Democratic Consolidation: Thailand’s attempt at democracy
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the process of democratic consolidation in Thailand between 1997-2006. The country’s consolidation of democracy has been hampered by continuous cycle of coup d’états which throughout history have halted the overall process of democratization. The coup of 2006 is one example of those instances where the democratic consolidation process was interrupted.

The method used to examine the years of 1997-2006 was theory consuming by qualitative text analysis where the data used to assess the situation was qualitative. The theory of democratic consolidation was offered by Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan. The theory’s prerequisites were applied to examine the case study of Thailand. The theory chosen were hoped to give a plausible explanation for the failure of democratic consolidation in the case of Thailand. It was also hoped that it could assess the overall quality of Thai democracy and possibly give a better insight in why military coups seem to be a reoccurring phenomenon in the case of Thailand.

Keywords: Thailand, Democratic Consolidation, Coup d’état, Democracy
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Thailand is offering an excellent workroom for exploring democratic consolidation as the country has a unique political history. Since 1932 Thailand have had 19 coup attempts, 7 of which have been unsuccessful and 12 successful seizure of power. The last 2 successful coups occurred in 2006 and 2014 respectively (Brown 2014). This means that the county’s history includes various government-transitions from autocratic to democratic governments. The period of 1997-2006 constitutes the longest continuous government in Thailand’s history under a democratic constitution (Albritton & Bureekul, 2008, p. 42). This is why the period is interesting as it opens an opportunity for investigating Thailand’s democratic quality and why it failed to consolidate.

Moreover, the kingdom of Thailand could be interesting for various of reasons. Thailand was never colonized by global powers such as France or Britain. Instead Britain saw Thailand as a buffer state, separating British and French expansion in South East Asia. For this reason, it was exempted from colonization. While its neighboring countries were subject to foreign rule, Thailand was free to experiment with forms of government. Monarchical absolutism helped shape the country in its early history. One of the key elements was the creation of the kingdom’s security sector and the development of a standing army. The creation would be a centralized Royal Thai Army that served as a guarantor for security within the kingdom and protection for the monarchy against domestic and external enemies. An example of domestic problems that could be detrimental for the Thai Buddhist kingdom were ideas and ideologies such as communism. If the security sector could restrict the spread of harmful ideas it would be successful in preserving the Thai monarchy (Case 2007).

Up until 1932, the military would be a minor partner in the asymmetrical power sharing relationship between it and the monarchy. This would nevertheless come to an end after the military successfully orchestrated a coup d’état in the same year. It led to the upheaval of monarchical absolutism and the institution of constitutional monarchy (Chambers 2013, p 5). The consequence was Thailand’s first encounter and experiment with democracy. However, it was unable to achieve civilian control because the constitution and general election led to a feeble superficial democracy. Instead, Thailand saw that the military’s monopolization power
which would have the kingdom fall under martial law years between 1938 and 1944. As consequence, the military would control the political playfield, as power was informally held by the armed forces. It allowed the military to amass power without monarchical or civilian supervision. As a result, the Thai-military exerted significant political influence in the beginning of the twentieth-century. The long-term effect of their dominant position of influence made the military into a core political actor in Thailand (Chambers 2013, p. 6).

The struggle between the different political actors could be examined by looking into the continuous cycle of coups that would regularly change the power balance between monarchical, authoritarian, civilian and democratic forces. Since 1932 Thailand have had 19 coup attempts. Statistically this means that a coup attempt occurs every four years (Brown 2014). Coups are significant moments that could act as cornerstones in history. Failed or successful coup-attempts can drastically change a country politically. The coup of 2006 exemplifies this as it saw the return of authoritarianism after the military ousted a democratically elected government and its prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra (Sripokangkul & Chambers, 2017, p. 1).

1.2 Purpose and Research question
This dissertation will apply Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan’s theory of democratic consolidation to answer why Thailand was not able to reach democratic consolidation. It will also include the limitations of democratic consolidation in Thailand.

Thailand seem to be in a constant struggle with setback for democratization as there is a continuous cycle of coups, resurgence of authoritarianism and revival of democracy (Pongsudhirak, 2008, p. 140). The theory might be able to pinpoint the issues with the democratic consolidation process between the years of 1997-2006 and give an answer to why the military would topple a democratically elected government and revert the country to authoritarianism.

Moreover, in some countries, there seem to be a prevalent reassurance of military coups. Cross-national studies express that coups that had a violent takeover of power in the past combined with political instability is an indicator of high risk of regime change through a new coup. Thailand could be considered an exception in this regard as the military coup of 2006 were able to seize power without violent means, therefore considered bloodless (Lehoucq &
Pérez-Liñán 2014). The continues cycle of coup d’état in Thailand will be secondary focus of this dissertation.

The research questions are the following:

1. Why did Thailand not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006?
2. What were the main challenges for further democratic consolidation in Thailand?

Thailand offer an excellent workroom for exploring democratic consolidation as the country has a unique political history. The transition from multiple autocratic governments to various degrees of democratic governments have been done many times. However, Thailand has never been able to consolidate its democracy despite various attempts on democracy. The period chosen, 1997-2006 constitutes the longest continuous government in Thailand’s history under a democratic constitution (Albritton & Bureekul, 2008, p. 41).

2. Theory

As the research will be theory consuming by qualitative text analysis, prerequisites that identify the conditions of democratic consolidation will be backed, examined, explained and better understood by applying the theory and works of Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan. Their book “Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe” will be significant for the analysis as it provides this dissertation with a theoretical framework. Their theory categorizes prerequisites of three dimensions a consolidated democracy demand. Theory consuming is a suitable approach that is hoped to give a deeper understanding of the challenges Thailand faced in the democratic consolidation process between 1997-2006 and why it ultimately failed. Besides applying the theory on the case of Thailand, secondary sources of data will complement the chosen method and give a better understanding on the theory on the case of Thailand.
2.1 Previous Research and Literature

Previous research and literature that includes publications articles and books have been important for answering the proposed research questions of why Thailand did not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006 and what the main challenges for further democratic consolidation in Thailand were. The used literature builds up the empirical foundation of this dissertation and are useful for a systematic overview and discussion of the issue. Larry Diamond’s “Rethinking Civil Society: Toward Democratic Consolidation” and Samuel P. Huntington’s “The Third Wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century” are examples of important literature. Publications such as these are interesting because they explicitly or indirectly talk about democratic consolidation in Thailand between 1997-2006. This includes history and the contemporary years. The selected time period is the period where the Thai Rak Thai-party led a democratically elected government which is critical for understanding the case and its outcome.

2.1.1 Past Development and The Military

Much have been written about the democratization process and past development of political transition from monarchy to authoritarianism and democracy. Paul Chambers’s “Unruly Boots: Military Power and Security Sector Reform Efforts in Thailand” talks about past development of Thai-civil-military relations as well as the political playfield in Thailand (Chambers 2013, p 10). The article is interesting for the case study as it specifically deals with Thailand as an emerging democracy. This includes the transition from authoritarianism and the strife for democratic consolidation which involve the civil-military relations. Chambers argues that while reforms in the security sector are difficult to achieve, they are significant for taming military political power. This is important for further democratization as the military is a core political actor in Thailand (Chambers 2013, p 2). The article may recognize challenges for democratic consolidation and answer why it ultimately failed in Thailand.

2.1.2 Research on democratic consolidation in Thailand

A wide selection of books and scientific publications have been written about democratic consolidation. What is more interesting is that some of these publications have approached the issue from distinct angles with the focus on Thailand. Robert B. Albritton is one scholar that have contributed to the research of democratic consolidation in Thailand. He argues that the economic advancements after the economic crisis in 1997 show signs of a stable democracy
that can endure economic challenges. Some of the presented challenges were the tsunami of 2004, high oil prices and southern separatists. Albritton conclude that robust institutions and great economic development is correlated with democratic consolidation. Consequently, it could be a driving force for future consolidation of democracy in Thailand (Robert B. Albritton, 2006, p. 147).

Robert B. Albritton have also approached democratic consolidation in Thailand from the position of Thai-citizens. Together with Thawilwadee Bureekul they investigated democratic consolidation and the perception of it among citizens in “Consolidating Democracy in Thailand: The First Four Years of Democracy under the Constitution of 1997”. They found that democracy had segmented and hardened support which could be examined by the landslide victories made by the Thai Rak Thai party and re-election of Thaksin Shinawatra. Despite democracy’s many different definitions, the data suggest that Thais’ definition of democracy is not far off from that of Europeans and Americans. This may well be significant for the case study as it shows that Thais and Westerners have a similar definition of democracy. This could show why democratic consolidation is or is not desirable for Thais (Robert B. Albritton, Thawilwadee Bureekul, 2008, p. 59). It is worth of note considering that the democratic consolidation process between 1997-2006 failed and was replaced with authoritarianism. However, the opinion of Thais on the matter of democracy is important for this study. It possibly displays how Thais citizens position themselves in the democratization process which corresponds to democratic consolidation (Robert B. Albritton, Thawilwadee Bureekul, 2008, p. 59). This is important for understanding Linz and Stepan’s arena of civil society.

A democracy’s quality could have implications for the democratic consolidation process in Thailand. William Case explore this in his article “Democracy's Quality and Breakdown: New Lessons from Thailand”. He argues that the actions of the ruling Thai Rak Thai government and its prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra had implications for the democratic quality in Thailand (Case, 2007, p. 638). This is important to understand as the Thai Rak Thai party were overthrown in the coup of 2006. It means that the party’s rule had consequences for the last phase of democratization and the consolidation of democracy, which is the components of this dissertation. It also implies that the regime provided coup-orchestrators reasons for their action. Case argue that the Thai Rak Thai party appointed new and progressive party member members while ignoring strong characters from provincial levels. Although this could have
improved the overall quality of democracy, Case argue that it instead led to its erosion (Case, 2007, p. 637). William Case provide interesting arguments on the enhancement and erosion of democratic quality in Thailand. It is linked with democratic consolidation as a robust democracy suggest progress in the process of democratic consolidation.

2.2 Theoretical concepts

In political science, some definitions of theoretical concepts lack consensus as scholars and individuals alike have different interpretations and explanations of the same concepts. In this dissertation there are several relevant theoretical concepts and terms that should be clarified as to build mutual understanding. This includes further description of democracy, democratization, coup d’état and democratic consolidation. They are important to understand as it informs the reader of underlying meanings which are appropriate for the case of Thailand and its process of democratic consolidation.

2.2.1 Coup d’état

Thailand have had many coup-attempts that have halted the democratization process as well as democratic consolidation. Because of this, it is important to define what a coup d’état constitutes so the reader have a better understanding of the meaning and the outcome of this dissertation. A coup d’état, also known as coup, ought to be defined as coups are distinctively different from revolutions in process of ousting a ruling regime.

A revolution is an act that could be conducted at all times, via popular and uncoordinated masses of people. The objective is to transform political and social structures in combination with altering the ruling regime. This is typically done by overthrowing leaders of the current regime. The word revolution has recently grown in popularity and usage, to suggest that something has turned for the better. As such, several coups have been graced with the term to legitimize the act (Edward N. Luttwak 1968, p. 7).

However, coups are different from revolutions as they do not involve or are assisted by public masses. In addition, an act of coup d’état is not characterized by any widespread fighting as it is expected to be swiftly and discreate. The assistance of the public would likely make a coup easier, but it would nonetheless be unreasonable for conspirators of a coup to rely on such measures. The argument for this is that a coup originally starts from a comparable small number of individuals in secrecy, thus rejecting a sizable portion of manpower in the
beginning stage of a coup. In addition, coups are attempts at seizing power and does not have to be successful to be classified as coups. More than that, a coup d’état does not have any political leaning since coups do not have any particular policies before or after the seizure of power (Edward N. Luttwak 1968, p. 11).

Military coups and coup attempts have occurred multiple times throughout Thai history. Since 1932 Thailand have had 19 coup attempts, 7 of which have been unsuccessful and 12 successful seizure of power. The last 2 successful coups occurred in 2006 and 2014 respectively and saw the return of authoritarianism after a period of democratic progress in contemporary Thailand (Brown 2014).

2.2.2 Democracy

Democracy is a concept that have multiple of definitions. The definitions are subjective and varies from person to person. As the description of democracy is more than a one-sided interpretation it could be important to provide a possible clarification of what democracy is, as the understanding of democracy is vital to understand the consolidation of it.

Originally the term democracy is coming from the city state period of Greek antiquity. During this period, philosophers such as Platon and Aristotle laid the foundation of political thinking. The word itself is derived from two Greek words, demos and kratos which can be translated into “The People” and “Power” respectively. Hence the term democracy can be explained as rule of the people (Larry Dimond, 1992, p. 3). The development of democratic models as system of government have taken various forms since antiquity and the Greek style of direct-democracy. Perhaps the roman republic is more recognizable as the senate and their legal system could be familiar to contemporary democracies. What is evident is that the description of democracy has altered through time and its meaning and implication have shifted throughout history.

Larry Dimond is a scholar that contributed to the study of democratic consolidation and provides an appropriate insight on what defines a democracy. He interpreted democracy as a system to elect a government. This is done by periodic intervals through free and fair voting elections where parties can partake in the competition of power. In addition, the civil society has the liberty to assemble and engage in the political system, citizens can retrieve information from multiple alternative sources that are protected under the rule of law (Larry Dimond, 1997, p. 13). This gives a brief understanding of what democratic means in the context of democratic consolidation.
2.2.3 Democratization

As previously mentioned, Forms of democracy are not limited to contemporary days and have changed drastically over the centuries. This means that forms of democratization have existed before contemporary scholars made extensive research on the process of democratization. For example, Aristotle referred to democratization as a perversion, when a majority subsides their subjective and particular interest for the overall benefit of the society. Aristotle argued for processes that would indorse the majority’s interests as it would have a positive effect on society and its leadership. It could stop the emergence of demagogues or a government’s expansion outside the limits of common acquaintance.

Moreover, Aristotle understood that revolutions could transform a society. He saw tyranny and oligarchy as degenerate and failed forms of monarchy and aristocracy in which a revolution would sanction the alteration of rule. While his thoughts could be of interest, they do not provide an adequate theory in today’s standard, that could adequately explain why modern states turn democratic (Tilly 2000, p. 1). It does however suggest that a transition from dictatorial to democratic forms of government is a complex phenomenon that have occurred throughout history.

The question why some states are successful in democratization while other fail is a tangible issue to answer. However, scholars have broken down the process of democratization into three phases. This is relevant for this dissertation as democratic consolidation is considered the last phase and distinctively separates it from the other phases. Democratization may have been broken down in multiple parts as it would help to identify different challenges in the process of democratization. The three phases are, liberalization, transition and consolidation.

The liberalization phase explains how nondemocratic regimes may offer its citizens less restriction and control on aspects such as freedom of speech and expression. However, such measures are not enough for a state to arise into the next phase as liberalization does not necessary mirror democratization. This is because the non-democratic, dictatorial or otherwise authoritarian rule could still resume power and secondly, there are other factors apart from elections that define if a state has transitioned into a democracy. Because the institution of elections does not suggest free and fair elections, which suggest that a state must open up for further for contestation of power and the control of government. This is linked with the next phase, transition (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 3).
Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan consider that a democratic transition is achieved when the political process for how the state elects its government have reached a consensus, when the government is chosen by free and fair elections, when the government has the power to produce laws and policies (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 4). In addition to these conditions transition is made when the new democracy’s executive, judicial and legislative branches do not split power with other institutions (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 3). If the transition stage has been successful and the stage of transition is considered complete the phase of determining the quality and strength of democracy called consolidation of democracy takes place.

2.2.4 Democratic Consolidation According to Linz and Stepan

While the explanation of a transition phase has been laid out by Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan earlier in theory section, the concept of consolidation has yet to been settled. This concept is important to entangle as the answers to the research questions are in accordance with the definition of democratic consolidation. Consequently, understanding of the concept of democratic consolidation, will generate understanding of this dissertation’s outcome and conclusion.

To build better understanding of this dissertation, the concept of consolidation must be clarified in order to comprehend what constitutes a completed democratic consolidation. This is necessary for answering the proposed research questions.

As the theory of Linz and Stepan is applied in this dissertation, their explanation of democratic consolidation would be appropriate. They explain that when a transition has been finalized, there are many remaining tasks that need to be solved before a state can reach consolidation. Linz and Stepan argue that a democratic state can be considered consolidated when democracy has become “the only game in town” (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 3). This includes three different dimensions that a democratic consolidation demand (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 3).

1. Behaviorally:

A democratic state is considered consolidated when there is no noteworthy political actor that seek to overthrow the democratic regime or by force try to secede from the state (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 6).
2. Attitudinal:
The second dimension involves attitudes amongst a state’s citizens. A democracy become “the only game in town” (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 3) when majority of the state’s citizens are convinced that the institutions and democratic procedures are the most suitable system for governing their state (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 6).

3. Constitutional:
A democratic consolidation is completed when governmental and non-governmental actors within the state are subjected to and adapted to the specific laws that are put in place to resolve conflict. These are endorsed by the political regime as the democratic principles and its processes are the foundation of a democratic rule (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 6).
The three dimensions define what a consolidated democracy constitutes. However, Linz & Stepan argues that a consolidated democracy needs to have five interrelating arenas for such consolidation to exist (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 7). The next section will examine what these five arenas are and why they are important for understanding if a democracy have consolidated itself.

2.3 The Five Arenas of Democratic Consolidation
Apart from the five arenas, the beginning factor which is essential for determining democratic consolidation is the state itself. Because there can be no democratic consolidation without an identifiable political entity that is a state. Consequently, the absence of an identification with the state among its assumed citizens could produce unsolvable problems. Consequently, if a large group of people want to secede, create a new independence or join another sovereignty, consolidation of a democratic regime in the contemporary world becomes impossible (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 7).

According to Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, if the criteria of an existing state is present, democratic consolidation can be achieved by the existence of five interrelating prerequisites named the five arenas. If there is an absence of these prerequisites, they must either be formed or created for a democracy to be consolidated. As democracy is more than just system of government the five arenas describe how the system is interconnected, interacting and how the different arenas are mutually reinforcing each another. No arena can work correctly and independently function if they are not assisted from at least one and many times all of them
For instance, civil society in a democracy needs the support of a judicial system that uphold the right of association and need the support of a state apparatus that implement legal measures on those who try to use unlawful methods to stop groups or individuals from their right to organize in a democratic state. In addition, the arenas can influence each other. For example, the political society enact laws, creates the constitution and the general guidelines. This creates the framework the economic society operates in. The example illustrates that a consolidated democracy is constantly flowing and interconnected between the arenas. (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 15)

2.3.1 Civil Society
The civil society is important as it is the arena where polity and self-organizing groups, movement and individuals can share their opinion. Values, ideas and interests are shared by the creation of associations and solidarities. This means that civil society can take many forms as it includes various types of political and social groups, religious gatherings, feminist organizations and groups for academic discussion. All these movements seek to advance their interests. The civil society also includes entities and individuals from the civic society, which are ordinary citizens without any group affiliation, journalists, lawyers, entrepreneurial associations and trade unions. Such civic societies have had the character of organization, which have been useful to facilitate an opposition to anti-democratic and authoritarian regimes, notably in south America. Thus, significant for advancing democratic consolidation for their ability to act as a counterweight to anti-democratic or corrupt forces (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 7). This can be further exemplified by looking into the student movements and organization of popular protests after the Thai-election of 1992 that led up to the Black may incident. This event implies that the complexity of civil society could spring off from small movements and accumulate into large scale demonstrations. These citizens often play a critical role in changing the balance between opposition and the ruling regime (or the opposite). Because their big numbers can have tremendous results as they make up a significant portion of demonstrators. With this power they can firstly, support large hypothetical demands from the demonstrators and secondly, ultimately challenge the government’s authority. This means that the civil society have a key role in the process of democratic consolidation and democratization.
2.3.2 Political Society
Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan explain that the political society (in terms of a democratic environment) is the arena in which the political entity set up and contestation of power occur. It is where the legitimate right to practice control over public power and the government apparatus happen and where legitimacy in the civil society is built. It provides legal safeguards which are ingrained in the rule of law and regulated by an objective state apparatus (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 8). Although a civil society may be able to terminate anti-democratic forces and ultimately overthrow a non-democratic government, a full democratic transition and specifically a consolidated democracy must include a political society. A political society involves the structure and strengthening of the democratic entity. This is achieved when society witness the development of a normatively favorable understanding of political organizations and institutions of a democracy and democracy becomes routinized. This includes the functioning of political parties, political leaders, interparty groupings, parliament, senate and the rules that determine how elections and referendums are conducted. It also involves the process a society selects and monitors their democratic government.

It is important to emphasize the complementary function of civil society and political society. Particularly for the contestation of political power which strengthen a democracy while directing it to consolidation. For example, the political society must involve political parties in order to achieve democratic consolidation. The political parties represent the civil society and should reflect the differences of opinion among citizens, individuals and democrats. Also, a political society needs to be accustomed to democratic dispute in order to reach democratic consolidation. This is necessary as disputes are regulated by standards and procedures in the democratic order (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 10).

2.3.3 Rule of Law
The rule of law has its origins in political society and civil society while it is applied by the state apparatus. According to Linz and Stepan, for effective consolidation of democracy, a degree of autonomy and independence in civil and political societies must be incorporated into and supported by the rule of law. The rule of law is an indispensable condition for a functioning democracy and the cornerstone of constitutionalism. It requires a robust commitment and dedication to the procedures of governance that cannot be easily changed by majoritarianism. Only an extraordinary majority ruling could alter the conditions for the state set in the constitution. It calls for a straightforward law structure, an autonomous justice
regime and a powerful legal environment backed by civil society (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 10).

2.3.4 Bureaucratic Structure
Democratic consolidation calls for an effective state apparatus that could exercise control over its territory. This include the upholding of state’s states monopoly of violence. It requires an effective tax system that can manage and handle mandatory taxes from individuals or entities under the state’s de jure land and given territory. It also requires strong normative administrative presence in its holdings. The absence of this could lead to disintegration as in the case of many countries in South America, particularly Brazil. The implication is that citizens’ rights are not respected as they are deprived from their fundamental rights in a democratic style of governance. It also prevents the state to effectively carry out bureaucratic tasks in the country (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 11).

2.3.5 Economic Society
This is the final arena and involves two claims. Firstly, during peacetime, a command economy has never and can never consolidate democracy. Secondly, A purely based market economy has never and possibly will never consolidate democracy. The reason for this can be explained by looking into Adam Smith’s Wealth of nations as the state is believed to have 3 essential tasks.

1. the obligation to protect society from other autonomous societies from intrusion or violent behavior.
2. The obligation to protect each member of society, whenever possible, against the injustice or abuse of, or from other members of society.
3. The obligation of installing or upholding public institutions or governmental works that could never be in the interest of individuals or small group of individuals as it would instead be beneficial for the greater society. (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 12)

The third task is important to reduce inequality among the citizens. Linz and Stepan agree that inequality would befall society if areas such as health sector, transportation and education were subject to market economy. The conclusion is that citizens would be better protected if the existence of these services were provided by the state (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 13).
This is done through the economic society. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan argue that a consolidated democracy entail informal and formal guidelines that can lead behavior and build the state socio-politically. This is where the economic society comes becomes vital as it functions a mediator between the state and the market. This is accomplished through set institutions and regulations that can regulate the market socially and politically. It means that an efficient state apparatus that is rooted in the political and civil society would adopt an economic society predisposed for consolidation of democracy. This is why a strong economy could be correlated with democratic advancement in the democratic consolidation process.

The crippling of a state’s capacity to produce regulatory functions equates to severe issues in making economic reforms that would further democratization. The theory concludes that a consolidated democracy is built on the interrelation between the five arenas how democracy as more than just a form of government. The arenas have separately individual tasks, but together build up a web that explain how consolidated democracy is achieved. Therefore, the economic society is vital for consolidation of democracy as it works as the mediator between many of the different arenas. It supports the notion that different arenas cannot function correctly without the assistance, help and backing of the other ones (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 13).

Linz and Stepan’s five arenas offer interrelating and comprehensive prerequisites for a state’s development towards democratic consolidation. Although the aspects that constitutes a flourishing arena may be extensive and hard to grasp, it seems that the emphasize is put on the aspects such as freedom, electoral process, good governance, check and balances, equality before the law, rule of law and equality. These are examples of the overarching aspects of the five arenas. As such the five arenas could be a basic structure of underlying themes of what a consolidated democracy constitutes. Exploring an analytical framework of the five arenas could help reaching a better understanding of the mentioned themes and features while possibly answering the proposed research questions of why Thailand did not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006, and What the main challenges for further democratic consolidation in Thailand were.

This will be thoroughly discussed in the section of operationalization as it will devote attention to Linz and Stepan’s theory and make it applicable. Such analytical framework may look like the table below, which includes the aforementioned aspects of the five arenas in different perspectives.
Table 2.1: The five arenas and its features of democratic consolidation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arena</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society</td>
<td>Does media have the freedom to express itself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there accountability mechanisms in place for political officials to be held accountable for their actions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Society</td>
<td>Are there free and fair elections?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are the election results accepted and legitimate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the country considered free?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule of Law</td>
<td>Are Human rights respected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there judicial independence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic Structure</td>
<td>Is there corruption within the state bureaucracy and institutions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Society</td>
<td>Are there high levels of poverty and inequality?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Method

3.1 Method of Choice

To answer the proposed research questions of Why did Thailand not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006 and What were the main challenges for further democratic consolidation in Thailand, a qualitative case study is conducted. The method is theory consuming.

The chosen approach should be thoroughly explained and begins with the question, what is a case? A case could be a situation, problem, event, activity, action thing or things. A case study could be done within a restricted system often bounded by time or space. Example of time could be a period or number of years and space could be a location, for example Thailand (“Case”, n.d).
In addition, a single-case study involves studying and analyzing multiple sources of data in order to attain an in depth and thoughtful understanding of the case (Bennet & George, 2005, p. 77). This include books, academic articles and previous research. The focus of this case study concern democratic consolidation and the selected boundary is Thailand between 1997-2006. The focus of the study will be the country of Thailand and no other complementary comparison of additional countries will be presented. The approach of a single case study with focus on Thailand is motivated by the unique political circumstances of the country to illustrate the issue of democratic consolidation. Therefore, the case study is representative of a democratic consolidation attempt in Thailand and nowhere else. Although a comparison between other countries could be made, such study would demonstrate multiple aspects of the issue of democratic consolidation such as history, society, culture, etc. These variables are often different as many countries do not share the same history, culture, etc. For example, Thailand may have a history of authoritarian rule which could make it less predisposed for democratic consolidation compared with a country that have historically enjoyed long periods of parliamentarianism (Seawright & Gerring 2008, p. 191).

Moreover, as previously stated, this case study will provide a profound understanding of the democratic consolidation process in Thailand and the choice of a single case study would be the most appropriate way in achieving that ambition.

Theory consuming will serve as the method in this dissertation. Existing literature will be reviewed and function as source for data gathering. The data and information will later be analyzed. Theory consuming means that the researcher is applying existing theories of democratic consolidation and democratization to a country of their choice. In this dissertation the theories will be applied to Thailand. Theory consuming methodology work as a tool to comprehend the case, not necessarily testing or developing the existing theory (Lowndes et al. 2010, p. 226).

Moreover, the method has an explanatory approach to examine previous studies done regarding the consolidation process in Thailand (Esaiasson, et al. 2017, p. 37). Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan’s theory will help to identify the significant features of Thailand and why it was unable to achieve democratic consolidation. This is conducted in their chapter “Democracy and its Arenas” which sets the prerequisites that ought to exist for a country to consolidate democracy. They call it “the five arenas” which includes, civil society, political
society, rule of law, bureaucratic structure, and economic society. The five arenas explore different necessary features of the democratic consolidation process. In short, the civil society refers to the idea that a vivacious civil society provides check on state power. Political society argues that political actors competes for public power in legitimately arranged methods such as open and fair elections. The rule of law is a functioning legal system, a necessity for a consolidating democracy (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 10). Bureaucratic structure express that a government in a democratic state should have an effective bureaucratic apparatus to enforce law and maintain the monopoly of violence. The economic society is vital as serves as a mediator between the state and market (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 7).

Applying this theoretical framework to the case and the democratic processes between 1997-2006 could answer the proposed research questions. It would also build scientific contributions based on the presented evidence and knowledge. The research question could thus fill the gap of understating concerning democratic consolidation in Thailand.

3.2 Operationalization

The table below show the five arenas and its features that ought to exist for a country to successfully consolidate democracy. The features have been selected based on Linz and Stepan’s theory of the five arenas and their description of what each arena constitutes. This dissertation will not be able to look at all aspects of a full flourishing arena but have nonetheless chosen the selected features based their believed vitality and necessity for consolidation of democracy to exist. The features could thus be seen as indicators for consolidation of democracy. As such, the respective findings would either suggest or oppose democratic consolidation in its corresponding arena. This means that the features are necessary to analyze in order to determine if a democracy could be considered consolidated. This allows for the operationalization of Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan’s theory and might answer the proposed research questions of why Thailand did not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006? And what the main challenges for further democratic consolidation in Thailand were?
Table 3.1: The five arenas and its features in the context of Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arena</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society</td>
<td>Does media have the freedom to express itself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there accountability mechanisms in place for political officials to be held accountable for their actions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Society</td>
<td>Are there free and fair elections in Thailand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are the election results accepted and legitimate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can Thailand be considered free?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule of Law</td>
<td>Are Human rights respected in Thailand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there judicial independence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic Structure</td>
<td>Is there corruption within the state bureaucracy and institutions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Society</td>
<td>Are there high levels of poverty and inequality in Thailand?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The civil society could act as a counterweight to anti-democratic- or corrupt forces for its ability to voice critical opinion (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 7). As such, the selected features could be important to analyze in order to determine if the civil society in Thailand has the means to decrease power abuse and corruptive practices. This could be done through institutions that could monitor governance and government officials. These institutions would create accountability and transparency where the civil society could hold Thailand’s leaders accountable. A democracy is impossible to consolidate if it is deprived of accountability and transparency. The existence of accountability-mechanisms and its durability could be verified by observing the 1997’s constitution and its implementation of accountability and transparency.

Freedom of expression equip individuals with a tool to highlight issues on accountability and transparency. Media has a platform where individuals could voice their criticism and opposition to the ruling regime. As such, it could be beneficial to assess if Thai-media had difficulties in its ability to express itself between 1997-2006. These worries could be analyzed...
by using existing databases on press freedoms and the assessment of controversial laws that could be in contrast with democracy and the consolidation of it.

The political society. An election is the organized choice and process for which a population vote for an individual or individuals to hold public office and represent the government. Therefore, free and fair elections are important as citizens could influence the political playfield. If Thai-elections are considered free and fair, Thai citizens could be confident that their vote is being represented in the Thai-democracy. The political society is where legitimacy for the system is built, as such free and fair elections in combination with accepted outcome could generate trust for the political system and be an indicator for segmentation of democracy which is vital for the consolidation of it. The Thai-elections between 1997-2006 has been empirically analyzed and such observations could help assess the concern of free and fair elections in Thailand. Although the term freedom is multifaceted it is often correlated with democracy and what makes a democracy desirable. In the beginning stage of democratization (the liberalization phase) it is explained that citizens start to enjoy greater freedoms which corresponds to reduced restriction on civil liberties and political rights. Consequently, in the process of democratic consolidation, a democracy is expected to retain and have been designated greater quality of aforementioned rights and liberties. Although freedom could be hard to quantify, Freedom House attempts to set a benchmark according to political rights and civil liberties in a country. This benchmark sets the parameters of what represents a free or not free society. As freedom is a feature and indicator for democratic consolidation, can Thailand be considered a free country given the assessment of the overarching individual-rights and liberties between 1997-2006?

The rule of law is an essential tool for democratic consolidation as Linz and Stepan explains that it is an indispensable condition for a functioning democracy and the cornerstone of constitutionalism. The explanation is that the rule of law has the democratic aspects that guarantees that everyone is equal before the law and that the judicial independence would have citizens confident in the judicial procedures. As such, human rights could also be considered a feature of democratic consolidation as they are rights that is believed to belong to all people while concurrently attaching and promoting the democratic values and fundamental freedoms such as equality before the law and human dignity. This is something The United Nations endorse as it is stated that human rights are the universal core principles for democracy.
Naturally, a democratic society which could be considered consolidated respects and protects human rights. If the Thai Democracy between 1997-2006 violated human rights it could hardly be considered consolidated in this arena. The illustration of how Thailand position itself in respect to human rights could be analyzed by reports and documentation on the subject within the selected timeframe.

A bureaucratic structure clean of corruption is important as corruption could undermine and halt the process of democratic consolidation. Corruption may damage the rule of law, social justice and decrease the trust for the bureaucracy, political institutions and processes. Linz and Stepan explain how a weak administration ridden with corruption prevents a state from effectively carrying out bureaucratic tasks in the country which is an important feature for a democratic style of governance and the consolidation of it (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 11). The most prominent database for the perception of corruption within public sector is offered by Transparency International. Their index could shed light on the perceived level of corruption within the bureaucracy in Thailand. As such, found anecdotal instances of corruption in Thailand could be supported by the utilization of such index for its measurement of corruption. If Thailand have noteworthy levels of corruption in the selected time frame, the levels might pose a hinderance for democratic consolidation. Concurrently, if Thailand would have low levels of corruption despite anecdotal instances, the Thai-democracy might be considered consolidated in this arena. What constitutes as high or low levels of perceived corruption will later be discussed in relation to the findings.

Selected feature of the economic society is important as widespread poverty could halt democratic consolidation. Poverty and inequality could be politically marginalizing and cause political alienation among a large part of the population. It would be harmful for democratic consolidation as citizens would feel a sense of separation from or rejection from the current political system. As Thailand is a developing country, it may still have a sizable portion of its population living in poverty and below the poverty line. Likewise, prominent inequalities such as income and rights could in conjunction with poverty lead to this aforementioned sense of separation from the political playfield and thus hinder the process of democratic consolidation in Thailand. To achieve democratic consolidation in this arena, an assessment of the size and magnitude of these features in Thailand must be analyzed where high levels of extreme poverty (below the poverty line) could be an hinderance for democratic consolidation.
3.3 Limitations
A qualitative single-case study presents limitations. Firstly, the researcher’s previous knowledge of the chosen case can intentionally or unintentionally create supporting or opposing views called bias. Bias could redirect the provided evidence into a dishonest and false conclusion. Hence why it is important to have a neutral standing that could promote objectivity that do not favor any political actor or position. As the secondary sources forms the basis of this dissertation, they should be chosen with care based on their reliability.
Trustworthy scientific articles, academic papers and research studies are a good choice for this dissertation as they would build reliability based on their scientific credibility (Lowndes, et al., 2010, pp. 100-101). Another limitation is the timeframe of 1997-2006. It may be too brief for adequately explaining democratic consolidation or the lack of it. Although the timeframe is short it constitutes the longest continuous government in Thailand’s history under a democratic constitution (Albritton & Bureekul, 2008, p. 41). This makes the period chosen the best possible time frame to examine democratic consolidation in Thailand. Chosen literature seems to agree that the period constitutes the last phase of democratization which is the process of democratic consolidation. It makes the timeframe relevant and interesting for this dissertation and for future research on attempts on democratic consolidation in Thailand.

While it could be hard to pinpoint the exact starting point of democratic consolidation, the enactment of the 1997’s constitution is perceived to be the starting point for this particular attempt at democratic consolidation in Thailand.
However, the starting point and timeframe might be insufficient as the democratization process started earlier and involves the transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic government. Therefore, the limitation of the selected period should be compensated with earlier advancements in democratization which is highly relevant for democratic consolidation (Albritton, 2006, p. 140).
4. Background and Results

4.1 Background: History and Dynamics of Contemporary Thai-Politics

The black may incident stem from the 1992 election that saw widespread vote buying and party switching (Neher 1994, p 198). This caused uproar among students who took to the streets to protest. The demonstrations soon got significant support from different social classes including, peasants from the countryside, urban and rural middle class, politicians, bureaucrats and students. The demonstrations soon numbered hundreds of thousands as the agenda of anti-Suchinda (elected prime minister), prodemocracy and anti-corruption were favorable. In May of 1992 the military tried to violently quell the ongoing protest. As consequence hundreds of Thais were killed, hence the name of black May. The turning point came when King Bhumipol Adunyadej intervened on behalf of the protester. The king seemed supportive of the pro-democracy cause, as he put an end to the political chaos by forcing Suchinda Kraprayoon out of office. This created enormous amount of prestige for the side that sought democratic rule. Simultaneously it increased the popularity for the monarchy while tarnishing the military’s reputation and their functioning as a political actor (Ibid, p 199).

While the people’s opinion of the military was deteriorating it also discredited the rise of any new strong leader from emerging. Instead it allowed the former prime minister and retired general, Prem Tinusalond to cumulate power over the armed forces. Together with army commander Wimol Wongwanich (1992-95), and Surayud Chulanond (1998-2002) his influence would elevate him to a position where he was referred as the kingdom’s surrogate strongman. As the result of his rise, officers who had been loyal to Prem Tinusalond or held good relationship with the former prime minister would have their own position and rank elevated (Chambers 2013, p 10). With support from the crown and the privy council, Prem Tinusalond became active in parliamentary politics in 1997 by swaying 12 members of the ruling Prajakorn Thai party to defect in favor of the opposition. It allowed for the formation of a coalition government led by the democrat party. As consequence, the new faction made up of Prem Tinusalond, the newly appointed army commander Surayudh Chulanondh and retired and current military officers could amass power. They would dominate politics while simultaneously hold authority over the military. This new political landscape would continue until the ascendance of police lieutenant colonel Thaksin Shinawatra in 2001.
Thaksin Shinawatra was successful businessman and telecommunications tycoon with a giant economic empire. His economic wealth could almost match that of the state and crown. Thaksin Shinawatra was a person that sought uplift the interest of the civilian elites. More than that, as prime minister (2001-2006) Thaksin Shinawatra’s social reforms had the characteristics of welfare capitalism and was significantly attractive with the country’s impoverished majority. Some of the reforms were a response to the growing cleft between Thailand’s society, security sector, legislative and judicial branch. While being in office he was able to personalize control over the Royal Thai Police and enhance his influence over the security sector. By 2005 the popular policies facilitated Thaksin’s Thai Rak Thai Party a victory Thailand’s general election (Szep, Petty 2010). Despite of his popular policies, thousands of anti-Thaksin demonstrators would protest in the streets of Bangkok in late 2005 and beginning of 2006. Thaksin’s growth and rule would fracture intra-civilian relations as some political parties had dismissed participation in the general election. This would later legitimize a coup takeover as some civilian elites desired his overthrow. An anti-Thaksin group would ultimately meet with army commander Sonthi Boonyaratklin and would lead to the mounting a coup d’état (Chambers 2013, p 11).

Moreover, Thaksin ultimately lost backing from the monarchy after winning the 2001 election. The crown appeared to be upset when it was believed that Thaksin sought to steal the king’s spotlight after his victory. In the aftermath of the coup in 2006 it was claimed that the coup d’état in September of 2006 “was nothing short of Thaksin versus the King” (McGeown 2006). The coup conspirators stated that Thaksin’s actions bordering lèse majesté was one motivator for the coup (Kuhonta 2008, p. 374). The coup consisted of Prem loyalist forces that would see Prem Tinsulanonda triumphant. The rivalry between Thaksin and Prem had since the 2001 election been a struggle for control over the armed forces and favor with the crown. Factions within the military had more motives for the coup as Thaksin had reduced the defense budget, had sought to appoint people he liked to high ranking positions in the military and wanted to privatize the army-control TV-station (channel 5) among others. Additional aspects of the military’s reason behind the coup could be furthered examined in literature presented by many scholars on the topic but would nevertheless be outside the scope of this dissertation. In short, Thaksin’s corrupt behavior, disregard for democratic institutions, and his polarization of Thai-society motivated a coup d’état.
The military regime that overthrew Thaksin stayed in power until December 2007 followed by new democratic election. The democracy that followed was different from that of Thaksin’s as it included the enactment of a military-influenced constitution that introduced a half-elected, half-appointed Senate while simultaneously enfeebling political parties by changing district boundaries in the electoral system. The following year of 2008 saw the conviction of Thaksin and the disbanding of his political party (Thai Rak Thai). A new royalist faction would influence the military after general Anupong Paochinda was appointed commander over the armed forces. As consequence, the Thai-military would rise to dominate the political playfield just as they had done before 1992. Despite this, a pro-Thaksin government coalition held power in 2008. Amounting court cases against the ruling party and enormous anti-Thaksin demonstrations made the government step down. An anti-Thaksin coalition led by the democrat party assume power the following 3 years. Political turmoil would commence as anti-government protests and pro-Thaksin “red shirts” began to protest the new government. The disorder climaxed in 2010 as massive demonstrations were violently quelled by the army, leaving 93 dead. A new general election in 2011 saw Thaksin’s sister, Yingluck Shinawatra rise to power, forming a pro-democratic and pro-Thaksin government (Chambers 2013, p 12).

4.2 Results
Throughout Thai-history, attempts at democratization have been hampered by the reoccurrence of coups. Thailand became an emerging democracy by the 90s as the period saw greater democratization. Governmental reforms in 1992 pushed for democratic transition by enabling party competition and strengthening democratic rule. As party-participation was endorsed the country started a democratic consolidation process in the decade’s later half (Albritton., Bureekul. 2008, p.140).

The next section will examine the process of democratic consolidation in Thailand by applying Linz and Stepan’s theoretical framework of the five arenas of democratic consolidation. It will also highlight the selected features from each arena presented in the operationalization section. By applying this approach, the dissertation is hoped to answer the proposed research questions “why did Thailand not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006” and “what were the main challenges for further democratic consolidation in Thailand”.

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4.2.1 Civil Society

Historically, the military have been responsible for major steps towards democratization and transition throughout the 20th century (Pathmanand 2001, p. 26). The initiative has come from the armed forces to open up and install democracy. This has occurred multiple times and might be a reason why democracy is reemerging. Showing dissatisfaction through organized demonstrations have certainly been contributing as demonstrations and protests have successfully accelerated the process through demands. This is particularly true for the event of black May in 1992 (Neher 1994, p 198). While this is outside the examined time period, it is an event that led to the 1997 constitution. Calls from the civil society led to major reforms that would enhance civilian rule and interest. The constitution of 1997 has been referred as “the people’s constitution” because of its features that asserts democratic rights for the civil society (Albritton., Bureekul. 2008, p.143). Thais positive attitude towards such a development can be found by examining opinion polls. They reveal that Thai respondents showed dissatisfaction with governments linked with authoritarianism. It could be an explanation many demonstrations as it displays a general support for democracy (Albritton., Bureekul, 2008, p. 59). One change that the new constitution brought was the reorganizing of media. Under the new constitution, media distanced itself away from the military’s supervision consequently reducing their political and economic influence. Electronic media were placed under public ownership with a single, self-governing organization. Its task was to manage and safeguard the public’s interest (Pathmanand2001, p. 26).

Media is important for the civil society as it is an intermediary between the people and the government. Media highlights opinions on social, political and economic issues while simultaneously keeps an eye on political activities and motions. Therefore, freedom of expression and opinion becomes an important feature for a democracy and its consolidation. Reporters Without Borders make assessment of worldwide press freedom the level of freedom available to journalists. The conditions evaluated are pluralism, mass communication independence, mass communication atmosphere and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and the furtherance of news and information. From the assessment, a score is calculated. The score could range between 0 and 100 where 0 is the best and 100 is considered the worst score. In Reporters Without Borders’ 2005 worldwide press freedom index, Thailand score 28,00 and lists at 107 among 167 countries. Reporters Without Borders consider a score between 25.01 to 35 points as a problematic situation (Reporters Without Borders 2005). Citizens’ and media’s freedom to voice their opinion seemed to have become
damaged in Thailand as there have been attacks on media through political intimidation. Thaksin’s access and control of the media grew under the examined timeframe as Thaksin in 2005, purchased one of Thailand’s most popular newspaper, The Nation. His minister of industry also purchased 30% of the shares in the opinionated Nation group which lost its contract to produce news for iTV (Freedom House 2013).

Thailand also retains lèse majesté laws which forbid insults of the monarchy. This could make criticism and negative opinion of the monarchy a serious offence (Kuhonta 2008, p. 374). A United nations’ special rapporteur on the encouragement of opinion and expression, David Kaye claimed that “lèse majesté provisions have no place in a democratic country” talking about Thailand (BBC 2017).

Additionally, the new constitution reflects the economic meltdown of 1997 as well as previous failings of elected governments as it sought to increase citizens participation in the polity and political process. The drafters of the new constitution meant to equipped citizens with necessary tools to monitor governance, bureaucratic procedures and political leaders. This was done through the establishment of institutions that could supervise abuse of power by government- and public officials. Nine crucial institutions were set up to address these concerns and four of these nine were particularly important in stimulating political accountability. These institutions include the elections commission of Thailand, the national counter corruption commission (NCCC), the constitutional court and the administrative court (Maisrikrod, 2008).

These institutions were important introductions as it gave power and strength to the opposition, promoting greater democracy. The rising influence of media, institutions and organizations was shown when the association of rural doctors exposed a case of corruption. The case concerned the purchase of medical supplies estimated at 1.4 billion baht. The purchase seemed suspicious as the minister of public health, Rakkiat Sukthana appeared to force the deal, favoring various pharmaceutical partnerships. Representatives of 30 non-governmental-organizations and 40 mass media organizations petitioned the case to the national anti-corruption commission and the official information disclosure committee. This was possible due to the provisions provided in the new constitution (Pathmanand2001, p. 34). Rakkiat Sukthana was forced to resign and the supreme court concluded that Rakkiat Sukthana had abused power as he had taken bribes. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison and the confiscation of assets worth 234 million baht (Fernquest 2011).

The Thai Rak Thai party’s contribution to the civil society had both negative and positive
nuances. They tried to strengthen the civil society by the reforming various sectors such as health and media. They showed great responsiveness as they delivered on many their campaign promises which generated greater support after the first election. While these examples show signs of consolidation of democracy, the party’s actions reduced the quality of democracy in other instances. Many of these instances include actions made by Thaksin himself. For example, media purchases and advancing his own corporate interest by meddling with the political system. Other example includes human rights violations committed in an attempt to quell drug trafficking and southern insurgency (William Case, 2007, p. 637).

4.2.2 Political Society
During the timeframe 1997-2006 Thailand underwent restructuring of the political polity. This regarded how the government apparatus was structured and how the state exercised power. This reorganization would enhance the democratic consolidation process for a brief period. Firstly, the security sector experienced changes in its structuring as the available positions had previously been occupied by members of the military through elite appointments. Before the enactment of the new constitution, the armed forced had taken up most of the seats in the senate and thus dominated the executive branch. The new constitution instituted that candidates could only enter the senate through elections. Consequently, all of the 200 seats in the Senate between 2000-2006 were given to candidates who ran for office, 2 percent were retired military officers. The days when the military exercised authority and hampered political competition seemed to be over (Chambers 2013, p 14). In addition, the military became weaker as it could no longer enjoy veto power over the dissolution or creation of governments. As such, the constitution seemed to minimize the military’s control (Chambers 2013, p 15).

In January of 2001, the Thai Rak Thai party climbed to power. Thaksin Shinawatra led the party to a victory and the formation of a government that would last the four-year term in full. Throughout Thai-history this had never happened and would mark a significant step towards democratic consolidation (Chambers 2013, p 14). Although the 2001 election was deemed fair and the results legitimate, the election commission of Thailand (ECT) investigated alleged fraud and irregularities after a series of complaints that led to interesting findings. 62 constituencies in 29 provinces had violated election laws and was ordered to perform election reruns (Hananutasuk 2001, p. 36). It was estimated that political leaders had disbursed approximately 25 billion ฿, equivalent to 625 million USD$ on vote buying. This was an
escalation of spending compared with the last election where the figures estimated 20 billion ฿ spent on vote buying. The funding of these practices often come from untraceable foundations and illegal activities. For instance, one member of parliament reportedly owned an underground and illegal gambling business in the city of Chaingmai. In other findings, politicians finance their respective campaigns through comparable gambling businesses, drug trade and smuggling of oil (McCargo 2002, p.117).

ANFEL (Asian network for free elections) point out that electoral results in numerous of constituencies indicate significant advancement in combating money politics and conclude that the ECT ruling to cancel electoral results due to cheating was widely popular among the public as it follow the political and democratic commitments accordingly. ANFEL further recommend that additional determination in the procedures of the ECT at a national level would support faith in democratic balloting and reduce the risk of repetitive elections in a continuous Thai- democracy. Simultaneously, in efforts to increase transparency in Thai politics, ANFEL recommend that creating local election committees, increased governmental support for NGOs and citizen groups that has democratic aspirations in terms of the voting public could generate more trust in the political system of Thailand (Hananutasuk 2001, p. 96).

Thailand was considered a free country by 2001 according to the Freedom House. The implementation and the 1997’s constitution, the election commission’s tough position against corruption and the election result all contribute to the Freedom House score (Freedom House 2014). This is comparable with 2006 where the Freedom House score Thailand as “partly free”. The decline is due to several political issues. Most prominent are the low political competitiveness, southern insurgency, war on drugs and attack on media through political intimidation (Freedom House 2013). Although still considered a fairly free country, the downward trend could hamper the democratization process and the continuation of democratic consolidation which the coup of 2006 wholly terminated.

However, the period of 1997-2006 is significant as it was marked by free and fair elections where political parties could compete for power. When the Thai Rak Thai party was reelected in 2005, it displayed an effective democratic system and where democracy was able to uphold itself, segmenting democratic rule (Albritton., Bureekul. 2008, p.143).
4.2.3 Rule of Law

Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996) argue that the rule of law is the foundations of the democratization process. This arena constitutes that the legislative branch is necessary for a democracy to flourish. Thailand’s constitution of 1997 sought to enhance the quality of democracy by implementing extensive political reforms. As for the executive branch the new reforms would strengthen political parties and uphold the economic, political and social rights as well as introducing a completely elected Senate. The new constitution would also create a strong and independent judicial branch while simultaneously implementing a framework that could consolidate a check-and-balance system, structuring a democratic system. This comprises of the establishment of independent supervising institutions. Those institutions were given judicial powers to restrict or balance the authorities with executive and legislative power. They also created accountability mechanisms, promoting respect for political and individual freedoms (Kuhonta 2008, p. 374). The national counter corruption commission and the constitutional court are examples of those independent institutions. These were meant to create good governance and sound management. The institutions provided a check and balance system against corruption, accountability and transparency (Maisrikrod, 2008 p. 109).

Citizens’ expectations of the new constitution’s reforms were explicably high even though the result of these modifications had been mixed. The new institutions had nonetheless been vigorous in their pursuit of political misbehaviors. Certainly, in terms of electoral politics, vote buying, fraud and corruption as investigations brought by the NCCC against high profile politicians demonstrates.

Successful cases in the constitutional court include investigations against the former secretary general of the democrat party, the interior minister, the former minister for health, political advisors and other members of parliament. These politicians were ultimately banned from holding political office. Despite this success, many other allegations of corruption had not resulted in prosecutions which could explain why the established institutions had been perceived as ineffective and unsatisfactory (Maisrikrod, 2008 p. 110). Some argue that the system failed as the charter unintentional provided a foundation for Thaksin Shinawatra to monopolize power. This was possible as the drafters of the constitution put emphasis on the strengthening of the executive branch (Kuhonta 2008, p. 382). In some respects, it allowed Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai party to slowly erode the quality of democracy. One example that is undoubtably debated is the institutionalization of accountability. Although it was
successful in prosecuting other high-profile politicians, the constitutional court freed the influential Thaksin Shinawatra from asset concealment charges.

Thailand had additional issues with the rule of law as the senate seemed to become an extension of the Thai Rak Thai party rather than a check on parliament. Media and the press witnessed continuous confrontation on their right to challenge the authority and human rights abuses became significant as Thailand’s war on drugs and southern disorder continued (Kuhonta 2008, p. 375). Linz and Stepan explain that autonomy and independence in the civil and political societies is important for the rule of law as the rule of law upholds the framework for how these societies operate in consolidating a democracy (Linz & Stepan 1996, p. 10).

As the report and score from Freedom House suggest, Thailand had serious problems with human rights in the analyzed period of 1997-2006. Thailand had not signed or ratified the convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatments or punishments. Thailand also retains the death penalty which is a prominent feature in Thailand’s war on drugs as individuals convicted of homicide and drug trafficking could receive the death penalty. Reports and accounts on Thailand’s war on drugs and southern unrest reveal serious violations on aforementioned human rights committed by security forces, police and judicial authorities. These reports comprise of violence, abuse of power and summary executions against suspected individuals. Despite this, police and officials escape legal consequences for their violations and actions. By 2005, 2500 people had been killed by police forces in Thailand’s war on drugs and none have been prosecuted as a result of these killings.

4.2.4 Bureaucratic Structure
As the five different arenas are interlinked and connected with each other, the degree of socioeconomics is just as significant as the institutional development. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan explain that when the five arenas interact with each other it creates this mutual reinforcement. Although institutions and organizations became strengthened after the enactment of Thailand’s constitution in 1997, reforms that sought to stamp out the practices of vote-buying and corruption were unable to eradicate the problem completely throughout the examined period of 1997 to 2006 (McCargo 2002, p.117). This highlights the flaws of the Thai-political system and the established institutions as the period was marked by prominent
flaws, violations and misbehaviors. Thaksin received a lot of criticism from the opposition for his questionable actions as prime minister. As he was a center figure of the examined period, his accused behaviors exemplify misconducts that could not be aligned with democratic aspirations or consolidation of democracy (McCargo 2002, p.117).

Examples of this have already been given as Thaksin was able to evade horizontal accountability by successfully manipulating and influencing institutions. Thaksin’s financial resources established compliance in the parliament as “wages” increased for the Thai Rak Thai MPs. As a consequence, bills aimed at restricting foreign ownership of domestic telecommunications companies passed successfully through the chamber. The legislation seemed suspiciously promising for Thaksin’s own Advance Info Service and their forecasts. (Case 2007, p.  631).

Furthermore, Thaksin hastened the promotion of his inner circle in the security forces. Family members and cadet classmates rose in rank after a cousin of Thaksin was appointed army chief. Moreover, 14 senior officers (one being Thaksin’s brother in law) elevated their position, becoming assistant chief of police (Case 2007, p.  631). William Callahan explains that nepotism and corruption such as this could be a gross violation of the rule of law (Callahan, 2005, p. 496).

The political priorities between 1997-2006 seemed to highlight efficiency in public administration. For instance, the public sector management reform plan from 1999 sought to enhance the functioning and management of governmental institutions and provided a legal basis for governmental businesses to tackle corruption. Simultaneously, the downsizing of the government was an additional importance for the Thaksin-led government. It would further centralization and make public services and enterprises performance oriented. A voluntary retirement system was set up to pursue that efficiency and anti-corruption agenda. Thaksin was fairly successful in his aspiration for efficiency (Painter, 1996, p. 41). However, the centralization of power meant that Thaksin and his socially interconnected people enjoyed increasing power under the appearance of efficiency (Painter, 1996, p. 43).

Corruption within the police, society and bureaucracy seem to be widespread as the data seem to suggest. In 2005 Thailand was ranked 59 out of 158 countries in Transparency International’s 2005 corruption perceptions index. Thailand scored 3.8 on a score range
between 0 and 10 where 0 is regarded as highly corrupt and 10 is regarded as highly clean of corruption (Utrikesdepartementet 2006).

The affirmation and existence of the problem could be of concern as corruption could cripple administrative tasks. The absence of corruption is important in a democratic style of governance as it helps to increase legitimacy. However, if the problem exists, it could make citizens feel alienated as they are being deprived of their rights. This is correlated with a state inadequacy to carry out elections or administrative tasks. This is how institutions free from corruption could help democratic consolidation (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 10).

Given the explanation of Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan’s theory it furthers the comprehension that the constitutional modifications and carried out reforms were largely overdue as the institutionalizing of values, efficiency, meritocracy would eventually lead to a decrease of corruption in Thailand. However, the implemented reforms could take several years to truly have an affect which is why the examined timeframe is still disturbed by the mentioned issues. (Painter, 1996, p. 44). In fact, the core issue seems to be that there is a persisting culture that remains within the bureaucracy despite the reformists’ modifications to the new system. Linz and Stepan explain that while a state bureaucracy is a necessary tool to reach democratic consolidation, problems in the state apparatus could be a lingering fallacy from the transition phase of previous pre-1997 governments. Although the system has upgraded itself to better tackle the problem, the short timeframe could not completely terminate the lingering culture of inefficiency or corruption despite structural changes emphasized in the 1997’s constitution. While necessary reforms have become operational the widespread corruption is still enduring despite the modifications and the ECTs successful investigations. This reaffirms what Linz and Stepan points out. They explain that efficacy is damaged because the old regime has profoundly laid claim to the established institutions. As such, it is a byproduct that cast problems for the post-totalitarian governance (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 250).

4.2.5 Economic Society
The economy had been an important focus for the Thai Rak Thai party as Thailand’s emergence out of the economic crisis of 1997 contributed to their success. The Thai Rak Thai party was the only party with a strong policy manifesto that helped them win the election of
2005 (Albritton, 2006 p. 141). However, a combination of issues led to an economic downturn in 2005. When the tsunami hit western Thailand in late December 2004 it caused a decline of tourism which was vital for the Thai economy. Southern political developments could also be attributed to the decline in tourism as violence and insurgency rose up. Despite the presented challenges, economic analysts are positive with the general performance considering the circumstances (Albritton, 2006 p. 146).

Moreover, Bangkok versus rural areas, economic growth and income inequalities, have long been issues Thai-political leaders have to deal with. Economic development has sometimes exceeded the importance of democratization as economic growth has successfully reduced inequalities and poverty. This is something public opinion confirms as 41.3% of Thais in 2001 thought that the economy is much more important than democracy. This opinion increased by 2% in 2005, demonstrating priorities among many Thais (Albritton, Bureekul, 2008, p. 46). Although the situation appears to become better, Thailand still rank high in terms of inequality and poverty as economic growth has been disproportionately distributed throughout the country (Hewison 2014, p. 852). Many experts also worry that gender equality could be a pressing issue as 44% of married women report having suffered abuse. Reports of rape are increasing and approximately 200,000 Thai women and underaged women work as prostitutes.

Thailand also rank high in terms of poverty compared with other countries. Most of the country’s wealth is concentrated in Bangkok whereas the north and northeastern regions appear to be stricken by poverty. Wages continue to remain low in these regions compared to the rest of the country (Hewison 2014, p. 852). Data from The World Bank reveal that 21.9% of the Thai population lived below the poverty line in 2006. This exemplifies the scale of poverty in the Thailand (The World Bank).

The economic policies Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai party promoted were incredibly popular in the countryside. Policies such as debt cancellation, affordable healthcare and village subsidies are examples of fulfilled campaign promises. The established social programs gave poor people a sense of empowerment as Thaksin responded to their problems. This ultimately created a strong rural voter base. The economic development in Thailand had a positive impact on democratization. As the urban middle classes grew in numbers it created a major force for pro-democratic sentiments in the beginning years of the examined period (Jäger 2012 p. 1144).
However, the continuous rise of Thaksin in later half of his rule meant that the role of traditional bureaucratic elites diminished. What emerged in its place was a web of businessmen. These businessmen participated in politics for their own economic interest rather than emulating a western-style party-system (Jäger, 2012 p. 1157). This altered the attitude of the urban middle class. (Jäger, 2012 p. 1444). They became more negative towards the Thaksin administration as the Thai-constitutional democracy seemed to evolve into the direction of populist authoritarianism (Jäger, 2012 p. 1445).
The following table and discussion summarize the results of selected features of each arena and indicate progress, problems or challenges for democratic consolidation in Thailand between 1997-2006.

**Table 3.1:** Summarization of the findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arena</th>
<th>Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society</td>
<td>The freedom of expression for individuals and media have reached a problematic situation as media-purchases by influential politicians and lèse-majesté laws seem to be meddling with freedom of expression. The 1997’s constitution provide many institutions that work as a check-and-balance system that could hold political leaders accountable for their wrongdoings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Society</td>
<td>Election Commission of Thailand is entrusted with the task to hold free and fair elections and have done a good job in combating voter fraud and vote-buying as they called for many election reruns. This opinion is shared by the Asian network for free elections. The final election results were eventually believed to be legitimate and correct. Freedoms in Thailand seem to be falling as the Freedom House in 2006 scored Thailand as “partly free”. The score is correlated with low political competitiveness, southern insurgency, war on drugs and attack on media through political intimidation. These factors amount to Thailand being seen as “partly free”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule of Law</td>
<td>Human rights are not respected in Thailand in the analyzed timeframe of 1997-2006 as many reports highlight a lot of shortcomings in regard to human rights. The new constitution established many independent institutions. So far these have been successful in their pursuit of political wrongdoings. However, the results have been perceived to be mixed as some allegations have not resulted in prosecutions, which makes some people question the independence of these institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic Structure</td>
<td>Corruption seem to be widespread in Thailand as multiple reports on political misbehaviors can testify. These reports are backed by data as Thailand score 3.8 in Transparency International's 2005 corruption perceptions index.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Society</td>
<td>Although inequality appears to be shrinking and the issue of poverty seem to be improving, Thailand still rank high in these areas as economic growth has been disproportionately distributed throughout the country and 21.9% of the country’s population lived below the poverty line in 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Discussion

According to the presented findings from material used in the study, the dissertation has indicated different factors that contributed to why Thailand did not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006. It has also identified what the key challenges that hindered further democratic consolidation were. The discussion will link presented data with selected features of the five arenas, used theory and methodology.

Civil Society: The civil society seem to be a major driving force for past democratization attempts and democratic consolidation process in the examined time period. Although the military have had significant influence in directing the country, the civil society has been vigorous for the call of liberalization and played a significant role in the transition to democracy. It could be a reason for why democracy is routinely reviving after an authoritarian takeover. It is likely that this type of pressure from the civilian society led to the creation of the 1997’s Constitution. The “people’s constitution” is projecting consolidation of democracy but lacked significant features that eventually led to the slow erosion of democratic quality. This is evident by looking at Reporters Without Borders’ worldwide press freedom index where Thailand’s press freedom is ranked as a problematic situation. This is a problem for the freedom of expression in Thailand as media corporations are getting less diverse in their political opinion. The findings also suggest that the civil society has paired up well with state institutions to protect freedoms and promoting greater social justice which is vital for the consolidation of democracy. The established supervising institutions seem to be operational as they have had successful results in their designated tasks.

Political Society: Thailand was able to undergo a great democratic transformation since 1997. The restructuring of the state has given positive effects that include a fully elected senate and an executive branch that is free from military power. The introduction of extensive civilian rule was a critical improvement from previous semi-democratic governments. The adaption to the system and its specific laws are something democratic consolidation constitutes. Thailand seemed to be on the road to fulfill this dimension after the landslide victories achieved by the Thai Rak Thai party in the 2001 and 2005 general election. However, the short time frame might not be sufficient to determine if this is the case as a democracy could take many years to be fully segmented in society. Despite this, election results in both elections were deemed free and fair by the ECT and illustrate that democracy has started to become routinized. Although still relatively free, Thailand’s political rights declined in the analyzed time period.
of 1997-2006. This means that the country’s status was downgraded from free to partly free by Freedom House. Low political competitiveness, southern insurgency, war on drugs and attack on media through political intimidation seem to be the factors in Thailand’s decline in respect to freedom. As democratic freedom is a feature of Linz & Stepan’s five arenas, the decline is significant for the democratization process as it appears to be a hinderance for achieving consolation of democracy in Thailand

Rule of Law: Although the enactment of 1997 constitution were a charter that sought to improve the quality of democracy with checks and balances it was unable to foresee the rise of a businessman with enormous wealth. Some argue that the charter failed as Thaksin was able to monopolize power due to the constitution’s emphasize on delegating power to the executive branch. This is why some perceive the established institutions to be ineffective and inadequate as there are instances when allegations did not lead to prosecution. Another example of this perception is that the institutions were thought to be heavily influenced by Thaksin as he was accused of evading accountability. Despite the mixed opinion of the institution’s independence, the established institutions were diligent and successful in their pursuit of political wrongdoings.

In the examined time period Thailand committed gross violations of human rights. This is particularly evident in Thailand’s war on drugs and southern insurgency. As human rights are a core feature the rule of law in a democracy, violations such as these would be a disruption for the consolidation of democracy according to Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan theory.

Bureaucratic Structure: The sidestepping of the rule of law had consequences for institutions and organizations that make up the bureaucracy and state apparatus. An example of this is the 2001’s general election that initially saw the return of vote buying and corruption before the ECT’s interventions. The new constitution did have safeguarding mechanism that recognized the practice and invalidated the result from many constituencies and provinces. Nevertheless, the practice had increased in numbers as more money was spent on vote buying. The funding of this came from illegal and corrupt activities.

However, the phenomenon implies that the problem lies within the culture of how to conduct an election rather than the bureaucratic structure. This culture is something that has been inherited from previous regimes and seem to be an obstacle for consolidation of democracy. The short time period was not enough for the institutionalizing of values, efficiency, further meritocracy and the decline corruption to become routinized. Segmented democracy is how a
democracy becomes “the only game in town” and considered consolidated.

The period 1997-2006 saw multiple instances of nepotism and corruption which is detrimental to the rule of law, the democratic procedures and consolidation of democracy. All this mistreatment overrode feature of the “people’s constitution” that were put in place to protect the state apparatus from such actions. It slowly eroded the quality of democracy and gave the military legitimacy in their seizure of power. Thailand had serious shortcomings in this matter as data suggest corruption is a widespread phenomenon in the country. This inhibited the democratic consolidation process and posed challenges for its continuation. The downsizing and centralization of governmental institutions enabled Thaksin and his close group of people to amass executive power under the mantle of efficiency. This is harmful to democratic consolidation as it redirects democratization into what could be described as developmental authoritarianism.

**Economic Society:** The economic development in Thailand had a positive impact on democratization and showed a strength and resilience during tough times. The optimistic view of Thailand’s economic forecasts gave the impression of a stable governance in a highly advanced democracy (Albritton, 2006 p. 147). Although inequality and poverty have been declining and the development goes in the right direction, they remain at an exceptional high level as 21.9% of the country’s population lived below the poverty in 2006. The disproportion could be troublesome for democratic consolidation as an equal society is desirable for a democracy. If the issues are not given focus it could reduce the system’s legitimacy. Linz and Stepan argues that an efficient state apparatus provides a proper economic society. This is an important feature for Thai-political leaders to recognize as inequality and poverty needs to be reduced for the consolidation of democracy in Thailand.

Limitations of this study based on the chosen methodology and design comprises of the short time period of 1997-2006. It constitutes the longest continuous government in Thailand that was democratically elected and thus noteworthy for the question of consolidated democracy. However, as the dissertation was limited to the assumptions of other people, and the material consists of their research, findings and opinion. The conclusions have been based on their contribution and assumptions.
6. Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate Thailand’s democratic consolidation process between 1997-2006. The dissertation was conducted through a qualitative case study where the method was theory consuming. In order to achieving the purpose, the dissertation asked the questions of, Why Thailand did not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006? and What were the main challenges for further democratic consolidation in Thailand.

This dissertation can conclude that Thailand did not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006 because of various factors. These factors were challenges that hindered further consolidation of democracy. For achieving full democratic consolidation these obstacles would have to be solved accordingly. Thailand have nevertheless, between the years 1997-2006 seen a positive development of democratization. For example, segmented support for democracy in Thailand suggest significant levels of democratic consolidation. Most of Thailand’s improvements stems from the 1997’s constitution that put emphasis on civilian rule. However, the drafters of “the peoples constitution” could not foresee that the rise of a businessman would be an inhibitor for future democratic consolidation.

Although Thaksin Shinawatra was successful at incorporating economic efficiency in Thailand, democratic consolidation would be negatively affected under his rule. Thailand would display authoritarian tendencies in his monopolization of power. His corrupt behavior, interference with institutions and actions on the verge of lèse majesté were reasons for his overthrow. Although he is not solely responsible for why Thailand did not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006, he is certainly a main figure that gave the military a reason to topple the regime and terminate the process of democratic consolidation.

This dissertation has pinpointed and discussed significant social, political, judicial, institutional and economic features that affected the democratic consolidation process in Thailand between 1997-2006. All this has been examined by applying Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan’s theory of democratic consolidation and the five arenas. From the dissertation’s analysis, it is evident that misappropriation of the state apparatus, inequality, poverty, corruption, declining political freedoms, the disregard for the rule of law and human rights were prominent challenges and obstacles for further democratic consolidation in Thailand.
The findings provide an answer to the proposed research questions of why Thailand did not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006 and what the main challenges for further democratic consolidation in Thailand were. Some of these challenges had been inherited from previous regimes, others were created by the actions of the ruling government or individuals. All these contributed to the fact that Thailand never reached a democratic consolidation and gave the military an excuse to topple the regime.

The results of this dissertation will enhance existing literature on democratic consolidation and democratization process of Thailand. By examining the results, the dissertation can deduce the answers to the research questions. Thailand did not reach democratic consolidation between the years of 1997-2006 because the country could not fulfill the five arenas of Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan which a consolidated democracy demands to become “the only game in town” and considered consolidated. By applying the theory of Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan and the five arenas the dissertation found that misappropriation of the state apparatus, corruption, inequality, poverty, declining political freedoms the disregard for the rule of law and human rights were challenges for further democratic consolidation in Thailand.

Moreover, As the dissertation have pinpointed challenges for the democratic consolidation process between 1997-2006 future research could dive deeper into the period of 1997-2006 by examining to which extent these challenges prohibits democratic consolidation. It could also be interesting to analyze if succeeding regimes or new attempts at democratic consolidation in Thailand have learned from past challenges and approached similar or remaining problems differently, and if they have been successful or unsuccessful. In addition, was the overthrow Thaksin delegitimized or legitimized among Thai citizens? This would be an interesting research as opinion polls revealed that Thai citizens showed dissatisfaction with governments linked with authoritarianism. It explores the dilemma of Thaksin turning authoritarian. Which was least appealing among Thai citizens, Thaksin turning authoritarian or an authoritarian takeover through coup d’état? A study such as this would display the civil society’s general support or contradictions to Thaksin’s democracy while simultaneously enhance the understanding of democratic consolidation in Thailand. Another related question worth exploring could be Thais confidence in the democratic process, quality of democracy and further democratic consolidation.
7. Bibliography


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