction has put into its relationship with another faction. Although a military organization might be factionalized, factional competition does not preclude factional members from establishing and maintaining cross-factional ties. [8]

There are two general types of investments – intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic investments are those resources that are put directly into the relationship such as time and emotional effort. Extrinsic investments occur when initially extraneous resources become inextricably connected to the relationship. These include:

[7] This discussion is drawn extensively from Rusbult & Lowery1985, 83-85; Lyons & Lowery 1986, 333-337; Rusbult 1983, 102-103; Rusbult & Farrell1983, 430-431.

[8] As noted earlier, factional ties are not exclusive; members are free to establish other simultaneous ties so long as they do not involve contradictory obligations.

mutual friends, share memories and material possessions, activities/persons/objects/events uniquely associated with the relationship. Once put in, intrinsic and extrinsic investments cannot be readily removed from the relationship. Investments increase commitment and help to "lock" the individual into a relationship by increasing the costs of ending it – to a greater or lesser degree, to abandon a relationship is to sacrifice invested resources.

The investment size between factions can be assessed by analyzing the degree of interconnectedness across factions. This would entail examining whether members of different military factions are involved in the same businesses; hold directorships in the same companies; socialize or belong to similar ethnic, religious or recreational networks. The more time officers from different factions spend together, the more likely they will invent commonalities and the greater the level of intrinsic investment. [9]

Third, factions within the military organization that lack *alternatives* for redress are more likely to engage in acts of insubordination. These alternatives for action encompass a faction's ability to appeal to other and/or higher authorities within or outside the military organization for assistance to rectify problem brought on by the "trigger" events. Factions that possess alternatives for assistance are more likely to use these options in the face of inter-factional dissatisfaction, and hence more likely to engage in constructive behaviors.

A military faction possess alternatives for redress if leaders further up on the military hierarchy (e.g. service chiefs, chiefs-of-staff, ministers, heads of state) paid attention to factional grievances and intervened on their behalf to rectify the problems. Also, I will also assess the extent factions are able to appeal to individuals or groups outside the military organization (e.g. business tycoons or conglomerates, foreign powers).

Drawing from these premises, we can hypothesize that:

Hypothesis (Factionalism) 1: Military organizations that are factionalized are more likely to be insubordinate to orders to use force against political demonstrators.

Hypothesis (Factionalism) 2: The faction that exhibits low levels of prior satisfaction, investment, and lack alternatives for redress is more likely to be insubordinate to orders to use force against political demonstrators.

[9] See Kier 1998; Ingraham & Manning 1981; MacCoun 1993.

Thailand 1973

Overview [10]

On November 17, 1971, Prime Minister Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn executed a coup against his own government, thereby ending the earlier three-year democratic experiment. The constitution, which was promulgated in 1968, was suspended. Political parties were banned, and military rule imposed on the country. Under this new regime, executive and legislative authority was held by a military junta called the National Executive Council (NEC). Heading the council was Thanom, who retained the office of prime minister and Field Marshal Praphat Charusathian, his deputy prime minister.

Despite stern moves to suppress opposition, popular dissatisfaction against the regime mounted in the universities and labor organizations. Discontent focused on United States' support for Thanom, the growth of Japanese economic influence, and the corruption that the regime made no effort to conceal. The civilian political elite joined students and workers in opposing Thanom's apparent aim to perpetuate a political dynasty through his son, Colonel Narong Kittikachorn, whose rise the officer corps resented. Thanom's aggrandizement of his family was at odds with the image he tried to project and the standards of the "civic religion" with its call for veneration of "Nation-Religion-King."

In December 1972, Thanom announced a new interim constitution that provided for an entirely appointed legislative assembly, two-thirds of the members of which would be drawn from the military and police. In May and June 1973, students and workers rallied in the streets to demand a more democratic constitution and genuine parliamentary elections. By early October, there was renewed violence, protesting the detention of eleven students arrested for handing out antigovernment pamphlets. The demonstrations grew in size and scope as students demanded an end to the military dictatorship. On October 13, more than 100,000 people rallied in Bangkok before the Democracy Memorial in a public display of their grievances against the government, the largest demonstration of its kind at that point in Thai history.

On October 14, 1973, army troops opened fire on the demonstrators, killing hundreds, and occupied the campus of Thammasat University. King Bhumibol, who had been seeking Thanom's ouster, took a direct role in

[10] This chronology is developed from accounts in: *Bangkok Post*, October 16, 1973; *The Nation*, October 21, 1973; *Bangkok Post*, October 21, 1973; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 22, 1973; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 29, 1973.

dealing with the crisis in order to prevent further bloodshed and called Thanom and his cabinet to the Palace for talks. In the evening, the King went on television and radio to announce a compromise solution – Thanom will resign as prime minister but would remain as supreme commander of the armed forces. In consultation with student leaders, the King appointed Sanya Dharmasakti (Sanya Thammasak) as interim prime minister, with instructions to draft a new constitution.

However, Thanom tried to reassert his authority the day following his resignation. He was reported that have said that "drastic and final measures" need to be taken to deal with "insurgents and terrorists" that had slipped into the ranks of the demonstrators. However, recently appointed Commander-in-Chief of the army, Gen. Kris Sivara, opposed this plan and disobey orders to send reinforcements to Bangkok. [11] This refusal prevented the use of stronger measures against the demonstrators and effectively left Thanom and Praphat's political position untenable. On October 15, after being personally ordered by the King, Thanom and Praphat left the country: Praphat for Taiwan and Thanom to the United States.

Subordination then Insubordination

The order to shoot the protestors was given by Marshals Thanom and Praphat. When exactly the decision was made by the two leaders is unclear. However, media reports do indicate that it might have been made as early as October 7 when Marshal Praphat was reported to have told a special meeting of the NEC that "compromises with the lawbreakers could not continue" and that he was willing to "sacrifice" 2 per cent of the estimated 100,000 demonstrators in order to "save" the country. [12] In addition, media reports of October 12 noted that military units from outlying areas were ordered into Bangkok and hospitals in the capital city were warned to be ready for casualties. [13] Explicit instructions from Marshal Thanom to use force were also recorded on October 14. He allegedly said that all military forces were ordered to "fight to their full capacity" to "prevent undesirable incidents and to protect state property (Heinze 1974, 502).

Most of the orders were reportedly passed down through Col. Narong Kittikachorn (Thanom's son and Praphat's son-in-law) and another trusted aide who was the son of a former commander of the 3rd Army. [14] The first wave of shootings was mostly undertaken by riot police personnel, who were supervised by Police Lt-Gen.

[11] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 22, 1973; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 29, 1973.
[12] *The Nation*, October 24, 1973
[13] *Bangkok Post*, October 12, 1973.
[14] *Bangkok Post*, October 16, 1973.

Montchai Pankongchuen, the Assistant Chief of Police. Lt-Gen. Montchai had been working closely with Col. Narong at the Riot Suppression Command, a unit that was hastily set up by Field Marshals Thanom and Praphat on October 10. [15] The soldiers who complied with the orders to shoot the demonstrators were those that were either in the direct control of Col. Narong or had commanders that were closely linked with him. Army troops were drawn primarily from 1st Battalion and 11th Calvary, and backed by a well-trained Rangers Unit at the Special Warfare Centre in Lop Buri – military units that Col. Narong commanded and previously commanded.[16] In fact, it was widely acknowledged that Col. Narong himself had gone up in a UH-1H helicopter gunship to supervise the attack. [17]

The army troops that disobeyed orders to shoot the demonstrators on October 15 were those that were associated with Gen. Kris Sivara. According to media reports, Marshals Thanom and Praphat had clashed with Gen. Kris at Riot Defence Command HQ on October 14. Marshals Thanom and Praphat wanted to continue their strong measures to "wipe out" the demonstrators. Kris opposed this plan and refused to send his troops to help existing troops on the ground and Montchai's riot squads, reportedly declaring: "These young people ... they are our children." [18]

Later on October 14, when the Field Marshals Thanom and Praphat mobilized the Rangers from Lop Buri to support troops and police in Bangkok that were running out of ammunition, Kris decided to respond more aggressively by ordering Gen. Prasert Thammasiri, commander of the 1st Army to bring in his troops then in Bangkok's suburbs to foil the order. Left with not options, the Thanom, Praphat and Narong agreed to leave the country a few hours later. [19]

<u>The Principal-Agent Model</u>

The principals in this case study are Field Marshals Thanom and Praphat, and the two agents involved in the event are – Col. Narong Kittikachorn and Gen. Kris Sivara. [20] Did the two principals possess the requisite

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[15] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 29, 1973.
[16] *The Nation*, October 21, 1973; *Bangkok Post*, October 21, 1973; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 29, 1973.
[17] *The Nation*, October 21, 1973; Personal interview, February 2, 2005.
[18] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 22, 1973.
[19] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 29, 1973.
[20] Since Col. Narong is Thanom's son and Praphat's son-in-law, and a key member of the NEC, the expectation is that he is unlikely to defy orders to defend the regime by using forceful means to clamp-down on protestors. While that has turned out to be the case, the larger question is why other military officers (allied with Col. Narong) have followed suit by complying with orders to shoot on demonstrators. Conversely, Gen. Kris may have disobeyed orders to shoot, but why did other officers associated with Kris go along with noncompliant act?

institutional capacity to detect malfeasance and control personnel decisions within the armed forces in the period leading up to the events of October 1973?

In this section, I argue that institutional controls at the time of demonstrations, and in the years leading up to the events of October 1973 were deficient. Indeed, as a scholar of Thai politics once wrote, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the situation within the Thai armed forces was one where "various factions retained spheres of influence and hegemony in which they operate unfettered," and individual officers were permitted to take independent action (political and economic), without close scrutiny from the ruling junta (Morell 1974, 136-137).

In the 10 years Thanom and Praphat were in office, there was no dedicated internal security agency to monitor the activities of the military officers. Thanom and Praphat asserted institutional control by granting the officer corps wide-ranging autonomy to pursue its business interests. As David Morell argues, "rewarding the faithful and the susceptible" in exchange for political support was the single most important strategy of rule for Thanom and Praphat. This approach mainly entailed allowing the officer corps to receive kickbacks and bribes from commercial undertakings. Competition between within the officer corps remained muted so long as these spoils were shared (Morell 1974, 846).

A good illustration of this "sharing of spoils" is the neat division of booming sectors of the Thai economy in the 1960s and early 1970s among the key military officers. For example, Col. Narong managed the highly lucrative petroleum sector in the early 1970s. He was reportedly behind the joint venture between Kuwait and Thai International Petroleum Company (TIPCO) to construct then the country's fourth major oil refinery. Narong was also behind TIPCO's attempts to secure direct import rights from crude oil sources at cheaper prices than local refineries through the barter of oil for Thai rice. [21]

Another thriving sector in the Thai economy was the businesses that were involved in the American military activities in Thailand and Indochina. Construction and infrastructural work for the secret US airbases in the Northeast of Thailand, and ancillary services for the US troops stationed in Thailand and constant stream of "rest and recreation ("R & R") soldiers, all produced an enormous boom in the Thai economy. 15 per cent of

[21] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 1, 1972 ; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 17, 1973; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 8, 1973;

Thai export earnings were due to the services provided for US troops, and half of the growth in the Thai GNP between 1966-68 was due to US spending (Hoadley 1975, 32; Surachart 1985, 152-155).

These US military-related contracts broke the exclusivity of the traditional relationship between the Sino-Thai business community and the members of the military elite and opened the way for mid-level generals, who were unfamiliar with the intricacies of the Sino-Thai business networks but dealing often with US-oriented Thai contractors, contracts, and equipment, to accumulate wealth independent from the patronage of the top generals. Thai entrepreneurs building the homes, nightclubs, hotels, and massage parlors for Americans at the airbases, or contractors providing food, transport and services, found that the necessary patron they require need not be as foremost as Thanom or Praphat, but instead could be the Thai commander of an American airbase, or the regional army commander. US airbase construction has been estimated to have generated over US$2 billion for the Thai economy, and some of this was certainly hived off as "commissions" for certain generals. [22]

One major beneficiary of Thailand's congenial relationship with the Americans was Gen. Kris. Gen. Kris, who as commander of the 2nd Army Area from 1960 to 1962, oversaw the beginning of the Thai-American military relationship. For the Americans, Kris was the most important liaison in the Thai military as they started their Northeast counterinsurgency program (Thompson 1975, 36-37). A list drawn up by a former Thai member of parliament showed that a sizeable number of Kris' business holdings centered on enterprises that served the American presence directly or indirectly – construction, transport, restaurants, hotels (Morell 1974, appendix C).

Kris' associates also benefited from Thailand's cozy relationship with the Americans. During this period, almost all of the US$20 million "R & R" related spending was routed through a single tourist agency which reportedly had cordial connections with Minister of Communications, Air Chief Marshal Dawee Chullasapya. [23]

However, by 1971, it became apparent that this system of sharing the spoils among the officer corps was becoming an increasingly untenable mechanism for the ruling junta to assert control over certain segments of the armed forces. Praphat, in particular, was challenged on two fronts. The first was a major drive for power by Thanom's aides – his younger brother, Police Maj. Gen. Sanga Kitikachorn and Lt. Gen. Sawaeng Senanarong, Thanom's personal aide since 1957. From all indications these individuals were determined to develop a strong

[22] *Indochina Chronicle*, May-June 1975.

[23] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 9, 1970. When Dawee Chullasapya was charged with plotting against Marshal Sarit (the previous Prime Minister), it was Kris who intervened to prevent Dawee from facing his executioners. See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 25, 1971.

position for political succession upon the eventual retirement of Thanom. While many observers at that time doubted that Sanga and Sawaeng possessed any real "horsepower" to mount such a campaign, Praphat nonetheless began to perceive a real threat to his future when rumors began circulating that Sanga had begun to contemplate a coup of his own to remove Praphat and his followers from power. In September/October 1971, Sanga reportedly contacted a powerful Army general, soliciting an alliance to implement a coup d'etat. This general said that he would consider the proposal but instead he turned to Praphat with the information (Morell 1974, 759-760).

Second, changes were also being contemplated to the armed forces establishment that could potentially upset the balance of power towards Praphat's foes. A new Army Division was being formed around Thai combat units returning from Vietnam. This so-called "Division 9," located in Kanchanaburi (west of Bangkok), was already at partial strength by mid 1971. It had been primarily a training unit, responsible for preparing troops for service in Vietnam. However, plans were made to assign an entire combat-experienced brigade to the operational control of Division 9, making it perhaps the most formidable combat unit in Thailand, either for conventional defense, insurgency suppression or coup activities. Division 9 was commanded by Gen. Uem Chirapongse, who was married to Thanom's oldest daughter, and therefore thought to be anti-Praphat (Morell 1974, 763-764).

To reassert the ruling junta's (or more appropriately Praphat's) authority, just after dusk on November 17, 1971, Thanom and Praphat carried out a coup against themselves. The coup's objective was to alter the form of government and to circumscribe the power of certain individuals within the armed forces. Field Marshals Thanom and Praphat and other key leaders continued to hold the same positions of power. More importantly, the putsch of November 1971 was perhaps a clear indication that the principals (Praphat, more so than Thanom) did not have the requisite institutional capacity to rein in an increasingly recalcitrant segment of the officer corps (Morell 1972, 163). Indeed, as Thanom stated in a press conference two days after the coup:

> He said that he has always been patient with criticism of himself. He admitted however, that there were times when he thought his patience would come to an end one day. "And that day has come … (Morell 1972, 157).

<u>Thai Military Organizational Culture</u>

Did the Thai military regard the domestic political environment as conflictual, and threatening in the late 1960s and early 1970s? Did the officer corps perceive political opposition in adversarial terms? In this section, I

argue that the Thai armed forces did not possess an organizational culture that was permissive to the use force against political demonstrators. Instead, as I will demonstrate, the officer corps was driven primarily by the pursuit wealth and political power. In many respects, the Thai military at that time was more accurately "a cluster of self-absorbed, status-conscious, privileged" group of officers (Anderson 1978, 205).

For the Thai military, the primary concern of internal stability in the 1950s to the early 1970s emanated from the incipient communist insurgency. [24] The Thai military leaders' perception of the communist challenge was essentially that of a foreign-driven problem. This can be explained by the origin of the communist movement in Thailand, which was closely linked to the ethnic Chinese and, to a lesser extent, the Vietnamese. Among ethnic Thais, the communists made such slow progress that when the first Congress of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) was held in 1942, the members were almost entirely Chinese. Thus, a belief developed within the military establishment that equated communism with minority problems.

The lackadaisical concern of the communist movement persisted through the 1960s. The CPT was not declared illegal until 1962. The view that the insurgency was externally-driven was reinforced by reports that the Pathet Lao were recruiting and training Lao-Thais in the Northeast and hill-tribesmen and sending them back to Thailand.

The first act of overt armed insurgency, however, did occur on August 7, 1965 when communist guerrillas attacked Thai forces in the Nakae District of northeast Thailand. Battalion-size units were ordered to the affected areas. "Search-and-destroy" operations were carried out together with air and artillery attacks to eliminate the insurgents. The conventional nature of the military response was based on the understanding that the insurgency was driven by guerrilla bands, and did not involve the party apparatus and its related elements. The appropriate military reaction, therefore, seemed to entail the use of overwhelming military force to quickly destroy these guerrilla bands. Marshal Praphat confidently predicted that the guerrillas would be crushed within six months if enough resources were diverted to the effort.

This view of the embryonic communist insurgency was influenced heavily by the United States. Many Thai officers, who were trained in American staff colleges, equated the communist threat with the Soviet Union

[24] This discussion of the CPT and the communist insurgency is taken from Samudavanija et. al. 1990, 49-57.

and China, and regarded Thai communists as under the direction of these foreign powers. A leading Thai general once said:

> … the insurgency has no real root in this country and is essentially an external creation, then it seems to us that the use of military force to destroy guerrilla bands on the basis of sound intelligence is both appropriate and legitimate. We believe that Thai villagers are basically loyal and that they are capable … given proper support and motivation … of organizing themselves against communist subversion and terror …

The Thai military took over the task of communist suppression from the policy fully in 1966 and created the Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) to coordinate nation-wide operations. The army was reluctant to assume this new role and considered it only an ad hoc assignment.

The Thai students, who were the chief drivers of the October 1973 demonstrations, were not considered part of the communist problem. In the 1950s, few student activists joined the CPT. Most Thai University students came from middle class or lower middle class backgrounds. Their principal aim has been to obtain a higher education in order to qualify for entrance into the government bureaucracy, and allow them to advance through a subsequent bureaucratic career (Morell & Samudavanija 1979, 315-316).

In the 1950s and 1960s, as a result of the Thai government's suppression following the Anti-Communist Act, the CPT was forced to concentrate its activities on mobilizing rural villages outside Bangkok and key provincial towns, where policing was less effective. The CPT remained on the defensive in the period 1957-1963, gradually expanding its base in rural areas but unable to increase its activities elsewhere. As far as mobilizing the youth was concerned, the CPT viewed students as "soft-minded intellectual bourgeois" who were not truly committed to revolutionary struggle (Morell & Samudavanija 1979, 315-316).

From 1965 to 1973, the CPT's activities in Bangkok were limited. This was partly due to military suppression, but even more so to the major setback caused by the arrest of several party members in 1968, including two members of the Central Committee. As such, the party spent most of this period sustaining and developing its village support base and its small armed guerrilla bands, which had begun to come under attack from the military, especially in the northeast (Morell & Samudavanija 1979, 316).

In short, the Thai military, although uneasy about the burgeoning communist insurgency, especially in the northeast, did not view the domestic political environment as ominous. Certainly, they did not perceive the students as belonging to and contributing to the insurgency.

Instead, the major preoccupation of Thai military officers appears to be their devotion to business and political activities. As scholars have noted, one of the key characteristics of Thai economic development since the 1950s has been the military elite's participation in commercial activities (Suehiro 1989, 140-172). The bulk of the business interactions were with Sino-Thai enterprises who obtained Thai military protection when they placed Thai military leaders on the boards of their businesses. For the Thai officers, these relationships were additional sources of income to supplement often low salaries (Morell & Samudavanija 1981, 62). Fred Riggs has detailed the extent of military elite participation in business affairs in the 1950s. In the period 1952 to 1957, out of the 107 firms that had military participants, 42 companies had three or more military cabinet officials on their boards (Riggs1966, 255).

Military participation in commercial activities is rife, and most senior officers' wealth emanates from these activities. Membership on these corporate boards, along with access to the economic resources of these companies creates a virtuous cycle of sorts – it builds the capabilities for further political control and influence, which in turn guarantees increased access to even more financial resources (Morell & Samudavanija 1981, 62).

An observer may be confused by the oft-heard rhetoric from the Thai military citing national security concerns when justifying their actions such as coups as constitutive of organizational culture. On the occasion of the 1933 military coup for example, it was announced that: "… as the action of the [Supreme State Council is contrary to the provisions of the Constitution … the Army, Navy, and Civil service therefore find it necessary to take control of the government (Hoadley 1975, 17). Similarly, in 1947, the coup leaders proclaimed that:

> Whereas the soldiers, the officials, the civilians, the police, and the people of the Thai nation are of the unanimous opinion that … the present government is not able to correct things in such a manner as to continue in a good way … so it is necessary to seize power and force the government to resign and set up a new government in accordance with the constitution in order to aid in cleaning up the dishonesty and evil of various kinds in the government circle.

In 1951, the dissolution of the elected National Assembly was justified in the following manner:

> The present Council of Ministers as well as Parliament have been unable to solve the Communist problem. Nor has it been able to stamp out the so-called corruption as has been its intention. Disintegration has spread so deeply as to cause grave anxiety for the continued existence of the nation in its present political danger.

And in 1957, the outset of Phibun by his former deputy Sarit was validated as follows:

> I hold the peace and happiness of the people to be first. Therefore when the people have suffered hardship and have called on me to correct the situation, I together with my military comrades of the three services have returned to serve you another time.

Indeed, in Thailand, as in many developing countries, the military have considered themselves to be the defenders of national security. Even today, this traditional perception prevails in the thinking of Thai military leaders:

> In accordance with the Constitution, the Royal Thai Armed Forces has the responsibility of safeguarding the sovereignty, security, and national interest of the State, conducting armed conflict of war, acting as a deterrent in order to protect the Institution of the Monarchy, and suppressing and deterring rebellion and anarchy in order to maintain the security of the State and to develop the country (Wattanayagorn 1998, 423-424)

However, to what extent is this self-perception of the altruistic role of the Thai military authentic? Scholars should not discount the possibility that military officers could be using culture instrumentally – saying what they think that are supposed to say rather than what they really believe (Kier 1997, 32-33).

In reality, the idea of "national security" in the Thai context must be understood partly as a rhetorical device, a mantra recited ritualistically by generations of Thai military officers in an attempt to justify their over-sized organization and comfortable sinecures. There can be few other militaries in the world where promotion to general is so common. Promotion to major-general is almost automatic for graduates of the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy (CRMA) who do not seriously blot their copy books. The Thai military has a very large number of senior officers, many of whom have almost literally nothing to do (McCargo 2002, 52). [25]

It should be highlighted that "security" (as conventionally understood in strategic studies) has never been the central task of the armed forces in Thailand. Instead, the pursuit of "security," as understood from the perspective of the Thai military has sometimes amounted to finding strategies to avoid having to fight anyone. Although there is little doubt that the Thai military displayed considerable professionalism during the Indochina conflict, by the 1980s, the Thai military had developed much more effective methods of combating insurgencies than previously. Truth be told, the most successful anticommunist strategy of the Thai military was its amnesty policy for communist insurgents, which yielded dramatic results in the early 1980s. Rather than fight communism in the jungles, the military decided to wait for the radicals to emerge from the jungle of their own accord. Since many of the so-called communist rebels were never members of the Beijing-backed CPT, but actually middle-class students from Bangkok with little inclination for a lifetime of guerrilla warfare, the amnesty strategy proved

[25] The *Bangkok Post* notes in 1998 there were an estimated 1,300 to 1,400 generals in the Thai army, about half of them in inactive posts (*Bangkok Post*, March 5, 1998). Chamlong Srimuang, as a colonel attached to the military's Supreme Command from 1981-85, spent most of his time driving around the country, preaching Buddhist sermons in the manner of a wandering monk. Playing golf is a more common way of filling in time.

highly successful. Also, it should be noted that the Sino-Vietnamese split, which resulted from the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1979, led China to cut off aid to the CPT, resulting directly in the decline of the insurgency (McCargo 2002, 52).

Essentially, the concept of national security was manipulated as a means of securing the privileged political standing of the military, and to justify an extension of the military role into a wide range of political arenas. As Muthiah Alagappa has noted:

> [Since 1932] successive military regimes have used the label of national security to justify the usurpation of political power and their subsequent political actions... Of significance in this connection is the recent attempt to institutionalize the dominant role of the military in Thai politics under the mantle of national security. The military is now not only assigned the traditional role of national defense but is also assigned the custodial role of the traditional institutions, and a leading role in defining and building a democratic framework suitable to Thailand. The lack of consensus over the exercise of state authority makes it exceedingly difficult to differentiate normal political intercourse from activities that may be considered as threats to national security (Alagappa 1987, 71).

Inter-faction Conflict and Military Insubordination

Was the Thai military factionalized prior to the crack-down of October 1973? Were there significant events that gave rise to dissatisfaction in one faction vis-à-vis another? In this part of the paper, I argue that factionalism was rife among key officers of the Thai armed forces in the period leading to October 1973. But far more important was the meteoric rise of Col. Narong Kittikachorn, whose political ascent led to increasing discontent within the military high command. The insubordination of orders to use force against demonstrators on October 15 was thus the discontented faction's response to the deteriorating relationship vis-à-vis Thanom, Praphat and Narong.

Before proceeding further it may be useful to begin by examining how Field Marshals Thanom and Praphat's rose to power. Thanom and Praphat were part of a faction within the Thai armed forces called the "military group (*Khana Thahan*)" that gained prominence following the coup of September 1957 against Marshal Phibul Songkram. The *Khana Thahan* group was overwhelmingly army-centered, comprising the commanders of the most strategic, Bangkok-based army units. Thanom and Praphat were part of the group of 31 officers that played key roles in the coup of September 1957 and another in October 1958, which led to Marshal Sarit's rise to power (Morell 1974, 114-115). After Sarit's death in 1963, Thanom became the prime minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Army. In 1964 he relinquished this position to Praphat who held the post until 1973 when Kris Sivara was appointed.

Composition of the 1957 Coup Group	
* Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat	* General Thanom Kittikachorn
General Suthisaarn Ronakarn	Police General Sawai Sawaisaenyakon
* General Praphat Charusathien	* General Surachit Charuserani
* General Chitti Navisathien	Lieutenant General Chalor Charukarat
Lieutenant General Rassamee Ruchanawat	Lieutenant General Chiam Yanothani
* Police General Prasert Ruchirawong	* Lieutenant General Krit Punnakan
Lieutenant General Prachern Nimibut	Lieutenant General Amphorn Chintakanon
Lieutenant General Poing Punnakan	* Lieutenant General Kris Sivara
Lieutenant General Champen Charusathien	* Admiral Chaman Ayuthya
Admiral Sanong Thanasak	* Air Chief Marshal Chalermkiat Watanakun
Air Chief Marshal Boonchu Chantarubeksa	Police Major General Torsak Yomanak
Police Major General Sanga Kittikachorn	
* The "inner core" of the *Khana Thahan* group	

Hence, for 16 years (September 1957 to October 1973), Thailand was ruled by the *Khana Thahan* group, with these three military men – Thanom, Praphat and Kris – forming its core. Each had risen to power through the classic route – by being Commander of the 1st Army (garrisoned in Bangkok). [26] Just prior to the October 1973 demonstrations, the three men held the following positions (Samudavanija 1982, 21):

Thanom: Prime Minister and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces

Praphat: Deputy Prime Minister, Deputy Supreme Commander and Minister of Defense

Kris: Commander-in-Chief of the Army

- *Factionalism within the Khana Thahan*

Thanom's succession to the prime ministership following Sarit's death was a straightforward issue. Thanom was Sarit's designated choice, both for the prime minister and as leader of the *Khana Thahan* group. He was senior to all other inner circle leaders in governmental positions, age, and date of military rank. He also had previous experience as prime minister, serving in that portfolio from December 1957 to October 1958 when Sarit was in the United States for medical treatment. Indeed, Thanom was clearly the only member of the *Khana Thahan* group that was best able to engender respect within the military, the bureaucracy, the general public and with the palace (Morell & Samudavanija 1981, 52). However, despite the great respect that Thanom enjoyed in the armed forces, Thanom's political control over the organization was fragile because he held no actual military position. He had to establish mutually beneficial arrangements, especially with Praphat, to govern. In addition, Thanom did not relish the heavy responsibilities he carried, and he frequently stated that he would like to relinquish the prime ministership (Morell & Samudavanija 1981, 52).

[26] Thanom was commander from 1950 to 1952; Praphat from 1952 to 1957; and Krit from 1957 to 1961.

As Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior and Commander-in-Chief of the Army (before 1973), Praphat has been thought of as next in line to succeed Thanom. But Praphat's position was not based on personal respect, but rather on his direct control of political and military power. As Army commander and Interior Minister, he controlled the administration of the entire rural countryside and the municipality of Bangkok. Of all the senior military leaders, Praphat was widely regarded as the most heavily involved in commercial activities. The Thanom-Praphat alliance was mutually beneficial. Praphat was the strong decisive leader and his keen perceptions of the domestic political dynamics and his vast resources of authority and wealth allowed him to operate successfully within the networks of military and politicos. But where he was weakest – reputation (overly corrupt), relations with the palace, international contacts – Thanom was strong. But here in lies the dilemma as well, Praphat though possessing extensive political power, lacked the reputation to assume the topmost position. Indeed, without Thanom, Praphat would be quite vulnerable (Morell & Samudavanija 1981, 53-56).

When Thanom's intention to relinquish the country's top post was made known, a scramble for power within the *Khana Thahan* group quickly ensued. Coupled with the growing level of tensions emanating from the competing political and business interests of individual officers, it was apparent by the early 1970 that the *Khana Thahan* group had ruptured into four main groups. The configuration consisted of a clique that was loyal to Praphat and three anti-Praphat groups – one that centered around Police Gen. Sanga Kittikachorn (Thanom's brother) and Gen. Sawaeng Senarong (Thanom's long time aide and confidante), another comprising the police-based faction of Police Chief Gen. Prasert Ruchirawongse, and the final an army-based group led by Gen. Kris Sivara.

- *Sanga Kittikachorn–Sawaeng Senarong Faction*: As detailed in the discussion on the principal-agent model, this group was attempting to develop a strong position for political succession upon the eventual retirement of Thanom. The basis of this faction was its leaders' close relations with Thanom. The clique's activities centered mainly in the regime's United Thai People's Party (UTTP) and in parliament, where Sanga and Sawaeng worked hard to increase its power base vis-à-vis Praphat and his followers. The faction did so by organizing aggressive and widely publicized campaigns against corruption and advocating democracy – direct barbs against the activities of Praphat and his faction (Morell 1972).

- *Prasert Ruchirawongse Faction*: Factional competition had become particularly intense over the political power and personal role of Police Gen. Prasert since 1963. Prasert and Praphat had been at odds for some years, a battle emanating from the traditional Army-Police rivalry, [27] their struggle for control of the Ministry of the Interior and competition for control of Village Security Forces. [28] Praset's faction draws from within the 75,000 strong police force, his close connections with the commercial and banking community, and from his former associates in the army (he is a former army Major General and Commander of the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Division in Bangkok). Prasert was due to reach the mandatory civil service retirement age of 60 in 1972. He and his supporters wanted the NEC to waive the requirement, as had been done a year earlier for Thanom in his military position as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Praphat's faction resisted this move and won. It was reported that one major reason for Prasert's departure was opposition to him by Narong and his mother, Thanphuying Chongkol Kittikachorn. [29] Their animosity dates back from an incident in 1970 when Army troops under Narong's command, apparently drunk, attacked and demolished a police installation in Bangkok. Prasert publicly criticized Narong for this incident, and Narong ever forgot the insult. Prasert was forced to retire as Chief of Police on October 1, 1972 and replaced by Praphat himself (Morell 1973, 163-165; Ho 1981).
- *Kris Sivara Faction*: Kris' close personal ties with the Americans and burgeoning business interests that were also tied to the American military presence were the key sources of contention with Praphat. In the 1960s, the bulk of the American involvement in Thailand was concentrated on the Thai northeast. As alluded to in an earlier section, as the most senior Thai commander in the northeast region, Kris participated in the drafting of counterinsurgency plans with the Americans and his competence in this task impressed his allies much to the detriment of Praphat. Kris also used his command tour in the northeast to build ties with a variety of businessmen and politicians in this region, which he tapped in the 1969 elections when he was the UTTP's party manager (Morell 1974, 125-126). In addition, to the northeast links, Kris was personally close

[27] This animosity goes as far back as the early 1950s, when the police under Gen. Phao Sriyanon were a heavily-armed competitor to the Army. Following Sarit's coup of 1957, the police was placed under Army leadership and control. It is commonly felt that the Army views the police as "too fat and too rich," and sees Prasert as the fattest and the richest.
[28] The Village Security Force (VSF) was an American initiated plan to merge the myriad counter-insurgency units patterned on the South Vietnam model into a new national village militia program (Ho 1981).
[29] Narong was apparently the favorite son of Chongkol, who in turn has enormous influence over Thanom and independent power of her own from her extensive commercial interests.

to the key leaders of the 1st Army. Kris' close army links developed largely because Praphat was often too heavily involved in his commercial activities and had tasked the day-to-day management decisions to Kris. One such person that Kris had established particularly close ties to was Gen. Prasert Thammasiri, the 1st Army's chief, the officer whom Kris relied on to support with troops when he defied orders to shoot the protestors on October 15 (Zimmerman 1978, 49-53; Morell 1974, appendix C).

Both the Sanga-Sawaeng and Prasert factions suffered after the 1971 coup and only the Kris faction augmented its position, eventually becoming the sole challenger to Praphat's ambitions of succeeding Thanom. In many respects, just two factions were left standing to compete for the spoils within the Thai military – Praphat and Kris.

Sanga was pointedly excluded from the list of coup participants in 1971, though his explanation was that he had chosen not to take part. Sanga was appointed "special envoy" to the United Nations which, given his close relationship with Thanom, which was the most respectable form of exile possible. Sawaeng was allowed to remain as Thanom's personal aide in the Prime Minister's office. As for Prasert, he was replaced by Praphat as the chief of the police. Some of Prasert's key followers were soon forced out of the police, with the most serious charge being one of drug trafficking against Prasert's old colleague, the chief of the drugs suppression unit. Prasert was implicated by rumor, and his new cabinet post of Public Health Minister was only a face-saving path to retirement.[30]

Following the coup, Kris assumed the role of chief of the NEC Secretariat. This was a key position as all proposals from the ministries and advisory groups were screened by him before reaching the other leaders. Kris also prepared the agendas of all NEC meetings, coordinated the operations of all ministries and ensured that Thanom's orders were implemented. Though in direct competition with Praphat, Kris' ascension was probably the consequence of the instrumental role he played before the coup in holding together the old UTTP under Thanom. Herding the UTPP's rebellious MPs like a shepherd, Kris helped to push several important government bills through the Lower House. Indeed, it was Kris who changed almost certain defeat of the UTTP into one of the narrowest of victories in House of Representatives history when he literally dragged a UTPP member from the lavatories to vote for the controversial 1970 tax bill. It was no wonder then that most political observers in

[30] *Insight*, January 1973, 42-43. Cited in Ho 1981.

Bangkok at that time tipped Kris as the man to watch. [31]

Although Kris and his clique emerged from the 1971 coup in a stronger political position, the subsequent ascendancy of Col. Narong Kittikachorn – Thanom's eldest son who was married Praphat's daughter – quickly dissipated the gains his faction had made a year earlier.

- *Trigger Event #1: Conflicting Ideas Event*

The year 1972 saw the sudden and rapid emergence of Col. Narong, a young officer who had fought in Vietnam. It was rare that year when one would open a Bangkok newspaper and not see stories or photographs depicting Narong's activities. He headed a widely-reported campaign to suppress corruption in the Army conscription system; directed a program to suppress heroin smuggling; responded to cries for help from girls kidnapped into brothels; met with students from Prasarnmit College of Education protesting their lack of university status; and gave a multitude of speeches on topics ranging from national ideology to pollution (Morell 1973, 165). Narong certainly did not make any effort to hide his rising prominence, boasting at times that he was the driving force behind the 1971 coup and that he was going to be the first President of Thailand (Bamrungsuk 1985, 170).

But Narong's claim to fame had a solid basis: he was Assistant to the NEC's Director of National Security (Praphat) and Chairman of the "Committee to Suppress Those Dangerous to Society." Narong was also close to several battalion commanders in the 1st Army, many of whom were his classmates at the Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy (Morell 1973, 165).

- *Trigger Event #2: Legitimizing Event*

Although it is not uncommon for the children from well-connected families in Thailand to receive preferential treatment throughout their lives (school, career, etc.), Col. Narong's meteoric rise in the military hierarchy was qualitatively distinct from those who had gone before him. The military elite could no just longer regard him as no more than a leading Young Turk in the army. Undeniably, as the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the widely respected Asian newsmagazine noted in August 1972: "there is a difference between being known and being heard in Thailand … Narong certainly is making himself heard." [32]

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[31] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 25, 1971.
[32] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 12, 1972.

To the military, especially Kris' faction, the officers realized that Narong ascendance was atypical when he was appointed to head "Committee to Suppress Those Dangerous to Society," later renamed the more staid "Bureau for the Investigation and Follow-Up of Government Operations [BIFGO]." His task was to get tough with corrupt officials in the armed forces and in the civil service. Then, BIFGO was expected to become just another annual exercise in "doing nothing." But Narong meant business. BIFGO became a carte blanche for Narong to extend his activities into any area or issue that he wished. He focused his "investigative" efforts in particular, on the patron-client networks of military leaders, especially those of Prasert Ruchirawongse and Kris Sivara. High-ranking military and police officers within Prasert and Kris' networks began to face charges of corruption and tax evasion. In contrast, his allies and that of Thanom and Praphat were left alone by BIFGO, and were rewarded with large new government contracts.

Narong's overt acts of factional targeting turned into a major source of resentment within the military, with some officers opining that Narong had over-played his hand, and that powerful generals will deflect his rise (Morell & Samudavanija 1981, 148; Morell 1973, 166). Narong's rise and actions augmented the position of the Praphat faction and undermined Kris'. However, why was insubordination the preferred response of Kris' faction to dissatisfaction vis-à-vis Praphat's?

- *Insubordination as a Response to Dissatisfaction*
  - Ambiguous Levels of Prior Satisfaction: In the period prior to Narong's ascendance, several of Kris' activities brought him into direct competition with Praphat. The first was Kris close professional ties with the United States military, which he cultivated at the expense of Praphat (Ho 1981). Second, Kris' extensive commercial undertakings, which he developed when he was the key contact person for the Thai military in the northeast, brought him into direct economic competition with Praphat, whose business linkages although predominantly Sino-Thai (Suehiro 1989, 140-172), was hitherto the most extensive of any officer in the armed forces. In a list of military business connections drawn up by a Thai member of parliament in 1969, Kris was reportedly a board member on 50 firms, 6 more than Praphat (Morell 1974, appendix C).

    However, it is not entirely clear if these sources of rivalry led to Kris resenting Praphat or instead made Praphat begrudge Kris' growing stature as a challenge to his political position. Despite

Kris' public display of loyalty towards Thanom and Praphat, especially during the parliamentary period, it has to be said there were enough rumors circulating in the early 1970s that Kris was forming groups to move against Thanom and Praphat for one to question Kris intentions. However, it is hard at this point, to be entirely certain of the extent of Kris' (dis)satisfaction with the military organizational status quo prior to the "trigger" events. Indeed, scholars of Thai politics who are knowledgeable about the 1960s and 1970s note that Kris was a "mysterious figure" throughout this period, who was "powerful and ambitious," but apparently preferred to "operate in the shadows (Morell 1974, 126)."

- Low Levels of Investment: On an intrinsic level, Kris and Praphat's investments were high based on their long history of working together in the Bangkok garrisons, their common army academy schooling, and their mutual participation in the 1957 and 1971 coups. However, when one examines the extent of extrinsic investment (joint material possessions) between the two, a far different picture emerges. In that same list of military business connections drawn up by the Thai Member of Parliament in 1969, out of a total of 347 firms surveyed, Kris and Praphat served jointly on the board of only one commercial enterprise (Morell 1974, appendix C). This statistic is astounding since Thai military officers' participation in business enterprises have always played a crucial role in maintaining harmony within the military organization as the non-martial linkages often cut across factional and personal cleavages to produce common requirements for mutual protection (Morell 1974, 137). For example, despite Praphat's obvious disdain for Prasert Ruchirawongse, the two officers served jointly on the board of 10 firms. The juxtaposition of these two statistics demonstrates that despite the high levels of intrinsic investment between Kris and Praphat, their personal ambitions and rivalries were far more significant determinants in their relationship with one another.
- Lack of Alternatives: Although Kris' dissatisfaction was directed towards Praphat and Narong, Kris was unable to turn to Thanom for redress – it would be problematic for Thanom to castigate either Narong or Praphat. First, Narong was purportedly the favorite son of Thanom's wife Chongkol, who in turn had enormous influence over Thanom (Morell 1973, 165). Thus it was unlikely that Thanom would have been unaware of and not sanctioned Narong's actions vis-à-vis Kris and the other factions. Second, as noted earlier, Thanom's grip on political power was fragile because he held no actual military position.

Thanom had come to rely on Praphat's influence to manage the various military-politicos. Rebuking Praphat would have affected this symbiotic relationship, one in which Thanom tolerated Praphat's extensive commercial activities and Praphat reciprocated by ensuring Thanom's political influence was not tenuous.

Though Kris had maintained excellent relations with the United States, it was unlikely that he could have turned to them for assistance. In 1972/73, the United States was in the midst of Vietnamization – an attempt to honorably disengage from the Vietnam War by having the South Vietnamese fight the communists. With strong domestic pressures to extricate themselves from Southeast Asia, it is therefore unlikely that the United States would have risked the disengagement process by being involved in an essentially a factional struggle within the Thai armed forces which also did not have any bearing on the larger conflict with the communist world.

In a nutshell, despite the ambiguous levels of prior satisfaction, one can nonetheless conclude that Kris' faction was likely to engage in an active-destructive response to discontentment vis-à-vis Praphat and his clique. This inference is based on Kris' lack of alternatives for redress and the stark levels of low investment Kris had in his relationship with Praphat.

Conclusion

The central question of this paper is why certain militaries comply with government orders to use force on political demonstrators while others do not. I offered three propositions to explain the puzzle – an explanation based on principal-agent models, another derived from studies of organizational culture, and one centered on inter-factional conflict within a military organization. I tested these propositions by examining the Thai military's response to demonstrations in October 1973 – an event where the armed forces first shot protestors but later refused orders to do so a day later.

The paper notes that in the period leading up to the events of 1973, the ruling junta did not have the institutional capacity to monitor malfeasance in the military nor did they have the ability to control personnel decisions. The main mechanism for asserting institutional control over the Thai military was to grant the officer corps wide-ranging access to pursue their commercial interests. Perhaps, the most visible manifestation of the

Thanom and Praphat's lack of institution control over the armed forces was the regime's coup against themselves – an attempt to circumscribe the activities of a recalcitrant segment in the military.

There was likewise no evidence of a Thai military organizational culture that was permissive to the use of force on political protestors. As I detail in the paper, the main internal security focus of the Thai military establishment in the 1960s and 1970s was the budding communist insurgency in the northeast. In addition, the main occupational focus of the officer corps was on personal aggrandizement.

However, the inter-factional proposition explains the variation in responses to shoot on protestors. The Thai military obeyed orders to crack-down on the demonstrations on October 14 because this act was carried out by a faction of the armed forces that was loyal to the ruling junta (Thanom and Praphat). The decision to disobey orders was carried by the faction led by Kris Sivara. As I demonstrated in the essay, Kris' decision to defy orders is best depicted as a response to dissatisfaction vis-à-vis Praphat and Narong.

This study hopes to improve on existing studies on factionalism in the civil-military relations literature. Traditionally, civil-military relations have been defined largely in terms of a balance – between the organization and *cohesion* of military elites and institutions on one hand, and the organization and *cohesion* of civilian elites and their institutions on the other. However, scholars have become cognizant that the military, especially in the developing world, is not the organizational juggernaut it was once perceived to be. The political behavior of the armed forces in regions such as Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, now appears to be influenced as much by their fragmentation and organizational incoherence as by their tight structure and cohesiveness.

However, many of these studies that do analyze factionalism in the military are largely descriptive, and focus essentially on demonstrating that factionalism is evident in the various military organizations. The key undertaking of these studies seems to be to critique Samuel Huntington's view and that of many other political scientists and military historians, which is the corporateness of armed forces. Indeed, these studies do not develop causal arguments to explain how factionalism (as an independent variable) leads specific types of military organizational behavior (dependent variable). In other words, no causal account exists to elucidate how factionalism affects political outcomes.

The inter-factional model developed in this paper here aims to address this shortcoming. It shows how factionalism within a military organization led to the insubordination of orders to use force on protestors. And it

also elucidates the conditions under which factionalism leads to noncompliance of orders to fire on demonstrators.

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