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**Globalization and Democratization
in Thailand:
Structural and Agential Roles
in Political and Economic Change**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Philosophy in Politics at Massey University

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Abstract

This thesis examines recent developments in Thailand's democratization process against the backdrop of economic and political globalization. It assesses the structural constraints and opportunities created by these forces, and the agential possibilities for managing them in a way that is consistent with democratization.

The structural environment of economic globalization has had highly contradictory effects on Thai democratization, in some instances helping and in others hindering. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's agential response to economic globalization does, however, have the potential to improve the climate for democratization. By offering alternative strategies for the management of this environment, and by prioritizing economic growth and redistribution, he has increased the options available to voters, and may be helping to avoid the economic problems that can undermine confidence in electoral democracy.

The structural environment of political globalization has likewise had mixed effects. Thailand has historically proved adept at adapting to changing global norms, and this openness has probably impacted positively on its democratization process. At the same time, however, it is an orientation that may have exacerbated Thailand's tendency to promote élite democracy, and stifled the search for indigenous democratic forms. Thaksin's agential responses to the political aspects of globalization do not appear to be favourable to deepening democratization. His impatience with what he perceives as the intrusion of the global community, his adherence to outmoded versions of sovereignty, and his failure to promote a global/local balance in the political realm combine to form policies that are unlikely to help Thailand take best advantage of international democratic networks.

This thesis argues the need to emphasize local solutions if Thailand's democratization process is to be protected in the context of a partially globalized world. Thaksin, albeit inadequately, has pointed the way toward these in the economic realm, but the pursuit of equivalent political solutions seems to be hampered by the power behind the projection of current global democratic norms, and by the difficulty of mediating between "top-down" and "bottom-up" democracy agendas in Thailand. Agential choice can make a difference here. But for this to happen, it is not only Thai agents who need a more inclusive and visionary democratic agenda. Changes in perspective are also needed by the most powerful agents in the global community – the world's most globalized, most wealthy, and most influential states.

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List of abbreviations

| | |
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| APEC | Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation |
| ARF | ASEAN Regional Forum |
| ASEAN | Association of South-East Asian Nations |
| EAEM | East Asia Economic Model |
| EGAT | Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand |
| NHRC | Thailand's National Human Rights Committee |
| SET | Stock Exchange of Thailand |
| TNA | Thai News Agency |
| TRT | Thai Rak Thai party, led by Thaksin Shinawatra |

Introduction

"If globalization fosters democratization," Clark argues, "it is not because of what it does, but because of what it *is*."¹ Important qualifications make this a much less positive assessment, however, than it appears at first sight. Firstly, the democratization that is inextricably associated with globalization is democratization of a certain kind, and secondly, there is an equally dependent relationship between globalization and democratic deficiency, with the former seen as the symptom of the latter rather than its cause.² The interplay of these two powerful forces and the intriguing implications of Clark's analysis form the context for this thesis, which examines recent developments in Thailand's democratization process against the backdrop of economic and political globalization.

Both democratization and globalization engender a diverse range of pressures, which are primarily experienced, buffered, and brokered at the level of the state – one of the most important sites where the global and the local intersect. An exploration of an individual state's reactions to these economic, political, internal, and external stresses enables a better appreciation of the real complexity of the forces involved, and highlights the difficult choices faced by a partially democratized, middle-income state in a partially globalized world. This study uses a range of theoretical and empirical literature on globalization and democratization to contextualize Thailand's experiences – positive and negative – of managing these two processes.

Some controversy surrounds the question of quite where to locate Thailand on the democratic transition/consolidation scale, but this thesis starts from the premise that a democratization process has been taking place over the past two or more decades, that this process is not complete, and that it may have been affected in some unspecified way by the parallel process of globalization.³ Very few case studies examine Thai

democratization in the context of globalization.⁴ Yet this viewpoint has valuable perspectives to contribute. Firstly, it reaffirms the importance of external factors in democratization, an angle that has often been downplayed in studies of Thailand. Secondly, it suggests that Thailand may be more of an "exemplary case" than is sometimes acknowledged. Thirdly, and crucially, it stresses the vital role of agency. These aspects will be developed throughout the thesis, but are introduced in the following section.

Globalization as a context for Thai democratization

The importance of links between democratization and globalization – or even between democratization and external factors of any kind – has been recognized only comparatively recently.⁵ Indeed, one of the firmest conclusions of a major 1980s democratization project was that external actors tended to play "an indirect and usually marginal role".⁶ But as the "third wave" of democratization rolled on, commentators began to recognize a "global trend towards democracy in the system", evidence of a "global demonstration effect".⁷ In an era that increasingly emphasized the deterritorializing nature of globalization, faith in the impermeable nature of borders seemed anachronistic.⁸ It is true that linking democratization with the "murky arena" of the international context immediately challenges "one of the most deeply rooted paradigm divides within political science, that between international relations and comparative politics".⁹ Yet this "great divide", with its misconceived theoretical separation of the domestic and international spheres, is arguably long overdue the kind of bridge that the current prominence of globalization debates thrusts upon it.¹⁰ In recent years, international relations theory has bumped up against democracy – which it long regarded as "domestic business" – at several key junctures, all of which fall under the shadow of globalization.¹¹ In a world where the nature of borders has changed, it makes little sense to insist on separating "a

theory of the good life within the state from a theory of the good life for humankind".¹²

The case of Thailand powerfully illustrates that the external can have complex and profound effects on the internal, in a way that makes it difficult not to conclude that globalization has played some part in shaping Thailand's democratization process. Contrary to the views of many of its supporters and detractors, however, the role of globalization is neither wholly positive nor wholly negative, as this thesis will demonstrate.

The second area brought into better focus by the globalization context is that of comparative democratization. Although the globalization process is unpredictable and contingent, its constraints and opportunities paradoxically align Thailand more closely with its democratizing peers than has been the case in the past. Thailand's democratization process has tended to be regarded as atypical, partly because its avoidance of direct colonial rule launched it on a political and social trajectory rather different from those of most other developing and newly democratizing countries.¹³ It is therefore rarely cited as an example of any particular process toward or away from democratic governance.¹⁴ Yet this thesis contends that a focus on democratization in the context of globalization – particularly when the political as well as the economic aspects of globalization are taken into account – throws into relief certain patterns that arguably make Thailand something of an "exemplary case".¹⁵

Both in Thailand and the world at large, globalization certainly suggests at least a partial explanation for some of the puzzling contradictions of the process of democratization over the last few decades. Democratic governance expanded dramatically over the course of the 20th century, and has spread with particular vigour since the 1970s.¹⁶ Yet summaries of this global democratic expansion often contain a strong chiaroscuro element. On the one hand, the reach of democracy is seen to be steadily expanding, and there are no global ideological rivals to democracy as a broad model of government; on the other hand, democracy has not taken

root at all in some parts of the world, and in many others, it is a delicate and fragile plant.¹⁷ Two global trends are thus seen to be colliding. One is the "surprisingly robust and resilient third wave of democratization", with the advent of a record number of electoral democracies; the other is "a spreading democratic malaise in many parts of the world", with "serious deficiencies of governance heightening public cynicism about parties and politicians in general, and diminishing public esteem for democracy".¹⁸

Assessments of Thai democracy demonstrate similarly contradictory trends. Thailand's last coup came as recently as 1991. The following year was marked by riots and bloodshed as demonstrators successfully protested an illicit post-election bid for parliamentary power by the leader of the coup group.¹⁹ Yet 1997 saw the passing of the "people's constitution" – a document that "enshrines all the usual provisions one might find in a western constitution, and a lot more besides" – and 1998 saw Thailand labelled a "free" country in the Freedom House rankings for only the fourth year since 1975.²⁰ Studies carried out in 2001 show "a high level of attitudinal commitment to democracy" among Thai respondents, and depict "a society well on its way to democratic consolidation".²¹ Yet, mirroring the global situation, serious questions can be asked about the health of democracy in Thailand. A "widespread hankering for competent as opposed to electorally legitimate government" has been discerned, and the extent of its democratic consolidation is often questioned.²² The new constitution, meanwhile, has proved to be "haunted by the law of unintended consequences", and doubt surrounds both middle-class commitment to democracy and levels of support for the liberal values often seen as necessary for a strong democratic tradition.²³ A lack of "human rights consciousness" is regularly deplored.²⁴ And bestriding all these concerns is the figure who "currently affects the prospects for stable democracy in Thailand more than any other single individual": Thaksin Shinawatra, leader of the Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party and prime minister since February 2001.²⁵ His "lukewarm commitment to democratic change", combined with "an aversion to scrutiny so intense

that at times it borders on paranoia", have prepared the way for a flurry of accusations that "Thailand's hard-won democracy is in tatters".²⁶

Given this confused picture, both in Thailand and worldwide, it certainly seems unsafe to leave the democratization-globalization connection unexamined. Indeed, Thede, underlining our lack of understanding of the way transnational forces affect new democracies, wonders whether "truncated democracies" are in fact the necessary outcome of the interaction of national and transnational forces in all or some cases.²⁷ Whatever else it may encompass, after all, globalization involves a reordering of the relationship between the sovereign state and the global environment.²⁸ Thus, states such as Thailand, which are in the process of laying the foundations of democracy and erecting its institutions, are carrying out this construction task on ground that is still shifting beneath their feet. Likewise, the salient issues confronted by Thailand in its globalization and democratization process – such as nationalism, populism, class division, economic autonomy, human rights, and good governance – are exemplary issues shared with many other states.²⁹ The subject of this thesis is specifically Thailand, and it is beyond its scope to focus in detail on other democratizing nations, but the point remains that contemporary globalization creates bedfellows where they did not exist before, and Thailand's experience, far from being unique, shares themes with many other polities.

The third area where greater understanding is gained by viewing Thai democratization in the context of globalization is that of agency. Globalization "is not some end-state in the course of realization, but instead is an ongoing political struggle".³⁰ If its effects are not pre-determined and predictable, and if its course depends on innumerable battles waged globally and locally, then the role of agency – both domestic and international – becomes doubly important. As domestic agents attempt to manage the effects of globalization, they are likely to impact, positively or negatively, on the process of democratization. This thesis therefore assesses policies on economic and political globalization

by the criterion of their potential effect on democratization, and this yardstick opens up perspectives on Thaksin's agential role that are rather different from those highlighted by much contemporary criticism. Central to the question of agency, however, is also the role of the international community's most powerful agents, who contribute significantly to the construction of the global environment in which Thailand has to operate, and thus affect its prospects of successful democratic consolidation. Their role, despite much global rhetoric on the value of freedom and democracy, is found to be not altogether helpful to states attempting to democratize in a world where political globalization has made one particular model of democracy overpoweringly influential.

There is therefore much to be gained from examining Thailand's democratization process in the context of globalization. The constraints of this study, however, necessitate the narrowing of the focus to very specific areas. The selection of parameters and theoretical perspectives is the subject of the next section.

The analytical framework

Thailand's democratization process is many decades old, and the structural changes associated with globalization presuppose a timeframe going back at least as far as the end of the Second World War.³¹ The primary focus of this study, however, will be the period since 2001, the year of Thaksin's election, contextualized where necessary by developments occurring over the 1990s, a decade marked by mounting agitation for a new Thai constitution, and by the Asian financial crisis.

The literature on globalization and democratization is voluminous. It was therefore necessary to develop a framework that allowed this overabundance to be marshalled in a coherent way. A suitable organizational outline is offered by the three theoretical approaches

around which explanations of patterns of democratization have traditionally tended to cluster. The first of these, the modernization approach, focuses on the presence (or absence) of the social and economic requisites for successful democratization. The second, the structural change approach, emphasizes shifting structures of class, state, and transnational power favourable (or unfavourable) to the democratization process. The third, the transition approach, stresses the role of agency in determining the political processes and choices that account for (or impede) transition to democratic rule.³² The scope of all three approaches can readily be extended to the international arena and the process of globalization, and they thus form convenient lenses through which to view particular aspects of democratization and globalization at work in Thailand.³³ Economic globalization, for example, was seen by many, especially in the early 1990s, as a spur to modernization, the creation of a middle class, and hence democratization. The "collapse of the entire bipolar structure of the international system", meanwhile, ushering in a new phase of political and economic globalization, is surely a change *par excellence* in transnational power structures, that might be calculated to have some effect, positive or negative, on the democratization process.³⁴ Similarly, the importance of individual agents in promoting or hindering democratization is redoubled, since their ability to handle globalization is also likely to directly affect their countries' transition to democracy.

As the first two strands of explanation concentrate on systemic factors and the third on the actions of élites and leaders, considerations of the role of "structure" and "agency" inevitably form a theoretical backdrop to these focal areas.³⁵ In the context of globalization and democratization, the structure/agent dynamic works on two interdependent levels: the domestic sphere, where society, culture, history, religion, economic capacity, and political institutions form the parameters within which leaders have to operate; and the international sphere, in which nation-states and other actors relate to each other as components of a broader political environment. The "agent" with which this thesis is primarily

concerned is Thaksin, although to the extent that his policies represent and steer Thailand in the international arena, "Thaksin's Thailand" is perhaps a more accurate agential descriptor in interstate contexts. Thaksin is reputed to be "the designer of every TRT policy and movement and the decision-maker on every one of its politico-economic and social issues".³⁶ Thus, while he rarely talks about democracy, the statements made to international audiences by ministers from the Foreign Ministry can be considered to form part of the Thaksin approach even if not directly articulated by him.³⁷

The structure/agent perspective adopted in this thesis is based on that expounded by Clark. This interpretation sees a "mutually constitutive relationship between globalization and the state, within which changes occur in both".³⁸ Thus, "structure (globalization) and agent (state) ... are not wholly separable categories, but essential constituents of each other".³⁹ This approach clearly has a constructivist basis.⁴⁰ Constructivism is not being advocated as necessarily constituting the best or only approach to the subject matter in hand, and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to test the overall effectiveness of constructivist theory in this area against other theoretical models. Nevertheless, many of its emphases – the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures; the importance of normative as well as material structures; the construction of actors' interests on the basis of social interaction; and the role of identity in shaping political action – have much light to shed on the fundamentally social processes of globalization and democratization.⁴¹ Above all, the attraction of Clark's constructivist-influenced description of the relationship between globalization and the state lies in its avoidance of the determinism that plagues many accounts of globalization. This interpretation gives agents real political room for manoeuvre, and real opportunities to shape the nature of the structure.⁴² While this strikes a somewhat hopeful note for countries like Thailand, some of the hope is immediately dispelled by the recognition that profound power disparities characterize the relative contributions of the units in the system. It is clear that not all states are equal in the "making" of globalization.⁴³

The organization of the thesis chapters separates economic from political globalization, and structural from agential roles. Clearly, there is a certain degree of artificiality here. However, separating these various facets not only makes the mass of material less impenetrable, but also highlights aspects of globalization that normally attract less attention. The argument will proceed as follows:

Chapter 1, a literature review, looks at the highly contested nature of both globalization and democratization, seeks to establish some working definitions, and summarizes some of the literature on the relationship between these two processes.

Chapter 2 considers the structural environment created by economic globalization. It assesses the applicability of modernization theory and the economic aspects of structural change theory (both of which link economic globalization and democratization) to the case of Thailand. This chapter demonstrates that such linkages are highly contradictory. In some instances economic globalization has helped Thailand's democratization process, while in others it has hindered it.

Chapter 3 adds the level of agency to this analysis. It asks whether or not Thaksin's policies on economic globalization have the potential to improve the climate for democratization, and argues – albeit with certain reservations – that they do. Thaksin has demonstrated that globalization does not necessarily mean loss of economic autonomy. By reintroducing the idea that economic globalization can be managed, and by emphasizing a balance between the global and the local, he increased the options available to voters, and enabled them to feel that their demands had been heard. By stressing – admittedly somewhat fixatedly – the need for economic growth, and by making poverty relief a key policy focus, he may be helping to avoid the economic malaise and inequality that can undermine confidence in electoral democracy.

Chapter 4 turns to the issue of political globalization, and asks whether major changes in transnational structures have aided or hindered Thailand's democratization process. After examining Thailand's levels of political integration, the chapter analyses the implications of Thai responses both to the massive geopolitical weight currently behind norms of democracy, and to the particular strand of liberal democracy with which globalization tends to be associated. Thailand has historically been adept at adapting to global norms, and this quality of openness has probably impacted positively on its democratization, but this chapter suggests that this orientation has also tended to exacerbate Thailand's perennial problem of élite democracy and stifle the search for a truly indigenous democratic vehicle. Thus, power disparities create a great irony here: at a time when "the international context has never mattered more to the future of democracy or been more favorable", the case of Thailand suggests that this very environment may be having adverse effects on genuine democratization.⁴⁴ The kind of democracy that both constitutes the current global norm and contributed to the democratic deficits of globalization has such momentum, such powerful backers, and such ready allies among domestic élites that it is often easier to adopt it – with all its inadequacies – than to search for home-grown patterns of participation that could root democracy more firmly in local culture, and level the playing-field for broader and deeper democratic involvement.⁴⁵

Chapter 5 returns to the question of agency in asking whether or not the responses made to political globalization by Thaksin and his ministerial team have improved the climate for democratization. Here the conclusion is negative. While Thaksin's economic ideas have the potential to be genuinely visionary, his international political acumen seems much less finely honed. His impatience with the reach of the global community, his adherence to outmoded versions of sovereignty, and his failure to apply his economic sense of the global/local balance to the political realm add up to a quasi-imperialist mentality that will not help Thailand to take best advantage of international democratic networks.

Finally, the Conclusion restates the major themes that have recurred throughout the thesis, and briefly considers how these themes may find broader application to other globalizing, democratizing polities. It argues the need for more emphasis on local solutions in the democratization process, suggests that the pursuit of these solutions is hampered by the proprietary attitudes to democracy shared by domestic élites and the shapers of current democratic norms, and stresses the importance of agential choice in correcting this imbalance.

Throughout, the sources are accessible in the English language. This is not seen as a limiting factor, as the topic of the thesis presupposes an "outside-in" perspective, and Thai governmental, media, and academic sites offer extensive material in English.⁴⁶

Turning with the globe, or turning the globe?

As one of Southeast Asia's small number of "free" countries, a key ally of the US, a survivor of the 1997 financial crisis, and an influential founding member of ASEAN, Thailand is a country whose democratic trajectory has a certain significance on the world stage. Democratic backsliding or failure, or alternatively, the demonstrably successful consolidation of democracy there, would be not only conspicuous but also possibly contagious to other states in the region, by adding weight either to the argument that democracy cannot flourish in a developing, partially globalized, middle-income Asian state with a recent history of dictatorship, or to the belief that it can.

This thesis argues that globalization will have an important influence on Thailand's democratic future, and success or failure will depend on how this process is managed. Inklings of the importance of this management are found in contrasting Thai translations of the word globalization. Chai-Anan Samudavanija's translation, *lokanuwat*, connoted "turning with the

globe", "moving along with the world", or "following the world".⁴⁷ In 1994, however, the Royal Institute of Thailand, reportedly at the instigation of the king, announced that the Thai translation of globalization should be *lokaphiwat*, which can be glossed as "turning the globe", "reaching outward, making contact with, to the extent of conquering the world", "progressing with the world", "when the world moves forward, Thailand also moves forward".⁴⁸ The change was variously seen as epitomizing a "Thai bourgeois expansionist trend", rejecting the idea of following Westerners, or avoiding the connotation of "worldliness" said to be carried by *lokanuwat*.⁴⁹ But from a post-crisis perspective, the king's instinct seems to be justified. If Thailand's democratization process is to both exploit the opportunities and manage the constraints offered by globalization, then its stance needs to be proactive rather than reactive. To play its full part in "turning the globe" it needs to add its own distinctive voice to the debate on globalization and democratization that forms the topic of the next chapter.

Endnotes to Introduction

¹ Ian Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p.150.

² ibid., pp.152, 156. These qualifications will be discussed in successive chapters.

³ Definitions of democratization and globalization, as well as the concepts of transition and consolidation, will be discussed in Chapter 1. A sketch of Thailand's current democratic standing will be given below, but the democratic consolidation process can surely never actually be complete in any country.

⁴ These will be reviewed in succeeding chapters. They tend to stress the influences, for good or ill, of economic globalization, while much less is made of the nature and effects of political globalization. This is perhaps partly because Asian responses to globalization have tended to be highly selective, resulting in "a distinctively Asian hybrid of pell-mell economic globalization and political-cultural exceptionalism" (Lowell Dittmer, 'Globalization and the Twilight of Asian Exceptionalism', in *Globalization and Democratization in Asia: The Construction of Identity*, Catarina Kinnvall and Kristina Jönsson (eds), London: Routledge, 2002, pp.22-23).

⁵ On the neglect of globalization's links with democratization, see Nancy Thede, *Democratic Development 1990-2000: An Overview*, Quebec: International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 2002, <http://www.ichrdd.ca/english/commdoc/publications/demDev/ddOverview10Years.pdf>, p.16 (all website access dates are listed in the bibliography). She notes, as late as 2000, that the issue of globalization is rarely addressed in discussions of democratization, and its relationship to democratic development is under-theorized. On the neglect of external factors in general, see Philippe C. Schmitter, 'The Influence of the International Context Upon the Choice of National Institutions and Policies in Neo-Democracies', in *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas*, expanded edition, Laurence Whitehead (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.26-28; Jon C. Pevehouse, 'Democracy From the Outside-In? International Organizations and Democratization', *International Organization*, 56:3 (Summer 2002), pp.515-519; and Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.150.

⁶ Philippe Schmitter, 'An Introduction to Southern European Transitions From Authoritarian Rule: Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey', in *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Southern Europe*, Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead (eds), Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, p.5, quoted by Pevehouse, p.515. See also Schmitter, 'The Influence', p.27.

⁷ Harvey Starr, 'Democratic Dominoes: Diffusion Approaches to the Spread of Democracy in the International System', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 35:2 (Jun 1991), pp.368-369, 377-378. See also Dankwart A. Rustow, 'Democracy: A Global Revolution?' *Foreign Affairs*, 69:4 (Fall 1990), pp.75-91.

⁸ Common to the key elements of definitions of globalization – the expansion of markets, challenges to the state and institutions, and the rise of new social and political movements – is "the sense that activities previously undertaken within national boundaries can be undertaken globally or regionally – to some extent 'deterritorialized'" (Ngaire Woods, 'The Political Economy of Globalization', in *The Political Economy of Globalization*, Ngaire Woods (ed.), Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000, pp.3-6).

⁹ Schmitter, 'The Influence', pp.28-29.

¹⁰ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, pp.15-32. Clark (p.5) argues that "the 'domestic' is as much a part of the fabric of the international system as any abstracted 'structure' of the relations between states". See Peter A. Gourevitch, 'The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics', *International Organization*, 32:4 (Autumn 1978), p.911, for early recognition that the international system "is not only a consequence of domestic politics and structures but a cause of them.... International relations and domestic politics are therefore so interrelated that they should be analyzed simultaneously, as wholes." Gourevitch, however (p.911),

judges the "interpenetrated quality of international relations and domestic politics" to be as old as the existence of states, and sees no reason that differing degrees of interdependence should require different modes of explanation – a position that this thesis does not adopt.

¹¹ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, pp.146-147; 162-166. Clark (p.147) sees three principal junctures at which democracy and international relations theory meet: the argument about the global forces that have encouraged the increasing spread of democratization; the thesis that the state now "underproduces" democracy as a result of globalization; and the literature on the "democratic peace".

¹² Anthony McGrew, 'Democracy Beyond Borders: Globalization and the Reconstruction of Democracy Theory and Politics', in *The Transformation of Democracy? Globalization and Territorial Democracy*, Anthony McGrew (ed.), Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997, p.262.

¹³ David Murray, *Angels and Devils: Thai Politics From February 1991 to September 1992 – A Struggle for Democracy?*, Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2000, p.258.

¹⁴ ibid., p.258. The partial exception here is modernization theory, with its emphasis on middle-class transmission of democracy (James Ockey, *Making Democracy: Leadership, Class, Gender, and Political Participation in Thailand*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004, p.2). The extent to which Thailand's democratization process really qualifies as an example of modernization theory in action will be discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁵ Laurence Whitehead, *Democratization: Theory and Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p.213. In Whitehead's terms, an exemplary case is one where the issues at stake can be seen as exemplary issues with an "outcome that is meaningful and salient at the international level".

¹⁶ Freedom House, '[Democracy's Century](http://www.freedomhouse.org/reports/century.pdf)', <http://www.freedomhouse.org/reports/century.pdf>; David Potter, 'Explaining Democratization', in *Democratization*, David Potter, David Goldblatt, Margaret Kiloh, and Paul Lewis (eds), Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997, pp.1-3, 9.

¹⁷ See, for example, Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2004: Gains for Freedom Amid Terror and Uncertainty', <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2004/essay2004.pdf>, pp.3, 4, 13; Larry Diamond, 'Advancing Democratic Governance: A Global Perspective on the Status of Democracy and Directions for International Assistance' (Dec 2003), http://www.stanford.edu/~ldiamond/papers/advancing_demo %20governance.pdf, pp.2-17.

¹⁸ Diamond, 'Advancing Democratic Governance', pp.12-13. Many other commentators make similar observations. Thus, the "heady early days of the third wave" are contrasted with the recognition that "what is often thought of as an uneasy, precarious middle ground between full-fledged democracy and outright dictatorship is actually the most common political condition today of countries in the developing world and the postcommunist world" (Thomas Carothers, 'The End of the Transition Paradigm', *Journal of Democracy*, 13:1 (2002), pp.18-20). The emergence of "unexpected trends" is noted in some of the new democracies, and the "quality of democracy" has become a major issue for concern, with accountability, socio-economic injustice, rising criminality, and citizen insecurity in new democracies becoming "the new frontier for democratization" (Thede, p.7). Indeed, while many countries may have experienced a "political transition" in recent decades, it is now becoming clear that most of these transitions are not so much "failed democratic transitions" as "transitions that never led in the direction of democracy at all" (Marina Ottaway, 'Promoting Democracy: The Next Phase', paper presented at conference on 'Democracy, Power and Partnership: Implications for Development Cooperation', Uppsala, 6 May 2002, <http://www.kus.uu.se/Democracy2/Demokratikonferens0303Marina%20Ottaway%20The%20Next%20Step.pdf>, p.1).

¹⁹ Michael Kelly Connors, 'Framing the "People's Constitution"', in *Reforming Thai Politics*, Duncan McCargo (ed.), Copenhagen: NIAS Publishing, 2002, pp.39-41.

²⁰ Edward McBride, 'A New Order: A Survey of Thailand', *The Economist*, 2 Mar 2002, p.4; Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World Country Ratings: 1972 Through 2003', <http://www.freedomhouse.org/ratings/allscore04.xls>.

²¹ Robert B. Albritton and Thawilwadee Bureekul, 'The Meaning of Democracy in a Developing Nation', paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association National Conference, Chicago, IL, United States, 3-6 Apr 2003, http://www.kpi.ac.th/download/meaning_of_democracy1.pdf, pp.1, 23-24. See also Paul Chambers, 'Good Governance, Political Stability and Constitutionalism in Thailand 2002: The State of Democratic Consolidation Five Years After the Implementation of the 1997 Constitution' (Aug 2002), King Prajadhipok's Institute, http://www.kpi.ac.th/en/res_good_gov.htm, pp.43-45; and Niyom Rathamarit, 'The 1997 Constitution: The Path of Reform', paper presented at the Thai Update 2003 Conference in Canberra, Australia, 29-30 Apr 2003, http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/thailand/thailand_downloads/Niyom_ThaiUpdate%20Apr03.rtf p.14

²² On the desire for competent government, see Duncan McCargo, 'Introduction: Understanding Political Reform in Thailand', in McCargo, *Reforming*, p.5. For views on consolidation, see Anders Uhlin, 'Globalization, Democratization and Civil Society in Southeast Asia: Observations From Malaysia and Thailand', in Kinnvall and Jönsson, p.163; and Somchai Phatharathananunth, 'Civil Society and Democratization in Thailand: A Critique of Élite Democracy', in McCargo, *Reforming*, p.130. Carothers ('The End', p.11) has suggested that Thailand, like many other countries, may belong in a "grey zone" rather than a true democratic transition/consolidation process. Given the success of Thaksin and the Thai Rak Thai party, however, he may now wish to switch Thailand from the "feckless pluralism" grey zone syndrome to the "dominant-power politics" one.

²³ Duncan McCargo, 'Democracy Under Stress in Thaksin's Thailand', *Journal of Democracy*, 13:4 (Oct 2002), p.114; Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Meaning of Democracy', pp.6, 13-14.

²⁴ David Streckfuss and Mark Templeton, 'Human Rights and Political Reform in Thailand', in McCargo, *Reforming*, pp.73-90; Sombat Chantornvong, 'The 1997 Constitution and the Politics of Electoral Reform', in McCargo, *Reforming*, pp.219-220.

²⁵ McCargo, 'Democracy Under Stress', p.115.

²⁶ ibid., pp.122, 124; *The Nation*, 'TRT Must Learn Democratic Values', 29 Feb 2004 (all newspapers consulted via Internet unless page numbers given; see bibliography for root websites). See also, for example, *The Nation*, 'PM's Declaration: Democracy Is Not My Goal', 11 Dec 2003; 'Democracy Can Easily Bite Back', 14 Dec 2003; *Bangkok Post*, 'PM Rules Without Question: House a Lame Duck Under an Iron Fist', 29 Dec 2003; 'The Thaksin Leadership Style: Things Snap if They Cannot Bend', 5 Mar 2004; 'Rally Aims for an End to "Thaksinocracy"', 12 Oct 2004; *The Washington Post*, 'Our Man in Bangkok', 26 Dec 2003; *The New York Times*, 'Bold Thai Leader Faces Growing Criticism', 14 Mar 2004.

²⁷ Thede, p.16.

²⁸ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, pp.68-69; Woods, 'Political Economy', pp.10-12. This reordering will be extensively discussed in Chapters 1 and 4.

²⁹ Whitehead, *Democratization*, p.213.

³⁰ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.174.

³¹ The "dating" of the beginning of the globalization process will be discussed in Chapter 1.

³² Potter, 'Explaining', pp.10-24.

³³ The three approaches, as well as their extension to globalization, will be amplified in Chapter 1.

³⁴ Schmitter, 'The Influence', p.36.

³⁵ Dessler summarizes the "agent-structure problem" as stemming from the need to reconcile "two uncontentious truths about social life: first, that human agency is the only moving force behind the actions, events, and outcomes of the social world; and second, that human agency can be realized only in concrete historical circumstances that condition the possibilities for action and influence its course" (David Dessler, 'What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?', *International Organization*, 43:3 (Summer 1989), p.443).

³⁶ *Business Day*, 'Bangkok Election Will Play a Significant Role in Deciding TRT's Fate', 19 Aug 2004. Thaksin has reportedly described himself as a "Genghis Khan"-style

manager, one capable of setting out a 'vision and forcing everyone to work like barbarians'" (*The Nation*, 8 Jan 2001, quoted in Ockey, *Making Democracy*, pp.18-19). Reports of televised cabinet meetings compare the cabinet room to "a school where the students lack the guts to argue with the teacher", while critics complain that "Thailand is being run in a corporate style, with the CEO calling every shot" (*The Nation*, 'Thaksin's TV Classroom Antics', 14 Jan 2004). On Thaksin's dominance over his cabinet see also *Bangkok Post*, 'Ministers Told They're Not Pulling Their Weight', 3 Mar 2004; *The Nation*, '50,000 Defy PM at Egat [Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand] Protest', 3 Mar 2004; 'Tactical Retreat Can't Solve Strategic Breakdown', 11 Mar 2004; 'PM's Dominance Denying All Others Space', 26 May 2004. Thaksin's dominance of his cabinet does not, however, equate to dominance of the entire political process. Chapter 4 will discuss the disjuncture between the political/ministerial sphere occupied by Thaksin and the different spheres of state-society relations occupied by certain state agencies.

³⁷ Thaksin's comments on democracy will be discussed in Chapter 3.

³⁸ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.5. Clark emphasizes (pp.30-31) that this process of mutual constitution is far from being one of "idyllic harmony". Rather, it is an adaptation that "imposes costs, measured in degrees of real-life human sacrifice, hardship, and suffering". Equally, the process is "asymmetrical". At particular times, "the 'external' pressures operating upon the state will be dominant and will discipline the state to behave in internationally acceptable ways", while at other times, "domestic forces will reassert themselves and the form of international order will be reconstituted from the inside out".

³⁹ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.104.

⁴⁰ One of the key characteristics of constructivism is an emphasis on the mutual constitution of agents and structures (Christian Reus-Smit, 'Constructivism', in *Theories of International Relations*, 2nd ed., Scott Burchill, Richard Devedzak, Andrew Linklater, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reus-Smit, and Jacqui True, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, p.218). As Wendt explains: "Just as social structures are ontologically dependent upon and therefore constituted by the practices and self-understandings of agents, the causal powers and interests of those agents, in their own turn, are constituted and therefore explained by structures" (Alexander E. Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory', *International Organization*, 41:3 (Summer 1987), p.359).

⁴¹ Reus-Smit, pp.209, 216-219. See Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, pp.29-31 and pp.172-174, for a general account of the usefulness – and limitations – of constructivist theory in dealing with globalization.

⁴² As Gourevitch's early study makes clear ('The Second Image Reversed', p.911), "However compelling external pressures may be, they are unlikely to be fully determining, save for the case of outright occupation. Some leeway of response to pressure is always possible, at least conceptually."

⁴³ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.55.

⁴⁴ Larry Diamond, 'Universal Democracy?', *Policy Review* (Jun-Jul 2003), pp.3-25, page numbers not available in Internet format.

⁴⁵ Ockey, *Making Democracy*, p.3, points out that support for democracy in Thailand stems not only from Western influence but also from habits of political participation rooted in traditional village culture.

⁴⁶ In the government's case, it may be objected that messages intended for overseas audiences may differ from those for home consumption, but government presentations of values and aims to foreign audiences are useful indicators of the standards they *think* they should be living up to (even if they do not actually achieve them in practice). Thus, they are helpful benchmarks of the extent to which governments recognize and seek to conform to changing global norms.

⁴⁷ Craig J. Reynolds, 'Thai Identity in the Age of Globalization', in *National Identity and its Defenders: Thailand Today*, Craig J. Reynolds (ed.), Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2002, pp.316-317; Kasian Tejapira, 'Post-Crisis Economic Impasse and Political Recovery in Thailand: The Resurgence of Economic Nationalism', *Critical Asian Studies*, 34:3 (Sep 2002), pp.330-331; Ishii Yoneo, comments at discussion following address by Thongchai Winichakul, 'Asian Identity: A Post-Colonial Misnomer', at symposium on 'What Are Asian Identities Under Globalization?', at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan, 8

Dec 2003, pp.94-95, (<http://www.waseda-coe-cas.jp/e/symposium0312/sympo03-d4-e.pdf>). Chai-Anan's translation was widely and successfully propagated by a leading and popular business newspaper (Reynolds, 'Thai Identity', p.317; Kasian, 'Post-Crisis', p.331).

⁴⁸ Reynolds, 'Thai Identity', p.318; Kasian, 'Post-Crisis', p.331; Ishii, pp.94-95.

⁴⁹ Kasian, 'Post-Crisis', p.331; Ishii, p.94.

Chapter 1

Democratization and Globalization

Globalization and democratization are notoriously contested terms. This chapter works to establish some definitions of these processes, on which the rest of the thesis builds. The first section examines definitions of democracy, and outlines three key clusters of theory used to explain democratization. The second section discusses the definition and dating of globalization, and notes the challenges and opportunities it presents for democracy. The third section links theories of democratization with globalization, and uses them to categorize some of the literature exploring the effects of globalization on democratization.

Democratization

Defining democracy and democratization

It is clear that the term "democratization" refers to "political changes moving in a democratic direction", but it is far from clear how that democratic direction should be defined.¹ Approaches can usefully be divided into three broad categories: minimalist, checklist, and contextual.

Minimalist approaches concentrate on elections. A much-quoted definition reflecting this emphasis is that of Schumpeter, who sees democracy as "that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote".² The first potential criticism of this approach is that it is inadequate.³ Certainly, a minimalist type of definition may be useful for a broad-brush historical survey or research agenda.⁴ However, it fails to speak to the concern that a functioning

democracy needs a lot more than an impeccable election record.⁵ The second criticism is that it tends to be élitist, with "the people" seen as little more than "producers of government".⁶

This sense of insufficiency has led to the checklist approach, which attempts to distinguish "liberal democracy" from purely "electoral democracy" by detailing the range of rights and freedoms that should accompany the holding of elections in any aspiring democratic polity. Some checklists are brief and general.⁷ However, the perceived *sine qua non* elements of a liberal democracy can also be cumbersomely extensive, stretching to 10, 11, and even 19 items.⁸ There are two main objections to the checklist approach, at least in its more specific and all-embracing variants. Firstly, the listings of individual freedoms are largely arbitrary, and may be culturally conditioned.⁹ Thus, this approach often fails to take context and locally driven needs into consideration, forgetting that democracy is not a "one size fits all" phenomenon, and is best grown from internal values, movements, and history.¹⁰ Secondly, although the codifying of individual rights and freedoms is undeniably a huge step forward from authoritarian rule, it is of very questionable value if the power relationships within a society mean that these rights and freedoms cannot actually be realized or enjoyed in everyday life.¹¹ No amount of listing can disguise the reality that democracy has "historically coexisted with exploitation and oppression at the workplace, within the schools, within bureaucracies, and within families".¹²

Such concerns throw up inherent difficulties in the liberal democratic model, symptoms of which crop up throughout this study. Commentators may express impatience that liberal democracy appears "little loved" by some observers, but there is, after all, much reason to be "unhappy with the outcomes democracies produce", and to want to "look beyond existing or likely democracies to better alternatives".¹³ Ironically, however, this search for better alternatives is hampered by the dominance accorded to liberal democracy by the process of globalization.¹⁴ This is not to say that liberalism is itself monolithic (there has always been

tension among the ideas and values that constitute the liberal tradition) or that globalization somehow dictates precise forms of government (huge differences exist in the institutional arrangements of established democracies). Nevertheless, today's governmental discourse certainly tends to highlight particular liberal themes at the expense of others.¹⁵ Thus, while supporters of this version of liberalism highlight the interlocking benefits of commerce, democracy, effective international institutions, and an emphasis on human rights, they neglect to "inquire into the normative character of the ensuing (at least ostensibly) liberal order" – hence the need, in Richardson's terms, for "critical liberalism", a fresh engagement with contemporary issues and problems.¹⁶ The global reach of liberal democracy has been alternately feted as "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and ... the final form of human government", and deplored as the "global hegemony of the liberal democratic state", but several of its aspects raise questions as to its universal applicability.¹⁷ It tends, for example, to emphasize a negative conception of freedom *from* government interference, rather than freedom *to* achieve various objectives with the help of an enabling state, while its (partial and varying, but nevertheless fundamental) separation of the private sphere of economics from the public sphere of politics has allowed formal political equality to co-exist with gross material inequality.¹⁸ It may "encourage a passive individualism, rather than active or collective citizenship", with an emphasis on representation rather than participation.¹⁹ Perhaps most importantly, liberal thought often downplays the significance of power.²⁰

Whereas checklist approaches to democratization thus leave many questions unanswered, contextual approaches, by offering a more nuanced, open-ended account of the journey of democratization, at least manage to circumvent many of the presuppositions inherent in the checklists. By avoiding over-stipulation, they leave societies a little more room to decide the kind of democracy they want to aspire to, and the way they want to prioritize those aspirations. One example of a contextual approach, provided by O'Donnell, suggests that a "realistic and restricted"

(but not minimalist) definition of a democratic regime combines "fair and institutionalized elections" with the kind of "surrounding political freedoms" that are actually necessary for the conduct of such elections.²¹ The nature of these political freedoms is "inductively derived", however, and universal agreement on exactly what they should be is very unlikely.²² Thede, commenting on this understanding of democracy, highlights that the specific group of rights cannot be standardized because it depends on the historical and social context of each country.²³ A second example of a contextual definition, given by Whitehead, emphasizes the need for a "moderately 'constructivist' approach" to the meaning of democracy, and argues that although the concept contains a core of meaning that is "anchored", there is also a margin of contestation that is "floating".²⁴ Context is therefore highly significant:

Democracy has some indispensable components, without which the concept would be vacuous, but these indispensable elements are skeletal and can in any case be arranged in various possible configurations. At best they only generate a 'thin' account of democracy that may be universally applicable but at the cost of much imprecision and ambiguity. The richness of the concept derives from its contextual elaborations, which are variable and may tug in opposed directions.²⁵

This does not mean that democracy can mean all things to all people. But it is the "court of democratic opinion" – "a reflective opinion shaped by regional and global as well as domestic influences" – that arbitrates disputes over precisely what counts in each context, not a "stipulative definition".²⁶ Democratization, therefore, according to Whitehead, is a "complex, long-term, dynamic, and open-ended process", consisting of "progress towards a more rule-based, more consensual and more participatory type of politics".²⁷

It is the broader, less prescriptive, more context-driven approaches that seem most appropriate for the purposes of this thesis. After all, there is little doubt that Thailand meets the minimalist criterion. Thais can change their government in genuinely competitive elections, even though vote-buying and electoral manipulation are an ongoing problem.²⁸ Similarly, Thailand ranks as a "free country" on the Freedom House scale, even though its scores and the accompanying assessment indicate plenty of

room for improvement on most versions of the "checklist".²⁹ But ticks in boxes on an arbitrary checklist give little indication of the struggles under way as Thai democracy simultaneously interacts with a globalizing environment and tries to progress toward Whitehead's more rule-based, consensual, and participatory type of politics. They give little indication of how many sectors of Thai society are genuinely empowered to avail themselves of the listed rights. In any case, the mental checklists prevailing in different parts of Thai society may come up with very different assessments both of this journey and its ultimate goal, and with very different judgements on the way globalization is affecting it. A non-Thai can, of course, never see things from a Thai point of view, but this impaired vision is only compounded when the outsider's view is further distorted by predetermined outside criteria, and when democratic progress is measured by tracking conformity to a particular, externally imposed, pattern. Given that globalization, no less than democratization, is also a "complex, long-term, dynamic, and open-ended process", the fewer prescriptive lenses that are used to explore their interaction, the better.

Before moving on to discuss explanatory theories of democratization, it is necessary to comment briefly on the intrinsic link between human rights and democracy. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights concluded that "democracy, development and respect for human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing".³⁰ Thus, democracy and human rights are mutually constitutive processes, and "struggles for the recognition and institutionalization of rights are the very stuff of democratic institutions and processes".³¹ Human rights issues therefore necessarily form part of Thailand's overall democratic profile.

Explaining democratization

The following subsection briefly examines some of the debates surrounding the modernization, structural change, and transition theories

of democratization. The final section of this chapter will then link these theories explicitly to globalization.

Modernization theory focuses on the socioeconomic requisites of democracy. Lipset's assertion that "democracy is related to the state of economic development" was first advanced in 1959.³² Lipset did not, however, assert causality – merely correlation.³³ He did not assert inevitability either. Revisiting the theory in a later essay, he argues that a number of statements can be confidently made about the structural, cultural, and institutional factors that are conducive to the development of democracy, but insists that "specific outcomes depend on particular contexts". While certain factors shape the probabilities for democracy, "they do not determine the outcomes".³⁴

Diamond takes Lipset's argument one step further. The evidence accumulated over decades of research, he contends, indicates that the strong positive relationship between democracy and socioeconomic development – although neither unilinear, nor stable across time, nor determinative – is causal in at least one direction: that is, higher levels of development generate a significantly higher probability of democratic government. Thus, while Lipset's original thesis read, "The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy," Diamond expands it to read, "The more well-to-do the people of a country, on average, the more likely they will favor, achieve, and maintain a democratic system for their country."³⁵ Studies carried out by Przeworski et al, on the other hand, suggest that Lipset should be taken quite literally, and development should be equated purely with the chances of *sustaining* democracy.³⁶ Thus, they conclude, "there are no grounds to believe that economic development breeds democracies", but "once established, democracies are likely to die in poor countries and certain to survive in wealthy ones".³⁷ This, however, is not a modernization theory, since "the emergence of democracy is not brought about by development ... it survives if a country is 'modern', but it is not a product of 'modernization'".³⁸

Structural change theory, the second approach to democratization under consideration here, relies mainly on long-term processes of historical change – particularly, shifting structures of class, state, and transnational power – to provide explanations for democratization. The basic premise is that some changes in power structures provide constraints and opportunities that nudge societies and élites along a path leading to liberal democracy, while others lead historically in other directions.³⁹ Structural approaches are helpful in several ways. They help to explain why democratization becomes an issue at all, throwing light on why different social groups are forced to stake their claim to state power, and how they find sufficient means to challenge old regimes. Structural theories also provide tools to explain why different social classes are members of different alliances in the democratization struggle, and how much political power they have. They are likewise used to explain why large-scale social processes, like war or economic crisis, can both force the pace of democratization struggles and make their democratic resolution difficult or impossible.⁴⁰

Although the different types of structural change are clearly interrelated, the focus of this thesis is changing configurations of transnational power.⁴¹ Manifestations of such change might include shifts in economic or geopolitical dependence or interdependence, economic crisis, war and international tension, decolonization, and ideological and cultural flows.⁴² Globalization encompasses several of these elements, but the case of Thailand particularly draws attention to the consequences of increasing economic and political power disparities, and the dissemination of ideas and norms. These are therefore the aspects on which this thesis will concentrate.

Transition theory, the third key approach to democratization, focuses on individual political actors. Thus, certain actions, choices, and strategies of political élites are beneficial to democratic transition while others are not, and the progress of democratization largely depends on what élites and individuals do when, where, and how.⁴³ This approach does not reject

structural approaches altogether, but shifts the balance of explanation toward institutional and procedural issues, leadership, and political action.⁴⁴ A key element of transition theory is that at some point the democratizing polity is supposed to enter a consolidation phase. However, the difficulties with defining what counts as consolidation are akin to those encountered with defining democracy.⁴⁵ Attempts to oversimplify have led to what Carothers dubs the "transition paradigm", the core assumptions of which, he argues, in no way match the democratic realities observed on the ground.⁴⁶ Whitehead suggests that "rather than envisioning a single uniform and final end-state as the necessary outcome of all democratization processes, it may be better to think in terms of a range of relatively open-ended democratic outcomes, each of which would be 'viable' (rather than 'consolidated')".⁴⁷

Clearly, it is impossible to rely on one approach to convincingly explain every occurrence of democratization. However, each theoretical basket of ideas, while partial in itself, throws light on differing facets of the democratization process, and helps correct imbalances inherent in the others.⁴⁸ Both the modernization perspective and the structural (or historical) perspective, for example, have been accused of determinism by scholars whose emphasis is that "democracy is or is not established by political actors pursuing their goals".⁴⁹ Certainly, the transition approach, with its stress on internal forces and contexts, "underscores the role leaders play in shaping alternatives, managing crises, and putting creative solutions together, rather than passively awaiting the operation of automatic forces".⁵⁰ But no political figure acts in a vacuum. Political options are always structurally constrained.⁵¹ The élites who make political choices are themselves both constrained by configurations of power and interest, and embedded in such structures in various ways.⁵² Overemphasizing structure fosters determinism, but overemphasizing agency obscures the circumstances in which choices are made.

Structural and agential concerns in democratization theory therefore mirror the classic agent-structure problem. The constructivist approach

that influences this thesis, while not "solving" this problem, offers a way of going beyond the agent-structure dilemma, and supports a synthesis that is helpful in the democratization debate. Thus, if structure and agent are mutually constituting, structure is more a process than a state – "materials for action" rather than an environment in which action takes place; the "continually evolving outcome and matrix of a process of social interaction" rather than a reified category explaining the "inevitable shape of social life".⁵³ This conception becomes particularly useful when dealing with democratization in the context of globalization, which constitutes the subject of the next section.

Globalization

Defining and dating globalization

"Globalization" is a notoriously fluid term. The following formulation is one of the more useful among the myriad attempts at definition, enabling the globalization process to be distinguished from more restricted social developments, and highlighting its distinctive aspect of "deterritorialization".⁵⁴ Thus, globalization is seen as

a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power.⁵⁵

Like its definition, the globalization debate is characterized by huge diversity, but one of its most important theoretical "fault-lines" concerns the issue of continuity and change – the extent to which contemporary globalization is or is not historically unprecedented.⁵⁶ This thesis positions itself at the "change" end of the "continuity-change" continuum, but well away from its outer pole. It recognizes an increasing "thickness" of contemporary globalization that distinguishes it from earlier periods, and agrees that more relationships of interdependence now intersect more

deeply at more points, but it also acknowledges that it is a phenomenon that forms a "continuing, if periodically accelerating, aspect" of the 20th century as a whole, and whose roots stretch back at least as far as the expansion of Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries.⁵⁷ Certain recent periods stand out as punctuation marks, however, indicating significant fast-tracks or direction shifts on the globalization route. One of these is the latter part of the Second World War and its immediate aftermath, a time when much of the architecture central to the idea of globalization was designed.⁵⁸ It is from this point, Shaw contends, that states in the West were "absorbed into an increasingly unified state conglomerate", within which borders of violence were abolished.⁵⁹ A second important landmark is the 1970s, when a new phase of globalization began to reflect domestic moves away from the key assumptions of corporatism and welfarism.⁶⁰ The third punctuation mark is the end of the Cold War, which has been seen as opening the way for the global reach not only of capitalism but also of ideals of democracy and human rights.⁶¹

The focal point of much of the "continuity or change" debate is the retreat or resilience of the state.⁶² This in turn has a hugely significant corollary which forms the subject of the next subsection: if the role of the state is changing, how will this affect democracy?

Identifying the globalization-democracy "problem"

Liberal democracy has developed throughout the modern era in the context of the sovereign, territorial nation-state.⁶³ If contemporary globalization constitutes a radical break with the past (as opposed to just another wave in the ebb and flow of historical globalization processes), and is fundamentally transforming or restructuring the global political economy, then, it is argued, the institution of sovereign statehood fundamental to the Westphalian order may be fundamentally compromised, and with it the democratic edifice it supports.⁶⁴ Globalization's contribution to the erosion of boundaries between foreign and domestic, national and international, and to the growth in the number

and influence of democratically unaccountable non-state actors, underlines its association with the emergence of a post-Westphalian order, the democratic credentials of which are far from clear.⁶⁵

This lack of clarity means that the "change" end of the "continuity or change" spectrum is peopled by all shades of opinion, from bleak pessimism to cautious optimism. Neo-mediaeval visions of the world – in which "increasingly dense ganglia of international corporations and markets ... are becoming the unseen arbiters of power in many countries", and the ability of democratic governance to affect our lives is "limited" – leave little room for democracy.⁶⁶ But many more nuanced voices, while worried about a "democratic deficit", both at national legislative level and above and below that level, see positive as well as negative features in global structural shifts.⁶⁷ While it is paradoxical that the worldwide spread of democracy has been taking place against a background of widespread disillusionment with democratic processes, hope is still expressed that these can ultimately be deepened both in older and newer democracies, and extended to levels above and below the nation-state.⁶⁸

The "continuity" end of the spectrum contains a range of observers who are keen to explode some of the "myths" that sustain the globalization thesis. They argue that many recent accounts of globalization not only exaggerate its uniqueness but falsely portray states as "passive victims of internationalization" whereas in reality they are "its primary architects".⁶⁹

On the role of the state, as with the dating of globalization, this thesis sits on the "change" end of the seesaw, but fairly near the fulcrum. It recognizes that interdependence does not mix well with sovereignty, and supports the view that the world is in the process of negotiating a new "trade-off" between the two.⁷⁰ However, it does not agree that "governments are now like flies caught in the intricate web of the market".⁷¹ It is more realistic, therefore, to anticipate a new accommodation between state power and the forces of globalization,

rather than the outright victory of one over the other.⁷² The future thus "lies neither exclusively with the state nor with transnational relations", but rather in a largely unmapped arena in which states continue to undergo a "profound transformation as their powers, roles and functions are rearticulated, reconstituted and re-embedded at the intersection of globalizing and regionalizing networks and systems" – a much more complex process than the metaphors of "loss", "diminution", or "erosion" of state power convey.⁷³ This thesis adopts the view that this process of renegotiation is best captured by Clark's approach, which avoids the polarization inherent in seeing the state as either the object or the subject of globalization, and insists instead on a mutually constitutive and transformational relationship between the two.⁷⁴ Thus, "globalization shapes the state and is, at the same time, what states make of it".⁷⁵ By extension, this interpretation also challenges inferences that the democratic state has been disempowered by outside globalized forces.⁷⁶ Rather, it points to the "reciprocal manner in which democratic deficits on the inside have been the necessary accomplices of globalization".⁷⁷

There is no doubt, however, that globalization affects different states differently. It is much harder for developing states to negotiate their place in the network than for older, richer, and/or more powerful polities.⁷⁸ Thus, the type of impact that globalization brings about is significantly mediated by a state's position in global political, military, and economic hierarchies, and by its domestic economic and political structures.⁷⁹ This disparity is one of the motivations behind calls for the development of democratic institutions at regional and global levels as a complement to those at the level of the nation-state.⁸⁰ The notorious reluctance of power-holders to cede power, however, means that a multitude of difficulties stand in the way of the achievement of this aim.⁸¹

If doubt and uncertainty surround the effects of globalization on democracy *per se*, then it follows that states adjusting simultaneously to the processes both of globalization and democratization will face multiple challenges. These can be categorized using the three approaches to

democratization outlined in the first section of this chapter. The following section therefore re-examines each approach, first highlighting its connections with globalization, and then using it as a lens through which to examine some of the literature on globalization and democratization.

Globalization and democratization: Key areas of research

The primary focus of modernization theory was domestic economic growth, but even in the 1950s when this approach was developing, it was never convincing to separate domestic economic performance from the performance of the world economy. Modernization theory also has a wider context, the post-Second World War "modernization project", which was elaborated against the background of the early Cold War, and emphasized "progress", state-guided national development, and development economics centred on import-substitution industrialization.⁸² These factors already provide a link to globalization.⁸³ The link became more pronounced with the end of the Cold War, when hopes were fanned that worldwide open markets would provide the route to prosperity and thence to democracy.⁸⁴ These connections received further forceful restatement to counter the rise of anti-globalization protests in the early years of the 21st century. Globalization's defenders focused on modernization theory's classic linkage – economic growth, the creation of a well-educated, urban middle class, and the eventual demand by this class for accountable democratic government – and emphasized the value of free trade, financial integration, and international investment in promoting the economic growth that would spark the rest of the cycle.⁸⁵

A number of research projects have sought to evaluate the connection between economic globalization and democratization, but the results tend to point in somewhat different directions.⁸⁶ Thus, while one research team concludes that "economic success, increased investment in education, and trade openness due to the recent globalization wave, were the key

driving forces of recent democratization events", another finds that globalization is eroding the prospects for democratization.⁸⁷ Part of the reason for the latter conclusion, they argue, is that emerging democracies often lack the financial and managerial resources needed to build social safety nets.⁸⁸ Rudra expands on this observation, demonstrating that economic globalization can promote greater democratic rights, but welfare spending plays a critical mediating role in this relationship.⁸⁹ Thus, the effects of globalization on democratization are "indirect, contingent upon the scope and desirability of redistributive policies".⁹⁰ This puts an interesting spin on modernization theory, suggesting that the kind of prosperity that can drive democratization contains important redistributive elements.⁹¹

The second approach to democratization, structural change theory, intrinsically contains a link to globalization in that transnational structures constitute one of its focal points. The manifestations of these changing structures readily divide into two distinct but interrelated categories, both of which have the capacity to push for greater democratization. The first category relates to "hard power" and shifting geopolitical weight.⁹² Although Shaw's "Western-centred conglomerate of state power" had been increasing in power since the Second World War, it received a major impetus from the end of the Cold War and the removal of systemic ideological opposition.⁹³ This shift gave the West the upper hand in agenda setting, from democratic conditionality to changed concepts of sovereignty, and the conjunction of Western power, liberal democratic values, and Cold War "victory" brought "a degree of international socialization, a pressure to emulate and to seek the rewards for doing so".⁹⁴ The second category of changing structures focuses on "soft power", centring around the attractiveness of certain ideals, and the increased levels of international interconnectedness and ideological and cultural interchange that facilitate their dissemination. Thus, there is more technological opportunity than ever for ideas to circulate and take root in a variety of contexts, and ideals of human rights and democracy are certainly part of this flow.⁹⁵

However, both these categories of changing power structures may equally well work against democratization.⁹⁶ The overwhelming hard power of the "global state conglomerate" may alienate nations with political, religious, cultural, and social traditions that diverge from the values promoted by the world's leading democracies.⁹⁷ Democratization "from without" may also result in tokenism – a shell of democratic institutions with little real democratic substance inside.⁹⁸ On the soft power side, global communication channels and civil society groups provide a vehicle for messages of xenophobia and terrorism just as easily as they do for democracy and human rights, and these negative messages are often provoked by issues related to globalization – perceptions of global injustice, for example, and fears of loss of identity.⁹⁹

Changing structures of both hard and soft power, and the links between these facets, provide the basis for much of the theoretical literature that explores positive and negative links between globalization and democratization.¹⁰⁰ The concept of "diffusion", for example, is particularly illustrative of the hard power/soft power nexus.¹⁰¹ Several empirical studies find that democratic diffusion has a significant effect.¹⁰² Membership of international organizations is found to have correlations with democracy, and trade also seems able to act as a channel of democratic ideas and values.¹⁰³ But diffusion – often associated with the soft-power desirability of certain ideas – has a distinct hard-power *alter ego* linked to geopolitical weight. Im and Bae, for example find that differences of political power, wealth, and population among countries are crucial mechanisms in the democratic diffusion process.¹⁰⁴ Thus, they argue, countries to some extent choose democracy because democracy is an idea that comes from wealthier, more powerful, and larger countries.¹⁰⁵ The same study demonstrates that "the end of the Cold War exerted a vast influence on democratic development in the developing world".¹⁰⁶ With the loss of the "only serious global competitor for international allegiances", the potential scope of the demonstration effects of dominant "international liberal capitalist lifestyles" is huge.¹⁰⁷ Whether this will ultimately impact positively or negatively on the global

democratization process is open to question, and will form part of the discussion of this thesis.

The third approach to democratization, transition theory, once majored on the salience of domestic actors. But again this set of ideas has key links with globalization. It emerged partly in response to the challenge to dependency theory posed by the re-emergence of democracies in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, and its attempt to correct a structure-weighted explanatory imbalance is again very relevant in an era when "many statements about contemporary globalization resonate with deterministic echoes".¹⁰⁸

Agency presumes "the ability to choose among different courses of action, to learn from previous experience, and to effect change".¹⁰⁹ However, agential autonomy – whether of states in the context of a globalizing world, or of domestic policymakers – is a matter of much debate in studies of globalization, particularly where economic policy is concerned.¹¹⁰ While some accounts see significant losses in governmental control, others recall that governments have always faced external economic constraints, and (certainly in advanced states) still have extensive governance capacity.¹¹¹ Thus, the "competition state", rather than being undermined by impersonal and inexorable structural forces, is increasingly "both the engine room and the steering mechanism of an agent-driven *political* globalization process".¹¹² At the same time, a fundamental transformation is wrought in the "agent" as an inevitable accompaniment of the development of this new "structure".¹¹³ Therefore, much of what is presented as "the demise of the economic state" is better understood as a "reflexive change in the nature of the competition state itself" as it shapes and is shaped by globalization.¹¹⁴

Rather than the decline of state agency *per se*, the chief agential problem in the globalization process is power disparity, which severely limits the room for manoeuvre available to weaker agents. Only a tiny minority of the world's states, argues Hirst, have the mixture of wealth, governance

capacity, and democratic legitimacy to be core players in the current international order, and even when some governments in developing countries have shown that they do have significant options for distinctive national policy, Western "recipes" tend to reduce those options.¹¹⁵ It is obvious that the liberal democracies that have shaped the world to their own advantage are slow to see the incentives for changing it.¹¹⁶ Thus, there is a clear and present danger that globalization, by empowering those states that shaped it in the first place, will reinforce their capacity to regulate its ongoing impact.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, globalization opens up new opportunities – as well as challenges – for state and non-state actors, and for leaders at the domestic level.¹¹⁸ Woods lists in her category of "strong" states – that is, those that can to some degree control the nature and speed of their integration into the world economy – not only industrialized Western polities like France but also some developing countries such as Brazil, Malaysia, and China. Common to these and others is that "each has propounded a powerful national ideology and rationale for rejecting what some call 'anglo-american capitalism'", and they thus come ready-armed to the world economy with ideas of their own to stave off "coercive liberalism".¹¹⁹

The role of agents, therefore, in shaping and influencing global processes such as globalization and democratization can hardly be overestimated, and the transition approach is a useful reminder of this.

Conclusions

Key themes emerging from the literature thus provide a background for the study of Thailand which will constitute the remaining chapters of this thesis. Firstly, globalization is "at best a long-term ally in promoting democracy".¹²⁰ It potentially has both negative and positive effects on democratization, and provides no automatic solutions.¹²¹ The interaction

of the two forces is a highly contingent process, in which hugely important parts are played by context, issue area, power, and agential dexterity.

Secondly, no single strand of theory is sufficient to explain the democratization process, even before the complicating element of globalization is added. These strands can, however, provide useful lenses through which to focus on the various ways the two forces impact on democratizing, globalizing polities such as Thailand.

Thirdly, the interplay of structure and agency is crucial both in democratization and globalization. But structure is not exogenously preordained. It is to a large extent the product of powerful agents, which are in turn shaped by what they have set in motion. Thus, the global odds may be heavily stacked in favour of the Western state conglomerate, but the essential malleability of the structure does mean that weaker states – albeit with large degrees of difficulty – have some chance of influencing its development.

The interaction of structure and agency in the trade-offs required to manage Thailand's globalization process, the agential choices made, and the effect these have on democratization, form the central topic of the following chapters, as structure and agency are studied in the context first of economic and then of political globalization. The next chapter begins this process by considering the impact of globalization-borne modernization and economic structural change on the Thai democratization process.

Endnotes to Chapter 1

¹ Potter, 'Explaining', p.3.

² Quoted in Seymour Martin Lipset, 'The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited', *American Sociological Review*, 59:1 (Feb 1994), p.1; G. Shabbir Cheema and Linda Maguire, *Democracy, Governance and Development: A Conceptual Framework*, New York: United Nations, 2002, <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan005781.pdf>, p.5; Guillermo O'Donnell, *Democracy, Law, and Comparative Politics*, Working Paper 118, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 2000, pp.6-11.

³ O'Donnell (p.9) even argues that Schumpeter is inconsistent in claiming that his definition is minimalist, in that the arrangements required for organizing free competitive elections presuppose a certain number of other freedoms. O'Donnell lists a range of other theorists (Huntington, Linz, and Lipset among others) who also centre their definitions on fair elections, but who then add some concomitant elements that are necessary for the staging of that kind of vote.

⁴ For example, the Freedom House study 'Democracy's Century', which surveys democratic progress over the 20th century, defines democracies as "political systems whose leaders are elected in competitive multi-party and multi-candidate processes in which opposition parties have a legitimate chance of attaining power or participating in power" (p.1). Similarly, in Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, where the aim is to classify regimes as democracies or dictatorships over a period of time, a minimalist definition is also chosen, with a democracy seen as a "regime in which government offices are filled by contested elections" (p.19).

⁵ Larry Diamond ('Universal Democracy?'), while defending the need for a "minimal litmus test of democracy", also recognizes that an "electoral democracy" that (for example) fails to defend the rights of women or minorities, or tolerates extensive corruption, is an "illiberal and hollowed-out democracy".

⁶ David Held, *Models of Democracy*, 2nd ed., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996, p.188. Democracy thus becomes a mechanism that "allows the registration of the broad desires of ordinary people, while leaving actual public policy to the few who are sufficiently experienced and qualified to make it" (p.179). For Held's discussion of "competitive élitism", see pp.177-198. Benedict R. Anderson, 'Elections and Participation in Three Southeast Asian Countries', in *The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia*, R. H. Taylor (ed.), New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996, pp.13-14, 19, expresses similar concerns about the "Janus-face of electoralism" and the "pacificatory promise" of elections.

⁷ For example, Dahl's definition of a polyarchy (quoted in O'Donnell, p.11) specifies seven traits, four of which stipulate attributes of elections, while the other three (freedom of expression, right to alternative information, and associational autonomy) constitute primary political rights integral to the democratic process.

⁸ Schmitter and Karl (quoted in Whitehead, *Democratization*, pp.10-11), add two further stipulations to Dahl's seven. Chambers, pp.10-11, stipulates 10 attributes: fair elections; no reserved domains of power for the military; the separation of powers; an autonomous judiciary; no cultural or ethnic discrimination; the existence of civil society organizations; free media; equality under the constitution; protection of human rights; and the right of assembly and free speech. USINFO, 'Defining Democracy', <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/whatsdem/whatdm2.htm>, lists 11 "pillars of democracy": "sovereignty of the people; government based upon consent of the governed; majority rule; minority rights; guarantee of basic human rights; free and fair elections; equality before the law; due process of law; constitutional limits on government; social, economic, and political pluralism; and values of tolerance, pragmatism, cooperation, and compromise". The Community of Democracies' 'Final

Warsaw Declaration', <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/26811.htm>, signed on 27 June 2000 by over 100 nations (including Thailand), lists 19 "core democratic principles and practices".

⁹ O'Donnell, p.15, surmises that the implicit hope of avoiding the problem of deciding which political freedoms to include "is the main reason for the persistent attraction of minimalist definitions of democracy – and the reason for the no less persistent failure of these definitions to stick just to elections".

¹⁰ Thede, p.25. Ottaway, p.6, makes clear that ideals need to be firmly grounded in specific situations: "Democracy is about politics, basically defined as being *who gets what* ... it is not just a question of process, a question of institutions – but a question of what is really important to people in these societies, a question of content."

¹¹ Held, pp.264-265.

¹² Adam Przeworski, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Vol. 3, p.63, quoted in Daniel H. Levine, 'Paradigm Lost: Dependence to Democracy', *World Politics*, 40:3 (Apr 1988), p.382.

¹³ Levine, pp.392-393.

¹⁴ See Clark's discussion, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.152.

¹⁵ James L. Richardson, 'Critical Liberalism in International Relations', Working Paper, Jul 2002, Department of International Relations, RSPAS, ANU, <http://eprints.anu.edu.au/archive/00001926/01/02-7.pdf>, pp.1, 7, 9.

¹⁶ ibid., pp.1-3, 7.

¹⁷ Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History', *The National Interest*, 16 (Summer 1989), accessed at <http://www.wesjones.com/eoh.htm>, page numbers not available in Internet format; James Anderson, 'Questions of Democracy, Territoriality and Globalisation', in *Transnational Democracy: Political Spaces and Border Crossings*, James Anderson (ed.), London: Routledge, 2002, p.12. Anderson is right to point out that this global hegemony came at the expense of more interventionist social democratic regimes as well as dictatorships, even though his conclusion that it "has mainly been propagated in the self-interest of the world's leading powers" seems an over-simplification, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

¹⁸ James Anderson, 'Questions of Democracy', pp.18-19, p.24. One of Smith's primary reservations about US democracy promotion, for example, is that it starts from the assumption of the separation of economics from politics (Steve Smith, 'US Democracy Promotion: Critical Questions', in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry, and Inoguchi Takashi (eds), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp.64, 80-82).

¹⁹ James Anderson, 'Questions of Democracy', pp.18, 34.

²⁰ Richardson, p.25.

²¹ O'Donnell, p.18. O'Donnell's definition is "realistic" as opposed to "prescriptive" (p.10). It is "restricted, in the sense that it disagrees with including a highly detailed, and ultimately inexhaustible and analytically barren, listing of potentially relevant freedoms" and "also in the sense that it refuses to introduce prescriptive notions into the definition of a democratic regime" (p.17).

²² ibid., p.15. By contrast, he argues that the attributes of fair elections are stipulated by definition: they must "have the joint condition of being free, competitive, egalitarian, decisive, and inclusive" (pp.11-12, 15).

²³ Thede, pp.9-10. Potter ('Explaining', pp.3-6) also proposes a definition that lends itself to a contextual, non-stipulative approach. Here, democratization is envisaged as movement over time in four broadly defined areas: from less accountable to more accountable government; from less competitive (or no) elections to freer and fairer competitive elections; from severely restricted to better protected civil and political rights; and from weak autonomous associations in civil society to more autonomous and more numerous associations. The precise course this movement will take, and its precise end-result, are not specified.

²⁴ Whitehead, *Democratization*, p.7. Whitehead ultimately takes Schmitter and Karl's definition as his baseline (pp.10-11), but he surrounds this choice with a stockade of reservations. Thus, this definition "may be no worse than any alternative", but remains "essentially contestable" and "closely associated with a single rather restricted tradition

of political thought and practice", in a way that "may limit its acceptability in other cultural contexts" (pp.25-26).

²⁵ ibid., p.20.

²⁶ ibid., p.3.

²⁷ ibid., p.27.

²⁸ McCargo, 'Introduction', p.17. See also Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World: Thailand', <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2003/countryratings/thailand.htm>. For a detailed assessment of the first general election held under the provisions of the 1997 constitution, see Duncan McCargo, 'Thailand's January 2001 General Elections: Vindicating Reform?', in McCargo, *Reforming*, pp.247-259.

²⁹ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World: Thailand'. Thailand scores "2" for political rights and "3" for civil liberties, on a scale from 1-7, best to worst.

³⁰ 'Democracy and Human Rights', <http://www.unhchr.ch/democracy/>. Former UN Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson also emphasizes that the "whole human rights structure is based on the accountability of governments", and clearly, governments that are democratic are more easily held to account than those that are not (Mary Robinson, 'Making "Global" and "Ethical" Rhyme: An Interview With Mary Robinson', openDemocracy, 9 Dec 2003, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-6-27-1627.jsp>). Non-democratic

governments are also quick to opportunistically equate democracy and human rights when it suits them. Amid concerns that the US government is relaxing human rights standards for those who support anti-terrorist actions, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, for example, remarked, "There is no doubt that the events of September 11 created a new concept of democracy that differs from the concept that Western states defended before these events, especially in regard to the freedom of the individual" (Chapter 5: 'The United States and International Human Rights', in *Assessing the New Normal: Liberty and Security for the Post-September 11 United States*, Human Rights First, 2003, <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/pubs/descriptions/Assessing/Ch5.pdf>, pp.74, 77-79).

³¹ Thede, p.22. Despite the overt link between the two, Thede comments (p.22) that "the approach linking human rights and democracy is consistently received by activists in the field as a ground-breaking contribution to work in both areas. It is rare in most countries that the two types of organization work together or that human rights are examined from the perspective of democracy or vice-versa."

³² Quoted in Larry Diamond, 'Economic Development and Democracy Reconsidered', in *Reexamining Democracy: Essays in Honor of Seymour Martin Lipset*, Gary Marks and Larry Diamond (eds), Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1992, p.93. Lipset's observation is said to have generated the largest body of research on any topic in comparative politics (Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, 'Modernization: Theories and Facts', *World Politics*, 49:2 (Jan 1997), p.156). Modernization approaches were later challenged by theories of bureaucratic authoritarianism (see Mark T. Berger, *The Battle for Asia: From Decolonization to Globalization*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, p.106).

³³ Lipset, p.16; Diamond, 'Economic Development', p.94. Lipset advances various areas that may mediate between socioeconomic development and democracy – for example, political culture, class structure, civil society, and the relationship between class and state.

³⁴ Lipset, p.17.

³⁵ Diamond, 'Economic Development', pp.93, 108-109. That is, socioeconomic development not only contributes to the stability of democracy where it already exists, but also "leads (sooner or later) to the eventually (if not initially) successful establishment of democracy", even though it is impossible to predict the point at which this will occur (p.125).

³⁶ See Przeworski et al, *Democracy and Development*, pp.78-137; and Przeworski and Limongi, pp.156-157, 166-167.

³⁷ Przeworski and Limongi, p.167. See also Freedom House 'Freedom in the World 2004', pp.10-12. Boix and Stokes contradict these findings (Carles Boix and Susan C Stokes, 'Endogenous Democratization' (Jan 2002), <http://ccd.uchicago.edu/endogenous.pdf>). Using a longer dataset, covering the period

from 1850 to 1990, they argue that economic development both causes democracy and sustains it. Results obtained by Papaioannou and Siourounis also support the view that democratization is more likely to occur in affluent and relatively highly educated societies (Elias Papaioannou and Gregorios Siourounis, 'Economic and Social Factors Driving the Third Wave of Globalization' (Apr 2004), http://phd.london.edu/gsiourounis/Elias_Greg_Democracy_probit.pdf, p.2).

³⁸ Przeworski and Limongi, p.159.

³⁹ Potter, 'Explaining', pp.18-19.

⁴⁰ David Goldblatt, 'Key Elements of Structural Approaches to Democratization', in Potter et al, pp.139-144.

⁴¹ Shifts in the transnational environment may well affect class alignments and the role of the state. Indeed, class conflict has been seen as "the social mechanism linking world-system processes to national political dynamics" (Kathleen C. Schwartzman, 'Globalization and Democracy', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), p.179).

⁴² Potter, 'Explaining', pp.21-22.

⁴³ ibid., pp.13-18.

⁴⁴ Paul Cammack, 'Democracy and Dictatorship in Latin America, 1930-1980', in Potter et al, pp.152-156.

⁴⁵ See Whitehead, *Democratization*, pp.27-30, 254-256; Thede, pp.10-12; Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Meaning of Democracy', pp.1-3.

⁴⁶ Carothers, 'The End', pp.5-17.

⁴⁷ Whitehead, *Democratization*, p.251.

⁴⁸ For example, structural theory can explain why authoritarianism comes under attack at a certain point, and portray the political balance of forces involved, but transition theory is needed to explain how and why particular coalitions are able (or not) to successfully consolidate democracy. Similarly, the long-term structural effects of economic change cannot be understood separately from a country's contingent economic condition (Goldblatt, pp.140, 142). Adrian Leftwich, 'From Democratization to Democratic Consolidation', in Potter et al, p.523, has even suggested an "explanatory synthesis", with each main approach seen as representing a different level of explanation. Thus, modernization theory is concerned with economic structure and its social consequences. Structuralism moves up a level to focus on the relations of class and power which flow from the economic structure in different societies, and the broad macro-political consequences of this. Transition theory moves up yet another level to concentrate on the political behaviour that arises out of these prior conditions, with a sharper micro-political focus on agency – the bargains, choices, and negotiations of élites and individual leaders.

⁴⁹ Przeworski and Limongi, pp.176-177.

⁵⁰ Levine, pp.391-392.

⁵¹ See Cammack, p.173, and David Potter, 'Democratization at the Same Time in South Korea and Taiwan', in Potter et al, p.238.

⁵² Richard Robison, 'What Sort of Democracy? Predatory and Neo-Liberal Agendas in Indonesia', in Kinnvall and Jönsson, p.96. See also Catarina Kinnvall, 'Analyzing the Global-Local Nexus', in Kinnvall and Jönsson, p.10, and Schwartzman, p.179.

⁵³ Kate O'Neill, Jörg Balsiger, and Stacy D. VanDeveer, 'Actors, Norms, and Impact: Recent International Cooperation Theory and the Influence of the Agent-Structure Debate', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 7 (2004), pp.152, 154; Dessler, pp.444, 461, 467; William H. Sewell, 'A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation', *American Journal of Sociology*, 98:1 (Jul 1992), pp.4, 27.

⁵⁴ Jan Aart Scholte, 'Global Civil Society', in Woods, pp.179-180, rejects definitions of globalization that act as little more than synonyms of internationalization, liberalization, universalization, Westernization, or modernization, and sees deterritorialization as the key to what is unique about globalization. Thus, territory still matters, but it no longer constitutes the whole of our geography. See Thomas Biersteker, 'Globalization as a Mode of Thinking in Major Institutional Actors', in Woods, pp.150-159, for evidence of the qualitative changes taking place in major institutional actors' conception of their role in the contemporary world as a result of a reorientation away from nation-state boundaries.

⁵⁵ David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999, p.16.

⁵⁶ Anthony McGrew, 'Globalization and Territorial Democracy: An Introduction', in McGrew, pp.9-12. The other major fault-line contrasts the mono-causal and multi-causal accounts of globalization, which divide on "whether globalization is conceived as a single process driven by a dominant logic (e.g., capitalism, technological change, or imperialism) or as a multidimensional process driven by several interrelated causal logics (e.g., technological, economic, cultural and political change)".

⁵⁷ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., 'Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?)', *Foreign Policy*, 118 (Spring 2000), p.112; Ian Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp.18-20; Randall D. Germain, 'Globalization in Historical Perspective', in *Globalization and its Critics: Perspectives From Political Economy*, Randall D. Germain (ed.), Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000, pp.72-77.

⁵⁸ See G. John Ikenberry, 'The Myth of Post-Cold War Chaos', *Foreign Affairs*, 75:3 (May/Jun 1996), pp.79-91; Ian Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order: The Spoils of Peace*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.23, 28; Martin Shaw, 'The State of International Relations', in *The State and Identity Construction in International Relations*, Sarah Owen-Vandersluis (ed.), London: Macmillan, 2000, pp.7-30, <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/hafa3/stateofIR.htm>, page numbers not available in Internet format.

⁵⁹ Shaw, 'The State of International Relations'. The potential for war still clearly remains between the conglomerate and other centres of state power, however. Shaw also enlarges on the post-Second World War development of the "increasingly interdependent single conglomerate of state power", the implications of which will be further discussed in Chapter 4, in Martin Shaw, 'Democracy and Peace in the Global Revolution', draft for *Making Global Spaces*, Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey (eds), Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000, <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/hafa3/democracy.htm>, page numbers not available in Internet format. The term "the West" tends to make a monolith out of a highly differentiated group of nations, but it is used as shorthand for the economically and politically globalized group of democratic states that is at the core of global power and influence and in the upper levels of economic development.

⁶⁰ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.159; Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation*, pp.148-155, 165-166, 200-202; Berger, pp.119-122; Held, pp.240-263. Many commentators, including Berger (pp.21-22), regard the 1970s as the starting-point of globalization, especially as this period coincides with the effective universalization of the nation-state.

⁶¹ Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order*, pp.139, 149, 154; Martin Shaw, 'The Unfinished Global Revolution: Intellectuals and the New Politics of International Relations', professorial lecture presented at the University of Sussex, 9 Nov 1999, <http://www.susx.ac.uk/Users/hafa3/unfinished.pdf>, pp.2-3.

⁶² Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.4.

⁶³ McGrew, 'Globalization and Territorial Democracy', pp.5-6.

⁶⁴ ibid., pp.9-10.

⁶⁵ It is an oft-noted paradox that "just as liberal democracy has become the 'universal political standard of civilization', democratic theorists are beginning to engage in a critical reinterpretation of the meaning of democracy in the context of late twentieth-century patterns of globalization" (McGrew, 'Democracy Beyond Borders', p.232). See also Paul Hirst, 'Democracy and Global Governance', paper presented at the 'Forum on Identity and Democracy', Rennes, France, 20 September 2002, <http://www.londonconsortium.com/hirst/dgg.doc>, page numbers not available in Internet format.

⁶⁶ Robert D. Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*, New York: Vintage, 1997, pp.80, 86.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Jessica Mathews, 'Power Shift', *Foreign Affairs*, 76:1 (Jan/Feb 1997), pp.63-66, and Thede, pp.14-15.

⁶⁸ Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization Is Reshaping our Lives*, 2nd ed., New York: Routledge, 2003, pp.71-82.

⁶⁹ Held et al, pp. 5-7. For arguments situated at various points along the continuity axis, at least in terms of the continued salience of the nation-state, see Hirst; Martin Wolf, 'Will the Nation-State Survive Globalization?', *Foreign Affairs*, 80:1 (Jan/Feb 2001), pp.178-190; Stephen D. Krasner, 'Sovereignty', *Foreign Policy*, 122 (Jan/Feb 2001), pp.20-26; Daniel Drezner, 'Globalizers of the World, Unite!', *The Washington Quarterly*, 21:1 (Winter 1998), pp.209-225; Kenneth Waltz, 'Globalization and Governance', *PS Online* (Dec 1999), <http://www.apsanet.org/PS/dec99/waltz.cfm>; and Michael Mann, 'Has Globalization Ended the Rise and Fall of the Nation-State?', *Review of International Political Economy*, 4:3 (Autumn 1997), pp.472-496. See also Held et al, pp.2-10, and Giddens, pp.6-19, for further accounts of the spectrum of opinion.

⁷⁰ Starr describes a "Westphalian trade-off", in which autonomy and independence were stressed at the expense of a formal source of authority or higher order. Since the Second World War, he argues, the balance has been changing, and the trade-off has come to stress the need to reduce the formal anarchy in the system in order to solve the problems of interdependence (Harvey Starr, *Anarchy, Order, and Integration: How to Manage Interdependence*, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997, pp.18-19).

⁷¹ Noreena Hertz, *The Silent Takeover: Global Capitalism and the Death of Democracy*, London: Heinemann, 2001, p.108.

⁷² Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation*, p.195.

⁷³ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, 'Power and Interdependence in the Information Age', *Foreign Affairs*, 77:5 (Sep/Oct 1998), p.94; Held et al, pp.440-441. The passive voice is perhaps misleading here, carrying too much of a sense that the state is purely at the receiving end of this reconfiguration. See also John M. Hobson, *The Wealth of States: A Comparative Sociology of International Economic and Political Change*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp.250-251.

⁷⁴ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, pp.4-5, pp.68-69.

⁷⁵ ibid., p.55.

⁷⁶ ibid., p.165.

⁷⁷ ibid., p.166.

⁷⁸ See Woods, 'Political Economy', pp.2-3, 9-12.

⁷⁹ Held et al, p.441.

⁸⁰ Held, pp.353-360; McGrew, 'Democracy Beyond Borders', pp.242-261; Held et al, pp.444-452; Daniele Archibugi, 'Principles of Cosmopolitan Democracy', in *Re-Imagining Political Community: Studies in Cosmopolitan Democracy*, Daniele Archibugi, David Held, and Martin Kohler (eds), Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998, pp.198-228; Mary Robinson; Anthony Barnett, 'An Emerging World Politics', openDemocracy, 11 Dec 2003, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/themes/article.jsp?id=3&articleId=1633>.

⁸¹ Hirst. While Hirst discusses the impracticability of the cosmopolitan democracy project, Clark (*Globalization and International Relations Theory*, pp.161-162) suggests it may be missing the root cause of democratic deficit – "the reconstitution of the state that supports the global processes under way".

⁸² Berger, pp.17-19, 62-64, 87-90, 102-105. Berger points out (pp.89-90) that although the broader modernization project was "at least rhetorically committed to democracy", stability gradually came to be regarded as more important than democracy.

⁸³ Berger (pp.17-23) distinguishes between the "US-led modernization project" of the 1940s to 1970s and the equivalent "globalization project" of the 1970s onward. This thesis, which dates the origins of globalization much earlier than the 1970s, sees these "projects" as part of the same phenomenon, so that the modernization phase and the neoliberal phase are both part of the same globalization project. However, it does not see them as engineered solely by the US (see Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order*, pp.150-153; Ikenberry, 'The Myth'; and Shaw, 'The State of International Relations', who contends that the Western state conglomerate was "from the start a complex structure based on much more than American leadership").

⁸⁴ Kinnvall, 'Analyzing', in Kinnvall and Jönsson, p.8; Woods, 'Political Economy', p.8; Hyo Bin Im and Jin Seok Bae, 'International Effects on Democratization in Developing Countries', 1975-1998, paper prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, US, 29 Aug-1 Sep 2002, http://www.gov.utexas.edu/content/research_papers/apsa_papers/baeimapsa02.pdf, p.8; Nita Rudra, 'Globalization and the Strengthening of Democracy in the Developing

World', unpublished manuscript, 2004, p.1 (earlier version available at <http://www.stanford.edu/class/polisci310c/readings/rudra03.pdf>).

⁸⁵ Alan Greenspan, for example, in remarks entitled 'Globalization', presented at the Institute for International Economics, Washington DC, 24 Oct 2001, <http://www.federalreserve.gov/boarddocs/speeches/2001/20011024/default.htm>, links globalization with greater economic stability and political freedom. See also Daniel T. Griswold, 'Globalization and Human Rights', undated article, <http://www.aworldconnected.org/article.php/565.html>; Daniel T. Griswold, *The Globalist*, 'Does Trade Promote Democracy?', 23 Jan 2004; and Jonah Goldberg, 'What Protesters Don't Get', 14 Feb 2002, <http://www.townhall.com/columnists/jonahgoldberg/jg20020214.shtml>. The elements of trade openness and financial integration link modernization-type theories with the structural realm, in that economic globalization, as well as promoting prosperity, is deemed to promote democracy-friendly institutions and the increased density of communication channels. See the following paragraphs, as well as a review of theoretical literature supporting the tenet that globalization promotes democratization (either through modernization or economic structural change) in Quan Li and Rafael Reuveny, 'Economic Globalization and Democracy: An Empirical Analysis', undated, earlier version presented at the International Studies Association annual meeting, Los Angeles, California, 2000, and the Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting, Chicago, 2000, polisci.la.psu.edu/faculty/li/research_papers/GLODEM39.pdf, pp.6-10 and 42. Papaioannou and Siourounis (pp.2, 21) find that international trade has a positive impact on democratization, whereas reduced exposure to international trade impedes the likelihood for democratization.

⁸⁶ It is not surprising that empirical research on globalization is not unanimous, given the difficulties inherent in defining or measuring either democratization or globalization. The former is usually measured using minimalist definitions, and it is almost impossible for the indices used to measure the latter – trade openness, financial openness, and so on – to capture the full extent of the process. Rudra, pp.5-8, notes six studies empirically linking globalization and democratization, but comments that their authors "either do not develop formal hypotheses about the causal connection, or do not test them". Thus, despite important advances, "the causal connection between globalization and democratization has yet to be unravelled". She regrets the "paucity of scholarship on this subject", which suggests "an enormous gap in the literatures on both globalization and on democracy". The theoretical literature is also highly divergent. For accounts of a range of theories, see Schwartzman, Im and Bae, Li and Reuveny, and Ronaldo Munck, 'Globalization and Democracy: A New "Great Transformation"?' , *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 581 (May 2002), pp.10-21.

⁸⁷ For the first conclusion, see Papaioannou and Siourounis, p.28. On this project's validation of modernization theory, see pp.6-7, and 11-17. For the second, see Li and Reuveny, pp.38-39. This conclusion is based on findings (p.2) that trade openness and portfolio investment inflows negatively affect democracy (with the effect of trade openness constant over time and that of portfolio inflows strengthening), while foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows positively affect democracy, with the effect weakening over time. Studies by Im and Bae, on the other hand (p.18), find that FDI rarely has an impact on democratization, whereas gross private capital flow "has a consistently and significantly negative impact on democratization of a developing country". Trade, they argue, "demonstrates an impressively powerful influence on democratization, and its signs are almost consistently positive". However, the effects of trade, they contend (p.19), are due to its function as a channel of democratic ideas and values (that is, a structural explanation), rather than its role as the economic source of modernization. See also Sylvia Maxfield, 'Understanding the Political Implications of Financial Internationalization in Emerging Market Countries', *World Development*, 26:7 (1998), pp.1210-1217.

⁸⁸ Li and Reuveny, p.39.

⁸⁹ Rudra, pp.3-4, 9-11, 14-15, 36-39.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p.11.

⁹¹ This is also underlined by findings from Papaioannou and Siourounis (pp.15-17). In contrast with other studies, they find that "greater inequality increases the likelihood of

transition and consolidation of democratic political institutions *until inequality reaches a very high level, where democratization is impeded*" (italics added). Thus, while their research confirms the validity of modernization theory, they stress (p.28) that democratization is "not secured even if GDP and human capital continue to increase". Rather, various features can seriously hamper socio-political and economic progress. Thus, where inequality is extreme (that is, where the Gini coefficient is above 45), the consolidation of democratic rule can be difficult and costly.

⁹² On hard and soft power, see, for example, Keohane and Nye, 'Power and Independence'. Whitehead's three categories of international factors that affect democratization (contagion, control, and consent), plus Schmitter's addition (conditionality), also have clear connections with globalization, and also reflect hard and soft power (Whitehead, 'Three International Dimensions of Democratization', pp.3-25, and Schmitter, 'The Influence', pp.26-54, in Whitehead, *International Dimensions*). Schmitter (p.29) thus lists control and conditionality under the heading "coercion", and contagion and consent under that of "voluntary".

⁹³ Rustow (p.91), writing in 1990, argues that the world has "become safer for democracy than it was in 1945, 1917 or at any previous time". See also Diamond, 'Universal Democracy?'

⁹⁴ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.151. On conditionality, see Schmitter, 'The Influence', pp.41-46. On sovereignty and "the new intrusive reach of international institutions", see Woods, 'Globalization and International Institutions', pp.213-214, and Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.151.

⁹⁵ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.151; Sara Schatz and Javier Jesus Gutierrez-Rexach, *Conceptual Structure and Social Change: The Ideological Architecture of Democratization*, Westport CT: Praeger, 2002, pp.157-158; Whitehead, 'Three International Dimensions', pp.21-22; Scholte, pp.191-193; and Munck, pp.15-17.

⁹⁶ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, pp.151-152; Whitehead, 'Three International Dimensions', p.22; Munck, pp.13-15.

⁹⁷ Daniel C. Lynch, 'International "Decentering" and Democratization: The Case of Thailand', *International Studies Quarterly*, 48:2 (Jun 2004), pp.346-347.

⁹⁸ See Fareed Zakaria, 'The Rise of Illiberal Democracy', *Foreign Affairs*, 76:6 (Nov-Dec 1997), pp.22-43.

⁹⁹ Scholte, pp.193-196; Woods, 'Political Economy', p.6.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, the literature review carried out by Li and Reuveny, which identifies three competing theoretical positions, namely, that globalization promotes democracy (pp.6-10 and 42); obstructs democracy (pp.11-15 and 43); or has no systematic effect on democracy (pp.15-17, 44). Many of these positions have structural change as their basis. The linkages between globalization and democratization examined by Schwartzman (the presence of a favourable climate for democracy, global economic growth, global crises, foreign intervention, hegemonic shifts, and world-system contraction) also include a strong structural element, although she is keen to emphasize the importance of paying heed to individual actors and questions of agency.

¹⁰¹ See Starr, 'Democratic Dominoes', and John O'Loughlin, 'Global Democratization', in *Spaces of Democracy*, M. Low and C. Barnett (eds), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004, <http://www.colorado.edu/IBS/PEC/johno/pub/Global%20Democratization.pdf>, for discussions of the diffusion process, which involves the role played by association, proximity, and/or emulation in facilitating democratization.

¹⁰² See, for example, Starr, 'Democratic Dominoes', pp.377-378; Im and Bae, p.16; and Li and Reuveny, pp.2, 23-24. The standard of measurement for diffusion is sometimes quite thin, however, in comparison with the complexity of the issue being measured. Thus, Li and Reuveny (pp.2, 23-24) find that the spread of democratic ideas promotes democracy persistently over time, using the indicator of the number of democracies within a region around each country as "a proxy for information and communication flows of democratic ideas among countries".

¹⁰³ On organizations, Pevehouse, for example (p.536), finds that membership in democratic regional organizations is significantly correlated with transitions to democracy. Im and Bae (pp.17, 21), by contrast, find that the effects on democratization of membership of international governmental organizations (with the exception of the EU) are consistently and significantly negative; however, participation in international

non-governmental organizations strongly supports democratization. On commercial links, Im and Bae (p. 19) find that trade with OECD countries consistently has an advantageous impact on democratization, whereas trade with non-OECD countries shows a slightly weak but consistently negative tendency.

¹⁰⁴ Im and Bae, p.16.

¹⁰⁵ ibid., p.16.

¹⁰⁶ ibid., p.20.

¹⁰⁷ Whitehead, 'Three International Dimensions', p.22.

¹⁰⁸ R. J. Barry Jones, 'Globalization in Perspective', in Germain, p.246; Levine, pp.379-385; Cammack, pp.152-156.

¹⁰⁹ O'Neill et al, p.155.

¹¹⁰ See, for example, Benjamin Cohen, 'Money in a Globalized World', pp.77-106, and Geoffrey Garrett, 'Globalization and National Autonomy', pp.107-146, in Woods; Maxfield, pp.1210-1217; Whitehead, *Democratization*, pp.152-164; and Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, pp.96-102.

¹¹¹ Hirst.

¹¹² Philip G. Cerny, 'Restructuring the Political Arena: Globalization and the Paradoxes of the Competition State', in Germain, p.138.

¹¹³ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.104.

¹¹⁴ ibid., pp.105-106.

¹¹⁵ Hirst.

¹¹⁶ ibid.

¹¹⁷ Woods, 'Political Economy', p.17.

¹¹⁸ ibid., p.3. Among these opportunities, Woods mentions the growing salience of regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, and transnational arbiters and regulators.

¹¹⁹ ibid., p.11.

¹²⁰ Catharin E. Dalpino, 'Does Globalization Promote Democracy? An Early Assessment', *Brookings Review*, 19:4 (Fall 2001), pp.45-48, <http://www.brookings.edu/press/review/fall2001/dalpino.htm>; page numbers not available in Internet format.

¹²¹ ibid. See also Uhlin, pp.153, 162-163.

Chapter 2

Modernization and Economic Structural Change: Economic Globalization and Democratization in Thailand

Economic globalization is often portrayed as a synergistic and dynamic partner to democratization. Its effects are ascribed to its capacity both to aid modernization, by increasing prosperity and empowering the middle class, and to promote the kind of structural change associated with more open institutions and denser communication channels. The course of Thai democratization in the 1990s has thus sometimes been seen as a classic case of modernization theory in action, and faith in modernization, with its emphasis on middle-class leadership of democracy, is certainly very much embedded in the Thai middle class itself.¹ Thailand's post-Second World War economic success clearly demonstrates that the "bonds of poverty are not inexorable".² Therefore, if higher levels of development do generate a significantly higher probability of sustainable democratic government, then this is a good indicator for Thailand.³

Yet the picture is much more complex than the above scenario would suggest. Firstly, the mix of economic growth, neoliberal-inspired financial liberalization, and democratization is extremely volatile.⁴ These elements create new winners and losers and new alliances, thus affecting social patterns in unexpected ways, and creating unpredictable pressures for and against democratization. Secondly, economic globalization carries with it the inescapable corollary of international oversight, with investors showing keen interest in events liable to affect the performance of their investments. This oversight is expressed partly through commercial diplomacy and chambers of commerce, partly via international organizations such as the IMF and World Bank, and partly through the media and other public channels.⁵ It can support positive economic and democratic trends, but it can also provoke angry reactions that hinder

them, or it can promote a "thin" version of democracy and economic progress that reassures global markets, but does little to broaden political space or address the issues of inequality and exclusion. Thirdly, the urban middle class, a key element in modernization theory, is not necessarily a reliable friend to democracy.

The following three sections will explain how Thailand illustrates these propositions. Their consequences are still very evident in current Thai politics, but it is necessary to go back to the 1990s and earlier to put them in context.⁶

Unpredictability: Creating new alliances and divides

The events surrounding the Thai financial crisis of 1997 suggest that the end product of the modernization recipe is far from certain. Pasuk and Baker argue that this crisis arose from a systematic disordering of economic policy resulting precisely from the combination of economic growth (dating at least from the 1960s), democratization (dating from the 1980s and even the 1970s), and financial liberalization (dating from the late 1980s and early 1990s).⁷ Thus, "financial liberalization carried out in parallel with increased democratization delivered control of economic policy making into the hands of politicians with little understanding of economic management".⁸

Political developments had particularly gathered pace in Thailand since the mid-1980s, driven by the gradual disintegration of the old dictatorial state (opening the way for new groups and demands) and by rapid industrialization (creating substantial changes in the social structure). Both processes fuelled a debate on how to bring politics into line with changes in the economy and society.⁹ Hopes of finally moving away from the kind of "semi-democracy" that had coexisted with many of the trappings of military rule were fanned by the success of the street

demonstrations of May 1992, which convincingly reduced the political aspirations of the army to a less anachronistic size. Thirayuth Boonmi – in terms reminiscent of modernization theory – saw this event as a momentous turning-point foreshadowing a period of benign change:

This will lead to a transfer of power and legitimacy from the state to society ... from the bureaucrat group to businessmen, technocrats, and the middle class. Society will change from a closed society to an open society, from conservative thinking to a much broader perspective, from narrow nationalism to greater acceptance of internationalism and regionalism, from centralization to decentralization.¹⁰

The creation of an alliance between the urban middle class and a newly enriched and educated peasantry was envisaged, and globalization was seen as a benign force assisting this liberal agenda.¹¹ But such optimism proved relatively short-lived. "Money politics" was still a substantial problem, with a local patronage system clearly able to persuade rural voters to return MPs more interested in making money than in making legislation.¹² Demands for reform increased. These encompassed many different perspectives, but two prominent, albeit diverging, agendas began to form an unlikely alliance in pursuit of a new constitution. On the one hand, an "establishment coalition" wanted to limit the expanding power of provincial business-politicians; on the other, an "activist coalition" wanted a charter of rights and reforms aimed at shifting power away from the state and toward the community and the individual.¹³

At the beginning of the debate, the Bangkok business community showed little interest in political reform. But during the course of the Banharn Silpa-archa premiership, arguments for reform were fuelled by a simpler proposition: "Thailand's rurally weighted electorate could not be trusted to deliver a government which knew how to manage Thailand's increasingly sophisticated, globalized and delicate urban economy."¹⁴ The conservative-radical alliance might have shaped the drafting of the constitution, but its passage was doubtful until the economic crisis recruited wider support among big business and the urban middle class in 1997-98. The constitution thus became the "symbol of an urban desire to exercise greater control over both politics and the economy".¹⁵

Economic globalization, then, played a strangely ambivalent role. The demands of the global economy provided a stimulus for political reform.¹⁶ Likewise, without the pressing circumstances of the economic crisis it had helped to engender, the most progressive constitution in Thailand's history may not have been brought into law.¹⁷ However, the impact of the crisis, and the IMF's response to it, radically changed the optimistic landscape of the early 1990s.¹⁸ By the end of the decade, Thailand's longstanding urban-rural divide had been supplemented by a further chasm: a global-local rift. One end of the first axis represented "the coalition of urban activism which had been so successful in changing the political structure and shrinking the space of the elected politicians", while at the other "stood rural Thailand petitioning ever more insistently for political space".¹⁹ The second axis tracked attitudes to globalization and neoliberalism:

At one end stood the Democrat Party with a base of support among business and white collar middle class who either saw their interests best served by globalization, or were attracted by the image of internationalism and modernity. At the other end stood businesses which had been mauled by the crises, social conservatives concerned about the consequences of greater foreign penetration, dissident activists, and the Thai Rak Thai Party manoeuvring to mould this material into a political force.²⁰

In its exacerbation of divisions, economic globalization was hardly contributing to the social cohesion and shared vision needed for smooth democratic progress. Indeed, Thaksin has to be credited with considerable political acumen for his ability not only to mount an election platform that straddled both these divides, but also to be seen to be delivering to all four constituencies. His election victory is equally notable for its defiance of international opinion, the subject of the section.

International oversight: Provoking a struggle for autonomy

Awareness of the reality that "the markets are watching" forms an inescapable backdrop to the events and divides described above.²¹ This was in many ways a new experience for Thailand. It has been argued that

the governmental compromise negotiated during the 1980s (in which provincial barons learned to manipulate the new electoral politics, and came to dominate parliament and cabinet, while the bureaucracy accommodated itself to this situation, and attached itself to leading politicians and political parties) was tenable only in circumstances in which civil society was weak, and outside forces were kept at bay.²² Over the 1990s, however, both these conditions were reversed: civil society strengthened, and the outside world intruded.²³ Thailand's steady integration into international trade and financial networks from the mid-1980s, and particularly its financial liberalization measures of the early 1990s, made it increasingly vulnerable to international public opinion.²⁴ Thus, when the financial crisis hit, there was strong external pressure, liberally reproduced in the local press, calling for a change of regime.²⁵ It suddenly seemed necessary to pass the 1997 constitution not only to have a better chance of securing competent government, but "to promote an image of political stability abroad, to reassure foreign investors".²⁶ As noted above, the constitution might never have been passed if its fate had not become entwined with the economic crisis. Similarly, when Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchayudh considered enlisting army help in the turmoil of the breaking financial crisis, the military rejected the suggestion, aware that "a crackdown under the watchful gaze of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and international investors would be very costly".²⁷

By sensitizing Thailand to investors' demands for a democratic environment, globalization can therefore be argued to have "contributed powerfully to Thai democratization in the 1990s".²⁸ The process of economic integration, the argument goes, makes authoritarian regimes more vulnerable to external pressure, and democratic breakdown less likely.²⁹ Thus, in Thailand, "globalization provided a crucial support to democracy".³⁰ Acharya also notes a regional dimension to this phenomenon. As the financial crisis broadened and deepened, it crystallized perceptions that authoritarian, non-transparent, and insufficiently accountable ways of governing were anachronistic in an age

of financial volatility and rapid social change.³¹ In a reversal of modernization theory, then, it appeared that a good dose of economic crisis was what was needed in Southeast Asia to bring about a "democratic moment".³²

But although this vulnerability to outside pressures can play an important restraining and sensitizing role, it can also backfire on political actors too closely identified with these pressures. Thailand's Democrat Party is a prime example of this. From one of many provincially-oriented parties in the early 1990s, it transformed itself in 1997 into the spearhead of urban aspirations to regain control over the cabinet and the economy, and then in 1998 into the "local arm of the IMF".³³ As the IMF's "off-the-shelf" macroeconomic solution for Thailand appeared to be doing little good, the Democrats tried to distance themselves from the organization, but the damage had already been done.³⁴ Entrepreneurs and bankers felt remote from a government that did not seem to be doing enough to look after domestic capital. The rural sector, which had been ignored during the boom years, and increasingly distanced from the urban sector, suffered great hardship.³⁵ There was a widespread perception that

political leaders find it easier to sell the neoliberal programme to the locals than to sell local needs and demands to the outside patrons and creditors. The Thai government [of Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai] ceased to be responsible to its people. Instead it became responsive to its creditors and to its international patrons.³⁶

Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party was launched specifically with the objective of capitalizing on the trend that both opposed neoliberal solutions and resented the crisis and the government's neglect of the "real" economy. Thaksin offered a party programme of support for small business and peasant farmers, and thus a very different alternative to the globalized direction of the Democrats.³⁷ He advocated a "dual-track" approach to the economy, combining an internationally open trade and investment environment with substantial Keynesian stimulus for the domestic sector. This platform proved highly successful for him in the elections of 2001.

Backed by a large cross-section of Thai society and fully supported by the business community, he won a substantial victory.³⁸

The global press clearly constitutes an influential component of international oversight, and it is interesting that Thaksin's election victory came despite marked hostility from the foreign press and financial analysts, and considerable local awareness of the economy's sensitivity to international sentiment. Foreign journalists openly willed victory for the Democrats and predicted various disasters (a coup, economic closure, fiscal crisis) if Thaksin came to power.³⁹ Even his overwhelming victory, in what is after all a reasonably democratic environment, earned him no reprieve in the international press, and analyses of his success continued to belittle Thaksin's ability and patronize the Thai electorate. Thailand was said to be taking a "leap in the dark" for "the wrong reasons".⁴⁰ It had "abandoned political reform" and opted for "risky campaign promises".⁴¹ Thaksin's victory was attributed in large part to his impressive personal wealth, which made him "a bit of an icon to poor Thais".⁴² His economic policies were judged spendthrift, and he was dismissed as a "populist", bent on "greater national assertiveness".⁴³

By 2003, however, *The Economist* was admitting that the highly popular Thaksin had a strong record to point to from two years in office, and despite dire predictions, Thaksin's spending programmes had not only failed to wreck the government's finances, but had helped revive Thailand's economy.⁴⁴ Indeed, Thaksin's economic policies have yielded impressive growth rates.⁴⁵ The jury is still out on how sustainable this growth will prove to be, but certainly, many early predictions have proved to be too pessimistic.⁴⁶

It is hard to get away from a consciousness of the markets and the international media in the Thai press. The effect of various policies and events, both economic and political, on tourism, the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), and international ratings is closely monitored.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Thaksin's prickly reactions to international media coverage

show that he is acutely aware of the economic implications of Thai current affairs. However, Thailand's experience over the last few years seems to indicate two things. Firstly, it is possible for a developing country to follow an economic policy that is independent and not out-and-out neoliberal. It is not true that global capital "has gained an effective veto over state policies" so that governments "are more accountable to the impersonal commands of the bond market than to their own electorates".⁴⁸ It is very unlikely that Thaksin and his policies would have been the choice of "global capital", but he developed his policies on the basis of needs expressed by the electorate, was elected on the basis of these same policies, and has since pursued them with some degree of success. States that follow a less than orthodox economic path will certainly be subject to rigorous international scrutiny, but independent, people-focused policies are not the impossibility that some anti-globalizers claim. Thaksin's economic ideals will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Secondly, Thailand's experience suggests that there is an important caveat in the discussion of outside influence over domestic politics. External hostility was not able to derail Thaksin. Thus, foreign media and other international pressures become a deciding factor in political and economic debate when this external "oversight" aligns with domestic political forces.⁴⁹ The key opportunity for this alignment is the subject of the next section.

The middle class: Prioritizing a "safe living"

Concerned that non-elected leaders sometimes gain from the international press a level of support denied to those who are elected, Pasuk and Baker argue that democratic politics is caught in a tension between the local power of demographics and the local and international power of money.⁵⁰ The Clinton era, they argue, which promoted economic

globalization in tandem with democracy, civil society, and human rights, produced a "trend of unstable democratic transitions".⁵¹ These can be characterized as follows:

Mass electorates choose leaders who are increasingly skilled at reflecting popular demands and aspirations. The local press reflecting the urban middle class condemns these leaders with such terms as "corrupt" or "backward". The international press joins in by demonizing them as "nationalist" or "populist". And together these two agitate to reinstall a regime which promises to manage and further liberalize the economy.⁵²

Pasuk and Baker are here highlighting an alignment between external influence (wielded by foreign capital and international media) and the urban middle class (attempting to overcome its minority status by increasing use of "agitational politics").⁵³ This urban middle class is keen to preserve its "safe living".⁵⁴ It is therefore highly sensitive to the fact that its prosperity depends on the health and momentum of the modern, urban economy, and that this health and momentum in turn depend on external factors.⁵⁵ Until 2004, Thaksin's popularity and economic success insulated him from such dual pressure, but a succession of problems in that year – including avian flu, the troubled privatization of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), oil prices, and the worsening security situation in the southern provinces – looked as though they might be creating the conditions for the renewal of such an alliance.⁵⁶ Thaksin's controversial stances on various aspects of political globalization make him doubly open to the kind of international hostility that may make inroads in the consciousness of the middle class in harsher economic times.⁵⁷

Urban middle-class agitation may achieve important reform objectives, as it did when the 1997 constitution was passed. It is doubtful, however, that the Thai middle class is intrinsically pro-democratic.⁵⁸ Suspicions that its first loyalty is toward its own economic wellbeing rather than democracy and reform are borne out by studies that show significant disparities between urban élites and rural citizens in their support for democracy. Far from serving as the vanguard of democratic development, the middle class appears to be lagging behind.⁵⁹ Indeed, surveys suggest that

the traditional emphasis on the 'middle class' as an engine of democracy appears to be declining in favor of a view that middle-class support for democracy exists primarily when it coincides with class interests in curbing the power of the government. This means that one cannot expect middle-class enthusiasm for democracy when it poses conflicts with private interests of the middle class.⁶⁰

Another study found that rural areas were the locus of significantly higher levels of civil society, often argued to be a key element in the consolidation of democracy. These levels steadily decline as society becomes more urban.⁶¹ Members of lower socioeconomic groups are also more likely to be involved in civil society than people with a higher status. Thus, the profile of Thai civil society that emerges from this study is of one made up of older people, of lower socioeconomic status, and primarily from rural areas.⁶² Civil society participants are also more likely to hold more traditional values, prompting the authors to observe:

This is not the picture of civil society led by radical social activists current in popular images of the struggle for democracy. The portrait that emerges is one of a highly domesticated civil society that does not involve the young, the modernistic, or the urban dwellers.⁶³

Nor does middle-class ambivalence toward democracy date from yesterday.⁶⁴ Middle-class opinion leaders arguably created the conditions for the 1991 coup, and when it happened, were ready to accept it, such was the degree of frustration with the corruption of the ousted government. Indeed, the government of Anand Panyarachun, which was appointed by the military, was popular with the urban middle class.⁶⁵ The 1992 protests are often depicted as middle-class democracy protests, but the degree to which they actually were middle-class demonstrations is debatable, and although they were undoubtedly influential in Thailand's democratization process, the extent to which they were consciously "pro-democracy" is also open to argument.⁶⁶

That prosperity thus appears to blunt the urge for democracy is a source of great frustration for Thai columnists and academics. Pasuk, for example predicts another election win for Thaksin, as the improved economy pleases middle-class voters "who care for nothing but the rise of

stock prices in the market".⁶⁷ *The Nation* similarly deplores the stance that presents economic wellbeing and democracy to Thai society as a mutually exclusive choice.⁶⁸

For a poor Thai rural voter, the alliance between a middle class that prioritizes its own economic wellbeing and an influential set of international opinion-makers that prioritizes the interests of investors and markets must feel like the very antithesis of democracy.⁶⁹ Yet if the middle class and the opinion-makers combine to ensure the victory of someone who is more reform-friendly than Thaksin, then the poor rural voter may ultimately gain more political power. Then again, the reform-friendly premier may be someone like Chuan – whose hallmark, according to *The Economist*, was "commitment to political reform", and whose "reformist zeal" set a "good example" to the region, but whose Democrat government was criticized for handling the surge of rural protest engendered by the financial crisis with a mixture of repression and selective concessions, leading some to conclude that while "the Democrats might promote democracy in urban Thailand, they believed the rural area must remain under paternal rule".⁷⁰ Such is the paradox of the encounter of globalization and democratization.

Conclusions

Thailand's experience illustrates the impossibility of predicting a straightforward connection, either positive or negative, between economic globalization and democratization. Firstly, economic change can bring new groups onto the scene to press for democracy, but it can also create new rifts that make democratic consolidation a harder task. Unpredictability is particularly marked when unchecked economic globalization leads to financial crisis.

Secondly, the international oversight associated with economic integration can also have both positive and negative effects. It can inspire a desire for more transparent government, enabling the nation to compete better in a global environment, and it can act as the "big brother" who disapproves of coups and political turmoil. However, it can also provoke angry reactions. In one sense, this is positive. Thaksin's victory shows that international opinion need not deprive either voter or government of autonomy. Electorates can vote against the wishes of the global marketplace, and governments can develop and successfully implement independent economic policies. But those who heralded Thaksin's victory as a blow struck for democracy against the tyranny of the markets may by now be regretting an own goal. The national mood that brought him to power has prompted fears that wholesale and undiscerning criticism of globalization could prepare the ground for the kind of autarkic economic order that would be better able to resist transnational pressures of all kinds.⁷¹ Similarly, in managing the external impact of globalization, Thaksin's "pluto-populism" may also be seeking to manage the internal consequences of democratization by summoning up the "embedded conservatism" bequeathed by Thailand's dictatorial past.⁷² Thus, it is feared, globalization "has advanced democratization in Thailand, but has also advanced the opponents of true democratization".⁷³

Thirdly, potential alliances linking investor interests with domestic middle-class concern are also ambivalent. They can promote spectacular progress in democratic reform, but this can easily be the kind of reform that further empowers the urban middle class while further alienating and disempowering the rural sector. As Albritton and Thawilwadee comment:

While growth of a middle class and freedom of the private sector often coincide, there is room for doubt as to class commitment to democracy if the instruments of government appear to fall into the hands of non-middle-class interests, such as rural populations and workers. In nations where a large proportion of the population falls below a "middle-class," the threat of popular control may pose a deterrent to enthusiasms for democracy.⁷⁴

In pointing to the unpredictability of links between globalization and democratization, this chapter has concentrated on the structural manifestations of economic globalization. Chapter 3 will go on to explore Thaksin's exercise of agential choice in managing this environment, and the effect these choices have had on democratization.

Endnotes to Chapter 2

¹ On modernization explanations for Thai democratization, see Ockey, *Making Democracy*, pp.2-3, and Neil A. Englehart, 'Democracy and the Thai Middle Class: Globalization, Modernization, and Constitutional Change', *Asian Survey*, 43:2 (Mar-Apr 2003), p.253. On middle-class understandings of modernization, see James Ockey, 'On the Expressway, and Under It: Representations of the Middle Class, the Poor, and Democracy in Thailand', in *House of Glass: Culture, Modernity, and the State in Southeast Asia*, Yao Souchou (ed.), Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001, pp.325, 329-330; Duncan McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation in Thailand: Alternative Currencies of Legitimacy', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 24:1 (Apr 2002), pp.58-59; and Michael Kelly Connors, 'Ideological Aspects of Democratisation: Mainstreaming Localism', Southeast Asia Research Centre Working Paper No. 12 (Oct 2001), http://www.cityu.edu.hk/searc/WP12_01_Connors.pdf, pp.13-16. Chapter 4 will contextualize this view.

² Przeworski et al, p.270. Thailand at least quadrupled its per capita income between 1950 and 1990 (Przeworski et al, p.270), and grew by 10 per cent per annum in the decade 1985-95 (Walden Bello, Shea Cunningham, and Li Keng Poh, *A Siamese Tragedy: Development and Disintegration in Modern Thailand*, London: Zed Books, 1998, p.12).

³ Its inequality rating may not occasion such optimism, however. See Papaioannou and Siourounis, pp.12, 28.

⁴ Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2000, pp.30-33.

⁵ Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, 'Democracy, Capitalism and Crisis: Examining Recent Political Transitions in Thailand', paper presented at Princeton University, 15 Nov 2001, <http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~ppasuk/democracycapitalismcrisis.doc>, page numbers not available in Internet format.

⁶ Relations with the IMF were still forming a theme at the beginning of the general election campaign in October 2004, for example, when Thaksin "ridiculed the Democrats' campaign slogan – Taking Back Thailand", and "said he didn't see the point of them winning back the country to mortgage it again to the International Monetary Fund" (*Bangkok Post*, 'Abhisit: Govt's Better Policies Won't Be Ditched if we Win', 19 Oct 2004).

⁷ Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.1, 14-33.

⁸ ibid., p.245.

⁹ ibid., p.108; Benedict Anderson, 'Elections and Participation', p.19.

¹⁰ Quoted by Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.108-109.

¹¹ ibid., p.157.

¹² ibid., pp.109-110; Anek Laothamatas, 'A Tale of Two Democracies: Conflicting Perceptions of Elections and Democracy in Thailand', in Taylor, pp.203-208.

¹³ Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, p.112. On the details of their respective agendas and the way these impacted on the 1997 constitution, see pp.117-119; on the inability of these interest groups to work together once the constitution had been passed, see pp.124-132.

¹⁴ ibid., p.114.

¹⁵ ibid., p.155; see also pp.115-122. The constitution "reengineered parliament to ensure an urban bias", by introducing a party list element and by insisting that MPs held at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent.

¹⁶ Connors, 'Framing', pp.44-47.

¹⁷ Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, p.vii; Connors, 'Framing', pp.52-53. Of course, agitation for a new constitution, as well as the consultation process, predated the financial crisis.

¹⁸ The bewilderment engendered among the Thai people by the crisis is described by Thanapol Chadchaidee, *Prominent Thai Political Thinkers*, Bangkok: Thanapol

Vittayakarn, 2002, pp.185-186. For the effects of the crisis, see Bello et al, pp.1-42. Concerns about the mixed blessings of globalization did not start with the crisis, however. The "globalizers" had gradually been challenged by the "communitarians" over the course of mid-1990s (Craig Reynolds, 'Globalisers vs Communitarians: Public Intellectuals Debate Thailand's Futures', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 22:3 (2001), pp.258-259).

¹⁹ Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.157-158; Anek, pp.221-223.

²⁰ Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, p.157; Pasuk and Baker, 'Democracy, Capitalism and Crisis'. The revival and broadening of the Thai discourse of localism is a notable element of this second end of the spectrum, and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

²¹ Studies based on four Asian countries, including Thailand, suggest that markets do not, as sometimes thought, automatically favour autocracies. Most developing democracies are susceptible to currency volatility, however, and there are significant differences between the advanced industrial democracies and developing democracies in this regard. Thus, the globalization of financial markets may impose some costs on all types of emerging market countries regardless of their degree of democratic development (Jude C. Hays, John R. Freeman, and Hans Nesson, 'Democratization and Globalization in Emerging Market Countries: An Econometric Study', <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/seminars/freeman1.pdf>, pp.24-27).

²² Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.153-154. Many of Thailand's "globalizers" were motivated by the conviction that "only by keeping Thailand open to the outside world could the country set higher standards of participatory government and equitable sharing of resources" (Reynolds, 'Globalisers', p.258).

²³ Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.153-154.

²⁴ Englehart, p.265.

²⁵ Pasuk and Baker, 'Democracy, Capitalism and Crisis'.

²⁶ Englehart, pp.272-273. See also pp.268-271 for an account of opposition to the constitution.

²⁷ McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', pp.50, 63.

²⁸ Englehart, p.265. By the same token, argues Englehart (p.278), a nationalist backlash against globalization could undermine democracy. Acharya notes that when the US and other Western countries "embraced the enlargement of democracy as a sequel to the containment of communism", Western recognition of the trade and investment opportunities available in Southeast Asia meant that the region was spared "the kind of vigorous democratization campaign directed ... at the economically less viable African and Latin American countries". By the end of the 1990s, however, Acharya argues, international pressure seemed to be assuming a more important role in fostering democratization in the region, partly because of the impact of economic globalization (Amitav Acharya, 'Southeast Asia's Democratic Moment', *Asian Survey*, 39:3 (May-Jun 1999), pp.423-424). This dynamic can probably be understood to have changed gear once again in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks.

²⁹ Acharya, p.424.

³⁰ ibid., p.424.

³¹ ibid., pp.418-422, Connors, 'Framing', pp.44-47; Lily Z. Rahim, 'Economic Crisis and the Prospects for Democratisation in Southeast Asia', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 30:1 (2000), pp.17-45; Dani Rodrik, 'The Asian Financial Crisis and the Virtues of Democracy', *Challenge*, 42:4 (Jul/Aug 1999), pp.44-47.

³² Acharya, pp.418-422, 431-432. Studies by Papaioannou and Siourounis (pp.21-22) detect the "significantly positive impact of a currency or banking crisis on the likelihood of democratization", thus confirming previous studies suggesting that economic success can impede and postpone opposition for more political and civil rights, while economic crisis makes it difficult for a non-democratic regime to survive.

³³ Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.142-143.

³⁴ ibid., pp.36, 64, 143. On the "widespread and popular opposition to the strictures demanded by the IMF", see Kevin Hewison, 'The Politics of Neo-Liberalism: Class and Capitalism in Contemporary Thailand', Southeast Asia Research Centre Working Paper No. 45 (May 2003), http://www.cityu.edu.hk/searc/WP45_03_Hewison.pdf, pp.4-7; and Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.142-143. On criticism of IMF prescriptions see

Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.35-66; Uhlin, p.152; Bello et al, pp.49-54; and Philippe Legrain, *Open World: The Truth About Globalisation*, London: Abacus, 2002, pp. 286-290. For an IMF defence, see Kenneth Rogoff, 'The IMF Strikes Back', <http://www.imf.org/external/np/2003/021003.htm>, originally published in *Foreign Policy*, 134 (Jan/Feb 2003), pp.38-46; Hubert Neiss, 'In Defense of the IMF's Emergency Role in East Asia', <http://www.imf.org/external/np/1998/100998.htm>, originally published in *International Herald Tribune*, 9 Oct 1998; and Stanley Fischer, 'In Defense of the IMF: Specialized Tools for a Specialized Task', *Foreign Affairs*, 77:4 (Jul/Aug 1998), pp.103-106.

³⁵ Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.143,250.

³⁶ ibid., pp.249-250.

³⁷ ibid., pp.140-143, 151-153.

³⁸ Darryl S. L. Jarvis, 'Problems and Prospects in Thaksin's Thailand: An Interim Assessment', *Asian Survey*, 42:2 (Mar-Apr 2002), p.297.

³⁹ Pasuk and Baker, 'Democracy, Capitalism and Crisis'; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 'Open Door for Election Chaos', 2 Nov 2000, pp.30-34; 'A Moment of Truth for Democracy', 9 Nov 2000, pp.15-19; 'On an Electoral Collision Course', 11 Jan 2001, pp.22-23.

⁴⁰ *The Economist*, 'Tycoon or Thai Con?', 13 Jan 2001.

⁴¹ *The Economist*, 'Back to Business in Thailand', 13 Jan 2001.

⁴² *The Economist*, 'Tycoon or Thai Con?', 13 Jan 2001.

⁴³ ibid. It is only fair to add that Thaksin was elected while still under a cloud of charges of non-disclosure of assets. Thaksin's victory stance – which assumed that such a large electoral mandate would effectively override any outstanding legal problems – played badly with the international press. Thaksin was eventually acquitted by the Constitutional Court on 3 August 2001, but the vote in his favour was only 8-7, and verdict was widely questioned. See McCargo, '2001 General Elections', pp.258-259.

⁴⁴ *The Economist*, 'Thais Love Thaksin', 19 Apr 2003.

⁴⁵ The Thailand Board of Investment quotes real GDP growth as 5.4 per cent for 2002 and 6.8 per cent for 2003 (<http://www.boi.go.th/english/how/monetary.asp>; attributed source: National Statistical Office). For examples of commentary on these figures, see *Channel News Asia*, 'Thai Economy Is Best Performing Asian Economy After China', 15 Dec 2003; and *Asia Times*, 'Year Ends on High Note for Thai Prime Minister', 25 Dec 2003. On 14 Sep 2004, *The Economist* gave forecasts for GDP growth of 6.2 per cent and 5.3 per cent in 2004 and 2005 respectively ('Country Briefings: Thailand: Forecast', <http://www.economist.com/countries/Thailand/profile.cfm?folder=Profile-Forecast>).

These had been revised downward on account of increasing oil prices and slowing consumer spending. For Thaksin's assessment of Thai growth and prospects, see his address at the Annual Dinner of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand, Bangkok,

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October

2004,

<http://www.thaigov.go.th/news/speech/thaksin/sp21oct04.htm>. Unless otherwise indicated, Thaksin's speeches can be found on the website of the Royal Thai Government, under 'Speeches and Press Releases', <http://www.thaigov.go.th/index-eng.htm>.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Jarvis, p.319.

⁴⁷ See, for example, TNA, 'Failure To Privatize EGAT Will Dampen SET, Says Fund Manager, 15 Mar 2004; *The Nation*, 'EGAT Battle Is Hurting Investment', 26 Mar 2004; 'EGAT Privatisation: Govt Retreat Good News for the SET', 24 Apr 2004; Reuters, 'Thai Govt Under Fire Over South, Aid Plan Delayed, 29 Mar 2004; *Asia Times*, 'Thailand's Tinderbox: Foreign Links Feared', 5 May 2004; *The Nation*, 'Crackdown in the South: Crisis Takes its Toll on the SET', 3 Nov 2004 .

⁴⁸ Robert Cox, 'Democracy in Hard Times: Economic Globalization and the Limits to Liberal Democracy', in McGrew, p.50.

⁴⁹ Pasuk and Baker, 'Democracy, Capitalism and Crisis'.

⁵⁰ ibid. They contrast the transitions from Joseph Estrada to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in the Philippines, from Abdurrahman Wahid to Megawati Sukarnoputri in Indonesia, and from Chavalit Yongchayudh to Chuan Leekpai in Thailand (transitions which were warmly welcomed by the international media) with the original election of Estrada and the election of Thaksin.

⁵¹ ibid.

⁵² ibid. The classic Thai example here is the transition from Chavalit Yongchaiyudh to Chuan Leekpai in 1997, in which local and international pressure combined to oust the former. However, the pattern of "scandalization" – whereby the rural electorate creates governments at the polls, and the urban lobby destroys these governments by public agitation – is a longstanding one in Thailand (Anek, pp.221-223).

⁵³ Pasuk and Baker, 'Democracy, Capitalism and Crisis'. The "middle class" is of course difficult to define. Anek, p.209, sees it as consisting of "city-based, middle-income persons employed in managerial, executive, or technical positions in the private sector, as well as self-employed professionals such as doctors, nurses, journalists, architects, and lawyers". Englehart uses the term to describe "the urban white-collar workers, professionals, and business owners that Ockey dubs the 'new rich'" (James Ockey, 'Creating the Thai Middle Class', in *Culture and Privilege in Capitalist Asia*, Michael Pinches (ed.), New York: Routledge, 1997, pp.230-250, quoted by Englehart, pp.255-256). Ockey, *Making Democracy*, p.170, warns that it is "analytically dubious to speak of a single middle class in Thailand". Rather, there are "diverse elements that have not yet converged into a single social class". Nevertheless, the fact that "middle-class culture is still fragmentary and under heavy construction has not prevented middle-class cultural imperialism".

⁵⁴ A Thai proverb advises, "Nothing is more important than knowledge, but most important is the wisdom to make a safe living" (Mattani Mojdara Rutnin, *Thai Modern Literature: The Process of Modernization and the Transformation of Values*, Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1988, pp.77-78).

⁵⁵ Pasuk and Baker, 'Democracy, Capitalism and Crisis'.

⁵⁶ Many commentators saw evidence of a middle-class turn from Thaksin in the Bangkok mayoral election of August 2004, in which Democrat candidate Apirak Kosayodhin was the victor. See, for example, *The Nation*, 'The Politics of "Do or Die" in the Bangkok Election', 23 Aug 2004; 'Election for Governor: PM Launches Final Assault', 26 Aug 2004; *Bangkok Post*, 'Apirak Gets Solid Support in Inner-City', 30 Aug 2004.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 5. The alignment between international investment and the urban middle class is, of course, doubly potent when it coincides with the views of the US Administration. To date, however, Bush is concerned to reward Thaksin's anti-terror efforts and his dispatch of troops to Iraq. During his visit to Bangkok for the APEC leaders' summit in November 2003, Bush conferred on Thailand the status of "major non-NATO ally", and the process of negotiating a free trade agreement has begun. Such attitudes have drawn criticism from the US press. See, for example, *The Washington Post*, 'Our Man in Bangkok', 26 Dec 2003.

⁵⁸ Englehart, p.256. This is unlikely to be true only of the Thai middle class. See Robison, p.105. Ockey, *Making Democracy*, p.170, notes that one effect of "middle-class cultural imperialism" has been "an attempt by reformists to promote democracy by associating it with fragmented and diverse middle-class elements that have shown only limited and sporadic support for democratic government".

⁵⁹ Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Meaning of Democracy', p.23.

⁶⁰ ibid., p.6.

⁶¹ Robert B. Albritton and Thawilwadee Bureekul, 'The Role of Civil Society in Thai Electoral Politics', paper prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA, United States, 29 Aug-2 Sep 2002, http://www.kpi.ac.th/download/role_of_civil_society1.pdf, p.10.

⁶² ibid., p.15. NGOs are often equated with "civil society", but they form just one category of the 14 "formal groups" and the six "informal groups" into which the study's questions divide civil society. Only 0.5 per cent of respondents reported affiliations with NGOs (pp.7-8). Pasuk notes that while many of the 1970s generation of NGOs did have middle-class backgrounds, those of the 1990s are more likely to come from a rural or urban lower-class family. Despite their "decision to remain true to their roots", however, the fact that they "have climbed the ladder of educational achievement" surely means they cannot be totally dissociated from the middle-class camp ('Social Movements in Thailand', paper presented at International Conference on Thai Studies, Nakhon Phanom, Jan 2002, <http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~ppasuk/socialmovementsinthailand.doc>, p.13). On

Thai concepts of "élite civil society" – that is, an élite-led partnership of the state, business, NGOs, and local élites and intellectuals – see Somchai, pp.133-137.

⁶³ ibid., p.16.

⁶⁴ Kasian, 'Post-Crisis', (p.330) describes the middle class as "an opportunistic and unreliable ally" both of dictatorship and democracy.

⁶⁵ Englehart, pp.257-258; see also Murray, pp.1-2; and McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', p.61. The technocratic orientation of the Anand cabinet also helped allay the fears of foreign investors (Murray, p.6).

⁶⁶ Englehart, pp.261-265; Murray, pp.262-264. See also the discussion in Ockey, *Making Democracy*, pp.164-166. Ji Giles Ungpakorn, 'From Tragedy to Comedy: Political Reform in Thailand', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 32:2 (May 2002), pp.193-194, also disputes the middle-class orientation of these protests, but insists on their clear democratic motivation.

⁶⁷ Bangkok Post, 'Government "Trying To Stifle Press Freedom"', 5 May 2003.

⁶⁸ The Nation, 'Thailand Faces Prosperity and Contradictions', 26 Sep 2003.

⁶⁹ See also the discussion of a "transnational élite" or "transnational managerial class" in William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention, and Hegemony*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp.33-38, 370-374.

⁷⁰ The Economist, 'Tycoon or Thai Con?', 13 Jan 2001; Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.144, 147; Far Eastern Economic Review, 'A Moment of Truth for Democracy', 9 Nov 2000, pp.15-19; Naruemon Thabchumpon, 'NGOs and Grassroots Participation in the Political Reform Process', in McCargo, *Reforming*, pp.193-194.

⁷¹ Englehart, p.278. Englehart likens this reaction to that of the academics and intellectuals who vociferously criticized the Chatichai Choonhavan government, and thereby unwittingly paved the way for the 1991 coup. The extent to which these fears are justifiable will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 5.

⁷² Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, 'Pluto-Populism in Thailand: Business Remaking Politics', draft article (Nov 2003), <http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~ppasuk/plutopopulism.pdf>, p.2.

⁷³ Uchrist Pathmanand, 'Globalization and Democratic Development in Thailand: The New Path of the Military, Private Sector, and Civil Society', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 23:1 (Apr 2001), p.39.

⁷⁴ Robert B. Albritton and Thawilwadee Bureekul, 'Developing Democracy Under a New Constitution in Thailand: A Pluralist Solution', undated article, King Prajadhipok's Institute, <http://www.kpi.ac.th/download/DEVELOPING%20DEMOCRACY.pdf>, p.17.

Chapter 3

The Influence of Agency: Thaksin, Economic Globalization, and Democracy

Transition theory privileges the actions of individual leaders and élites in explanations of democratization, asserting that the stage may be set by global economic structures, and the scenery may shift with the impact of modernization, but it is ultimately the actors who carry the action forward. Clearly, Thaksin is not the only Thai actor engaged in the political process, but he has overtly cast himself as an agent of change – the "can do" prime minister – and his larger-than-life character, his self-proclaimed "CEO" management style, and the magnitude and quantity both of his innovative ideas and his faults make him a compelling figure to study from the point of view of agency.¹ This chapter therefore analyses Thaksin's approach to managing the structural backdrop of economic globalization. It evaluates his policies from the point of view of their potential to be favourable to democratization, and it concludes, with qualifications, that they have indeed demonstrated such potential.

In cautiously affirming aspects of Thaksin's platform, this study is emphatically not advocating specific policies, or making any claim as to their economic sustainability or universal applicability.² Neither is it contending that Thaksin in any way conceived of them as pro-democracy policies. Equally, it is not overlooking or defending the very debatable closeness that has developed between government and business, or denying that Thaksin's policies are probably motivated by a variety of considerations, some of them far from altruistic.³ It is also not writing off the argument that in seeking to manage the external factor of globalization, Thaksin has unfortunately developed a parallel agenda that waters down the internal factor of democratization.⁴ This may be true, but the two do not have to go together. What this study does suggest,

however, is that the goals of Thaksin's policies on economic globalization – which could be doubly beneficial if they could be disassociated from Thaksin's faults – identify and focus on areas that also play an essential part in the continued growth of democracy. Thus, the intentions behind the policies – which may of course not be fulfilled for any number of reasons – are compatible with greater democratization rather than less.

It may seem odd to find anything favourable to democracy in a man who has been described, with some justification, as "a conceited, intolerant, dictatorial ruler, who has no respect for democratic values, good governance or the rule of law".⁵ The conclusion this chapter reaches, however, is based on two key considerations, which will be developed in the sections that follow. The first section argues that by reclaiming the initiative on economic globalization, and offering policies based on internal rather than external demands, Thaksin was able to give voters a genuine choice, thus potentially promoting confidence in the capacities of the democratic process. By affirming in this way that "globalization is indeed human made, and must be human managed for the benefit of humankind", he challenged perceptions that Thailand is simply a prey to outside forces, with its democratic choices limited to doing the bidding of the markets or cutting itself adrift.⁶ The two parts of this section examine central components of Thaksin's management strategy: his emphasis on an independent economic policy that stresses both the global and the local dimensions of the economy; and his attempts to rebuild the nation's confidence after "the debacle of Thaitanic".⁷ While this chapter argues that the economic manifestation of these elements is potentially favourable to democracy, Chapter 5, on the other hand, will show how the lack of political equivalents to such stances, or the distortion of these political equivalents, has promoted attitudes distinctly unfavourable to democratic progress.

The second section of the chapter argues that Thaksin's policies of promoting prosperity effectively help to provide a safety net for democracy. In views that clearly resonate with modernization theory,

Thaksin's administration believes that "economic prosperity and democracy are mutually reinforcing", and "freedom from want" is an essential factor if the "seed of democracy" is to grow.⁸ Prosperity in the contemporary global environment involves the need to exploit the opportunities offered by globalization, through "policies that recognize both our own strengths and weaknesses, and those of the international order".⁹ The two parts of this section therefore examine Thaksin's stress on economic growth and poverty alleviation, and suggest that these policies are potentially helpful to Thailand's democratization process.

Reclaiming the initiative in economic globalization

"How countries manage the impacts of globalization," Thaksin argued, "will determine their ability to survive and to prosper".¹⁰ Indeed, in choosing Thaksin in 2001 rather than more narrowly local alternatives, the Thai electorate was arguably opting for a "globalist" – someone they thought would be able to understand globalization, and manage it for the good of the local population rather than for the good of overseas investors.¹¹ Thaksin sought to fulfil these management expectations by allowing localist discourse to feed into economic policy, and by motivating Thais and Asians to pre-empt future crises by being more proactive and self-reliant. These aspects will be dealt with in turn.

Stressing both the global and the local

The financial crisis convinced Thaksin that the task of deciding on the model of development best suited to Thailand "should no longer be left to anyone but ourselves".¹² He asserted:

Each country will have to work with the basic tenets of market economics to come up with its own economic model, befitting its own stage of development and particular circumstances. Each economy will have to work out how it can best promote originality, creativity and productivity, making the most of its global advantages.¹³

In Thailand's case, this economic model involved "a new paradigm of national development based on globalization and localization", a process of transition and transformation aimed at bridging the gap between the modern and the traditional, the national and the global.¹⁴ "Thaksinomics" described itself as "a pragmatic response to the void created by the demise of two key paradigms that formed the basis of much of the pre-1997 economic policy making in East Asia", the "Washington consensus" and the East Asia Economic Model (EAEM)".¹⁵ The theory is

an eclectic strategy that combines the traditional element of the EAEM model, emphasizing mass manufacturing spearheaded by foreign direct investment – dubbed the First Track – and a more domestic focus on local enterprises leveraging indigenous skills and resources, known as the Second Track.¹⁶

A major goal is to gradually shift the Thai economy "from export dependence to greater reliance on the more controllable domestic market", thus emulating the position of more developed countries, which tend to have a smaller proportion of exports to GDP than the East Asian economies, and are therefore less vulnerable to external shocks. This aim is to be realized by stimulating domestic demand in the short term through increased government expenditure, while simultaneously developing new local industries as part of the diversification away from EAEM activities. "At the same time, domestic market focused policies can achieve structural change by assisting business in moving up the value added chain, thus keeping ahead of direct Chinese competition."¹⁷

Its defenders stress that "Thaksinomics" does not represent a retreat from globalization: "Although the policies are more domestically focused, they are not meant to discriminate against foreign capital. In fact Thailand is still aggressively attempting to attract foreign direct investment."¹⁸. Thaksin also emphasized the continuation of a policy of free trade, in recognition that Thailand's past and future success was based on "its openness to foreigners and its participation in a globalizing world", and that Thai society needed to "think internationally in order to survive".¹⁹ This was a very necessary clarification. Spooked by the "localization" aspect of the dual-track equation, investors began to fear drastic

protectionism, and Thaksin's intentions on foreign investment were the subject of much debate, especially in early 2001. Critics accused Thaksin of emphasizing the domestic half of the dual-track equation to woo local audiences, and then soft-pedalling when international investors showed signs of serious panic. As was noted in the previous chapter, however, many of these critics, as supporters of the interests of markets and overseas investors, had always been suspicious of Thaksin, and were unlikely to see merit in a dual-track approach. Thaksin's claim that his message had been wilfully misinterpreted might not necessarily be too wide of the mark.²⁰

Thaksin continually stressed the importance of finding the "right balance" between the internal and external focus, one that would leave Thailand better prepared to adapt to global events both positive and negative.²¹ He argued that "a developing country should strengthen itself from within and reduce its vulnerability to sudden shifts in market sentiment" by carving out its own unique niche in the global economy.²² Thus, Thailand

has been drawing on the inner strengths of our culture and society to effect a qualitative change in our economic growth.... We are trying to avoid becoming too dependent on the export of mass-replicated products by encouraging the commercialization of local wisdom and know-how.²³

The irony here is that global interests might have ended up with a much worse deal, given the strong pull of localism in Thai society after 1997.²⁴ Thailand's much revered king had long been emphasizing the importance of local strengths and communities, and the dangers of moving away from an agricultural base.²⁵ Globalization's other "discontents" included significant elements of NGOs, social movements, and intellectuals.²⁶ A strongly local streak similarly pervades the National Economic and Social Development Board's "Ninth Plan Development Vision Framework (2002-2006)", approved by the cabinet on 1 August 2000.²⁷ Even if Thaksin's detractors are correct, and his dual-track policy was merely opportunist and populist, it was certainly nothing if not shrewd in its ability to keep the global-local seesaw balanced.

A key issue here is that democracy presupposes choices, genuine alternatives, a belief that elected representatives can take a proactive stance in the world. For an electorate unexpectedly savaged by the rigours of the financial crisis, it was surely heartening to be told that the choice was no longer between "more of the global same" and the uncharted waters of economic isolationism. Thaksin's vision held out the hope of gaining the best – rather than the worst – of both worlds, despite the dire warnings of the international financial community.²⁸

Putting Thailand and Asia first

One of the recurring criticisms of Thaksin targets his "blatant promotion of nationalism", a characteristic generally seen as intrinsically negative and harmful.²⁹ Even his party's name, Thai Rak Thai, which translates as "Thais love Thais", is seen as a symptom of this proclivity. But this criticism needs to be contextualized, especially given the tendency to see sinister nationalism in others whereas kindred elements at home might be described as patriotism, legitimate national pride, or justified protectionism. Indeed, Thaksin points to "a rising tide of economic nationalism in the West", and detects considerable degrees of nationalism in the developed world:

I have said on many occasions that under the capitalist and democratic systems, there is one common element among all the successful capitalist countries, that is, a sense of nationalism. Nationalism is completely different from chauvinism. In our ties with other countries, it is essential for us to adhere mainly to the national interest.³⁰

Nationalism is an important consideration both for globalization and democratization, but its relationship with neither is straightforward. Globalization, despite its capacity to foster openness and exchange, clearly also has the capacity to provoke and exacerbate nationalism and chauvinism.³¹ Many of its aspects accentuate the recognition of "uneven structural patterns between various groups and regions in relation to global forces", and unequal power relations easily lead to the kind of "one-dimensional identities" that gain inappropriate predominance at

times of uncertainty and rapid change.³² Nationalism likewise sits uneasily with democracy. Despite liberalism's theoretical embrace of the goal of self-determination, and despite a fundamental link between nationalism and democracy, liberal democrats tend to be suspicious of any form of nationalism.³³ Not all nationalisms are evil, Hoffmann concedes, but "some nationalisms are evil, and all others can become evil".³⁴ Nationalism, after all, with its conception of the "common national will", has the capacity to aggravate the inherent tension between liberalism and democracy.³⁵

However, it is useful to distinguish between "nationalism" – which Hoffmann defines as involving an ideology, a programme of action, a definition of "enemies" – from softer concepts such as national identity, national consciousness, and patriotism.³⁶ Arguably, some confusion of these definitions creeps into much of the criticism of Thaksin's nationalism and Thai nationalism in general. The conventional trappings of nationalism – flags, anthems, royal symbols, and so on – are very evident in Thailand.³⁷ But such manifestations can perhaps be understood more properly as a sense of national pride, uniqueness, and distinctness, centred around king, religion, and culture, and perhaps fuelled by fears of loss of identity in the face of loud, powerful, and potentially overwhelming Western influences.³⁸ They only occasionally topple over into introverted xenophobia.³⁹ This softer end of "nationalism" – a patriotic national consciousness – arguably meshes more with the self-sufficiency ideals of the localism discourse, discussed above, than with any more threatening ideology.⁴⁰

There are three elements to Thaksin's promotion of national consciousness, all of which relate directly to globalization, and only one of which poses real dangers to democracy. The first element is the desire to encourage national pride and a distinctive identity. The second is "economic nationalism". The third is the tendency to exploit "the nationalist card to discourage domestic political opposition to TRT policies" – and at the same time to discourage international comment.⁴¹

The first two, and their implications for democracy, will be discussed in this section, while the third will be explored in Chapter 5.

Thaksin owes much of his popularity to his consummate ability to promote national pride and identity, and the pain of the financial crisis gave him much scope for action. Thai national consciousness is built on the twin ideals of openness and independence. On the one hand, therefore, Thais are noted for "a remarkable ability to adopt, adapt, and synthesize foreign cultural, political, economic, and social elements".⁴² Thailand is thus a "gatekeeper state", that has historically developed a tradition of embracing the constitutive norms of global culture, and chosen to manage flows from the international to the domestic realms without resorting to protective barriers.⁴³ On the other hand, Thais are hugely proud of "seven hundred years of cherished independence", and credit the "adroit diplomacy and selective modernization" of astute monarchs with their status as "the only important Southeast Asian society never to have been colonized by Westerners".⁴⁴ One of the lines of the national anthem, publicly rendered twice a day, pledges that Thais "will never let anyone threaten their independence".⁴⁵ It is understandable, then, that the events of 1997, involving outside forces that were perceived to have taken advantage of Thailand's openness and undermined its independence, were seen as a "time of darkness", a "time of despair", a "nightmare", "simply disaster".⁴⁶ Thaksin therefore sought to draw on all available currents of residual pride and localism in order to rebuild national confidence and restart the economy. As one journalist put it, "National 'face' is ... as important as personal face and in dragging us back from bankruptcy and despair, the prime minister has gone part of the way to rebuilding our self-esteem."⁴⁷ Thus, when Thailand's IMF loan was paid off ahead of schedule, Thaksin hoped that all Thai people would "feel confident and proud of being Thai. Today Thailand has no binding obligations.... We can choose to implement only those measures that are of greatest benefit to the country. We will, from now on, be able to stand on our own two feet."⁴⁸

But how can an emphasis on national pride be argued to be favourable to democracy? Clearly, if this locally responsive national pride tips over into hard nationalism, chauvinism, bigotry, or xenophobia – and, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, some of Thaksin's political actions and reactions do veer dangerously in that direction – then it cannot. Equally, the kind of national pride that pursues the chimera of a monolithic and fossilized "Thainess" will not facilitate the dissent and pluralism that is at the heart of the democratic process. But democracy has to cultivate an indigenous identity. It must grow from internal values, movements, and traditions.⁴⁹ It is unlikely that a "cosmopolitan economic utopia devoid of any and all particular national characteristics and hence national capitalists" could ever be a successful breeding ground for democracy.⁵⁰ Without healthy national pride, a strong sense of identity and distinctiveness, and a vibrant, outward- and forward-looking emphasis on local culture, the opportunity for indigenous democratic development will be eroded. If identity is indeed the "missing link" between globalization and democracy, as commentators have suggested, then an identity based on the traditional strengths of openness and independence will stand Thailand in good stead.⁵¹ Democracy will not be strengthened, on the other hand, if national pride is removed from the economic and political equation, and reduced to the level of "cultural shows". Even the World Bank recognizes that "the self-awareness and pride that comes from cultural identity is an essential part of empowering communities to take charge of their own destinies".⁵² What is democracy if not an attempt to empower communities to take charge of their own destinies?⁵³

The economic dimension is the second aspect of Thaksin's "nationalism" to come under heavy international fire. Glassman, however, rejects neoliberal accusations of "economic nationalism", arguing that Thaksin's policies are best seen as a form of neomercantilism rather than a manifestation of closed-door statism or an attempt to resurrect import-substitution industrialization.⁵⁴ Thus, almost all Thaksin's economic policies have a recognizable "nationalist" edge, but this was designed less to express deep commitment to "the nation" or the national economy

than to service a temporary confluence of constituencies united by the various but common wounds inflicted by economic globalization.⁵⁵ This is totally consistent with the global-local balance discussed in the previous section.

As noted above, a locally-oriented national consciousness had already developed in some quarters as a response to the negative effects of economic globalization evident in the boom years. Its momentum, predictably, increased with the onset of the bust.⁵⁶ Thus, globalization brought "a new notion of identity", one that was "populist, pluralist and protean in its formation", and contrasted with top-down attempts by governments and élites over the decades to foster "state-identity creation".⁵⁷ The origins and drivers of localist national consciousness were very eclectic. On the one hand, people's organizations, NGOs, workers, and academic groups adopted a "populist-nationalist" stance against the Democrats' IMF-inspired economic policies.⁵⁸ On the other hand, local entrepreneurs mauled in the economic crisis sought support from the Thai state and the recovery of some measure of "economic sovereignty".⁵⁹ Thaksin's policies contained something to appeal to them all.⁶⁰

This is no doubt an adroit and opportunist – albeit inherently fragile – strategy. But can it be said to facilitate democracy? This study argues that it can. All the constituencies attracted by Thaksin's economic policies were victims of processes essentially beyond their control and beyond the previous government's will to control. "Alone among all the parties," one observer noted, "Thai Rak Thai asked the voters what they wanted, and promised to provide it."⁶¹ It is therefore arguable that the inclusion of corrective "nationalist" policies in response to public demand would make all the affected constituencies more likely, rather than less likely, to put their faith in the power of local democracy. Democratic choice loses much of its appeal, after all, in the absence of real confidence in the power of locally driven solutions, and the adjustment of economic policy is an essential expression of the state's brokerage role, as it vents pressure

from the internal to the external and vice versa.⁶² Clearly, the argument that "if the voters want it, it must be right to offer it" is subject to significant restrictions. Democracy can hardly be served by offering voters the option of genocide. The fundamental ethical consideration of economic policy, however, is surely to provide the greatest level of economic wellbeing for the greatest number of people in a way that is still commensurate with the greatest degree of individual liberty – an ethical consideration often ignored by neoliberal critics who denounce "economic nationalism", but fail to critique the neoliberal policies that led to crisis and demands for economic nationalism in the first place.⁶³

The best prophylaxis, therefore, against the more negative manifestations of nationalism is surely greater global equity.⁶⁴ In comments made during decolonization, but still strikingly relevant today, Geertz noted:

The peoples of the new states are simultaneously animated by two powerful, thoroughly interdependent, yet distinct and often actually opposed motives – the desire to be recognized as responsible agents whose wishes, acts, hopes, and opinions "matter", and the desire to build an efficient, dynamic modern state. The one aim is to be noticed: it is a search for an identity, and a demand that the identity be publicly acknowledged as having import, a social assertion of the self as "being somebody in the world". The other aim is practical: it is a demand for a rising standard of living.⁶⁵

The development of national consciousness is thus "fundamentally a matter of dignity".⁶⁶ More effort to "hear" on the part of stronger states could translate into less need to "shout" on the part of weaker ones.

Arguments about equity figure prominently in the pan-Asian dimension of Thaksin's attempts to rekindle pride, which also underline that his vision is not narrowly Thailand-centred. In some aspects, his oratory recalls the "Asian values" debate, and just as Western commentators often reacted disproportionately shrilly to the Asian side's very understandable, if somewhat irritating, expressions of newly found pride and success in that debate, so some critics' reactions to Thaksin today may well reflect resentment at what is seen as an over-buoyant tone and a revival of the "East-West" discourse. Certainly, Thaksin's vision of Asia is of "a

continent that is the most desirable place to live, to travel and to do business in ... a strong and self-confident Asia", and crucial to the realization of this vision is the ability to meet the West on a more level playing field.⁶⁷ His aim is "partnership on equal terms, as opposed to donor-recipient relations, which breed dependency and complacency", and ultimately, this equal partnership will "strengthen Asia, not only for ourselves but for the entire world".⁶⁸ Thus, he strongly urges greater Asian cooperation, without which "we in Asia are bound to compete among ourselves for the benefit of the rest of the world, selling our goods and labour in ruinous competition with each other to serve global markets".⁶⁹ By resisting "growth without originality", he seeks to replace a situation in which Asia has been "subsidizing the high living standards of the West" with one in which the West would "start paying real money for real products from Asia, as opposed to products farmed out for production to Asia, intended for consumption in the West".⁷⁰

Thaksin is keenly aware of the inadequacies of the current global financial architecture and institutions.⁷¹ He advocates the formulation of "fair, effective and realistic codes of financial standards" at international level, and the establishment of a forum to study "new and innovative ways for developing countries and transition economies to engage equitably and properly with the international financial community in a new globalized context".⁷² He expresses deep concern about the problem of uneven development, and stresses that globalization can and should be a process by which all can genuinely benefit, if all countries are given "ample and sincere opportunities to be able to stand tall by themselves and become better partners in our global system".⁷³ Economic globalization, he argues, should be seen not just as free trade and the liberalization of capital flows. It should mean that "the strengths and excellence of each society are in constant interaction, thereby nurturing and enhancing one another".⁷⁴

However, developing countries are themselves also urged to be proactive. He advises the Non-Aligned Movement, for example, to

"rethink and revitalize itself, creating a partnership to benefit from, not be victimized by, the globalized economy".⁷⁵ He asserts:

We used to think that when the global economy faces problems, we would also have problems. However, it is not this government's style to do nothing and allow the surrounding factors to determine our lives. We must be in control of our own destinies. This is what the government has done and has always emphasised. We must set goals and accomplish them.⁷⁶

For democracy to have any chance of gaining or retaining credibility on a local level, steps must sooner or later be undertaken to address the inequities of the global economic arena. In this sense, Thaksin's twin emphasis on the responsibilities of individual governments and the need to reform the environment in which they function is highly pertinent.

Having been subject to much international criticism of his economic policies, he understandably loses no opportunity to taunt critics when he can. Explaining, for example, that his policies had been vindicated after two years in office because Thailand's economy was back on track, he complained: "Still, politics being the thankless job it is, the critics who once predicted the economy would nosedive under my watch are now complaining that I am overheating the economy."⁷⁷ Similarly, when announcing better than expected economic growth figures to the US Chamber of Commerce, he explained that his officials had underestimated performance because "just like several academics, critics and media, they never dreamt that we would ever have it so good!". In the press, after all, "no news is good news".⁷⁸ Summarizing the external economic challenges he had successfully circumvented since his election, he acknowledged ruefully that any major economic mistakes "would have been severely punished by our 'well-wishers' in the international media as well as those who are still stuck with the old paradigm of economic analysis".⁷⁹

This characteristic of bravado and independence, so helpful in defending the political and economic space needed for a developing country to operate in an economically globalized world, is nevertheless one that

easily tips over into constituting one of Thaksin's major flaws. "The sign of a true democracy," he told foreign correspondents in June 2001, "is one that welcomes constructive criticism and feedback."⁸⁰ Clearly, the feedback has not been judged constructive enough, because it has often been distinctly unwelcome. But it is arguably not only Thaksin who bears responsibility here. The apparatus of international finance, and the media which take their tone from it, are perhaps too quick to stigmatize locally oriented, democratically validated measures as nationalism, populism, cronyism, or protectionism. Such labels devalue local electorates, and either tend to stifle initiative or create antagonism.⁸¹ As will be explored in Chapter 5, they can also create a climate of immunity to criticism which is then extremely harmful when serious political criticism needs to be offered and heard.

By reclaiming the initiative in economic globalization – stressing electoral economic choice, rather than global constraints; emphasizing local values, strengths, and identities; expounding the potential benefits of globalization rather than concentrating on its threats; and challenging the inequities of the international economic arena – Thaksin has arguably enlarged the space for democratization. By prioritizing economics, the focus of the next section, he can be said to be laying the foundations for its protection.

Prioritizing economics

Diamond sees poor economic growth as one of the three major sources of the democratic "malaise" described in the Introduction. He also argues that the consolidation of democracy in many countries is dependent on substantial progress toward the reduction of poverty and inequality.⁸² This thesis certainly does not contend that a concentrated focus on the economy is sufficient to sustain a holistic democracy, but if certain propositions noted in Chapter 1 are valid – namely, that richer societies

are more likely to preserve democracy, and that redistributive policies play a crucial role in ensuring that economic globalization facilitates democratization rather than hinders it – then it can be argued that a strong emphasis on overall economic wellbeing is essential for the long-term health of democracy.⁸³ This section will examine Thaksin's terrier-like pursuit of economic growth in the light of these two propositions. Again, it is not so much Thaksin's specific policies as his overall aims that are being evaluated here.

Majoring on growth

While Thaksin's speeches are heavy with economic vision, they are light on democratic aims. "Democracy is a good and beautiful thing, but it's not the ultimate goal as far as administering the country is concerned," he is notoriously quoted as saying in a statement released on Constitution Day in 2003. He reportedly added, "Democracy is just a tool, not our goal. The goal is to give people a good lifestyle, happiness and national progress." As if to further alienate himself from democracy supporters, he is quoted as developing the metaphor further: "'Democracy is a vehicle,' Thaksin said. 'We can't drive a Rolls-Royce to a rural village and solve people's problems. A pickup truck or good off-road car will do. We just need to think carefully and make the right choices.'"⁸⁴

These expressions, which aroused ire in the Thai press and were picked up around the world, fit perfectly with a view of democracy that is essentially economic. Indeed, Thaksin's democracy is so bound up with capitalism that he seems to find it difficult to separate the two. "As a democratic government," he said in an interview not long before the 2001 election, "you need to allocate the budget for the majority of the people."⁸⁵ This is a refreshing viewpoint, but subsequent pronouncements seem to imply that this is *all* that is required for a functioning democracy. The link is apparent again in a New Year address, when it was reported:

Prime Minister Thaksin said that the democratic system in this world was based on a capitalist economic system, so it would be difficult for people to establish their own businesses if they had no capital. The government policy on asset capitalization would [therefore] provide opportunities for people to have a brighter future.⁸⁶

In a speech advocating new patterns of openness and cooperation in Asia, he acknowledges the need for political freedom, stressing that "only change backed by political, economic and social freedom can endure".⁸⁷ But the economic connection always seems uppermost. He told delegates to a conference of Asian political parties, for example, that

we strive to learn from the wisdom of our peers with a view to building a broader base of participatory democracy. Such efforts should empower our people to realise their potential and fulfil their destinies for a more prosperous and happy future.⁸⁸

Thaksin and his ministers thus consistently connect "well-being", democracy, and the "broad-based participation of the people, particularly at the grassroots level":

Rather than making decisions from "within" the government and imposing them upon the people, we have integrated the wishes of the people "outside" the government into our policy platform and its implementation.... The Thai government's outside-in democracy has been a major contribution for the country's fast and successful economic recovery.⁸⁹

The theme of "participatory democracy" also emerged in a speech on bureaucratic reform. Listing the factors that make this reform necessary, Thaksin stated:

Another motive for the change is that the global paradigm of thinking has changed. Participatory democracy is playing an increasingly important role. It has proved that many heads and brains are better than one head and one brain.... The paradigm of all sectors has changed because of the experience of the democratic system, resulting in the participation of organization members. As participatory democracy has proved to be better than the old system, a push for the entire paradigm, including bureaucratic reform, has been staged.... Another issue involves the democratic system. We are in the system of economic competition called capitalism.... We must compete, act quickly, and know how to deal with the tricks and tactics of others.... The thinking paradigm has changed. Capitalism forces us to compete, fight, and act quickly. If we cannot act quickly, we must change.⁹⁰

"Participatory democracy" here seems to mean enabling more shoulders to be put to the wheel in the interests of efficiency and prosperity. It does

not sound like the laborious, contentious, compromise-ridden process that democracy necessarily involves.

In the context of these views, it may sound particularly counterintuitive to suggest that Thaksin's stress on economic growth can facilitate a democratic environment. Nevertheless, there is a persistent subtext in much of the literature on democracy that although a good economy may not produce a democracy, the state of the economy definitely matters to the functioning of democracy once it is installed.

A recent study on Russia, for example, found the defects of this country's economic and political systems to be "typical of countries at a similar level of economic development". Almost all democracies in the "middle-income" bracket, noted the authors, "are rough around the edges: their governments suffer from corruption, their judiciaries are politicized, and their press is almost never entirely free". They are liable to suffer from "inequality, financial crises, a large unofficial sector, and intertwined economic and political power". Most countries in this middle-income category therefore "end up somewhere between textbook democracy and full-fledged authoritarianism", with "incomplete" and "unpredictable" democracies. Thailand certainly qualifies as a middle-income country.⁹¹ If these somewhat unfashionable observations are valid, then ambitions to see Thailand become part of the "first world" are not – or at least not only – signs of economic and party political hubris.⁹² They may also represent Thailand's best hope of achieving a stable democracy.

Based on data obtained in November-December 2001 (almost a year into Thaksin's premiership), Albritton and Thawilwadee established that over 90 per cent of the electorate were satisfied with democracy and the way it worked in Thailand.⁹³ The authors point out that 39.3 per cent of the sample also rated the economy as bad or very bad at that time, with only 14.3 per cent describing it as good or very good. They remark that this conjunction would imply that economic difficulties did not deter support for democracy. But the authors also note that Thai optimism about the future

was high at that point, with 53.1 per cent of respondents believing that the economic situation of their family would be better in the near future, and only 9.5 per cent fearful that it would be worse.⁹⁴ Literature on the "economics of happiness" suggests that macroeconomic performance has direct effects on an individual's sense of wellbeing, and that a virtuous circle may link higher levels of wellbeing with greater support for democracy.⁹⁵

Certainly, the links between attitudes to democracy and economic performance are underlined in the report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on democracy in Latin America, published in April 2004. As the website introduction notes, three years of research show that "slow economic growth, profound inequalities, and deepening poverty levels are ... undermining confidence in electoral democracy". This report finds that more than half of all Latin Americans – 54.7 per cent – say they would opt for an "authoritarian" regime over democratic government if authoritarianism could "resolve" their economic problems.⁹⁶ The executive summary of the UNDP report argues: "No discussion on the future of democracy can ignore economic options. The economy is critical because the development of social citizenship depends on it." Thus, "progress towards democracy and towards the establishment of clear and legitimate macroeconomic norms must be seen as mutually reinforcing".⁹⁷

A country should certainly not be required to choose between democracy and prosperity, and Thaksin has certainly not achieved the right balance.⁹⁸ There are obvious dangers in a "paternalistic approach to government", in which citizens risk becoming "clients who are made to queue up to receive handouts from Thaksin" and citizenship is "reduced to the role of a non-questioning recipient".⁹⁹ But in neglecting to acknowledge economic aspirations and successes, some of Thaksin's critics perhaps forget that democracies can founder on the rock of stalled economies just as readily as they can on that of eroded civil liberties.

Tackling inequality

In a reformulation of standard neoliberal policy, Thaksin commented in 2000, "If you pour water on the roots it greens at the top of the tree. If you pour water on the top of the tree, it never comes down to the grassroots."¹⁰⁰ A key part of his election success was certainly due to the attention he paid to Thailand's "grassroots", the rural poor.¹⁰¹ Thaksin often stresses that Thailand has two societies coexisting within one country, a rich urban society and a poor rural one, and it is vital to take on the "colossal task" of reducing the gap between the two.¹⁰² If the poor were "left in poverty and deprived of opportunities, Thailand would not be able to become a developed country".¹⁰³ Theories that had been successfully applied in developed countries, Thaksin explains, could not be applied to Thailand's twin societies without considerable adaptation, because in their raw form they risked further damaging the poorer sector.¹⁰⁴ Hence he developed and implemented a swathe of new policies intended to alleviate poverty. In the short term these aimed to stimulate local consumption, and in the long term to incorporate the peasant economy more firmly into the national market economy.¹⁰⁵ "In the past," Thaksin argued, "we spent rural capital on the urban areas, mostly in Bangkok. Today, it is time to distribute capital evenly to all the Thai people in all sectors and provinces."¹⁰⁶ The label "compassionate capitalist" may be hyperbole, but his description of himself as both pro-business and pro-grassroots – "pro the less privileged sector of Thai society" – does have some basis in fact.¹⁰⁷

Of course, these policies attract opposition from many critics and doubters, and are frequently dismissed as "populism".¹⁰⁸ This is an accusation that Thaksin is keen to reject:

Our critics condemned our policy and called it, with contempt, a populist policy. I must confess I was bemused. A populist policy, so called because it must be a policy so liked by the people. The people like it because they find it beneficial. So if they like the policy and benefit from it, what's wrong?¹⁰⁹

Charges of populism certainly need to be treated with some scepticism in elitist Thailand. After all, "in a country accustomed to receiving policy edicts from on high", a spot of corrective populism may be no bad thing.¹¹⁰ Attacks on populism often seem motivated by middle-class fears of loss of influence, and show ill-concealed contempt not only for "political campaign gimmicks" – accused of seeking to attract "the loyalty of grassroots voters and the urban poor, who have been the beneficiaries of populist programmes doled out with strenuous benevolence" – but also for the "unsuspecting and unprincipled voters" themselves, who are "captive to the kind of policies that offer quick fixes and instant gratification".¹¹¹ Thus, when critics voice fears that rural grassroots voters – "the gullible beneficiaries of various populist programmes and victims of propaganda" – will continue to support TRT in the next election, they do little to convey respect and understanding for the differing needs and aspirations of different sections of the electorate, and much to explain why Thaksin's pitch to the poor was so successful.¹¹² Indeed, the tone employed to critique his "populism" is often distinctly condescending. Thus, his "populist platform has effectively imposed some very bad social habits on a good part of the population"; his attempts to eliminate poverty add up to "giving away money to local folk"; and his "populist policies ... pander to people's unprincipled wants and needs".¹¹³ "All the voters care about", laments *The Nation*, "is getting something for nothing (or next to nothing), and Thaksin is delivering".¹¹⁴ Why the keeping of election promises should be so shocking is not clearly explained.

Aside from glib shots at "populism", however, serious questions have been expressed as to the affordability of Thaksin's policies, their capacity to trigger debt crises at the rural level, and their failure to level the playing-field before injecting new resources.¹¹⁵ Some critics challenge the top-down nature of the schemes.¹¹⁶ Others accuse Thaksin of merely seeking to provide a cushion against the protest and dissent that would destabilize entrepreneur-led growth, and allege that his main aim was to implement "a wide-ranging agenda designed principally to improve the environment, both external and internal, for the growth of large-scale,

modern business".¹¹⁷ There is therefore nothing "compassionate" about these policies, according to these critics. They are dictated by Thaksin's awareness that he has to "keep the countryside happy" in order for his pro-business policies to succeed. Thus, far from containing elements of "socialism", they are nothing but "old-fashioned paternalism", and "Thaksin may talk like a populist in an agrarian country, but he will govern like a capitalist in a globalised economy".¹¹⁸ After all, the argument goes, TRT is essentially a party of businessmen. Thaksin has no ambition to empower farmers or change their structural position – rather, he wants to make them into businessmen too.¹¹⁹

All this may contain more than an element of truth. But even if these particular rural welfare schemes end up fulfilling all the critics' nightmares, the *aim* behind them was still a necessary part of promoting democratization in the context of economic globalization. Thaksin may well be no philanthropist when it comes to rural policies. Indeed, it is highly likely that he sees a richer rural sector chiefly as a group of potential consumers, exporters, and electoral supporters. But he is well ahead of leaders of some much wealthier nations and much more established democracies in at least realizing the dangers of ignoring poverty and social exclusion. The dangers present themselves to Thaksin as risks to the economy, but they also constitute huge risks to democracy, as exclusion leads almost inexorably to voter apathy, insecurity, and the erosion of social capital.¹²⁰ The UNDP report on Latin America, for example, found that the increasing frustration engendered by a lack of opportunities and high levels of inequality, poverty, and social exclusion readily expresses itself in actions and attitudes that threaten the stability of the democratic system itself. No supporters of democracy can afford the Thai Democrats' "open contempt for the plight of the common Thai".¹²¹ Signs that this realization may be dawning on other political parties in Thailand are evident in the social agenda announced by the new Mahachon party and in early campaigning for the 2005 elections.¹²²

In the study by Rudra noted in Chapter 1, an investigation of 59 developing countries "supports claims that trade and capital flows will be associated with improved democratic rights *if* social groups receive sufficient compensation for their (potential and actual) losses". Thus, democracy will be strengthened when "welfare spending serves as concessions from the élite to circumvent challenges to their positions as market integration increases". Conversely, "political and individual freedoms will be suppressed if hard-liners are convinced that increasing social spending puts too much pressure on élite assets".¹²³ This is absolutely a case of "buying off" the poor. It is treating the symptoms of poverty, and not its cause. But if welfare spending serves in some measure to respond to the demands of the poor, promote the economy, and indirectly improve the climate for democracy, it is hardly an aim that merits unmitigated criticism.

Conclusions

This chapter has argued that if Thaksin has done anything at all to reclaim the initiative on economic globalization, help Thais recover their confidence, boost the economy, and help the poor, then he will arguably have contributed something, albeit totally unintentionally, to the cause of democracy.

Thaksin is a magnet for criticism, much of it very richly deserved. He is too local for the globalists, too global for the localists, too statist for the neoliberals, too capitalist for the left – and too arrogant for almost everyone.¹²⁴ Yet he retains significant levels of popularity.¹²⁵ As the reviewer of yet another volume on Thaksin commented, "what the book lacks is a chapter explaining why the majority of Thais appear to be happy with their leader, despite what his critics say".¹²⁶ The problem is that indiscriminate criticism has a tendency to polarize every debate, patronize the Thai electorate, and underestimate the juggling act required

for a middle-income democratizing country to maintain economic autonomy and prosperity in a globalized environment. Some commentary reads as though the failure of Thaksin's policies is not only anticipated but eagerly awaited, as the final nail in the coffin of an ambitious, authoritarian maverick. But the challenge for Thailand's democracy sympathizers is that his emphasis on managing globalization, maintaining identity, generating strong growth, and contributing to the advancement of the rural sector is an emphasis that will have to be imitated in some way, rather than reversed or abandoned. They may not do precisely *this*, but they need to work out clearly what they would replace *this* with. Notwithstanding Thaksin's all too evident anti-democratic traits – and many are truly egregious – the failure of his policies on economic globalization would not be a triumph for democracy but rather a setback.

Failing a cataclysm of protectionism (which would be extremely unlikely to benefit democracy anyway), democratization must inevitably be worked out in the context of economic globalization, not divorced from it. This process will possibly require odd solutions, quirky approaches, novel adaptations. It will certainly require greater local differentiation, not greater homogenization. It would arguably help democratizing countries, therefore, if international criticism – and indeed élite domestic criticism – were a little more nuanced; if a little more room were given for elected leaders at least to try out their own locally developed and sanctioned path before they are shot down as "populists" or "nationalists"; if more acknowledgment were made of the possibility of doing the right economic thing for the wrong political motives, or vice versa. If the general noise level were lower, the sound of serious criticism would be more likely to penetrate. This points to an urgent need to dissociate the "global agenda" of economic neoliberalism from that of democratization. The Thai case shows that at both structural and agential level they muddy each other, and set up crosscurrents and reactions that make democratic progress difficult.¹²⁷ Democratizing countries would surely stand to benefit if the energy poured into preaching an unrealizable and undemocratic economic orthodoxy were channelled into supporting local ideas,

developing local identities, helping economies grow, and tackling poverty – as Thaksin, most ironically, has been doing.

Understanding the political outcomes of economic crisis and recovery means recognizing that the critical elements are the responses of domestic economic and political forces.¹²⁸ If globalization is manifested and reproduced through agency, rather than self-generated as an inexorable and impersonal economic force, then it can also be resisted, controlled, or managed by agents.¹²⁹ These agents include states and their élites. States are thus not "passive victims... caught between the Scylla of global capitalism/inter-state system and the Charybdis of society/social forces".¹³⁰ Rather, states and their élites "actively shape both arenas by drawing on one to enhance their position in the other".¹³¹ Thus, on the world stage, the Thai state, as represented by the government Thaksin heads, has sought to articulate the message that Thailand is still very much in the globalization game, but is intending to play a different position. It is projecting powerful local demands into a global arena, and attracting attention by doing so.¹³² The converse is seen within Thailand, where Thaksin has shrewdly exploited "a renewed awareness of the importance of state power for promoting domestic capitalism in the context of globalisation".¹³³ His proclaimed role here is to shield the local domain from the predations of the global. Indeed, it has been suggested that Thaksin's response to the issues raised by the localists may have parented a "kind of historic compromise and recomposition of the state" – especially if these considerations prove to be genuinely agenda-changing across the Thai political spectrum.¹³⁴ The legacy of the economic crisis may thus have been "to mainstream localism, not merely as an ideological cover for ultra-nationalist reaction, but as an integral component of a new economic compact".¹³⁵ This chapter has argued that the agential change of policy that engineered this compact – even though the policy is opportunist, and the compact itself fragile and easy to corrupt – manages economic globalization in a way that holds out more, rather than less, hope for Thai democracy.

Thaksin's policies on political globalization, on the other hand, have been neither so adroit nor so potentially favourable to democracy. The next chapter will turn to the structural constraints introduced by political globalization, while Chapter 5 will examine Thaksin's responses to these constraints from the point of view of their contribution to democracy.

Endnotes to Chapter 3

¹ See, for example, *The Nation*, 'The Prime Minister Has Proved To Be a Windfall for Publishers', 6 Aug 2004; 'Thaksinomics a Massive Feed for Curiosity', 6 Sep 2004; *Bangkok Post*, 'PM Invites us To Wake Up', 22 Sep 2004; TNA, 'Govt To Make "Leading Changes" To Turn Thailand To Become "Developed" Nation', 22 Sep 2004; *Business Day*, 'Signs of a Decline in the Popularity of the Thaksin Government?', 8 Jun 2004.

² It is still rather early to judge. In 2003, Thailand's economic success was defying all predictions, and critics were drawing in their horns. In 2004, however, a failure to control southern violence, an inability to definitively control avian flu, and a spike in oil prices began to make the outlook appear less rosy, and Thaksin's opponents saw the opportunity to begin a new offensive. For a range of recent assessments of the health of the Thai economy, see *The Nation*, 'Widening Trade Deficit: Critics Warn Against Govt Overspending', 27 May 2004; 'Whatever Happened to Economic Reform?', 4 Jun 2004; 'Thaksin Has To Get Tough or Economic Reality Will', 13 Aug 2004; 'PM Thaksin and the Steely Ladies of the Bank of Thailand', 16 Aug 2004; '10 Reasons Why Economists Are Scared', 1 Sep 2004; 'Dual-Track Economic Policy Falling Short of its Goals', 29 Sep 2004; *Business Day*, 'Morgan Stanley Backs Thai Economy', 5 May 2004; 'Significant Jump in Thai Household Indebtedness', 28 May 2004; 'Economy Heading for Upturn', 13 Jul 2004; 'Deutsche Bank Upbeat on Thai GDP', 17 Aug 2004; TNA, 'PM Concedes Weaknesses in Thai Economy', 15 May 2004; 'Fundamental Change in Approach, Attitude Crucial for Turnaround', 13 Oct 2004; *Asia Times*, 'Thailand Toughens Up its Economy', 3 Jul 2004; 'Thaksin's Populist Economics Buoy Thailand', 3 Aug 2004; *The Economist*, 'Country Briefings Thailand: Forecast', 15 Nov 2004, <http://www.economist.com/countries/Thailand/profile.cfm?folder=Profile-Forecast>.

³ See, for example, Pasuk Phongpaichit, 'People's Government, People's Rights, People's Justice', keynote speech, Political Economy Centre Annual Seminar, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 19 Nov 2003, <http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~ppasuk/peoplesgovernment.doc>, pp.1-2; Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, '"The Only Good Populist Is a Rich Populist": Thaksin Shinawatra and Thailand's Democracy', Southeast Asia Research Centre Working Paper No. 36 (Nov 2002), http://www.cityu.edu.hk/searc/WP36_02_PasukBaker.pdf, pp.3-4, 9; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 'Thailand Incorporated', 18 Jan 2001; *The Nation*, 'The Wind Beneath the SET's Wings', 16 Feb 2004; 'Conflict of Interest Needs a Closer Look', 24 May 2004; *Bangkok Post*, 'Oct 14 Rally Slams Despotism: Thaksin Govt "Steeped in Conflict of Interest"', 15 Oct 2004.

⁴ Pasuk and Baker, 'Pluto-Populism', p.2. This angle will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

⁵ Sulak Sivaraksa, quoted in *The Nation*, 'Preserving the Public Conscience Under Thaksin', 23 Apr 2004.

⁶ Thaksin, opening remarks during inaugural ceremony of UNCTAD XI, São Paulo, Brazil, 14 June 2004; Kasian, 'Post-Crisis', p.332.

⁷ *Bangkok Post*, 'Can PM Learn From his Mistakes?', 9 Jun 2004.

⁸ Speech by Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai at Second Ministerial Conference of Community of Democracies, Roundtable 1: 'Consolidating Democratic Institutions', Seoul, Republic of Korea, 11 Nov 2002, <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/35.php?id=3039>.

⁹ Thaksin, 14 Jun 2004.

¹⁰ Thaksin, opening statement at the inaugural meeting of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, Cha-Am, Thailand, 19 Jun 2002.

¹¹ Pasuk and Baker, 'Democracy, Capitalism and Crisis'; Pasuk and Baker, 'Pluto-Populism', pp.4-5.

¹² Thaksin, keynote address, 'Asia Cooperation Dialogue – the New Asian Realism', at East Asia Economic Summit 2002, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 6 Oct 2002.

¹³ Thaksin, keynote address at conference on 'Global Economic Governance and Challenges of Multilateralism' organized by International Chamber of Commerce—Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 17 Jan 2004.

¹⁴ Thaksin, keynote address, 'Next Generation Asia', at 2001 Fortune Global Forum, Hong Kong, 9 May 2001.

¹⁵ 'The Origins of Thaksinomics', http://www.thaksinomics.com/Origins_of_Thaksinomics.htm. Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.17-20, dispute the extent to which Thailand ever truly represented the EAEM. See also Hewison, 'The Politics of Neo-Liberalism', p.1.

¹⁶ 'The Elements of Thaksinomics', http://www.thaksinomics.com/Elements_of_Thaksinomics.htm. While the First Track is oriented toward earning foreign exchange, the Second Track focuses on "activities that will not come into direct competition with China".

¹⁷ ibid.

¹⁸ ibid.

¹⁹ Thaksin, speech at Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand, Bangkok, 4 Jun 2001.

²⁰ The discussion in *Asiaweek*, 'Why Is This Man Quitting his Job?', 18 May 2001, is an example of the debate. Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker point out that "Thailand is still a country where 10 percent of people are in the modern economy, 50 percent are right out of it, and the rest float in-between. The foreign investors and commentators are interested in only the small modern bit" ('Thailand's Thaksin From Inside and Out', draft of article for *International Herald Tribune* (20 January 2001), <http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~ppasuk/thaksinforiht.doc>, page numbers not available in Internet format).

²¹ Thaksin, 4 Jun 2001. See also Thaksin, statement at opening ceremony of mid-term review conference of UNCTAD X, ESCAP, Bangkok, 30 Apr 2002; and the exposition of the 'Dual Track Development Strategy' on the Thai Rak Thai party website, http://www.thairakthai.or.th/policy_trt12.asp. Woods, 'Political Economy' (pp.11-12), argues that "strong" states are states that can control to some degree the nature and speed of their integration into the world economy, whereas "weak" states suffer from a lack of choice in their economic relations and have often been subject to "coercive liberalization". Thaksin's corrective global/local focus might also be seen in this context as an attempt to strengthen Thailand's hand in the global economy.

²² Thaksin, 17 Jan 2004.

²³ ibid.

²⁴ In reaction to the pain that globalization often inflicts, localism emphasizes Buddhist economics, agriculture, and the importance of the local community and culture. See Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.193-210; and Kevin Hewison, 'Responding to Economic Crisis: Thailand's Localism', in McCargo, *Reforming*, pp.147-153. Hewison is critical of localism, arguing that it not only fails to offer a coherent alternative to the neoliberal order, but can be "reactionary, romantic, anti-urban and chauvinist" (pp.153-160). Pasuk and Baker view this trend much more sympathetically, contending that the mobilization of "ideas about community, locality, and Buddhist values" in opposition to the neoliberal agenda follows a known historical pattern in which societies under pressure "discover that social and cultural values which do not figure in market economics are important to the society's survival and well-being". They see hope in the increased salience of localist ideas and their intellectual development during the crisis (Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, p.216). Connors sees this strand of thought as "a broad approach to development and democracy that seeks to elicit a communitarian ethos and to develop greater state/society dialogue and action as a progressive response to globalisation". It is not a simple rejection of globalization. Moderate Thai localism, for example, has forged links with international bodies and development agendas, and become "part of the historic movement towards renegotiating the terms of globalisation, simultaneously seeking a re-embedding of market institutions within the social formation of Thailand and in the global at large" (Connors, 'Ideological Aspects', pp.23-24). Thaksin has been able to capture both the global and local agendas.

²⁵ See 'Principles of the Royal Development Projects', the Office of the Royal Development Projects Board, <http://www.rdpb.go.th/main.asp?lang=EN>; 'Thai Monarchy: Introduction', Thailand's Official Information Center,

http://www1.thaimain.org/en/thai_monarchy.html; Hewison, 'Responding', pp.148-149; and William Stevenson, *The Revolutionary King: The True-Life Sequel to The King and I*, London: Robinson, 1999, pp.218, 228-263.

²⁶ Hewison, 'Responding', p.146.

²⁷ This also emphasized "sufficiency economy" as the main philosophy for the "sustainable development and well-being of the Thai people", and instead of "focusing only on economic prosperity", the Ninth Plan proposed the strengthening of a "strong social foundation" and "prosperity decentralization as well as poverty alleviation and income generation". The capabilities of the "grass roots level" were to be strengthened, with approaches focusing on "human, community, and societal development" ('National Policy: The Ninth Plan Development Vision Framework', <http://www1.thaimain.org/en/policy/ninthplan.html>).

²⁸ The 2004 UNDP report on democracy in Latin America provides useful comment on this approach. This report also notes the dangers of adopting a "fatalistic approach" to economic globalization. It contends that "the state and the market can be combined in various ways to create a variety of models that can be adapted to promote human development", and insists that "the type of economy must be at the center of the public debate and not be relegated to a mere technical discussion" ('Report on Democracy in Latin America', <http://www.un-ncls.org/eng-executivesummary.doc>, p.8).

²⁹ Bangkok Post, 'Thailand in 2004: Thaksin Casts a Wide Spell', 19 Jan 2004. See also, for example, BBC News, 'Economy is Key Issue for Thais', 8 Jan 2001; Business Week Online, 'Thaksin's Thailand', 28 Jul 2003; The Nation, 'An Action-Packed Year Awaits Us', 6 Jan 2004; TNA, 'Ministry of Defence Behind "I Love You Thailand" Concert', 9 Jun 2004.

³⁰ Thaksin, 17 Jan 2004; Thaksin, televised speech, 'Repayment of the Final Installment of Thailand's Debt under the IMF Programme', at the Press Conference Centre, Government House, Bangkok, 31 Jul 2003. It is characteristic of Thaksin to speak of democracy and capitalism as if they are synonyms. This interpretation will be discussed later in this chapter.

³¹ James Ockey, 'McJihad: Globalization and the Future of Nationalism', *Political Science*, 53:1 (Jun 2001), pp.65-66; Catarina Kinnvall and Kristina Jönsson, 'The Global-Local Nexus Revisited: Constructing Asia in Times of Globalization', in Kinnvall and Jönsson, p.258.

³² Kinnvall and Jönsson, p.259.

³³ Stanley Hoffmann, 'The Crisis of Liberal Internationalism', pp.73-75, and 'The Passion of Modernity', pp.189, 191, 199-200, in *World Disorders: Troubled Peace in the Post-Cold War Era*, Stanley Hoffmann, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998. Nationalism and democracy are linked in that both locate sovereignty in the people, and proclaim the theoretical equality of the citizens of the nation. Georg Sørensen notes ('The Impasse of Third World Democratization: Africa Revisited', in Michael Cox et al, p.294): "If nationalism is a bond of loyalty among the people that constitute a nation, then some measure of nationalism is a necessary precondition for democratization. That is because the nationalist bond of loyalty is the glue which ties the people inside the state's territory together; it helps create the minimum of national unity which is at the core of the political community that is the nation."

³⁴ Hoffmann, 'Nationalism and World Order', p.214.

³⁵ Hoffmann, 'The Crisis of Liberal Internationalism', pp.73-74.

³⁶ Hoffmann, 'The Passion of Modernity', p.193. He defines national identity as the sum of the material, spiritual, physical, and behavioural features that are characteristics of a given nation, and distinguish it from others. National consciousness, on the other hand, is the subjective self-image that citizens have of their nation, which often selects only some features of national identity, or distorts them, or invents new ones. Patriotism, meanwhile, is the sense of attachment and loyalty to one's nation.

³⁷ Pasuk and Baker contend that Thaksin's nationalism, by contrast, "evokes a community of 'Thai people' without fully embracing the vocabulary and symbols of nation and state" (Pasuk and Baker, 'Only Good Populist', p.13).

³⁸ Craig Reynolds, 'Globalization and Cultural Nationalism in Modern Thailand', in *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand*, Joel S. Kahn (ed.), Singapore: Institute of Southeast

Asian Studies, 1998, pp.119-120, 129-130, 140-141. It is interesting that the National Identity Board, given the rise in importance during the 1980s of the notion of democracy, duly appointed "Democracy" as the fourth pillar of Thai identity to stand alongside "Nation, Monarchy, and Religion" (Daniel Arghiros, *Democracy, Development, and Decentralization in Provincial Thailand*, Richmond: Curzon, 2001, p.35).

³⁹ Pasuk and Baker thus dispute claims of a widespread nationalist response to the financial crisis, arguing that Thailand lacks any truly nationalist tradition ('Only Good Populist', p.13). They contend that the "proto-nationalist rhetoric" evident in the political arena during the financial crisis was never matched by an equivalent popular response, and the movements of popular participation that emerged in response to the crisis tended to be focused inward (on self-sufficiency and self-reliance) rather than outward (on hostility toward the West). Thus, foreign expectations of a strong nationalist resurgence in the wake of 1997 were a reflection more of Western preoccupations than of realities in Thailand (Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.161-189). Even these commentators, however, concede that Thaksin's victory was partly due to an unwonted display of nationalism stemming from IMF "arrogance", the opportunism of international financiers, and the critical tone of the foreign media (Pasuk and Baker, 'Thailand's Thaksin'). Thongchai, on the other hand, contends that nationalism as an ideology is prevalent in Thailand (Thongchai Winichakul, 'Asian Identity: A Post-Colonial Misnomer', paper presented at symposium on 'What Are Asian Identities Under Globalization?', at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan, 8 Dec 2003, <http://www.waseda-coe-cas.jp/e/symposium0312/sympo03-s3thongchai-e.pdf>, p.78). See also Thongchai's discussion of "post-Westernism" (pp.76-78), and Reynolds's account of some of the post-crisis literature rejecting or questioning Western influence ('Globalisers', pp.259-263). The distinction between nationalism and national pride is illustrated by Kristian Gotthelf, 'National Pride in Thai Advertising: A Shift in Spokesperson Choice', Association for Asian Research, 30 Jan 2004, <http://www.asianresearch.org/articles/1847.html>. He sees an interesting contrast in the reactions to globalization apparent in Thailand's and Malaysia's advertising. Whereas Malaysia's response concentrates on promoting "Asian" as opposed to "Western" identity, Thai themes draw resonance from "national pride".

⁴⁰ Reynolds, 'Thai Identity', p.328, points out that the Thai expression that best sums up what is seen as threatened by Westernization, the IMF, the WTO, and US hegemony is *phum panya* (translated as local knowledge, native wisdom, ingenuity, a knack for figuring things out by means of local genius).

⁴¹ Jim Glassman, 'Economic "Nationalism" in a Post-Nationalist Era: The Political Economy of Economic Policy in Post-Crisis Thailand', *Critical Asian Studies*, 36:1 (Mar 2004), p.59.

⁴² Mattani, pp.67-68. See also Lynch, p.346.

⁴³ Lynch, pp.339-341, 345-348. David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984, p.62, explains that Thai openness to outside influences goes back much further than the 19th century. Reynolds, in 'Globalization and Cultural Nationalism', pp.120-124, 127-128, notes some of the cultural and historical factors that create this predisposition toward cosmopolitanism.

⁴⁴ 'Introduction', <http://www1.thaimain.org/en/introduction.html>. Of course, "independence" from colonialism came with many strings attached. As Gong points out, the provisions of the treaties concluded with Western polities in the 1850s and 1860s meant that Siam preserved its nominal independence, but "lost its judicial and fiscal autonomy outright, and had its political freedom compromised". The loss of tariff and duty control, Gong notes, restricted the country's economy at a time when revenues from increased trade might have furthered its development (Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, pp.211-212). Anderson also points out that while "saving" Siam from conquest and colonization, Kings Mongkut and Chulalongkorn also made themselves "the most powerful and most dependent sovereigns in Thai history". The external security generated by the elimination of Siam's traditional enemies enabled the rulers to concentrate on the consolidation of their domestic power (Benedict Anderson, 'Withdrawal Symptoms', in *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*, Benedict Anderson, London: Verso, 1998, p.162).

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- ⁴⁵ 'National Anthem', <http://www1.thaimain.org/en/intro/anthem.html>.
- ⁴⁶ Thaksin, keynote address, 'Thaksinomics', at event organized by Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Philippine-Thai Business Council, Manila, 8 Sep 2003. See also Bello et al, p.1.
- ⁴⁷ *Bangkok Post*, 'Can PM Learn From his Mistakes?', 9 Jun 2004. This accolade gains force from being taken from an otherwise critical perspective on Thaksin's policies.
- ⁴⁸ Thaksin, 31 Jul 2003. Thaksin's view is that Thailand sustained greater damage from the 1997 crisis than necessary as a result of IMF policies. Commenting on the early repayment, IMF managing director Horst Köhler commended "Thailand's impressive progress", and noted, "Thailand's ability to repay the IMF ahead of schedule reflects a strong macroeconomic and balance of payments performance over the past few years. This success has been underpinned by a sound policy framework, for which the government and the Bank of Thailand should be congratulated" ('Thailand Completes Early Repayment of 1997 Stand-By Arrangement', International Monetary Fund Press Release No. 03/131, 31 July 2003, <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2003/pr03131.htm>).
- ⁴⁹ Thede, p.25.
- ⁵⁰ Kasian, 'Post-Crisis', p.337.
- ⁵¹ Kinnvall and Jönsson, 'Global-Local Nexus Revisited', p.258.
- ⁵² Quoted in Connors, 'Ideological Aspects', p.5.
- ⁵³ This empowerment, of course, has often not been achieved or even sought. Arblaster comments that at the root of traditional understandings of democracy lies the "idea of popular power". Yet from the Greek experience onward, this core idea has been a source of tension. From interpretations of citizenship that require land or education (thus excluding "the poor, the mob, the dregs") to constraints on popularly elected assemblies and the careful division of power (thus guarding against the "tyranny of the multitude"), the history of democracies is a history of attempts to keep popular power under careful control. By the 20th century, democracy had mutated from "a principle which all but the most radical or 'extremist' were anxious to disown" to "one which all but the most reactionary claimed to believe in" – but its definition has been "revised, adapted, narrowed and diluted to render it compatible with the persisting belief in the necessity or the virtue of rule by élites, with an equally persistent mistrust of 'the masses'; and, perhaps most important of all, to render it compatible with the existing political systems of the Western world which call themselves 'democracies'" (Anthony Arblaster, *Democracy*, 3rd ed., Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002, pp.9, 25, 34-36, 39-40, 46, 48, 61).
- ⁵⁴ Glassman, pp.58-61. Nevertheless, Glassman argues, it is a real form of "nationalism". Some of the negative political aspects he associates with it will be discussed in Chapter 5.
- ⁵⁵ ibid., pp.40, 45-46.
- ⁵⁶ Reynolds, 'Globalisers', pp.256-259.
- ⁵⁷ Reynolds, 'Thai Identity', p.328. On official attempts to promote state-identity creation, see Chai-Anan Samudavanija, 'State-Identity Creation, State-Building and Civil Society, 1939-1989', pp.49-70, and B. J. Terwiel, 'Thai Nationalism and Identity: Popular Themes of the 1930s', pp.108-125, in Reynolds, *National Identity*; and Kasian, 'Post-Crisis', p.337. Pasuk and Baker (*Thailand's Crisis*, pp.161-189) argue there was a general forgetting of the top-down nationalist themes of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, because these never developed the character of a mass popular movement.
- ⁵⁸ Kasian, 'Post-Crisis', pp.334-335; Glassman, pp.51-53.
- ⁵⁹ Kasian, 'Post-Crisis', p.333; Glassman, pp.46-51.
- ⁶⁰ As Glassman points out, it was not long before the confluence started to subdivide again, as Thaksin lost the support of organizations like the Assembly of the Poor (p.54). The contradictions and internal tensions of TRT's brand of economic nationalism thus offer further invalidation of neoliberal fears.
- ⁶¹ McBride, p.8.
- ⁶² Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation*, pp.201-202; Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.67.
- ⁶³ Glassman, pp.59-60.
- ⁶⁴ See Edward Friedman, 'On Alien Western Democracy', in Kinnvall and Jönsson, p.71.

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- ⁶⁵ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, p.258, quoted by Ockey, 'McJihad', pp.65-66.
- ⁶⁶ Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993, quoted by Hoffmann, p.199.
- ⁶⁷ Thaksin, 19 Jun 2002. Yet, Thaksin's vision of "South-South cooperation" urges avoidance of the temptation "to blame the North". "The rules of the game have hardly favored the South to begin with," he argues. Therefore, "getting bogged down in recriminations only distracts from our ultimate goals"(14 Jun 2004).
- ⁶⁸ Thaksin, 17 Jan 2004; 19 Jun 2002.
- ⁶⁹ Thaksin, 19 Jun 2002. He looks to the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, for example, to give both parties "a larger voice in international trade affairs on issues of common interest" (Thaksin, address, 'Revitalising ASEAN, Sustaining Economic Recovery', at the Asia Economic Summit Organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 8 Mar 2002).
- ⁷⁰ Thaksin, opening remarks at the opening ceremony of the London School of Economics Asia Forum 2004, Bangkok, 18 Mar 2004; Thaksin, 17 Jan 2004.
- ⁷¹ See, for example, Thaksin, 6 Oct 2002; Thaksin, keynote address, at the closing ceremony of the Second Asia Cooperation Dialogue ministerial meeting, Chiang Mai, 22 Jun 2003; Thaksin, 17 Jan 2004.
- ⁷² Thaksin, statement at the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 21 Mar 2002.
- ⁷³ Thaksin, 21 Mar 2002; 30 Apr 2002 (the phrase "ample and sincere opportunities" appears in italicized, boldface text in the original).
- ⁷⁴ Thaksin, 30 Apr 2002.
- ⁷⁵ Thaksin, speech at the Non-Aligned Movement Business Forum on South-South Cooperation, Kuala Lumpur, 23 Feb 2003.
- ⁷⁶ Thaksin, 31 July 2003.
- ⁷⁷ Thaksin, 23 Feb 2002.
- ⁷⁸ Thaksin, address at breakfast hosted by US Chamber of Commerce, Washington DC, 11 June 2003. See also Thaksin, keynote speech at the annual dinner of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand, Bangkok, 1 Oct 2003.
- ⁷⁹ Thaksin, 8 Sep 2003.
- ⁸⁰ Thaksin, 4 Jun 2001.
- ⁸¹ The barrage of international criticism following Thaksin's election probably added to his stature in Thailand, "on grounds that if the farang [foreigners] dislike him so much, he must be doing something right" (Pasuk and Baker, 'Thailand's Thaksin').
- ⁸² Diamond, 'Advancing Democratic Governance', p.14.
- ⁸³ See Chapter 1.
- ⁸⁴ Quoted in *The Nation*, 'PM's Declaration: Democracy is Not my Goal', 11 Dec 2003.
- ⁸⁵ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 'How To Save Thailand', interview with Thaksin, 16 Nov 2000, pp.28-29.
- ⁸⁶ Report on Radio Thailand radio address, '2004 Cited as the Year for People's Opportunities', 3 Jan 2004, http://www.prd.go.th/pm_talks.asp.
- ⁸⁷ Thaksin, keynote address, 'The Future of Asia', at the Nihon Keizai Shimbun 9th International Conference, Tokyo, 5 Jun 2003.
- ⁸⁸ Thaksin, remarks at the dinner of the Second International Conference of Asian Political Parties, Bangkok, 23 Nov 2002.
- ⁸⁹ Statement by Vice-Foreign Minister Sorajak Kasemsuvan, at the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, Ulan Bator, Mongolia, 10 Sep 2003, <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/35.php?id=5735>. Surakiart similarly emphasizes that investing in democracy equates to investing in "peace and prosperity", and asserts that "democracy is increasingly accepted as the most effective system in improving the well-being and security of the people" (Surakiart, 11 Nov 2002).
- ⁹⁰ Thaksin, address, 'Joining Forces in Reforming Thailand, Joining Hands in Reforming the Bureaucratic System', at teleconference, Government House, Bangkok, 11 Sep 2002', http://www.prd.go.th/en_special/reforming/st2.htm.
- ⁹¹ Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman, 'A Normal Country', *Foreign Affairs*, 83:2 (Mar/Apr 2004, pp.22, 30, 38. Hirst similarly fears that "most of the democracies outside the OECD will be unstable and ramshackle", and thus in a weak position to challenge

the consensus of the OECD countries. According to the Globalis indicator of Gross National Income (GNI), which uses data from 2001, Russia ranked 39 (on a scale 134-1, low to high), with a GNI per capita of 8,660 Purchasing Power Parity dollars (PPP\$). Thailand ranked 50, with PPP\$ 6,550. By way of comparison, India ranked 95, with PPP\$ 2,450; Brazil 46, with PPP\$ 7,450; Mexico 37, with PPP\$ 8,770; New Zealand 21, with PPP\$ 19,130; and the US 2, with PPP \$34,870 ('Indicator: GNI – Gross National Income per capita – 2001', <http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator.cfm?IndicatorID=140&country=RU#rowRU>).

⁹² Bangkok Post, 'Somkid: Thailand on Verge of "First World" Status', 27 Dec 2003.

⁹³ In addition, 84.3 per cent said that democracy was always preferable to authoritarian forms of government, and over 90 per cent indicated confidence in the ability of democracy to solve the problems of the nation (Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Meaning of Democracy', pp.7-10).

⁹⁴ ibid., p.10.

⁹⁵ See Carol Graham and Sandip Sukhtankar, 'Does Economic Crisis Reduce Support for Markets and Democracy in Latin America? Some Evidence from Surveys of Public Opinion and Well Being', Centre on Social and Economic Dynamics, The Brookings Institution, <http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/graham/20040210.htm>, p.2. Graham and Pettinato report: "A number of studies find positive links between happiness and future economic performance. Our own research finds that happier people are more likely to have pro-market and pro-democratic attitudes. Thus it seems plausible to posit that the strong negative skew in the perceptions of many respondents [on their economic position and prospects] has at least some implications for the sustainability of support for market policies and, possibly, for democracy in these countries" (Carol Graham and Stefano Pettinato, 'Happiness, Markets, and Democracy: Latin America in Comparative Perspective', *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 2:3 (Jan 2001), p.254). Graham and Sukhtankar also find (p.25) that those with high expectations for their own and their children's future are more likely to be supportive of markets and democracy.

⁹⁶ 'Democracy in Latin America', <http://www.un-ncls.org/democracy-undp-publication.htm>. These findings can be compared with the analysis by Graham and Sukhtankar based on the Latinobarometro surveys from 2000 to 2002. They found that the percentage of Latin Americans favouring democracy over any other system of government (which fell from 2000 to 2001) increased in 2002, and recovered to its 2000 levels despite deteriorating economic conditions. They attribute this result to increased voter ability to keep the poor performance of individual governments separate from an appreciation of democracy as a general government system. Nevertheless, they do note negative trends in Brazil and Colombia (Graham and Sukhtankar, p.19). *The Economist* similarly notes the "worryingly low" support for democracy in these countries, and points out that in all but four countries, support for democracy was lower in 2002 than it was in 1996, "probably because of Latin America's generally poor economic performance in recent years". When the poll results are adjusted to take into account the countries' populations, they suggest that only 50 per cent of Latin Americans are convinced democrats (*The Economist*, 'Democracy Clings On in a Cold Economic Climate: The Latinobarometro Poll', 17 Aug 2002). For a response contesting the findings of the UNDP report, see Carol Graham, 'Latin America is Far From Rejecting Democracy', <http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/graham/20040802.htm>, published in *Financial Times*, 2 Aug 2004.

⁹⁷ 'Report on Democracy in Latin America', <http://www.un-ncls.org/eng-executivesummary.doc>, p.8.

⁹⁸ *The Nation*, 'Thailand Faces Prosperity and Contradictions', 26 Sep 2003.

⁹⁹ *The Nation*, 'The Rise of Thaksinomics and What the Implications Are for Thailand', 20 Jan 2004; and 'OK, We Know You Are Wondering, Why Didn't we Pick That Man...', 31 Dec 2003.

¹⁰⁰ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 'How To Save Thailand', interview with Thaksin, 16 Nov 2000, pp.28-29.

¹⁰¹ See Pasuk and Baker, 'Pluto-Populism', pp.4-5, for details of the election campaign's appeal to the rural masses.

¹⁰² Thaksin, 4 Jun 2001; 11 Sep 2002, 8 Sep 2003.

¹⁰³ Report on radio address, 3 Jan 2004.

¹⁰⁴ Thaksin, 11 Sep 2002.

¹⁰⁵ Pasuk and Baker, 'Pluto-Populism', p.21. The projects included the 30-baht health care scheme, the farmers' debt suspension program, the 1-million-baht Village and Urban Revolving Fund (a revolving loan program), the People's Bank (to provide credit to micro-enterprises), and the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) scheme (to assist each tambon, or subdistrict, to modernize the process of producing and distributing the specialized local products in which they have a comparative advantage). See 'Elements of Thaksinomics'.

¹⁰⁶ Thaksin, 31 Jul 2003.

¹⁰⁷ Thaksin, closing address at the Asian Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility, Bangkok, 19 Sep 2003.

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, *The Economist*, 'Tycoon or Thai Con?', 13 Jan 2001; *BBC News*, 'Thai PM Risks Losing Populist Touch', 28 Jan 2004; Pasuk and Baker, 'Only Good Populist', pp.1-2. Populism is an ill-defined term that can be little more than a "vacuous term of political abuse" (Michael McCarthy, 'Europe – A Miserably Élite Project', openDemocracy, 18 Jul 2002, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-3-51-752.jsp>). Although populist policies sometimes pander to the more negative aspects of nationalism (Pierre Rosanvallon, 'Europe in Perplexity', openDemocracy, 14 Jul 2004, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-3-109-2009.jsp>), and can act as an inferior substitute for the "hard slog of deliberative democracy" (David Marquand, 'Tony Blair and Iraq: A Public Tragedy', openDemocracy, 2 Feb 2004, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-8-92-1709.jsp>), they can also provide some measure of antidote to the élitism often championed by some neoliberal elements.

¹⁰⁹ Thaksin, 8 Sep 2003.

¹¹⁰ McBride, p.8.

¹¹¹ *The Nation*, 'How To Control Whores, Ticks and Fleas', 14 Dec 2003; and 'TRT Must Learn Democratic Values', 29 Feb 2004. Middle-class frustration with rural voters and their priorities is not new. See Anek, pp.201-223. As Anek points out (pp.221-223), reconciling the electoral aspirations of the rural poor and the middle class is crucial for the health of democracy. This does not mean, however, attributing the "problem" solely to the "deviant" behaviour of the rural electorate, and "educating" it to vote for "qualified" individuals. The urban middle class, Anek emphasizes, "does not have a monopoly in defining the national interest". Patronage-oriented voting (like the response to Thaksin's "populism") is caused by the need to draw greater attention or benefits from the centre to the periphery. If this attention were routinely given, rural voting habits might not need to diverge so notably from those of middle-class "democrats". See also Ockey, 'On the Expressway', pp.319-320.

¹¹² *The Nation*, 'New Party Is Not Necessarily a Viable Option', 4 Jul 2004. It is hard to square this disparagement of grassroots voters with the view that "grassroots politics is the bedrock of a truly democratic nation" (*The Nation*, 'A New Beginning for Local Government', 16 Mar 2004).

¹¹³ *The Nation*, 'Something Has Gone Wrong: Strong PM, Weak Citizens', 24 Jun 2004; 'What Goes Round Doesn't Always Come Round', 9 Jan 2004; and 'Thailand Faces Prosperity and Contradictions', 26 Sep 2004. The people's "undisciplined" or "unprincipled" wants and needs – not defined – are also castigated in *The Nation*, 'The Rise of Thaksinomics and What the Implications Are for Thailand', 20 Jan 2004, and Democrat election campaigns accused Thaksin of "spoiling voters with populist policies" (*The Nation*, 'Democrat Fund-Raiser: Don't Spoil the People', 19 Oct 2004). A typical Thaksin response to such criticism is reported by *Asia Times*: "The government does not spoil the poor, we give them opportunities" (*Asia Times*, 'Year Ends on High Note for Thai Prime Minister', 25 Dec 2003).

¹¹⁴ *The Nation*, 'Thailand Faces Prosperity and Contradictions', 26 Sep 2004.

¹¹⁵ See, for example, *The Nation*, 'Poverty Fight Off Target: NGO', 17 Dec 2003; 'Promises Bode Ill for the Economy', 18 Oct 2004; and the discussions in Ungpakorn, pp.203-205; *Business Week Online*, 'Thaksin's Thailand', 28 Jul 2003; and *Newsweek*, 'The Bold Coast', 12 Jan 2004, reproduced at <http://www.amitai-notes.com/blog/archives/000425.html>.

¹¹⁶ Glassman, p.52.

¹¹⁷ Pasuk and Baker, 'Pluto-Populism', pp.2, 9, 21; Pasuk and Baker, 'Only Good Populist', p.10.

¹¹⁸ Pasuk and Baker, 'Thailand's Thaksin'.

¹¹⁹ Pasuk and Baker, 'Only Good Populist', p.3-4, 10.

¹²⁰ Compare Thede, p.16.

¹²¹ Duncan McCargo, quoted in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 'Thailand Incorporated', 18 Jan 2001, pp.16-18. Election results in India in May 2004 also highlighted the dangers for democratic governments of ruling the poor too blatantly out of the electoral equation.

¹²² *Bangkok Post*, 'Anek: Mahachon at Odds With Govt Policy, Will Pursue Agenda of "Social Investment"', 7 Jul 2004; 'What Choice Do we Have?', 29 Sep 2004; 'Abhisit: Govt's Better Policies Won't Be Ditched if We Win', 19 Oct 2004 (the "better policies" that "have proven to be good for the people" were said to include the 30-baht medical care scheme and the 1-million-baht village fund). Commenting on Thaksin's election campaign announcement of further "generous handouts", the *Bangkok Post* warns that priorities must be set, reality respected, and fiscal discipline strictly observed, but concludes that "the latest populist package announced by Thai Rak Thai is not all that bad", and "should not be altogether shunned", especially as some of the former crop of "populist projects" have been beneficial to the poor and generally helpful (*Bangkok Post*, 'TRT Freebies Not All Bad', 22 Oct 2004).

¹²³ Rudra, p.36, boldface italics as in original version.

¹²⁴ See Hewison, 'The Politics of Neo-Liberalism', p.12, on the difficulties of categorizing Thaksin.

¹²⁵ Thais voted Thaksin "outstanding politician of the year" in 2003 with the support of 84.6 per cent of respondents. He also topped the "person of the year" list with 82.5-per cent support (*Bangkok Post*, 'Thaksin Person of the Year', 22 Dec 2003). In May 2004, despite months of trouble in southern Thailand and an acrimonious censure debate, Thaksin's approval rating in Bangkok – a notoriously unpredictable electorate – was still 56.9 percent (TNA, 'Censure Debate Dents PM's Popularity', 23 May 2004). Signs of waning popularity were seen in the Democrat candidate's win in the mayoral election in August 2004 (*The Nation*, 'PM Needs To Take Stock as Voters Back Underdog', 30 Aug 2004). Commentators were quick to concede that "Bangkok is not Thailand", but equally quick to remind Thaksin of the old dictum that "rural voters elect national governments and Bangkokians boot them out" (*Bangkok Post*, 'Bangkok Sends Thaksin a Message', 3 Sep 2004). Polls carried out in October 2004, before the launch of campaigning for the 2005 election, indicated that 48.9 per cent of those intending to vote would vote for TRT, while 34.9 per cent would opt for the Democrat Party (TNA, 'Poll Predicts Thai Rak Thai Would Stay as Government Next Term', 17 Oct 2004). However, by November 2004, violence in the south, and the government's increasingly inept handling of that situation, looked likely to function as an election "wild card" (*Asia Times*, 'Thailand's Southern Enigma Is Election Wild Card', 10 Nov 2004).

¹²⁶ *Asia Times*, 'A New Political Mask', 21 Aug 2004, reviewing Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, *Thaksin: The Business of Politics in Thailand*, Bangkok: Silkworm Books, 2004.

¹²⁷ Glassman notes (p.59): "Neoliberals associate any policies that are not favored by the most powerful blocs of international capital not only with protectionism and economic nationalism but with political repression." Political repression is a serious concern under Thaksin – but not because of his economic policies.

¹²⁸ Hewison, 'The Politics of Neo-Liberalism', pp.2, 15. Connors also emphasizes the importance of local responses and strategies, stressing that "it is politics that shapes the nature of those processes associated with globalisation and its impact on the political form of the state" (Connors, 'Ideological Aspects', p.3).

¹²⁹ Helen E. S. Nesadurai, *Globalisation, Domestic Politics and Regionalism: The ASEAN Free Trade Area*, London: Routledge, 2003, pp.19, 25.

¹³⁰ Hobson, p.253.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, p.253.

¹³² *The Nation*, in 'Thaksinomics Is All the Rage', 5 Jan 2004, and 'What Goes Round Doesn't Always Come Round', 9 Jan 2004, criticizes Thaksin's policy but acknowledges it has created considerable interest. *India Times*, 'When Left Is Right for Investors', 19

May 2004, advises Indian policymakers that they have much to learn from Thaksin. See also Thaksin, 8 Sep 2003.

¹³³ Pasuk and Baker, 'Only Good Populist', p.12. Hewison comments that Thaksin's "new social contract" sets itself apart from conventional neoliberal wisdom by stressing "the protection of domestic capital by the remaining rich, while delivering increased social protection to the poor" (Hewison, 'The Politics of Neo-Liberalism', p.13).

¹³⁴ Connors, 'Ideological Aspects', pp.21-22.

¹³⁵ ibid., pp.21-22.

Chapter 4

Structural Change Theory: Political Globalization, Democratization, and Thailand

The structural approach looks to changing structures of class, state, or transnational power for explanations of the process of democratization. The focus of this chapter will be political globalization as a manifestation of transnational structural change.¹ It will consider contrasting claims: on the one hand, that the systemic changes brought about by political globalization favour the democratization process in Thailand; and on the other, that they hinder it.

Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai certainly seems convinced of the globalization-democratization link. Addressing the second ministerial conference of the Community of Democracies, he emphasizes:

We gather here with a common conviction that democracy is the most appropriate and effective system of governance in today's world of globalization. Globalization and the expansion of democracy are interconnected.... The modern world of international media through high information and communication technology helps bring about and spread the wave of democratic values from one country, one region, one continent and one ideology to another.²

But less sanguine interpretations are also possible. Anderson, for example, argues that

the leading state powers adhere to the limited and limiting form of liberal democracy. This peculiarly shallow form of national, territorial representation, and the almost non-existent democratisation of inter-state and transnational relations, suits their neo-liberal and profoundly undemocratic economic globalism.... Elevation of the liberal democratic state to hegemonic world norm is part of the "new imperialism".³

This chapter will discuss the question of where to locate Thailand between these two extremes. First, however, the nature of "political globalization" must be defined. What Shaw calls a "fundamental transition

towards a different world order" has been under way since the Second World War.⁴ It was from that point that the bonds of post-war Western interdependence and the political and economic institutions of a global liberal order began to be formed, providing "the framework for the increasingly global world which has emerged in the subsequent half-century".⁵ It was from that point that the Western state became a rather different entity – a "globalized" or "global-cum-national" state.⁶ Globalization, for this kind of state, is not so much a context in which the state operates as a new form that it takes.⁷ The emergence of the globalized state does not invalidate the nation-state, but it does transform its role.⁸

Because the Western state-bloc has over the decades consolidated its position as the "effective centre of worldwide state power", it affects the role of all states, even though many are relatively weakly integrated into "global-Western state institutions".⁹ Before the end of the Cold War, its values and strategic imperatives were projected mainly onto allies and satellites, among them Thailand. The end of the Cold War removed one category of strategic imperatives, and gave its values scope for worldwide projection.¹⁰ Throughout, the global state conglomerate promoted the three elements of security, development, and democracy. But the three legs form a rickety tripod. While security is usually the most firmly planted leg, democracy – the least controllable of the elements, and the one most likely to threaten the stability of the tripod – is the first leg to be dismantled in situations of stress.¹¹ The global state conglomerate need not be understood as purely imperialistic – on the one hand, a key aim for all states, globalized or otherwise, is self-preservation, and on the other, the combination of overwhelming power and ideals that resonate with many grassroots aspirations is unlikely to be able to hide its light under a bushel even if it wanted to. The post-Cold War liberal rights order can be understood only in a dual role, offering "evidence *both* for normative change *and* for the exercise of state power to foster its development in preferred directions". Its "assertion of power" is "mitigated by a desire to convince others willingly to subscribe to its precepts".¹²

Chai-Anan sees globalization as a key factor accelerating the gradual decline in the political power of the Thai military – "one of the major political forces determining the pace of democratization in Thailand".¹³ Unlike "Westernization" and "internationalization", he argues, globalization threatens the kind of "entrenched security-development state in which democratic transition failed to be effectively consolidated".¹⁴ Thus, globalization – "occurring under a New World Order which actively promotes human rights, democracy and environmental protection" – is seen as a major challenge to the power of established élites in general.¹⁵ Yet this view fails to recognize that globalization is the offspring of the same powerful forces that promoted Westernization, internationalization, and the Cold War discourses of security and development through which the Thai military gain increased power and political involvement in the first place.¹⁶ It is only the emphasis that is different – the source is the same.¹⁷

Nevertheless, much commentary tends toward cautiously positive evaluations of political globalization's effects on Thailand, and its broadly helpful contribution is viewed as at least partially counteracting the more negative economic aspects of the process:

The end of the cold war has led to the decline of dictatorship. The opening up of democratic politics has created more space for social agitation and political expression. The global discourse on topics such as rights, identity, and environmental protection has stimulated reactions within Thailand.¹⁸

Question marks are attached to many facets of this picture, however. On the one hand, the rise of the "modern state" and new forms of global power are also seen to cause conflict and dislocation, and on the other, the two aspects of globalization are hard to separate.¹⁹ Thus, "the combined impact of democratization, economic growth, and globalization creates contradictory results".²⁰

This thesis questions the extent to which the political aspects of globalization have been positive for democratization in Thailand. While the current geopolitical weight behind democratization has in some ways helped Thailand to move in a democratic direction, important downsides

seem evident from the type of democracy that is consolidating in Thailand. This argument is made over the course of four sections. The first section assesses the implications for democratization of the mutually constitutive and transformational relationship between globalization and the state, and categorizes these implications under the labels of integration, power, and homogenization. The subsequent sections situate Thailand in the context of these categories. Thus, the second section explores the extent to which Thailand is integrated in a politically globalizing world, concluding that neither the level nor the nature of its integration is likely to help its democratization process. The third section considers whether Thailand's response to the contemporary international power environment – which has put heavy emphasis on the norm of democracy – has helped or hindered its own democratic trajectory. While not denying the positive qualities of Thailand's traditional openness to change, this section argues that the "top-down" international pressure behind democracy has possibly exacerbated the élitist orientation of Thai politics, in a way that does not favour the building of a more participatory and equitable system. The fourth section addresses the closely related question of the type of democracy currently being promoted as a global norm, arguing that the power behind this version may have impeded the search for more indigenous Thai forms of democracy.

Structural change theory is essentially a long-term perspective, so conclusions must inevitably be tentative at this point. Nevertheless, an exploration of structural constraints and opportunities provides a context for the agential choices that will be examined in Chapter 5.

Globalization, the state, and democratization

If states reside in an "international/national vortex", the twin dimensions of which are constantly structured by mutual interaction, and if the state is both shaped by, and formative of, the process of globalization, then this

dynamic has important implications for the relationship between globalization and democracy.²¹ For a start, attempts to separate "outside" and "inside" seem less credible. Liberal democracy is "as much constituted from without as from within", and in the context of globalization, the "self-contained democratic state is an illusion".²² There is no longer any such thing, if there ever was, as "democratization in one country".²³

Additionally, the perspective that sees the democratic state as engulfed from without by globalization and forced into ignominious retreat is very much called into question. The problem, argues Clark, "is not that of fitting the existing off-the-peg democratic state into a changing external environment, but rather that of conceptualizing *the changed nature of the democratized state* in conditions of globalization".²⁴ Rather than globalization causing the end of the democratic state, it is the transformation of the nature of the democratic state that is an integral part of what is driving globalization, so what is occurring "outside" is as much a reflection of the internal restructuring of the state as vice versa.²⁵ If globalization is perceived less as a cause than as a symptom (albeit a symptom that arguably exacerbates the cause), and if democratic deficits are becoming more evident, at the level of the nation-state as well as above and below it, then searching questions are needed as to the kind of democracy that spawned this environment in the first place. It is just as possible to argue that the failures of domestic democracy have led to globalization as that globalization has led to the erosion of domestic democracy.²⁶

This interpretation raises a number of issues for Thailand's democratization process. Firstly, this process does not take place in a hermetically sealed space. On the one hand, this may constitute quite a challenge for states like Thailand that have not yet fully developed their democratic institutions and identity. On the other hand, heightened interconnection has the potential to strengthen the democratization process of such states by increasing their exposure to "new political

narratives ... which seek to reframe human activity and entrench it in law, rights and responsibilities that are worldwide in their reach and universal in their principles".²⁷ The worst of both worlds would be to be subject to international scrutiny and pressure without being knit into the kinds of global networks that might support democratizing polities. Yet this is precisely the position of many states, given the clear variation in the degree to which nation-states are integrated into a globalizing world. The "global revolution" – the two components of which Shaw defines as the development of distinctly global relations and forms of state power on the one hand, and the continuing democratic revolution on the other – is doubly unfinished. Not only is domestic democratic change only very partially accomplished, but globally legitimate, equitably accessible institutional frameworks and networks are also only weakly developed.²⁸ The Janus face of democratizing states like Thailand therefore stares inward and outward to twin construction sites.

Secondly, if the "democratized state" with its "changed nature" makes and is made by globalization, immediate questions are raised about the extent of the role that can be played by a democratizing state like Thailand. Clark admits that his discussion of state forms and state transformations is primarily applicable to those found in the industrialized "North". Globalization "is not divorced from the power structures associated with inter-state relations and, as such, the strong states of the North have thus far imposed the heavier imprint on it".²⁹ Therefore, democratizing states have to cope with major power disparities as they negotiate their place in a politically globalized world, and face complex choices in simultaneously brokering the outside power of the democracy-promoting global state conglomerate and the internal demands of their societies. Thus, even if integration is successfully achieved, it carries with it an inescapable power corollary:

International institutions are being extended, and they have a symbiotic relation with the major centre of state power, the increasingly internationalised Western conglomerate. The success of the global-democratic revolutionary wave depends first on how well it is consolidated in each national context – but

second, on how thoroughly it is embedded in international networks of power, at the centre of which, inescapably, is the West.³⁰

Thirdly, globalization is associated with democratization of a certain kind, and this raises its own complexities for democratizing states like Thailand. To the extent that the globalization process has promoted democracy, it has been the liberal version that has been encouraged.³¹ This is a bias that at the very least is open to the criticism of favouring a historically and culturally specific democratic mode that may not be suitable for more community-oriented societies. The charge has also been made that the process of globalization fosters a form of low-intensity democracy that is more attuned to providing "good governance" for the sake of international capital than a robust democratic environment for the sake of the electorate.³² This is not just a question of "democracy lite" for developing states. It also ties in with the issue of the precise manifestation of liberal democracy that is currently being modelled by the powerful Western states. If the "present-day ills of democracy" apparent in the West are viewed not as a consequence but rather as a description of the move from embedded liberal to neoliberal state – a move at least partially sanctioned by democratic electorates – then there are serious issues over the extent to which countries like Thailand should or can adopt the same democratic/economic package.³³ If the apparent erosion of democracy in the core democratic states is not the consequence of some exogenous force, but a "symptom of changing state-society relations at the heart of the democratic state itself", then to be constrained by the pressures of power and homogenization to adopt this kind of democracy is to imitate the interim result of an ongoing experiment – without the same ingredients, and without having gone through all the stages of the experiment itself.³⁴ This is the danger of some aspects of democracy promotion, whether direct or indirect – it tends to imply that a temporary and local recipe is the one universal blueprint for the ultimate end-product.³⁵

The remaining sections of this chapter will explore in greater detail the above three themes of integration, power, and homogenization, and assess their impact on Thailand.

Thailand, democracy, and integration

If Shaw is right to assert that the democratization of local states is inseparable from their integration into global networks, then Thailand is not in a favourable position.³⁶ In Li and Reuveny's study on globalization and democratization, the spread of democratic ideas, which they defined as the number of democracies within a region around each country, was the only indicator to promote democracy persistently over time.³⁷ This would offer no encouragement to Thailand. Its environment comprises states ranging from a small number of struggling democracies, through various shades of authoritarianism, all the way down to out-and-out dictatorship. If it is "undeniable" that "regional location matters", then Thailand is in the wrong neighbourhood.³⁸

Pevehouse's conclusion that international organizations with a higher democratic density are more likely to be associated with democratic transitions similarly has little to offer Thailand.³⁹ There is certainly no overwhelmingly democratic streak present in the organizations to which Thailand belongs.⁴⁰ Other studies find that states belonging to multilateral organizations without pro-democracy clauses, such as ASEAN, are the least likely to respond to challenges to democracy abroad. This result gains greater significance when juxtaposed with the strong correlation found by the same research between a country's support for democracy abroad and the level of its internal democratic development. These studies ranked Thailand as "fair" (and trending downward) in terms of "defending democracy".⁴¹

One picture that emerges from these studies is that Thailand is not particularly connected to the kinds of networks that might bolster its democratization process. Another interpretation, of course, is that Thailand is working in a regional environment that generates and sustains rather differing sets of norms, and it has to be creative in balancing its democratic identity with its regional role.⁴²

Do other linkages, then, help to offset Thailand's seemingly unpropitious democratic location and club membership? Apparently not, if the results of the 2004 Globalization Index are to be believed.⁴³ Thailand ranked 48 on a scale from 1 (most globalized) to 62 (least globalized). This position is boosted by the high economic globalization ranking (28), which in turn is disproportionately affected by a very high trade ranking (8).⁴⁴ Thailand's degree of political linkage is significantly lower, however. Here it ranks in 58th place, ahead only of Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Iran, and Taiwan.⁴⁵ It would be unwise to base any theories on such a snapshot, but it is interesting to note that the disparity between economic and political rankings is replicated throughout the ASEAN countries surveyed.⁴⁶

The Global Civil Society Yearbook paints a slightly different, but still less than hopeful, picture of Thailand, based on three key "drivers" of globalization: economic globalization, global civil society, and the international rule of law. Their maps give Thailand a rating ranging from low through medium to high (depending on area) in terms of extensity and intensity of global civil society, measured by density of INGO presence. The country is rated low in terms of economic globalization (measured by outgoing FDI) and low in terms of international rule of law (measured by treaty ratifications and absence of reported human rights violations). The combined scores gave Thailand a ranking ranging from high (in the Bangkok area) to low medium (elsewhere). However, there is marked incongruence among the three "drivers". Such incongruent relations are seemingly typical of the middle range of the globalization ranking (neither highly globalized nor non-globalized). This category covers the largest geographical area and most of the world's population,

and the authors caution that it is "in these middle-ranking countries, where the relationship among drivers is most incongruent, that our understanding of globalisation generally is perhaps the weakest".⁴⁷

Nevertheless, "global imperatives" have played an important role in the transformation of the Thai state.⁴⁸ In support of his contention that liberalism continues to make significant ideological advances in Thailand, Connors notes "manifestations of the new emergent liberal hegemony" in several important areas.⁴⁹ All these areas reflect awareness of, and attempts to face up to, a global era. The reconceptualizing of security, for example, is based on "a recognition that a new international order has emerged which requires the regulation of human rights in a manner that transcends national sovereignty".⁵⁰ Changes in official discourse thus reflect an element of "the ideological transformation of the state, and its penetration by reformers both domestic and international".⁵¹ So Thailand certainly seems to be absorbing something from the international atmosphere (in conjunction with domestic demands), even if the formal linkages are not dense. The pervasiveness of such norms seem to reflect something of the "Zeitgeist" model, the view that it is "increasingly difficult for a country to remain immune to globalization influences, including those of a political nature such as the latest wave of democratization".⁵² A "gatekeeper state" like Thailand might be considered to be particularly susceptible to such influences. After all, "global culture" may play a powerful role in socializing state-builders and élites into a particular set of democratically oriented norms, but it is still far from inevitable that states succumb to such pressure.⁵³ The deciding factor, it is argued, is the nature of the articulation between state-society units and global culture, and in Thailand's case, this articulation is open and thus receptive to democracy.⁵⁴

Significantly, Connors emphasizes the current disjuncture between two levels of governance – between the political sphere occupied by Thaksin, and the different spheres of state-society relations occupied by certain state agencies.⁵⁵ Thus, on one level, Thaksin may be "successfully

attacking substantive elements of the reform project", while on another, "the state is penetrated by international reformist discourses and projects".⁵⁶ Connors suggests various trajectories this disjuncture could take: coexistence; liberal retreat, if an authoritarian regime "effectively reshapes the state and its relationship with international agencies of development"; or liberal advance, as "larger and more structural forces" continue to work to bring about a liberalization of the Thai state.⁵⁷

This suggests something of a "bottom-up" dispersal of liberal ideals, powerful even in face of an administration with a tendency toward authoritarianism. But there are other, differently nuanced, "top-down" interpretations. One is that

neither the officials of the state, nor most of Thailand's politicians can really be described as liberal. However, structurally, they are forced to pursue liberal projects in specific areas as required by the needs of capitalism, both domestic and international.⁵⁸

Thus, particular agencies of the state are vulnerable to the discourse of bodies such as the World Bank and development agencies, and "the iteration of these discourses reflects the linkages existent between agencies and these organizations". These discourses may well focus less on the creation of "ideal liberal societies" than on "disciplining concepts to bring about change in the conduct of people and institutions that would benefit the advance of market societies".⁵⁹ This interpretation will be re-examined in the next section.

Whatever the slant, however, it is clear that the transnational plays a significant part. Ultimately, Connors argues, "the trajectory of regime form in Thailand is highly contingent not only on the play of politics in the years to come, but also on the nature of global economic and political developments".⁶⁰

It can be seen from the foregoing that expectations of democratization via global political integration need considerable modification in Thailand's case. Firstly, potentially beneficial linkages are limited by the very patchy

picture of contemporary world globalization. Indeed, the argument becomes somewhat circular at this point: to derive democratic benefits from integration, a state needs to be integrated, and the will for greater and more proactive integration needs to come in part from a desire to be identified with the "new political narratives" generated by the democratic world. This leads on to the second modification. It may indeed be increasingly difficult for a country to remain immune to the "global hegemonic 'Zeitgeist'", but as indicated by Connors, there are many questions surrounding the precise nature of its influence.⁶¹ Even if it is true that there is "an almost universal wish to imitate a way of life associated with the liberal capitalist democracies" – and this is surely very debatable – considerable doubt surrounds the ultimate advisability of emulating such a model.⁶² At issue are the implications of the Zeitgeist's origins in the world's most globalized, most wealthy, and most powerful states, and the quality of the liberalization and democracy it contributes to instilling. The following sections will examine these questions in turn.

Thailand, democracy, and global power

Underlying much of the discussion linking democratization and globalization is a kind of schism. On the one hand, there is a perception of a universal, "bottom-up" groundswell of desire for justice, prosperity, and a greater measure of liberty and self-determination.⁶³ After all, far from being culturally specific, democracy has fairly convincingly demonstrated that it offers solutions for political yearnings that seem global in scope.⁶⁴ Thus, it is hard to question the underlying desirability and "rightness" of democratic aspirations, and of efforts, whether by masses or élites, to realize them. Shaw is therefore right to caution against the "enormous condescension" of equating the worldwide democratic revolution with the "inexorable triumph" of Western or American values, and thus undervaluing the countless lives sacrificed by citizens in the struggle for democracy.⁶⁵ Shaw's equivalent of the

"Zeitgeist", then, is a more grassroots affair, combining a growing awareness of the common fragility of human existence, and "the sense of common values that informs global consciousness and institutions", so that wherever people seek democratic change, "they appeal concretely to universal standards and institutions".⁶⁶

On the other hand, however, commentary on the democratization-globalization nexus also contains a substantial acknowledgement of the weight of geopolitics. Shaw urges democrats to make the most of "the new, partial congruence between Western state interests and worldwide democratic movements".⁶⁷ Nevertheless, even he concedes that there are imperial and neocolonial echoes in the new globalism.⁶⁸ In all too many ways, the global state conglomerate is "the Western state writ large", with democratic change being seen by many polities as "a means of admission to and recognition by the new Western-dominated global world order".⁶⁹ The "top-down" side of the democratization equation, therefore, presents an undeniably murkier picture – suffused with overtones of new "standards of civilization" that bind others into networks and systems not of their own making, and marred by a willingness to make exceptions to the democratic ideal when politically convenient.⁷⁰

Elements of this same underlying divide are discernible in many descriptions of democracy and its external environment. Thus, democracy is seen both as a social or revolutionary movement and as an institutional form.⁷¹ "Societal democracy" is contrasted with formal institutional democracy, and "popular democracy" with "polyarchy".⁷² Consensual solidarism (the spontaneous consolidation of normative attitudes) as an account of the external drivers of democratization is likewise differentiated from coercive solidarism (the imposition of values through hegemonic power).⁷³ Similarly, the post-Cold War order encompasses both a "regulative" dimension, impelled by ideas of legitimacy, consensus, and acquiescence, and a "distributive" dimension, driven by themes of power, exaction, imposition, and enforcement.⁷⁴ Even the "softer" side has two faces: "The regulative peace is itself a subtle

blend of power and legitimacy. While seeking to found itself upon the latter, it is very far from divorced from the former."⁷⁵

Because of this bottom-up and top-down dichotomy, there is sometimes a tendency to see global civil society – upholding the largely transnational, informal, participatory democratic tradition – as the wholly "good" champion of the former, and Western democratic governments – upholding the mainly national, formal, representative democratic tradition – as the predominantly "bad" imposer of the latter.⁷⁶ Indeed, civil society and its global counterpart are sometimes seen as crucial elements in the interface between democratization and globalization. Thai civil society activism expanded in several arenas during the 1990s, and although Ukrist is keen to stress that this trend was driven by "internal dynamics", and not "the spread of democratic values from outside", the cross-fertilization of local and global civil society in the Thai case seems open to a range of interpretations.⁷⁷ However, civil society, global or local, is hardly the panacea for democratization that has sometimes been suggested.⁷⁸ Firstly, these arenas are themselves by no means free of the power imbalances that plague the rest of international society.⁷⁹ Secondly, even a strengthened civil society in Thailand is still "institutionally weak" in the face of the established forces of capital and bureaucracy.⁸⁰ Thirdly, there is always the possibility of the cooption of civil society agendas by the state.⁸¹ Fourthly, civil society movements can unconsciously play into the hands of the neoliberal "small state" agenda, and the presupposition that the main area of political conflict is between the state and non-state groups in society means that the issue of class and differences of power between classes is sidelined.⁸² Neither is the "good civil society/bad state" dichotomy convincing. For a start, both these categories are incomplete: informal participatory democracy lacks representative mechanisms, and formal representative democracy increasingly lacks inclusiveness and legitimacy.⁸³ Additionally, it is excessively cynical to reduce the democratization project of Western states to a scenario whereby the "dominant sections of capital worldwide have found that a system of liberal democratic states ... provides the

'best shell' for corporate globalism".⁸⁴ While there might be much that is true in this assessment, it provides too deterministic an account of the post-Second World War and post-Cold War orders and the complex motivations behind the construction of the world's normative and institutional architecture.⁸⁵

The inextricable entanglement of these two strands – the people-backed and the power-backed – profoundly complicates any assessment of the pro-democratization potential of transnational structural change. Power distorts relationships, and the power disparities in the international arena – even when efforts are ostensibly made to aid "bottom-up" development – have the capacity to dramatically skew the democratization environment. The state has been described as a "bidirectional valve" controlling the interface between internal and external, responding to whichever pressure is greater, and releasing it from one to the other arena.⁸⁶ Democratizing states, however, have to carry out this two-way regulatory task on the level both of the demands of the "revolutionary" sphere (at home and abroad) and those of the "power-backed" sphere (home-grown and international). At a time when they are still struggling to establish their own democratic identity, develop a democratic mentality, and maintain a functioning economy, this is often a major challenge. This section will argue that Thailand has historically proved adept at coping with "top-down" international pressure – after all, "Thais have been globalizing for centuries".⁸⁷ However, it has proved less nimble in mediating between the differing "layers" of democratic aspiration and accommodating the "bottom-up" element. This imbalance may ultimately impact on the quality of its democratization process.

Thailand's previous experience of "globalizing" waves of top-down pressure includes accommodation with Western powers in the 19th century and the country's inclusion in US Cold War strategy and economic tutelage in the late 1950s.⁸⁸ As a "gatekeeper state", it chose pre-emptive appropriation as the best way of navigating the dilemmas posed. Thus,

To avoid the colonial fate that had befallen their neighbours, Siam's perceptive leaders, particularly King Mongkut and his son Chulalongkorn, deliberately sought to "civilize" their country according to the requirements of the standard of "civilization".... Shrewdly realizing that treaty relations with the European powers were inevitable, Mongkut sought to strengthen Siam's otherwise weak position by entering such relations peacefully and in a spirit of voluntary accommodation.⁸⁹

This same pattern – the adoption of political models ascendant in global culture – has been discerned in later political upheavals, with the establishment of a quasi-fascist regime in the 1930s and 1940s, an authoritarian developmentalist state in the 1950s and 1960s, and increasingly democratic modes of government in the 1980s and 1990s.⁹⁰ This malleability partly reflects a cultural preference to "draw water at high tide", and "not set your boat against the current".⁹¹ Lynch, however, also points to crucial moves by Kings Mongkut and Chulalongkorn to re-evaluate the nature of Thai Buddhism, a central plank of Thai identity, in order to enable it to embrace, rather than resist, modernity.⁹² The attitude seems to be that if you are going to have to have something, because this something is global, modern, and more powerful than you, then you may as well not only have it but also *want* it.

This stance, while in many ways admirable, has two difficult corollaries. One is "cultural schizophrenia". The modern version of this condition is induced by "the desire to be Thai amidst the un-Thai exigencies of globalization".⁹³ But this has been a long-standing dilemma in Thailand's interaction with outside culture. Lynch concedes that "gatekeeping certainly includes a degree of management of national identity and active filtering of miscellaneous aspects of global culture deemed undesirable", but the precise boundaries to be drawn have often proved slightly problematic in Thailand.⁹⁴ A "shadowy realm of imaginary Thainess" has arisen from state attempts to maintain and reassert an official voice in an increasingly fluid and complex society and culture.⁹⁵ Cultural schizophrenia may very well impede and complicate the formation of a truly democratic Thai identity.

The second, more serious, difficulty is that this road to change is very much a "top-down" encounter. Even though democratic "agents of socialization" need not be states – they may be INGOs, journalists, labour activists, and so on – the flow is still largely from the area with more power to the area with less power. In that area of less power, those most likely to form the interface with the external environment are the élites, whose education and wealth put them in the best position to detect the way the "global culture" wind is blowing, and turn it to their own advantage. Thus, the influences of top-down democratization – following on from many other top-down movements – play to, and almost certainly reinforce, the powerful role of the élite in Thai politics. Just as monarchs, through contact with the West, paved the way for Thailand to become a modern, "civilized" state, so Western-educated élites hastened the advent of constitutional monarchy in 1932.⁹⁶ From then on, argues McCargo, Thai élites have at different times successfully traded in the three "currencies" of security, economic development, and political participation in order to legitimize their rule and preserve their power.⁹⁷ But the value of these currencies at any given time, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, depends largely on the priorities of their powerful global guarantors, and even when democracy is the dominant norm, the type that fits best – that best gives the security-development-democracy tripod a semblance of stability – is élite-managed. This is because security and economic development are usually underwritten domestically by powerful factions – those who have the most to lose and the least to gain by challenging the status quo either at home or abroad. Therefore, it is almost inevitable that top-down solutions will be weighted toward favouring élites. They have an inbuilt stake in each other's survival.⁹⁸

Thailand's élites were soon powerfully abetted by the middle class. A substantial US presence during the 1950s and 1960s, coupled with US-influenced economic development and educational expansion, played a key part in the constitution of the Thai middle class, which gradually consolidated a conviction that "the masses could not be trusted", and "only an educated middle class could sustain democracy".⁹⁹ The

prevailing view of politics was that it did not involve any substantial transfer of power downwards.¹⁰⁰ This is not to say that middle-class ideology was monolithic at this time. Indeed, the profiles of its component parts to some extent mirror the top-down/bottom-up schism described above. While the pervasive and mainstream theme of middle-class thought was an acceptance of Cold War ideology and US aid, combined with a fear of the masses, there also existed a sub-theme of dissatisfaction with US influence and openness to mass action.¹⁰¹ After the temporary success of the 1973 mass-based uprising, the two sets of middle-class attitudes began to diverge quite rapidly, however, and the more radical theme was marginalized after the 1976 demonstrations.¹⁰² By the 1980s, the dominant narrative of what it meant to be middle class had solidified, with the outward signs of consumerism, modernity, and Westernization forming one half of the package, and the core value of democracy the other.¹⁰³ In a variant of modernization theory, it was understood that the middle class would eventually bring about civil society, a prerequisite of democracy.¹⁰⁴ The lower classes, by contrast – whose lack of education supposedly made them unable to understand the principles of democracy, and whose vote-selling proclivities threatened to turn it into "the rule of the corrupt and the incompetent" – continued to engender anger and suspicion.¹⁰⁵ Throughout, the "external" narrative was in line with the top-down view, communicated via an evolving cast of élites and middle classes adept at manipulating the prevailing nuances of the global discourse in the interests of gaining and/or retaining power and influence.¹⁰⁶ The relevant "global culture" imperative thus gradually mutated from anti-communism, development economics, and modernization theory to incipient neoliberalism, deregulation, and liberal democracy, but in none of its guises was it likely to do other than boost the power of the already influential.

When debate on the need for major political reform emerged in 1992-94, the two most prominent reform agendas again carried overtones of the top-down/bottom-up rift. As noted in Chapter 2, an "establishment coalition" wanted to shore up the bureaucratic polity while an "activist

"coalition" wanted a charter of rights and an array of reforms shifting power from the state to the individual.¹⁰⁷ Although both these threads were represented in the 1997 constitution, this document was still largely an "élite-led affair", with NGOs seen as performing a legitimizing function, and the label "people's constitution" mainly rhetoric.¹⁰⁸ Ultimately, the constitution directly reengineered the parliament to ensure an urban bias.¹⁰⁹ The reform alliance that came together over the constitution issue also fell apart over the pace and extent of reform once it was passed. While the conservatives wanted a stronger state and the status quo, the liberals wanted greater power for individuals and communities, and "their further reform efforts would be directed towards strengthening civil society organizations rather than reforming bureaucracy and politics".¹¹⁰ It seems clear that the "conservative reformers" were the victors in this round, a result no doubt welcomed by influential sectors of the international community keen to make Thailand safe for investment again, but not so interested in empowering its poor.¹¹¹

Indictments of the stultifying effects of élite dominance punctuate accounts of Thai democracy. "Without active popular participation from below," it is argued, "substantive democracy will have no chance to materialize", and if the poor are not fully included in the democratic system, "democracy in Thailand will be nothing more than a charade".¹¹² No doubt it would be going too far to argue that the power of international democratic norms always strengthens a trend towards élite democracy. But it seems very likely that it has done so in the Thai case. Lynch describes Thailand as a "gatekeeper state whose élites have always been adept at harmonizing the imagined Thai essence with the constitutive norms of global society".¹¹³ Those élites have also been adept at harmonizing those norms with their own interests. Until it is possible for global culture to communicate in a bottom-up way – a very tall order even for non-state actors, given the disparities of power involved – the interface between the geopolitically weighted global norm of democracy and the democratic aspirations of local populaces is likely to continue to be states and élites, rather than societies and poor people.¹¹⁴

Somchai's remarks about Thai democracy find application in the wider world too. He stresses that arguments against top-down democratization certainly do not mean that all initiatives from above are useless, but he goes on to argue:

Manoeuvres from above can play only a supporting role to endeavours from below. If we make top-down efforts into the most important mechanisms for democratization, our democratic struggle will rest on fragile foundations. In sum, both forms of democratic effort are desirable, but with the right priority given to grassroots efforts.¹¹⁵

At a global level, because of power disparities and restrictive agendas, it is very difficult indeed to give the right priority to allowing space for grassroots efforts to grow.

If global power imbalances have already ensured that the democratic means of communication are biased toward those who are already powerful, then the effects become all the more pronounced if the message itself contributes primarily toward the maintenance of the status quo. This is the area that will be examined in the following section.

Thailand, democracy, and homogenization

If we agree that the rather narrow form of liberal democracy generally represented in top-down globalized norms neither arrived by parthenogenesis nor is wholly the result of a planet-wide capitalist plot, but rather is a product of the mutually constituting interaction of the globalization process and the state, then we have to look for the germs of this cut-down version within the fabric of the established democracies themselves. If we do not like the kind of liberal democracy advocated by global norms (one that does little to tackle inequality or include the marginalized, and stops above and below the level of the nation-state), then we need to re-examine the kind of democracy prevalent in the industrialized West – where voters display little will to address inequality, marginalization, and disempowerment, and responsibility stops with the

casting of a ballot. In this light, an "almost universal wish to imitate a way of life associated with the liberal capitalist democracies" would seem little short of a tragedy.¹¹⁶

As far as Thailand is concerned, there are two key questions that arise from this critical perspective. The first follows directly from concerns about the "thinness" of the currently prevalent version of liberal democracy, which patently is not functioning adequately. The second concerns the cultural relevance of the liberal democratic model, even if it were functioning adequately.

At issue firstly, then, is the low intensity of the current liberal democratic model. At its most reduced, this takes the form of "good governance". Indeed, Thede contends that "the concept of democratic development is progressively being replaced by that of 'good governance'", a trend that "represents an attempt to depoliticize democracy by reducing it to a question of management of power and resources".¹¹⁷ This process effectively redefines political space, and locks in a specific model of state-market relations, with "good governance" defining what is "necessary for an efficient market-driven economy".¹¹⁸ The whole approach "envision[s] 'democracy' as a well-oiled machine producing tangible results, rather than recognizing the fact that democracy is about debate, dissent, building compromises, broadening participation and even confrontation".¹¹⁹ Pasuk agrees that good governance is primarily concerned with better legal frameworks, transparency, and accountability. Those who advocate it, she argues, see it as a "top-down exercise", and "do not want to touch on the issue of political reform".¹²⁰ Thus, good governance is seen as relevant only to *part* of Thai society – the private corporate sector – while remaining essentially irrelevant to the most pressing concerns of the agricultural sector, composed mainly of small-scale farmers.¹²¹ While Thai definitions of good governance tend to be broader than their World Bank equivalents, sceptics argue that their common point is still that "the reforms necessary for 'good governance' should be carried out by the élite".¹²² Indeed, even Thai civil society

"appears to have been domesticated as an integral part of the 'good governance' movement.... Far from being a vanguard, civil society is firmly within the mainstream of conventional political discourse."¹²³

Good governance, whether in the international or the Thai sense, is weighted toward the status quo – and thus the élite – in a way that undermines many of the hopes vested in democracy. As the previous section of this chapter argued, this is a risky encouragement of trends already all too prevalent in Thai politics. If powerful global democratic norms are communicated primarily via élites, and the message contained in these norms is that society can be cleaned up and made more efficient, but need not be restructured, then potentially destabilizing social disparities are likely to remain unaddressed.¹²⁴

The second question, on cultural relevance, concerns a misplaced assumption of homogenization to which the "traditional liberal ideal of a world in which liberal rights and freedoms are enjoyed by all" can contribute.¹²⁵ Given the "global hegemony of the liberal democratic state", the contemporary version of this ideal involves "a very particular – and from a local viewpoint, not necessarily appropriate – form of individualized democracy".¹²⁶ Thus, "rather than democratization fitting specific geographical-historical contexts, societies are forced to adapt to 'universal' (i.e. Western) norms".¹²⁷ Thailand, as discussed, was not exactly "forced", but still, the question of appropriateness remains. It is true that potentially homogenizing forces are absorbed into specific political and cultural economies, and end up "heterogenized through infinite and contingent processes of indigenization", and to that extent, every version of democracy is *sui generis*.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, Helgesen's observations of South Korea make it clear that "imported democracy" – partly, surely, because of the prestige and power associated with it – can hold considerable intellectual sway even as it fails to engage with the deeper levels of the culture.¹²⁹

A study of two Thai NGOs, the Campaign for Popular Democracy and the Assembly of the Poor, finds that they have resisted such homogenization by constructing definitions of democracy that take into account cultural specificities. They have not, then, succumbed to the "top-down' adoption of external views".¹³⁰ However, Western discourses endorsing "a normative notion of liberal democracy" were found to have heavily influenced the Thai Government, as well as the governments of the Philippines and Indonesia, so that the conclusion reached by the study in question – which rejected the "suggestion that a globalisation of liberal definitions has taken place" – has to be highly qualified.¹³¹

Helgesen's study detects a mismatch between imported liberal democratic norms and the community- and family-oriented values that lie at the heart of Korean culture.¹³² In seeking to establish a well-functioning political system, it is essential, he argues, to consider the links between politics and culture, and "implicit in this view is that liberal democracy as a universally applicable political model has no future".¹³³ Something of a mismatch is also discernible from studies of Thai perceptions. The adversarial nature of Western models, for example, may not be appropriate in a culture with an aversion to conflict.¹³⁴ It is hard to separate democracy from contention, since an inevitably contested redistribution of power is part of its essence, but it is reasonable to suppose that indigenous mechanisms may be adopted for dealing with such contention. In another mismatch between global expectations and Thai attitudes, studies showed a comparatively low level of trust in NGOs and newspapers. This may indicate that Thais do not like contradiction with the government, and fear the prospect of violence.¹³⁵ Thus, "what some observers might regard as a wonderfully open and critical press may be looked upon as a rancorous intrusion into an otherwise complacent society".¹³⁶ Input from all levels of Thai society, then, not just from Western-influenced élites, is needed to work out parameters for free speech. Again, Thais seem to have comparatively low levels of "social capital", a "bottom-up phenomenon" arising from social connections based on "trust, mutual reciprocity and norms of action".¹³⁷ If trust is "an

essential element of healthy democracies", then it is interesting that Thais have a lower level of trust in individuals than do Americans, Swedes, or Australians. By comparison, trust in most institutions is high.¹³⁸ All these discrepancies – especially given the high overall levels of support for democracy documented by the same studies – may indicate not so much that Thailand is simply moving along the road but has not arrived at the "destination", as that fundamental cultural-political disparities have arisen because of the adoption of an essentially foreign model. This is clearly a much harder problem to fix, and one with which the global community – often applying oversimplified measurements of democracy and democratic backsliding – has little sympathy.

It is often observed or implied that Western-style democracy rests on inadequate foundations in Thailand.¹³⁹ Thus, there are said to be difficulties with accepting the principle of the sovereignty of the people, or an "active sense of civic responsibility and common ownership amongst the citizens" is judged to still be missing "after seven decades of supposed democratic development".¹⁴⁰ Loyalty to family or a specific peer-group is said to be so strong in Thailand that it "at times runs contrary to public interests".¹⁴¹ All the more reason then for finding a version of democracy that grows out of the available foundations rather than perches awkwardly on top of them. Thai culture is not lacking in indigenous precursors to democracy. Ockey argues, for example, that traditional village culture included important elements of organizational participation.¹⁴² Similarly, a Thai social critic advises that the achievement of economic, political, and social justice depends on adhering to the home-grown principle of *santi prachadhamma*, or peaceful social righteousness.¹⁴³ He urges:

We ... must re-examine our cultural heritage and learn from the wisdom of our forefathers as well as reassess the influence of the Western-dominated body of world knowledge. We must proudly declare independence from the mainstream Western ideas while acknowledging their positive and real contributions to the world. We must learn from our Buddhist roots.... We must try to understand the structure of social injustice in order to find ways to destroy it for the benefit of our downtrodden fellow citizens.

Indigenous principles may also provide the best approach to Thailand's often puzzlingly cavalier attitude to human rights. Very high levels of public support were expressed for Thaksin's highly controversial 2003 crackdown on drugs, for example, and 48 per cent of respondents in a 2004 poll said that police could legitimately use force to obtain confessions, while only 7 per cent disagreed.¹⁴⁴ Even if it is true that "an autocratic culture is so deeply rooted that it is impeding progress on human rights", then starting from alien liberal principles may not be the best way forward on either issue.¹⁴⁵ A Thai report on human rights suggested, for example, approaching human rights from the perspective of the traditional Thai values of *namjai* and *mettatham*, generosity and kindness.¹⁴⁶ More international attention to issues of poverty might also help. A commentator in *The Nation* points out that it is often the poor who suffer most from the drug trade and its links to violent crime, and their rights are substantially violated as they lose access to livelihood and education. He continues:

But advocates of human rights paid no attention to this. Instead they focused on the violations of the human rights of those targeted on the government's blacklists.... Perhaps it was not surprising that the mass of people thought human-rights idealists had got their priorities wrong.¹⁴⁷

Informal, bottom-up movements have the capacity to wield great influence in the area of cultural relevance. Pasuk, for example, contends that the leading roles often taken by women in Thai popular movements represent a reassertion of traditional female power in the face of the "extreme male bias" that developed in formal politics through the importation of Western bureaucratic and political models.¹⁴⁸ But these moves can be endangered by too much steamrolling Western influence – however committed and respectful the INGOs it comes from.

Considerations of culturally appropriate political forms beg the question as to whether the ingrained élitism that was seen as so unhelpful to Thai democracy in the last section is in fact what the majority of Thais want. Do the preferences of ordinary Thais in fact coalesce with the "top-down" models of the global environment, leaving "bottom-up" Thai activists out

on a limb? Thai social structures, after all, are markedly hierarchical.¹⁴⁹ Explorations of trust patterns similarly reveal a relatively high degree of trust in government institutions, which may be presumed to be élite-weighted.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, despite "years of military rule and the massacres of civilians in 1976 and 1991", the military is one of the most trusted instruments of government.¹⁵¹ Similarly, higher levels of trust were expressed in the civil service than in parliament, possibly harking back to a history characterized by a "deeply rooted bureaucratic polity".¹⁵² Studies on political participation indicated that only 2.3 per cent of Thais described themselves as "activists", maintaining a "high" level of participation, while 50.4 per cent described themselves as political "onlookers", who are presumably content to let the élite lead.¹⁵³ The same studies found that the more Thais trust institutions, the less they participate in politics.¹⁵⁴

Interestingly, however, there is a parallel finding here: the more people support democracy, the less they trust institutions.¹⁵⁵ This, coupled with the success of mass-based agitation at various points in the recent past, suggests that although a truly Thai form of democracy may carry out a different, possibly more deferential, accommodating, and cooperative form of dialogue with élites, nevertheless, once experienced, greater ownership of political power might not seem unattractive. Hopeful signs of greater political freedom have been noted at the local level, for example, as rural people exhibit less willingness to "act like the paradigm of a democratic citizen".¹⁵⁶ Indications of attitudinal change are also apparent among slum dwellers, "who are beginning to believe that the government belongs to them and that they have a right to make demands of it".¹⁵⁷ After all, "democracy is learned and utilized quickly when the political opportunity structure allows it and the threat of eviction requires it".¹⁵⁸ Thai deference to superiors is also bound up with an expectation that these superiors will meet their obligations toward their inferiors. Democracy can provide mechanisms to make sure these obligations are discharged, in the political field at least, thus in effect supporting rather than countering hierarchical cultural norms. It seems, therefore, that lower-class

empowerment is hindered more by middle-class and governmental ideas than by the preferences of the lower classes themselves.¹⁵⁹ As long as the middle class continues to believe that it is modernization and its own assimilation of Western democratic ideas that bring about democracy, then it will continue to maximize middle-class participation in democratic government and minimize that of the lower classes – at least until they are sufficiently "educated" to handle their democratic responsibilities.¹⁶⁰ If, on the other hand, it is accepted that "there are indigenous patterns of participation already present, then the primary task is to discover a way to integrate those traditions"; in this case, "broad-based participation is to be encouraged and effectively channeled into democratic institutions".¹⁶¹ The global weight behind a particular version of democracy, however, does not make the latter option easy.

An indigenous form of democracy certainly need not equate with the cut-down versions of some "Asian values" proponents. On the contrary, there is much in Thailand's experience – localist discourse, for example, as well as "socially engaged Buddhism" – that could help to deepen and broaden global democratic thinking.¹⁶² Some strands of localism have their own "tendency to élitist prescriptions" to grapple with, but their questioning stance toward Western ideas may help to balance an overemphasis on "gatekeeper" permeability to global culture that may be impeding the search for home-grown versions of democracy and the development of a unique and democratic Thai identity.¹⁶³

Conclusions

The case of Thailand thus challenges both the claim that the transnational structural change evidenced by globalization supports democratization and the counterclaim that such change hinders it. As with economic globalization, the situation is much more complex. All things being equal, the top-down global norm of democracy would mesh with the

bottom-up democratic aspirations of the nations to create a deep-rooted global synergy. But all things are not equal. The powerful democratic states of the world play a disproportionately large role in shaping the global environment in their image. This can have several effects. Vulnerable states can be coerced into an unconvincing democratization through various conditions and incentives.¹⁶⁴ "Guardian states" may resist even more fiercely – resisting, in fact, not democratization *per se*, but a perceived threat to an imagined national essence.¹⁶⁵ "Gatekeeper states", such as Thailand, may draw on historically and culturally influenced techniques to adapt to global norms at the expense of developing their own patterns. Whatever the categorization, however, the playing field is not level. States constitute globalization just as globalization constitutes states, but power disparities mean that the less established democracies are more likely to be reactive than proactive. Thus the structure in which younger, poorer, less democratically mature states operate is one that is created in large part by and for the more powerful agents on the world scene. This process need not be motivated by any overtly imperialistic ambitions – it is simply a function of the attribute of power, which states are notoriously reluctant to give away.

These challenges affect Thailand's democratization process in several ways. General interconnectedness makes the country accessible to a number of liberalizing influences, which may continue to develop even in face of a more authoritarian government. Ironically, given the problem of power disparities, Thailand's uneven level of more formal integration means it is not always present in the very arenas where these disparities may best be moderated and negotiated, namely, institutions, international law, formal treaties, and specific commitments. This comparative lack of political connectedness also hinders its ability to shape globalization through these channels. The real but nebulous liberal influence that Connors charts reflects a general tradition of Thai openness to powerful norms, despite the power imbalances involved. At issue here, however, are the motives, means, and alliances associated with the extension of this essentially unaccountable influence, and the precise form of

democracy it conveys. Too ready an openness to global culture, although apparently favourable to democracy in the short term, may be depriving Thais of the opportunity to develop a bottom-up, mass-inclusive, participatory democracy, with indigenous forms more suited to their culture and values. It is ironic that an international climate supposedly conducive as never before to the global spread of democracy may prove to be betraying those who, over decades, have risked life and liberty to fight for Thai democracy.

Globalization encourages a certain kind of democratization "not as some incidental side-effect, but as an essential expression of globalization itself".¹⁶⁶ But globalization is what states make of it.¹⁶⁷ It is in the best interests of democracy, security, and all states to make sure that all states have more voice in the construction of globalization, and hence in the nature of democratization.

Endnotes to Chapter 4

¹ For a case study of various aspects of structural change that have affected democratization, see David Potter, 'Democratization', pp.228-237. Here Potter identifies changes in class power, state power, and geopolitical power as relevant to democratization. In the third category, he includes the easing of international tension, a "wave" of democratization elsewhere, including the impact of the fall of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, and the forms of democratic conditionality that had begun to figure prominently in the 1980s in the "advice" of intergovernmental organizations and so on. Other major aspects of transnational structural change are, of course, war and decolonization. See, for example, Schmitter, 'The Influence', pp.35-36.

² Surakiart, 11 Nov 2002.

³ James Anderson, 'Questions of Democracy', p.34.

⁴ Shaw, 'The State of International Relations'.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Shaw's expression "global state conglomerate" is arguably a better designation than "global-cum-national state", which is clumsy, or "global state", which is easy to confuse with ideas of a universal world state. Shaw ('The State of International Relations') points out that global state conglomerate is not a monolith. It does not function as a simple international actor, but "as a cumbersome mass of competing bureaucracies". On its development, he notes that the Western state began to be consolidated in the late 1940s with the formation of NATO. State leaders gradually developed a raft of integrated state institutions incorporating "not only the USA, UK, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada, but in varying degrees the states of the British Commonwealth and non-Communist Europe". Although the Western state often seemed to be defined by its conflict with the Soviet Union, from the beginning it involved other sorts of common projects: European reconstruction, European economic integration, a liberal world economic order, economic management, integration of post-colonial states into the world order, and the development of a wide range of institutions and regimes for the management of economic and social relations.

⁷ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.7. Rather than seeing globalization and the state as two distinct fields, Clark views the "globalized state" as a single unit of analysis.

⁸ Shaw, 'The State of International Relations'.

⁹ *ibid.*; Shaw, 'Democracy and Peace'. In 'The State of International Relations', Shaw suggests three rough bandings of states: those that are thoroughly integrated into global-Western state institutions; those which have substantial cohesion as nation-states but are relatively weakly integrated; and those that lack even cohesion at a national level.

¹⁰ Shaw ('The State of International Relations') highlights the power of the conglomerate's "consensual international structures", and argues that the Soviet bloc's ultimate failure derived partly from its inability to develop an equivalent, in which bloc allies could be viably represented. See also Ikenberry, 'The Myth'; and Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation*, pp.176-179.

¹¹ See Berger, pp.89-90. This ordering of priorities is most notable during the most strained period of the Cold War, and has again come to the fore in the "war on terror".

¹² Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order*, p.223.

¹³ Chai-Anan Samudavanija, 'Old Soldiers Never Die, They Are Just Bypassed: The Military, Bureaucracy, and Globalisation', in *Political Change in Thailand: Democracy and Participation*, Kevin Hewison (ed.), London: Routledge, 1997, p.54; McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', pp.52-53.

¹⁴ Chai-Anan, 'Old Soldiers', p.54.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.51. Chai-Anan was, of course, writing before the advent of the Bush administration and the events of 11 September 2001.

¹⁶ ibid., pp.49-50; McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', pp.52-53. Hewison, 'The Politics of Neo-Liberalism', pp.10-11, describes the "developmental social contract" that held sway in Thailand for much of the Cold War period. Military authoritarianism was justified by the promise to deliver economic prosperity – a development perspective endorsed by assistance from the US and the World Bank. "In short," Hewison explains (p.11), "the military would deliver political stability, the government would support private capital, and domestic capital would deliver the economic growth that would allow a trickle-down of benefits to the working and peasant classes." McCargo points out that "the concept of national security was manipulated as a means of securing the privileged political standing of the military, and to justify an extension of the military role into a wide range of political arenas". The development agenda, meanwhile, had heavy security implications, and was "a synonym for enhancing state power, promoting anti-communism, and strengthening the élite" (McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', pp.52-53, 55-56).

¹⁷ The shift in emphasis began in the early 1970s, with events in Thailand seeming to reflect US foreign policy and global changes in economic direction. The end of the economic boom, and changes in the Cold War dynamic, with US-China rapprochement and the Vietnamization of the Indochina war, created a mood of marked discontent within Thailand: "Exclusion from political participation had been tolerable so long as the dictatorship 'produced' in the economic, security, and educational sectors, but became much less so as problems accumulated" (Benedict Anderson, 'Withdrawal Symptoms', pp.153-157; Wyatt, p.298). The student uprising of 1973 saw the start of a gradual decline in the power of the military, although a variant of the "developmental social contract" remained "shakily" in place through to the 1990s, sustained by the economic boom once military domination had started to wane (Ukrist, p.26; Hewison, 'The Politics of Neo-Liberalism', p.11). With US withdrawal from military bases in Thailand in 1976, and the end of the Communist Party's armed insurrection in the 1980s, the military lost its ideological base and much of its direct support (Ukrist, p.26). The change in pace of the Cold War, however, meant that by the 1980s, the character of Thai economic development had changed substantially. Rather than being driven by Cold War imperatives and large-scale American aid, it was increasingly dominated by the private sector, allowing room for new political forces to develop (McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', pp.56-57). Even the "opportunistic and ultimately anachronistic coup" of February 1991 was accompanied by a recognition that the military could no longer resurrect a full-blown dictatorship, and it was thus necessary to appoint a civilian as prime minister (McCargo, 'Introduction', p.1; Ukrist, p.27). This is not to say that the military has lost its appetite for political power, but it now has to make use of "the discourse of development and participation rather than the largely obsolete discourse of security" (McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', p.55).

¹⁸ Pasuk, 'Social Movements', p.10. See also Chai-Anan, 'Old Soldiers'; Lynch; and Michael Kelly Connors, 'Goodbye to the Security State: Thailand and Ideological Change', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 33:14 (Oct 2003), pp.431-448.

¹⁹ Pasuk, 'Social Movements', p.10.

²⁰ ibid., pp.10-11.

²¹ Hobson, p.12; Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, pp.4-5. The state thus occupies a Janus-like position between the internal and the external, simultaneously looking inward to its own society and outward to other states and actors (Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, pp.10, 57; Hobson, pp.11-12).

²² Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.149, paraphrasing David Held and Anthony McGrew, 'Globalization and the Liberal Democratic State', *Government and Opposition*, 28:2 (1993), p.282.

²³ Whitehead, 'Three International Dimensions', p.24.

²⁴ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.12, italics added.

²⁵ ibid., p.149.

²⁶ ibid., pp.155-156.

²⁷ David Held, 'Globalisation: The Dangers and the Answers', openDemocracy, 27 May 2004, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-6-27-1918.jsp>.

²⁸ Shaw, 'Democracy and Peace'.

²⁹ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.55.

³⁰ Shaw, 'Unfinished Global Revolution', p.39. Thede, p.18, also comments that "democratic development cannot be addressed as if the national sphere were a discrete unit", despite the fact that this is precisely what the major institutions involved in democracy promotion are doing.

³¹ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.152.

³² See Clark's discussion, ibid., p.152. On "low-intensity democracy", "polyarchy" versus "popular democracy", and the "political project of the transnational élite" that constitutes the "political counterpart" to economic neoliberalism, see William Robinson, pp.4, 35-38, 48-62. See also Smith, pp.72-74.

³³ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.159. On the move from embedded liberal to neoliberal state, Clark explains that globalization, in the economic sense of the term, developed out of the core of democratic states after the Second World War. This strategically motivated process was mediated through "the corporatist-welfare state, which set protective limits upon the extent of the economic globalization that could take place". By the 1970s, however, a new phase of economic globalization was under construction, a change which "reflected domestic moves away from the key assumptions of mid-century corporatism and welfarism". Thus, the balance has shifted "in favour of assigning priority to international needs over domestic harmony". Globalization has been privileged over social protection and the state reconstituted on this basis. The argument in this chapter is not necessarily that the move from embedded to neoliberal state was a wrong one – just that it arose from a particular conjuncture of political, historical, and economic events that is unlikely to be replicated in other parts of the world. On the responsibility of democratic electorates, Hirst comments: "The domestic and international regimes of modern liberal economies were created by democratic governments that had broad public support for those policies. Thus the imposition of limits on the scope of government policy, and, therefore, of democratic decision, was the product of democratic decisions. Citizens in the democracies of the OECD have consistently voted by large majorities for parties that favour an open international economy and have decisively rejected those parties that do not. It is thus difficult to argue that liberal policies are part of an externally imposed programme that derives from a democratic deficit."

³⁴ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.161.

³⁵ This message does not need to be disseminated by full-scale government democracy-promotion policies – it can equally well be powerfully conveyed by any Western NGOs, academics, journalists, tourists, or concerned citizens who are too uncritical of their own nations' version of democracy.

³⁶ Shaw, 'Unfinished Global Revolution', pp.39-40. See also Held and McGrew, pp.284-285.

³⁷ Li and Reuveny, pp.2, 23. See also Whitehead, 'Three International Dimensions', pp.5-8, on "contagion".

³⁸ O'Loughlin, p.3. In terms of regional location, Thailand's back yard has not even totally emerged from the Cold War. As Clark notes, unlike the European post-Cold War settlement, the settlement for Pacific Asia "has not advanced much beyond the armistice phase" (Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order*, p.125). See also Kimie Hara, 'Rethinking the Cold War in the Asia-Pacific', *The Pacific Review*, 12:4 (1999), pp.515-536.

³⁹ Pevehouse, p.529. Pevehouse admittedly argues his point with reference to *transitions* to democracy rather than the consolidation process, but some of the influences he notes could arguably be applied to the prevention of backsliding in polities with young democracies.

⁴⁰ Kusuma argues that Thailand, under Chuan, "became involved in international organizations that would not only promote its interests but also enhance its democratic and humanitarian values", and that this international orientation of Thai foreign policy "led to the country's more favourable profile in the world community and added to Thailand's international social capital with like-minded countries" (Kusuma Snitwongse, 'Thai Foreign Policy in the Global Age: Principle or Profit?', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 23:2 (Aug 2001), pp.208). But although the linkages Kusuma cites undoubtedly do demonstrate international civic-mindedness, and thus raise Thailand's international profile, they do not necessarily play much of a role in connecting Thailand with kindred

democratic spirits and enhancing its democratic values. The anti-land mine treaty, for example, was signed and ratified in company with such democratic luminaries as Sudan and Turkmenistan; the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was signed alongside Iran and the Democratic Republic of Congo; and Thailand contributed military forces to the United Nations peacekeeping operation in East Timor along with Pakistan and Egypt ('Treaty Members', <http://www.icbl.org/treaty/members?eZSESSIDicbl=a44fcefc8c8c8a678514e6e35341a649>; 'Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court', <http://untreaty.un.org/ENGLISH/bible/englishinternetbible/partI/chapterXVIII/treaty10.asp>; and 'Army Overseas: East Timor', <http://www.army.mil.nz/?CHANNEL=OPERATIONS&PAGE=East+Timor>). Apart from primarily economic organizations, such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Indian Rim Association for Regional Cooperation, and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<http://www.mfa.go.th/web/104.php>) lists ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in which Thailand has the status of "partner for cooperation" (<http://www.osce.org/ec/partners/cooperation/partners/>), and the Human Security Network (HSN), an "informal, flexible mechanism" involving Austria, Canada, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Holland, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa (as an observer), and Switzerland. The principles of the HSN note, "Human security is advanced in every country by protecting and promoting human rights, the rule of law, democratic governance and democratic structures, a culture of peace and the peaceful resolution of conflicts", and also emphasize the need for sustainable human development through the alleviation of poverty ('Principles', <http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org/principles-e.php>). It is the latter aim that is currently stressed by the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which notes (<http://www.mfa.go.th/web/23.php>) that Thailand "has stressed its firm position in the HSN that in addressing human security, the HSN countries must give equal attention to freedom from fear and freedom from want". This emphasis, common to other Thai human rights contributions under this administration (Thailand has also served as a member of the UN Commission of Human Rights) will be discussed in Chapter 5. Thailand is also part of the Community of Democracies, and has acceded to four core human rights instruments, as well as endorsing a proposal to accede to a fifth (<http://www.mfa.go.th/web/24.php>). Kusuma (p.208) also notes that "expanded linkages" under the Chuan administration included joining the Organization of the Islamic Conference as an observer.

⁴¹ See 'Defending Democracy: A Global Survey of Foreign Policy Trends, 1992-2002: A Brief Summary', http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/research/publications/research_downloads/DefendingDemocracyBriefSummary.pdf, and 'Defending Democracy: Thailand', <http://www.demcoalition.org/pdf/Thailand.pdf>. This research used four criteria to assess democracies: response to the overthrow of a democratically elected government; response to the manipulation of electoral processes; the promotion of international norms and values of democracy and human rights, and the institutions that sustain them; and policy toward entrenched dictatorships. It rated countries as very good, good, fair, or poor. Thailand ranked in the same category as Benin, India, Japan, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania, Turkey, Ukraine, and Venezuela. France also figured in this category, indicating that neighbourhood and company do not necessarily influence a country's response to threats to democracy. Only Canada, the Netherlands, and Sweden ranked as "very good". The results for other Asian democracies were as follows: India – fair; Indonesia – poor; Japan – fair; South Korea – good; Philippines – fair. Lynch, p.352, also notes that "states successfully socialized into the values of global culture can be expected to act as agents of socialization for others", and "the more enthusiastically newly democratic states embrace this responsibility, the more thorough their socialization is likely to be".

⁴² Thus, for example, even the pre-Thaksin Chuan government, despite its declared policy of promoting human rights and democracy, had to balance "principle" with "pragmatism" when it came to relations with Myanmar, finding it easier to stand by its principles when working in a broader framework such as the United Nations and the International Labour Organization (Kusuma, pp.198-199, 202).

⁴³ A. T. Kearney/*Foreign Policy* Globalization Index 2004, 'Measuring Globalization: Economic Reversals, Forward Momentum', *Foreign Policy*, 141 (Mar/Apr 2004), pp.54-69; 'Measuring Globalization: Country: Thailand', http://www.foreignpolicy.com/issue_marapr_2004/countrydetail.php?country=Thailand.

The index surveys 62 countries, accounting for 96 per cent of the world's Gross Domestic Product and 84 per cent of its population.

⁴⁴ Thailand's results for the other three categories making up the economic "basket" were: portfolio capital flows (44); foreign direct investment (53); and investment income (37).

⁴⁵ The criteria making up this category were: membership in international organizations (45); personnel and financial contributions to UN peacekeeping missions (45); international treaties ratified (53); and amount of governmental transfer payments and receipts (52). In the personal globalization category, Thailand ranked 48: international telephone traffic (53); international travel and tourism (42); remittances and personal transfers (32). In the technological globalization category it ranked 40: Internet users (37); Internet hosts (41); secure servers (42).

⁴⁶ Singapore ranked 2 (economic) and 40 (political); Malaysia 8 and 46, the Philippines 32 and 51, and Indonesia 47 and 53.

⁴⁷ 'Mapping Global Civil Society', by Helmut Anheier and Helmut Katz, in *The Global Civil Society Yearbook 2003*, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook/PDF/PDF2003/GCS2003%2010a.pdf> and <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook/PDF/PDF2003/GCS2003%2010b.pdf>, pp.248-255. See the 'Data Programme', pp.259-386, for further details, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook/PDF/PDF2003/GCS2003%20Data%20a.pdf> and <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook/PDF/PDF2003/GCS2003%20Data%20b.pdf>

The rationale for using outbound FDI as a measure of economic globalization is explained on p.254, where it is suggested that "a country's ability to manage the process of globalisation and to retain its capacity to effect a social and economic policy agenda" may be a more appropriate measure of economic integration than the traditional use of trade as a percentage of GDP, and such integration may best be measured by openness to global financial flows and the ability to exercise "policy will" or policy choice.

⁴⁸ Connors, 'Goodbye', p.435.

⁴⁹ ibid., p.439. He cites the 1997 Constitution, national development plans, national security plans, and culture policy.

⁵⁰ ibid., p.443. Chapter 5 will discuss elements of Thaksin's discourse that appear to run counter to this recognition.

⁵¹ ibid., p.444.

⁵² O'Loughlin, p.16. Linz and Stepan note: "When a country is part of an international ideological community where democracy is only one of many strongly contested ideologies, the chances of transitioning to and consolidating democracy are substantially less than if the spirit of the times is one where democratic ideologies have no powerful contenders" (J. J. Linz and A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p.74, quoted in O'Loughlin, p.3). Schatz and Gutierrez-Rexach (pp.157-158) similarly speak of "a global political environment much less conducive to authoritarian regimes and ideologies" than previous historical periods. Thus, for example, Acharya (p.426) contends that domestic opposition to authoritarian rule in Southeast Asia at the time of the financial crisis "derived considerable moral strength from the general international awareness about and criticism of authoritarianism in the region", even though direct efforts by Western governments towards democratization in the region have proved somewhat sporadic. Whitehead, meanwhile, refers to the "truly formidable" scope and power of "international demonstration effects", which affect "the underlying distribution of popular preferences and expectations" (Whitehead, 'Three International Dimensions', pp.21-22).

⁵³ Lynch, pp.339-341, 345-348. Lynch defines contemporary "global culture" (p.339) as a "hegemonic set of constitutive and regulatory norms" that esteems rationalism, individualism, and material consumption, and advocates the pursuit of these values through bureaucracy, markets, and a formal commitment to human equality and human

rights, practices that in turn underpin democracy as a norm. Global culture, he argues, although originating in the West, has now transcended its area of origin to become "modern and universal". Élites in gatekeeper states tend to embrace socialization to global culture even though they recognize the ultimately Western origins of this culture and the West-centred nature of the narratives that support it. "Guardian" states, on the other hand, have developed traditions of protecting their perceived national essence from the decentring effects of global culture.

⁵⁴ ibid., pp.339-340. States and élites derive their identities not only from the constitutive norms of global culture but also from domestic constitutive norms, and some states have domestic norms that are less susceptible to the democratic socialization process than others.

⁵⁵ Connors examines development, security, and cultural agencies: the National Economic and Social Development Board, the National Security Council, and the National Culture Commission.

⁵⁶ Connors, 'Goodbye', p.436.

⁵⁷ ibid., pp.436-437.

⁵⁸ ibid., p.437.

⁵⁹ ibid., p.437.

⁶⁰ ibid., p.437.

⁶¹ O'Loughlin, p.16.

⁶² Whitehead, 'Three International Dimensions', pp.21-22. See also Lynch's comments, p.342.

⁶³ This desire may not, of course, be expressed in terms of a call for democracy. It seems, however, that the ideal of democracy continues to have the best chance of delivering justice, prosperity, liberty, and self-determination.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Friedman, 'On Alien Western Democracy', pp.56-65, and also Edward Friedman, 'Asia as a Fount of Universal Human Rights', in Peter Van Ness (ed.), *Debating Human Rights: Critical Essays From the United States and Asia*, Routledge: London and New York, 1999, pp.56-79.

⁶⁵ Shaw, 'Unfinished Global Revolution', p.7. He develops the argument for "insisting on the revolutionary character of contemporary democratic movements" over pp.8-12, and recalls that the worldwide democratic revolution arrived "uninvited by Western statesmen", and was "often a cause of some embarrassment to them (p.18).

⁶⁶ ibid., p.10.

⁶⁷ ibid., p.35.

⁶⁸ ibid., p.35.

⁶⁹ Martin Shaw, 'Global Voices, Civil Society and Media in Global Crises', in *Human Rights in Global Politics*, Timothy Dunne and Nicholas Wheeler (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp.214-232, <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/hafa3/voices.htm>, page numbers not available in Internet format; Shaw, 'Democracy and Peace'.

⁷⁰ For an exposition of this view, see Mathurin C. Houngnikpo, 'Pax Democratica: The Gospel According to St. Democracy', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 49:2 (Jun 2003), pp.197-210.

⁷¹ Shaw, 'Democracy and Peace'.

⁷² Uhlin, pp.150-151; William Robinson, pp.56-62.

⁷³ Ian Clark, 'Legitimacy in International Society', paper presented at Australian National University seminar on 28 Aug 2003, <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/ir/seminars.html>, page numbers not available in Internet format.

⁷⁴ Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order*, pp.12, 61. Clark argues that the post-Cold War order can be likened to a peace settlement, the twin dimensions of which are usually regulative and distributive.

⁷⁵ ibid., p.249.

⁷⁶ Uhlin, pp.153-154; James Anderson, 'Questions of Democracy', pp.12-13. The champions of civil society often argue that globalization and the internationalization of capital have made the state a less important actor in a world where borders are no longer so important and communications technology is undermining state attempts at social control (Chai-Anan, 'Old Soldiers', pp.54-55; Ukrust, pp.32-33). Civil society and its global manifestation constitute another area whose definition is highly contested. Helmut

Anheier, Marlies Glasius, and Mary Kaldor, 'Introducing Global Civil Society', in *Global Civil Society Yearbook 2001*, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook/PDF/Ch1.pdf>, p.17, offer the following descriptive definition: "Global civil society is the sphere of ideas, values, institutions, organizations, networks, and individuals located *between* the family, the state and the market and operating *beyond* the confines of national societies, polities and economies." For a discussion of the origins of global civil society, its effects on politics, and its "promises and perils", see Scholte, pp.173-201. See Pasuk, 'Social Movements', pp.2-8, for a review of international debate on social movements since the 1960s, and pp.8-14 for a summary of the Thai situation.

⁷⁷ Ukrist, pp.32-34. In an era of increasingly pervasive global influences, it is hard to understand how the priority of internal dynamics can be so certain. Ukrist (pp.33-34) argues that whereas the growth of civil society organizations in Indonesia and the Philippines appears to have been significantly influenced by external forces and sources of support, the Thai case appears different. Thus, the Assembly of the Poor, for example, one of the most successful civil society organizations, has had relatively little contact with international networks of NGOs. Connors, 'Ideological Aspects' (pp.4-5, 16-20), on the other hand, points out that themes such as localism may draw both on Thai experience and on the kind of "global developmental discourse" promoted by a complex of global governmental and non-governmental organizations (involving themes such as social capital, democracy, governance, capacity building, civil society, community, decentralization, accountability, and civic-mindedness). Reynolds ('Globalisers', p.264) also notes that the current stress on local knowledge in Thailand has clear links with the global level, and reflects key concepts of late-20th-century development theory.

⁷⁸ See Thede, pp.5, 27-28; Ottaway, pp.5-6; Sejong Institute, Seongnam, South Korea, 'Civil Society, Political Parties and the State' (conference organized by Sejong Institute, Seongnam, South Korea; the National Endowment for Democracy, Washington DC, USA; King Prajadhipok's Institute, Bangkok; and the Asia Foundation, San Francisco), Bangkok, Feb 2002, <http://www.sejong.org/Democracy/data/EDF2002-01.pdf>, pp.9-11.

⁷⁹ Chandhoke suggests that civil society is "not only constituted by the state and the market but also permeated by the same logic that underpins these two spheres" (Neera Chandhoke, 'The Limits of Global Civil Society', in *Global Civil Society Yearbook 2002*, [http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook/PDF/PDF2002/GCS2002%20pages%20\[02\]_%20.pdf](http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook/PDF/PDF2002/GCS2002%20pages%20[02]_%20.pdf), p.49). Shaw ('Global Voices') likewise asks: "If Western civil society is the core of global civil society, just as the Western state is the core of the global state, how do non-Western voices become heard?", and Arblaster (p.101) warns that civil society "often acts as an attractive umbrella beneath which lurk oligopolies and concentrations of unaccountable power, whose relation with the rest of society is one of domination, not collaboration". See also Uhlin's discussion, pp.153-163.

⁸⁰ Ukrist, p.39.

⁸¹ Connors, 'Goodbye', pp.431-434, 444-446. Such cooption is certainly not always negative (see Connors, 'Ideological Aspects', pp.23-24), but by appropriating, influencing, and developing potentially progressive ideas, the state can sideline radical projects. Thus, Connors argues ('Goodbye', p.446): "Radical activists who harness the language of a national civil society, localism, community and participation have been trumped by the state. The state repeats back at them their own manifestos for change." See also Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Role of Civil Society', pp.2-4, 17-18. Robinson further contends that civil society can also be co-opted as a tool of US attempts to exert power and control through democracy promotion (William Robinson, pp.29, 69).

⁸² Ungpakorn, p.195. Ungpakorn explains (pp.200-202) that this is particularly a problem in Thai society because of the legacy of the crushing of the left in the "bloodbath" of 6 October 1976. One of the ways this legacy has shown itself is the extreme reluctance to re-establish left-leaning political parties. Instead, "a 'Civil Society' struggle to create 'political space' for various interest groups is preferred.... Yet, without political parties of the peasantry and the working class, little economic or political reform to create a more just society will ever take place." Pasuk rejects this criticism of civil society action ('Social Movements', pp.2, 12), arguing that the very fact that civil society movements are *not* founded explicitly on class concepts and class antagonism makes it easier for them to mobilize support from a broader public.

⁸³ See James Anderson, 'Questions of Democracy', p.13.

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- ⁸⁴ ibid., p.25. See also William Robinson, pp.6-7, for a summary of this argument.
- ⁸⁵ See, for example, Ikenberry, 'The Myth'; Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order*, pp.74, 159, 161.
- ⁸⁶ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.67.
- ⁸⁷ Historian Thawit Sukhapanich, quoted by Reynolds, 'Globalization and Cultural Nationalism', p.128. Thawit goes on to comment that "Thai culture has long been adapting to what the Western world had to offer in terms of values, knowledge, and abilities". Thus the reason the Thai language is "deficient in the vocabulary of globalization" is that there has never been a time when Thai society was not globalizing.
- ⁸⁸ Ukrist, p.25.
- ⁸⁹ Gong, pp.202, 213.
- ⁹⁰ Lynch, p.350. Peter Lyon (*War and Peace in South-East Asia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969, p.34, quoted by Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific, 1945-1995*, London: Routledge, 1996, p.34) also notes a predisposition for "soft" diplomacy toward the dominant regional power: China before the Opium Wars, then Britain, then Japan, and then the US.
- ⁹¹ Old Thai sayings quoted by Mattani, pp.77-78.
- ⁹² Lynch, pp.347-352. King Mongkut reigned from 1851 to 1868, King Chulalongkorn from 1868 to 1910. Once Buddhism could be seen to accommodate science – because both reflected the truth – science could no longer be regarded as either the prerogative of the West or a threat to Thai identity. In embracing the values of global culture, Siam could therefore not be denatured, "because its basic nature was identical to the deepest values of modernity". Indeed, the Siamese and then Thai states would have to evolve as global culture evolved in order "to avoid a fundamental legitimacy crisis" (p.350). See also Thongchai, pp.82-83.
- ⁹³ Kasian Tejapira, 'The Post-Modernization of Thainess', in Souchou, p.161. Reynolds ('Thai Identity', p.312) also comments on the tension between the desire to remain Thai (and retain familial and village values) and the desire to be un-Thai (and adopt the trappings of global competitor and global consumer).
- ⁹⁴ Lynch, p.347. For example, the military government of the 1930s struggled to balance "being a pure and genuine Thai" against "behaving in a way deemed acceptable to Westerners", and some of the recommendations made in the Cultural Mandates of 1939-40 – such as the instruction to men to kiss their wives before leaving for work in the morning – suggest that the balance was not always correctly struck (Craig Reynolds, 'Introduction: National Identity and its Defenders', in Reynolds, *National Identity*, p.7). Kukrit Pramoj also mentions some of the ludicrous aspects of the decrees in his novel *Four Reigns*.
- ⁹⁵ Kasian, 'Post-Modernization', pp.164-166.
- ⁹⁶ Gong, pp.217-221; Thanapol, pp.1, 146-147; Prawase Wasi, 'An Overview of Political Reform', in McCargo, *Reforming*, pp.21, 26. Thanapol, quoting Chai-Anan, argues that the 1932 coup was executed without mass support, and rotated élites without bringing about significant changes in class relations. Wyatt (pp.245-252) similarly refers to the difficulties experienced by the "People's Party" in building a popular constituency, and notes that by 1938, some important progress had been made toward consolidating constitutional rule, but the government of that period could still be best characterized as one of "élite nationalism". This does not mean that "democracy" was completely irrelevant, but it "was seen as just one more component in the package of modernity towards which the new élite aspired" (Michael Kelly Connors, *Democracy and National Identity in Thailand*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, p.39). Ungpakorn disputes such emphases on élites (p.191), contending that the "revolution" of 1932 "was carried out on the back of widespread social discontent during a period of economic crisis", and had the support, tacit or otherwise, of peasants and working class activists. His intention in stressing the role of different social groups (p.192) is to counteract a "consistent attempt by the Right, both inside and outside Thailand, to claim that ordinary Thai people have a culture of respecting authority and therefore show little interest in politics" (see also McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', p.58). Yet "creating the conditions for the success of the 1932 revolution" is a far cry from actually engineering it. The "revolution" might have had "the effect of expanding the base of the Thai capitalist ruling class to include the top members of the civilian and military bureaucracy", but

élites were still firmly in control, and the military was rapidly able to gain the upper hand because "the civilian bureaucracy had no real power base in society". It is important to recognize, as Ungpakorn does (p.191), that true democratic rights in Thailand have always been won by mass struggle, and this thesis is not attempting to detract from the struggles of non-élite Thai democrats over the decades. After 1973 at latest, "élite actors were forced to come to terms with the reality of bottom-up pressures" (McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', p.58). What this thesis does suggest, however, is that grassroots struggles have been made more difficult by the support for élitism routinely offered by top-down global culture. Heroic democracy protesters only deserve more credit for having had to function in a system in which ordinary people, according to Kobkua, were "allocated only an insignificant part" in a "power-struggling and power-sharing exercise among the ruling élites", and the masses received "neither respect nor compassion" (Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, *Kings, Country and Constitutions: Thailand's Political Development, 1932-2000*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, p.7).

⁹⁷ McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', p.51.

⁹⁸ Commenting on US policy after the Second World War, Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry, and Takashi Inoguchi comment that it often "seemed safer ... to ally oneself with élites one could trust than the masses whom one could not" ('Introduction', in Michael Cox et al, pp.4-5). On élite-mediated global influence, see also Connors, *Democracy*, pp.6-8, 33, and 191.

⁹⁹ Ockey, 'On the Expressway', pp.324-325. See also Benedict Anderson, 'Withdrawal Symptoms', pp.144-152.

¹⁰⁰ Thanapol, p.147, quotes the view of Chai-Anan Samudavanija that Thai politics was characterized for decades by a syndrome whereby bureaucrats expected politicians to simply pass laws, and not involve themselves in mass mobilization, grievance articulation, or interest aggregation. Whenever these latter activities did come to the fore, they precipitated military intervention. Thanapol, p.83, also quotes Kukrit Pramoj's 1971 comment that political power had never moved from the group of people who hold power to other groups of people. Robison, p.97, warns that democratization, too, has the capacity to "entrench previous predatory arrangements".

¹⁰¹ Ockey, 'On the Expressway', pp.325-326.

¹⁰² ibid., pp.326-328. Ockey explains that the 1976 demonstrations were led by those with values based on rural development and the organization of labour and the peasantry, ideas that were opposed as communist-inspired and threatening to security, stability, and development. The democracy that began to emerge in 1978 was hedged about by military control, but because it developed simultaneously with the decline of the left and an increase in the rate of growth, it began to be associated with stability and development. Thus, when politicians did gain the upper hand, there was no effort to mobilize the masses. Vote-buying became common, so mass participation was effectively bought off.

¹⁰³ ibid., p.328.

¹⁰⁴ ibid., p.330. Ockey contrasts this understanding with the mass-based civil society of Latin America and Eastern Europe. This middle-class co-option of the democracy narrative, he argues, has led to the "erasure of the role of the poor" in the 1992 demonstrations (pp.315-316), and an undervaluing of other political initiatives. The "Hyde Park movement", for example, has traditionally been given little attention because it was essentially a working-class phenomenon (James Ockey, 'Civil Society and Street Politics: Lessons From the 1950s, in McCargo, *Reforming*, p.121).

¹⁰⁵ Ockey, 'On the Expressway', pp.328-329; Anek, 'A Tale of Two Democracies', p.208.

¹⁰⁶ Compare McCargo, 'Security, Development and Political Participation', pp.60-61, 63-64.

¹⁰⁷ Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, p.113. Pasuk and Baker elaborate on these categories on pp.154-155. See also Reynolds, 'Thai Identity', p.319. Somchai sees élitism in both camps (Somchai in McCargo, *Reforming*, p.135).

¹⁰⁸ McCargo, 'Introduction', pp.9; Connors, 'Framing', pp.43, 47-52. Connors (p.47) contends that the NGO role in the reform process was significant and productive, but "it was subsidiary to the real politics of élite conflict over political reform".

¹⁰⁹ A disproportionately large share of party list seats (about 20 percent of house membership) goes to Bangkok and other urban MPs, and the requirement for MPs to

hold a university degree is said to exclude around 90 per cent of the total adult population, over 95 per cent of those in rural areas, and over 99 per cent of those in the agricultural sector (Ockey, 'On the Expressway', pp.330-331; Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.118, 127).

¹¹⁰ Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, p.127.

¹¹¹ Temporary alliances between the Thai middle class and the international press and financial community have already been mentioned in Chapter 2.

¹¹² Somchai, p.142; Soraj Hongladorom, 'Democracy and Culture: A Case for Thailand', paper presented at the 7th East West Philosophers' Conference, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii, US, 8-20 Jan 1995, <http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~hsoraj/web/Dem.html>, page numbers not available in Internet format. See also Ockey, 'Civil Society', pp.120-122; Naruemon, pp.183-199; Chai-Anan Samudavanija, 'Good Governance: Only the First Step for Thailand', *The Journal of the Royal Institute of Thailand*, 27:3 (Jul-Sep 2002), pp.610-614; and Kobkua, p.7.

¹¹³ Lynch, p.359, italics added.

¹¹⁴ When the influence of global culture takes the form of conscious democracy promotion, Ottawa, for example, warns of the dangers of strengthening non-representative élites – groups that are "much better embedded in an international system than they are in their own society" (pp.5-6).

¹¹⁵ Somchai, p.142.

¹¹⁶ Whitehead, 'Three International Dimensions', pp.21-22.

¹¹⁷ Thede, p.31. See also Cox, 'Democracy in Hard Times', p.63. See Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand's Crisis*, pp.125-126, for an account of the translation and connotations of the expression "good governance" in Thai.

¹¹⁸ Thede, p.32 (quoting Bonnie Campbell, 'An Overview of Governance', paper prepared for the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, 2000, p.22); Chai-Anan, 'Good Governance', p.612. Other writers also take exception to the "thinness" of contemporary ideas of good governance: "In good governance," objects *The Nation*, "you only have to pursue a degree of transparency and accountability and then allow other people to cross-check your work to be considered a good corporate citizen." By contrast, "good governance" should be understood as "dharma" or "virtue", a form of good that cannot be "compromised or camouflaged with accounting or legal tricks" (*The Nation*, 'Good Governance Is No Substitute for Virtue', 19 Mar 2004).

¹¹⁹ Thede, p.32. Democracy as a "well-oiled machine producing tangible results" is oddly reminiscent of Thaksin's utilitarian approach, outlined in Chapter 3.

¹²⁰ Pasuk Phongpaichit, 'Good Governance: Thailand's Experience', paper presented at the Asia Pacific Finance Association annual conference, Bangkok, Jul 2001, <http://pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~ppasuk/goodgovernancethailandsexperience.doc>, p.10.

¹²¹ Chai-Anan, 'Good Governance', pp.612.

¹²² Somchai, p.135. See also Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Role of Civil Society', p.3. Thirayuth stresses that his concept of good governance is much broader, more holistic, and more communitarian than that advanced by the World Bank and other bodies (Thirayuth Boonmi, 'Good Governance: A Strategy To Restore Thailand', in McCargo, *Reforming*, pp.29-35).

¹²³ Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Role of Civil Society', p.17. "Good governance" is here understood in the Thai sense, a movement led by "progressive élites who are committed to reform of the state, if not to mass democracy". Mobilization against Thaksin is possibly breathing new life into civil society, however.

¹²⁴ On the need for global norms to promote both liberal and social democracy, see Jason Ralph, "'High Stakes' and 'Low Intensity Democracy': Understanding America's Policy of Promoting Democracy", in Michael Cox et al, pp.214-217.

¹²⁵ Richardson, p.3. A review of several strands of democratization literature leads Lynch, for example, to critique the "normalization" of democracy – the conviction not only that democratization is a natural and ultimately inevitable process, but that all countries will eventually end up looking alike (pp.341-345). Brown likewise comments that the "assumption that universal norms and values will triumph over those based on particular local contexts is a feature of contemporary liberalism in almost all its forms"

(C. Brown, 'International Political Theory and the Idea of World Community', in *International Relations Theory Today*, K. Booth and S. Smith (eds), Cambridge, 1995, p.92, quoted in Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order*, p.230).

¹²⁶ James Anderson, 'Questions of Democracy', pp.12, 24.

¹²⁷ ibid., pp.12, 24.

¹²⁸ Len Ang, 'Desperately Guarding Borders: Media Globalization, "Cultural Imperialism", and the Rise of "Asia"', in Souchou, p.36; Friedman, 'On Alien Western Democracy', p.59.

¹²⁹ Geir Helgesen, 'Imported Democracy: The South Korean Experience', in Kinnvall and Jönsson, pp.73-91.

¹³⁰ Che Charteris, 'Democratic Discourses in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 4:2 (Dec 2002), pp.166-167, 170.

¹³¹ ibid., pp.169-170.

¹³² Helgesen, pp.77.88.

¹³³ ibid., p.88.

¹³⁴ Albritton and Thawilwadee found that Thais are anxious about social instability and have "a deeply held, but subtle, antipathy to conflict". Although Thais are generally supportive of freedom of speech, 75.8 per cent feel threatened by diversity of political and social views, and nearly half the respondents (45.5 per cent) are not prepared to tolerate minority viewpoints. Thus, "to the extent that political debate and challenge threaten societal harmony, Thais are averse to contentious discourse" (Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Meaning of Democracy' pp.12-14, 21). Such characteristics, of course, make the powerful protests that took place in 1973 and 1992, as well as the spate of rural protest during the financial crisis, all the more impressive.

¹³⁵ Thawilwadee Bureekul, 'Social Capital and Governance in Thailand', draft paper presented at the 5th Asian Development Research Forum, Bangkok, Thailand, 2-3 Dec 2002, http://www.kpi.ac.th/download/Social_Capital_Thawilwadee.pdf, p.24.

¹³⁶ Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Meaning of Democracy', p.16. It is interesting that television is much more trusted than newspapers, even though the most prominent channels are government-controlled.

¹³⁷ Thawilwadee, p.2.

¹³⁸ ibid., pp.5-6, 24.

¹³⁹ Kobkua (p.29) argues that Western democracy has never actually been practised in Thailand. This may not in itself be a bad thing, she comments, as it "begins on premises quite foreign to the understanding and sociocultural norm of the Thai society". Kobkua contends (pp.4, 9-28) that the three versions of "democracy à la Thailand" (the despotic paternalism of "Thai Buddhist democracy"; guided or "half-a-page" democracy; and the traditionalist style of democracy with stress on the "noble king" figure) failed because of a concentration on process rather than principle. These forms therefore seem to have failed not because of their indigenous basis (which was in any case often distorted because of power considerations) but because they were top-down and élitist. See also Elliott Kulick and Dick Wilson, *Thailand's Turn: Profile of a New Dragon*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992, pp.xvi, 32-40, 49-51, for a discussion of democracy and Thai culture.

¹⁴⁰ Kobkua, p.29; *The Nation*, 'Privatisation of Public Utilities Could Be a Threat to Democracy', 22 Mar 2004.

¹⁴¹ *The Nation*, 'The Fight Against Corruption Starts With the Individual', 2 Apr 2004.

¹⁴² Ockey, *Making Democracy*, pp.2-5. The local participatory tradition was undermined as colonial technology and administrative expertise were applied in Southeast Asia by the colonialists themselves, and in Thailand by central Thai leaders whose authoritarian tradition sought to extend its control into the villages (p.172).

¹⁴³ Sulak Sivaraksa, quoted in *The Nation*, 'Preserving the Public Conscience Under Thaksin', 23 Apr 2004. Sulak observes that *santi prachadhamma*, in the widest sense, means the "virtue, morals and goodness of the general public".

¹⁴⁴ *The Nation*, 'Populist Justice Versus the Rule of Law, 1 Dec 2003; 'Polarised Opinions Over Drug War', 8 Dec 2003; 'Rights Panel Report: "State Stronger, People Weaker"', 5 Aug 2004; *Inter Press Service*, 'Thailand's Drug "Victory" Exposes Fault Lines in Democracy', 8 Dec 2003, reproduced at http://www.cyberdyaryo.com/features/f2003_1208_02.htm. Thaksin's "war on drugs" will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

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- ¹⁴⁵ Charnchao Chaiyanukit, director general of the Department of Rights and Liberty Protection, quoted in *The Nation*, 'Rights Panel Report: "State Stronger, People Weaker"', 5 Aug 2004. As noted above, the wholly autocratic nature of the Thai political experience is open to question.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Bangkok Post*, 'Rights Issues Start To Earn Their Due', 10 Aug 2004.
- ¹⁴⁷ *The Nation*, 'Polarised Opinions Over Drug War', 8 Dec 2003.
- ¹⁴⁸ Pasuk, 'Social Movements', p.12. See also Ockey, *Making Democracy*, p.5.
- ¹⁴⁹ See, for example, Hans-Dieter Bechstedt, 'Identity and Authority in Thailand', in Reynolds, *National Identity*, pp.242, 249, 252-253.
- ¹⁵⁰ Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Meaning of Democracy', p.15.
- ¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, pp.16-17.
- ¹⁵² *ibid.*, p.17.
- ¹⁵³ Thawilwadee, p.19.
- ¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.23.
- ¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, pp.22-23.
- ¹⁵⁶ Arghiros, p.280.
- ¹⁵⁷ Ockey, *Making Democracy*, p.148.
- ¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.150.
- ¹⁵⁹ Arghiros, for example, comments on "the state's coalescence of democracy with obedience and deference" (Arghiros, pp.35-40).
- ¹⁶⁰ Ockey, *Making Democracy*, p.173.
- ¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, p.173.
- ¹⁶² See Lynch, pp.351-352, for an account of progressive Buddhism.
- ¹⁶³ See Hewison, 'Responding', pp.156-157, on élitism in localist thought. Connors ('Ideological Aspects', p.23) also notes strong currents of élitism in moderate localist discourse, commenting that moderate localists often act as "disciplinary agents" keen to channel people into "right ways" – ways, that is, that emphasize consensus above confrontation, collaboration over autonomy, and social learning over social struggle. While consensus, collaboration, and social learning may well constitute Thai cultural preferences, there remains an uncomfortable sense of manipulation if these values are imposed from above rather than chosen from below. Thongchai argues that the most active force within the spectrum critical of Western influence is "radical conservatism", a localist ideology powerful among Thai NGOs and activist groups. It advocates "democratization and popular participation while fighting against the decadence of (Western) modernity and the perils of Western influence to Thai society, culture, and people" (Thongchai, p.77). There are clearly dangers as well as opportunities in such a platform. Writing in 1992, Kulick and Wilson (p.51), congratulated Thailand on its ability to confront "with reasoned argument and patient experiment the challenge which democratic institutions originating in the West pose for Thai traditional culture and self-respect". This is a refreshingly positive evaluation, but fails to mention the power considerations that make this challenge so difficult.
- ¹⁶⁴ See, for example, Ottaway and Zakaria.
- ¹⁶⁵ Lynch, pp.340, 347. Lynch goes on to note (p.347): "An ironic corollary is that the more extensively a country opens to the outside world economically and socially, the more fiercely the guardian state must defend authoritarian rule. Globalization therefore makes guardian states less likely to democratize, contrary to the expectations of optimistic neoliberals."
- ¹⁶⁶ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.152.
- ¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.55.

Chapter 5

The Influence of Agency: Thaksin, Political Globalization, and Democracy

Managing the structural environment of political globalization is dauntingly difficult for less powerful states – considerably more difficult than the task of managing economic globalization. While it might be theoretically possible for states to withdraw from the global markets and still please their people, the equivalent hypothetical option in political globalization is hard to imagine. Firstly, some Western bloc norms are genuinely in line with popular demands, and rejecting the one would mean disappointing the other. Secondly, the powerful West flavours global democracy like sugar in tea. Once the sugar is there, it is very difficult to start afresh from a sugarless state.

Nevertheless, agents – states, élites, and others – do have policy choices. This chapter therefore examines the responses to political globalization articulated by Thaksin – either directly or through members of his cabinet – and asks whether they have promoted a climate conducive to democratization.¹ It concludes that Thaksin is tragically lacking in the political vision needed to help his country consolidate its democratization process amid the structural constraints and opportunities of political globalization.

In the following three sections, Thaksin's policy is evaluated in the context of the three areas discussed in the previous chapter. Firstly, in the area of integration, Thaksin seems curiously unaware (or defiant) of the reality that no aspect of politics, whether domestic or international, takes place in a vacuum, but is increasingly subject to the scrutiny of the international community. Secondly, in the area of power, he has proved unable to comprehend that state strength is now wielded and negotiated in a

different global environment, in which sovereignty carries a different meaning. Thirdly, in resisting homogenization, he has failed to strike the kind of judicious balance between global and local that he has been so powerfully able to articulate in economic terms. The negative side of Thaksin's nationalist discourse is uncomfortably discernible in all these areas.

This chapter argues that Thaksin – far from acting as a competent globalist – is losing ground in the political arena, in a way that is damaging both for Thailand and for the international democratic community.

Thaksin, integration, and democracy

Thaksin is certainly no isolationist. He supports the "further integration of ASEAN as well as ASEAN links with other regions".² Contrary to many voices in Asia, he appears to welcome a wider role for regional organizations such as APEC and the ASEAN Regional Forum.³ He also publicly affirms Thailand's commitment to UN goals and missions.⁴ In economic terms, his vision of the benefits of symbiotic integration and cooperation is farsighted. The idea, for example, that Asian cooperation is limited by the continent's diversity he sees as an "archaic presumption", to be relegated to an age that extolled the virtues of the vertically integrated corporation:

Asia is like a giant holding company with many diversified entities, each with its own individuality and creativity. The uniqueness of each Asian entity, when combined, becomes an enormous asset for Asia as a whole. Through our diversity, we are able to create great flexibility of response and greater strengths for one another. It only remains for us to recognize this possibility together. As major corporations have begun to downsize and to stop their vertical integration, all of us should also move towards horizontal integration, each creating our own unique products, while working together to combine our strengths and utilizing the new economic principles of speed and diversification.⁵

He is firm in the belief that "regional development and prosperity are not what a nation can do all alone, but they are what nations can and must do all together".⁶

But Thaksin seems completely unable to translate this economic vision – which in many ways is the ideal picture of how globalization might work – into political terms. In the political arena, he seems to regard the increased level of comment engendered by integration as an irritant, and is often publicly impatient of it. "The United Nations is not my father," he reportedly responded to news that a UN envoy would be dispatched to gather information on the rising death toll in the 2003 "war on drugs".⁷ In similar vein, he responded with defiance to international concern over the killings at Krue Se Mosque in Pattani in April 2004. "Please don't intervene. Please leave us alone," he urged in a radio address. "It is my job and we can cope with this matter. We are trying to explain this to foreigners. But if they do not understand or ignore our explanation, I don't care because we are not begging them for food."⁸ He seemed equally unwilling to face up to international criticism when scores of arrested protesters died at Tak Bai in October 2004.⁹

There are plenty of indications that Thaksin does respond, albeit sometimes belatedly, ungraciously, and not totally transparently, to pressure from the international community. For example, he admitted to "human errors" in the bird flu debacle, says *The Nation*, only because he "thought the international community was expecting a higher standard from him" than was the Thai public.¹⁰ Similarly, after rejecting international "interference" over the mosque killings, Thaksin moved "to clear up any misunderstandings" with Malaysia and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and "to ease Muslim anger" by setting up a commission of inquiry.¹¹ The aim of the commission, according to one of its members would be "to clarify the issue to the international community".¹² Again, according to Somchai Homlaor, chairman of the Law Society of Thailand's human rights committee, the "war on dark influences", a

follow-up to the drug war, did not produce "a significant number of extra-judicial killings" precisely because of concern about foreign opinion.¹³

However, the potentially helpful role of outside forces in sometimes mitigating bad policy and promoting higher standards is highly compromised by Thaksin's defensiveness, and the desire to counter the outside influence, criticism, and scepticism that are inevitable in a globalized environment sometimes strengthens his already undue predisposition to muzzle the media.¹⁴ The nationalist notes he strikes in this context are not aimed at restoring legitimate national pride, but at deflecting attention from illegitimate national failures. Thus, the Thai public and the media are urged to show patriotism "by not posing embarrassing questions", complains *The Nation*.¹⁵ Any criticism, the argument goes, could damage Thailand's reputation and economy, and is therefore unpatriotic. Objecting to media "inaccuracy", for example, Thaksin "said the media should keep in mind that the nation must come first". He went on to remind journalists: "Think about your country please. When other countries attack us, their press will quote the Thai media."¹⁶ Again urging the media to "be restrained" in their coverage of southern problems, Thaksin warned: "Believe me, don't make people panic. You may worsen the economy; tourism will be affected and people will lose their jobs."¹⁷ His comments on the mosque attack contained a similar misplaced patriotism: "Don't forget that all this is being broadcast abroad. This is damaging Thailand's reputation." Upbraiding critics for failing to engage constructively with problems, he again "urged them to think of the good of the nation".¹⁸

Foreign media reports on southern violence were similarly castigated as "hostile, unfair, unethical and irresponsible". Thaksin asserted, "We don't ask for friendship here, just fairness. They live, breathe and eat here in Bangkok, but they are never fair and always write inaccurate reports."¹⁹ Hence the announcement of the setting up of a "news centre" aimed at compiling information for dissemination among media outlets, in order to "ensure all media received 'correct information'".²⁰

In Thaksin's view, however, it is not just the media that need to restrain their comments for the sake of patriotism. A similar stance was apparent in his dismissive reaction to the first report produced by the Human Rights Commission in August 2004. The *Bangkok Post* noted his comments that "the report risked undermining the country's international standing and read more like an opposition polemic than constructive advice", and quoted him as asking, "Don't they think their criticisms which have been published worldwide will do the country a disservice?"²¹ This response is a telling indication of a fundamental double flaw in Thaksin's vision. Firstly, he seems unable to comprehend that increasing global integration means the world is always watching, and its gaze is not limited to what Thaksin wants it to see. Evidence of these blinkers can be found in the baroque nature – and thus eminent newsworthiness – of some of the preparations for the APEC summit in October 2003. Indeed, a reader's letter to *The Nation* showed more awareness than Thaksin that excessively elaborate efforts to create a good impression tend to create international suspicion instead:

Thais who feel euphoric over the success of APEC must not have followed the international press coverage of the summit, which was extremely critical of how the Thai government prepared for the event. Almost every report I saw or read about APEC ... emphasised the "heavy-handed" tactics of the government in rounding up beggars, threatening NGOs, and being insensitive to Bangkok's poor.²²

The correspondent wonders if "Thaksin and the Foreign Ministry were prepared for such often scathing criticism of Thailand". The answer is that they were probably not. Thaksin's years of higher education in America seem to have left him singularly unaware of the workings of the international media, and their urge to find better stories by looking behind the scenery.²³

Secondly, he seems not to have grasped that when the rules of global democratic society have been broken, concealment is subject to much harsher condemnation than frank admission. *The Nation* has understood this much better, noting that Thailand's first indigenously produced human rights report – far from undermining the country's reputation – will "polish

the country's image and restore much-needed credibility to the country's human rights record as a whole".²⁴ Rather than capitalizing on the fact that "not many countries, certainly not the developing countries in the region, have the courage to file a report on such a sensitive issue", Thaksin lost all the available kudos, and rejected the findings as unpatriotic.²⁵ King Bhumibol shows a far superior awareness of international requirements for transparency. Urging clarification of the large numbers of deaths in the drug war, he insisted, "If the matter is not clarified, many people will blame the prime minister. The findings should be made available to the public and to the international community."²⁶ The king has realized that openness in such matters gains useful prestige for developing countries. It may be unjust and galling that powerful nations have the ability to influence less powerful ones by giving or withholding such "merit points", but in managing a global environment not entirely of their own making, democratizing states are paying a comparatively small price (and one that is usually in the interests of their own citizens) by following the transparency rules demanded by increased integration.

Thaksin, global power, and democracy

Misplaced nationalism all too easily subverts any understanding of the need for transparency, however, and the first line of defence is often the attempted projection of power. Many of the reactions to external concern over avian flu, for example, ranging from ministerial "sabre-rattling" to prime ministerial threats of commercial retaliation, thus seem symptomatic of old ideas of sovereignty that will make it hard for a democratizing nation to carve out its niche in a globalized environment.²⁷

The Nation thus reports:

At the government's chicken-eating fair in Sanam Luang, Thaksin told a huge crowd that he does not care if foreign countries refuse to buy Thai poultry as long as they do not spread distorted information or impose unfair trade barriers against the country's exports. "If they do I will retaliate," he said. "This government is not afraid of anything," he told the crowd. Facing intense criticism both at home and abroad over the government's handling of the epidemic, Thaksin said that it had now become an issue of "sovereignty".²⁸

This view of sovereignty – as protective wall insulating the national entity from criticism and enabling it to flout internationally recognized agreements and standards – is at odds with the contemporary environment and the "substantive reconstitution of sovereignty that is now taking place".²⁹ Clark argues: "As sovereign, the state seeks to remake itself – in response to conflicting domestic and international pressures – by discarding traditional capacities and acquiring new ones. It also delegates functions to other international and transnational bodies."³⁰ Thaksin, however, has not fully realized this. He might well tell Thai diplomats "not to resist global forces, but move with them and adapt", but away from the economic sphere, he seems to have little recognition of what those global forces mean.³¹

"Like it or not," comments Thai political scientist Panithan, "a nation's 'sovereignty' in today's world is not the same as it was."³² Thus, when internationally salient issues are at stake, such as disease control, health, or human rights, a democratic nation aspiring to first-world status cannot simply bring down the shutters. Panithan agrees: "Being a democratic society, Thailand must allow international organisations to investigate the state of human rights, and this should not be perceived as a violation of Thai sovereignty."³³

But this is not Thaksin's view. When the 2004 annual US report on human rights again picked up on the unexplained deaths of drug dealers, his response was once more assured of headlines:

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra yesterday denied US allegations that Thailand was home to human rights abuses, rounding on the US administration for "trampling on the feelings" of its friends. Responding to the US report ..., the prime minister said that the writers of the report had simply picked up on unfounded media rumours. "I really can't accept the fact that the US has issued this report, based on media statements. Although as nations we're allies, the US has got to the point where it destroys the feelings of its friends," he said. "We've met to discuss this matter, but they still issued this report. Speaking frankly, I feel extremely hurt," said the Thai leader.³⁴

US human rights reports are undoubtedly blunt instruments, and their efficacy can be disputed. Nevertheless, there is a somewhat disturbing

Cold War feel to Thaksin's apparent assumption that "allies" are immune from criticism. Global human rights concerns perhaps constitute the site where the top-down and bottom-up agendas of the global state conglomerate and global civil society most often coincide. Thus, governments of democratizing states earn no global status points in either camp by implying that sovereignty should provide a wall of insulation.³⁵

Quite contrary to the impression he gives in the global economic arena, Thaksin appears rigid and uncomprehending here, unable to grasp the concept that "maladaptability is the sign of state weakness", while "a strong state is one that is able to successfully adapt to internal and external pressures, especially through cooperation with society".³⁶ The darker side of Thaksin's nationalism makes this adaptation difficult, encouraging him to cling to an outmoded concept of national strength, inherent in which is the need to resist "interference" and project invulnerability.

This is not to underestimate the difficulties encountered by a middle-income democratizing state in negotiating the global political environment, the power imbalances of which were discussed in the last chapter. In some senses, states like Thailand, and their leaders, are caught in a bind between top-down and bottom-up pressures, and it is easy to fall, as Thaksin often does, into the trap of pleasing no-one. The top-down pressures have a long history, dating back at least as far as the Wilsonian idea of developing "good types of states", whose changing characteristics would facilitate the workings of peace-seeking international organizations.³⁷ The new phase of globalization stimulated by the end of the Cold War was likewise supposed to induce "a stable order within which economic activity, democratic norms, and liberal beliefs would all be greatly enhanced" through the development of a new type of self-regulating behaviour within states.³⁸ Clark pithily captures the blend of idealism and power behind the post-Cold War credo:

Globalized states participating in an open economic order would be the best guarantee of international peace, prosperity, and stability. In case this was too altruistic a message, it took the precaution of appealing to more self-interested motives as well. The states that would do best in this new order, and benefit most from it, were those which most successfully reinvented themselves in accordance with its prescriptions. To be a traditional state in a globalized order was a recipe for failure, but to be a globalized state in this order was to place oneself in the mainstream of activity, and regain a measure of control over one's destiny. In the ultimate paradox, submission was to be the only meaningful route left to national self-assertion.³⁹

Why, then, can Thaksin be accused of failing to pick the right path by resisting the political coercion of globalization? If this thesis judged his championing of autonomy in the economic realm to be favourable to democracy, why should an equivalent strategy in the political realm not be equally laudable? More specifically, when the drug war deaths aroused no great reaction among the Thai public, why should Thaksin be expected to tolerate criticism from outside? The answer is twofold – although both elements need to be accompanied by the essential proviso that less hypocrisy and more empathy on the part of the globalized states would also help to make their human rights messages more palatable to their globalizing counterparts. Firstly, a softer response would have demonstrated greater pragmatism, more of a realization that those sitting on the bus find it easier to influence the bus-driver than those shouting from the bus-stop. In this sense, Thaksin's raucous responses often abandon "time-tested, century-old Thai diplomatic finesse".⁴⁰ But secondly, and more importantly, the political values Thaksin undermines in some of his nationalist outbursts – values at the heart of human rights, such as transparency, accountability, and equality before the law – are not prescriptions developed by élite think-tanks in powerful nations over the course of a few fast-moving decades, but rather fundamental aspirations that have been gathering bottom-up momentum amid large swathes of the earth's population for centuries.

If Shaw is correct to posit that nation-states are embedded not merely in "their" societies but in larger state contexts – "the multi-layered socio-spatial networks of an emergent global society" – then leaders of democratizing polities do their states and their societies no favours by

needlessly resisting genuinely deep-rooted global trends.⁴¹ Such trends, after all, constitute the area in which "the new, partial congruence between Western state interests and worldwide democratic movements" have the most hope of actually doing some good.⁴² Former UN Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson sees the instruments that constitute the international human rights framework as important tools for holding governments to account – not only upward to international bodies but downward to citizens, civil society, and public opinion. A new relationship thus becomes possible between national states and the international order, in which governments accept that their legitimacy as governments makes them accountable to citizens to defend and deliver the basic universal human rights codified in the conventions.⁴³ Barnett sees this as a "virtuous rather than vicious circle of democratic influence", with globalization empowering and expanding local forms of politics, as governments find they have to account "downward" for their behaviour with respect to the priorities and norms established at a world level.⁴⁴ Ideally, this should be a two-directional process, with pressure from above and below converging on the key site of accountability – the government. In the case of the Thai drug war deaths, with the population reluctant to act as whistle-blower, the global level becomes even more important. Thailand has, after all, ratified several international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, whose principles were apparently seriously undermined during the war on drugs.⁴⁵ The global community could therefore legitimately call the state to account for treaty infringement, and a more receptive response on Thaksin's part might have ensured a more fruitful dialogue on the need to protect the rights both of suspected drug dealers and their victims.

Rather than trying to build a nationalist wall between Thailand and the political judgement of the international community, it would therefore perhaps be more constructive "to define nationalism and patriotism in the more cosmopolitan terms of democracy, such as free speech, the right to criticise, and respect for opposing points of view".⁴⁶ To seek to build

national pride on the culturally appropriate expression of such principles would not be a shameful capitulation to externally dictated rules but a reclaiming of the initiative in the political globalization debate in a way that would enable Thai insights to be heard and weighed at global level.

Thaksin, homogenization, and democracy

Thaksin's inability to replicate in the political arena the creative balance between global and local that he manages to strike in the economic field is evidenced by various policy pronouncements in the area of democracy and human rights. On arriving in power, Thaksin certainly seemed to intend to signal a change in emphasis from that of Chuan's outgoing Democrat government. Foreign Minister Surakiart declared that "Thai foreign policy would not be 'ideology driven' but 'business driven'", and while the Chuan government declared as its foreign policy goal "the participation by Thailand on the international stage in the protection and promotion of democratic values and human rights", Thaksin's foreign policy statement made no mention of either.⁴⁷ Instead, the emphasis was to be on "proactive economic diplomacy" and "developmental cooperation".⁴⁸ Nevertheless, political globalization made a complete backtrack very difficult. The salience of the issue on the international stage, coupled with internal political reform, had to some degree influenced Thailand's image of itself. Thus, the Thaksin government could not afford to ignore "the psychological satisfaction" derived by a significant section of the population from the assertion in global society of a national identity concerned with democracy and human rights.⁴⁹ A softening of emphases was therefore very soon visible.⁵⁰ Surakiart told an international human rights workshop in February 2001, for example:

This Government will further support participatory democracy, promote human rights education for all, strengthen the role of local community and civil society as "human rights defenders" to protect their own rights and promote development as enshrined in the Constitution.... I wish to stress that as a new member of the United Nations Commission for Human Rights, Thailand stands ready to cooperate with the members of the Commission and the international community in the promotion and protection of human rights.⁵¹

While the government's conception of "participatory democracy" is a little suspect, as noted in Chapter 3, this statement of intent clearly reflects a baseline awareness of what the international community would want to hear.

Notwithstanding the softened line, Lynch may be a little sanguine to reduce the policy shift to "rhetorical changes", and assume that Thaksin would "continue the Democrats' close practical alignment of Thai foreign policy with the international cause of human rights".⁵² The Thaksin administration's policy comments, while still espousing the values of democracy and human rights, do seem to contain interesting adjustments of emphasis. A cynical interpretation of these is that they hark back to "Asian values", and offer excuses for soft-pedalling. A more positive interpretation is that they offer useful local correctives to prevailing global imbalances – correctives that would be all the more effective if only their motives were not so often called into question by dubious behaviour at home.

Thus, while Thaksin's utilitarian and rather hollow view of democracy is very evident in remarks by Vice-Foreign Minister Sorajak Kasemsuvan – who stresses that "democracy is only a means" to the end of achieving "sustainable development and human security or simply put, the well-being of our peoples" – he nevertheless offers a pertinent challenge to the kind of homogenizing democracy criticized in Chapter 4:

Therefore, we should tread carefully in applying democratic practices in governance for there is no "one size fits all" formula. Democratic values, despite its universal character, cannot be imposed on a country and must be refined from within, bearing in mind the historical, cultural, economic, social and religious context of that particular country. It would therefore be valuable if countries of similar political and socio-economic conditions could share their best practices in the democratization process between each other.⁵³

Surakiart's address to the 57th Session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, at which Thailand was participating for the first time as a full member, also invokes the importance of cultural differences:

Many challenges that globalization has brought along may be addressed most effectively not by the state, not by the international community, but by the people themselves. In this regard, to maximize the fullest contribution of the individuals to shaping the course of the world, the realities and cultural diversities of the local communities should be taken into consideration when setting international norms and standards.... Mr. Chairman, tolerance, understanding and respect for diversity are fundamental to promote sustainable peace, development and democracy which are our global priorities.... In view of Thailand's experience in promoting democracy and human rights, we are conscious of the sensitivities involved in blending international norms with national values.... We, therefore, hope to facilitate the convergence of divergent views and practices regarding human rights promotion and protection of the developed and developing countries in order to yield benefits to all nations and segments of the society.... I believe that each society, be it the East or the West, with its centuries of civilizations, definitely has something inherent to it to contribute significantly in terms of human well-being, human dignity and human potential. The concept of human rights in this broad vision encompassing the three aspects should be implemented with vigor in all societies, but perhaps in different forms.⁵⁴

This is all very apposite, but such emphases would carry significantly more weight if the Thaksin administration had cultivated a better relationship with the very groups that play key roles in defining democratic values from within – civil society, NGOs, the Buddhist sangha, the media, and academia.⁵⁵

Surakiart's 2001 address also contains other challenges to prevailing emphases.⁵⁶ For example, he seems concerned to give economic rights their due importance, emphasizing the need "not to simply respect the people's rights, but to empower them":

We do expect that this Commission shall address the issue of human rights in a holistic and comprehensive manner, in full recognition of the importance of human well-being, human dignity and human potential. Mr. Chairman, we in this hall should make clear that in our vision and perception, all human rights are of equal importance. This means that all rights, political, civil, economic, social, cultural as well as the right to development, and all freedoms, both freedom from fear and freedom from want, are interrelated and interdependent.... Our experiences have taught us that sacrificing one set of rights and freedom at the expense of another will only lead to imbalance and later disruption. We believe that a strategic balance is needed. One should not be forced to choose between the right to food and the right to democracy.⁵⁷

This was, of course, an emphasis of the "Asian values" debate.⁵⁸ But it is also a corrective line advanced by many contemporary human rights defenders. Robinson, for example, comments, "When I am asked, 'What, in your view, is the worst human rights problem in the world today? I reply: 'Absolute poverty.'"⁵⁹ While the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights maintained a balance between strong civil and political rights and the progressive implementation of economic, social and cultural rights, Robinson explains, the Cold War brought about the division of the two groups into two covenants. As a result, "the western world by and large didn't take economic, social and cultural rights seriously". The fact that there are signs of change in this attitude is therefore "dramatically important for the credibility of human rights internationally".⁶⁰ The usefulness of Surakiart's stance, however, again declines when it is juxtaposed with a succession of incidents that have called into question Thailand's defence of civil and political rights.

Surakiart's 2001 Geneva address also takes a stand on international intervention:

Likewise, the international community should stand ready to assist but not to assault, to alleviate but not to aggravate the situation.... Thailand believes that the international community has an important role to play in promoting the right to development and human-centered development. It is a moral responsibility of the international community to help people where they are in need. Human rights, however, should not be set as a condition to international development assistance. It is now clear to all that it is not the state but the ordinary people who suffer most from lack of assistance.... We want to take part in moving this very important body beyond politicization. We want to place human well-being, human dignity and human potential at the forefront of the world's human rights agenda. We want to make the work of the Commission relevant to people around the world.⁶¹

This stance calls to mind Thaksin's policies on Myanmar. Even the Chuan government, with its Foreign Ministry "iconoclasts", was forced to tone down its rhetoric on Myanmar and "constructive intervention" within ASEAN.⁶² In an article in *The Nation*, then Deputy Foreign Minister Sukhumbhand Paribatra rejected Aung San Suu Kyi's call to ASEAN to help the people of Myanmar in their quest for democracy, arguing that Thailand had no choice but to opt for a policy of engagement, as one of exclusion would only reinforce the status quo.⁶³ Historical animosity and distrust, combined with border demarcation disputes and problems with illegal migrants, refugees, and drug flows, mean that issues of economics and security are a necessary component of any Thai government's foreign policy towards Myanmar.⁶⁴ With all these complications, "it is clear

that Thailand has little or no leverage on Yangon on the issue of human rights and democracy".⁶⁵ Given the intractability of the Myanmar problem, Thaksin is therefore perhaps too heavily criticized for failing to apply sufficient pressure. True to type, he "feels he can make a difference in Burma through economic cooperation and commercial transactions".⁶⁶ Critics concede that Thaksin's policy of active engagement has produced an easing of tensions along the border, but see no reduction in the trade in drugs and humans across the frontier. Even more negatively, they contend that "being seen as an apologist for the military regime has damaged Thailand's credibility with the world community".⁶⁷

But quite what Thailand should do is more uncertain. The classic post-Cold War Western line to take with recalcitrant but vulnerable regimes is to pressure them, either directly or through their neighbours. The results of this strategy have been disappointing at best. Eager democratic converts such as the eastern European post-Communist states may have seen sufficient rewards in potential membership of the powerful EU bloc to be motivated "to put their eligibility on the line by completing a political and economic checklist", but European attempts to selectively apply the same principles with Asian trading partners seem to be producing little except annoyance and inconsistency.⁶⁸ One observer fears that the Myanmar situation risks turning into "another Zimbabwe standoff, with the EU indirectly strengthening rather than weakening the country's leadership in Myanmar's transition".⁶⁹

Neither the EU nor America, after all, has Myanmar next door. This is another area where top-down Western pressure for a pre-determined method of democracy promotion seems inept and out of touch with the realities of local perception. Thaksin's policies on Myanmar may indeed be "reprehensible and dangerous", but to claim that they are "undermining US efforts to foster democracy and the rule of law in an important region" is surely to push local populaces toward the inappropriate forms of nationalist response criticized above.⁷⁰ Democrat Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan's bold ideas on increasing ASEAN

assertiveness in dealing with members like Myanmar may have made him Madeleine Albright's "hero", and evoked an "ecstatic" response from the liberal Bangkok media, but with the exception of the Philippines, the rest of ASEAN "recoiled at the idea – and at the way Surin had brashly gone public with it without consulting them".⁷¹ If democracy promotion involves socialization – persuading others to want what you want for them – then this seems a clumsy way of going about it.⁷²

Thus, Surakiart's plea against conditionality and politicization, and his emphasis on development and human well-being, dignity, and potential, may well be laying down markers to excuse the future fudging of issues on Myanmar, but at least they have a tough regional and global context as mitigation.

In the battle against homogenization, therefore, Thaksin and his team have some useful points to make: they emphasize the cultural differences that need to be acknowledged and debated in order for the successful indigenization of democracy and human rights to proceed; they stress the need to promote the whole panoply of human rights, and not neglect the imperative of development; and they challenge the perspective that sees regional coercion as the only useful way forward with authoritarian states. All these helpful contributions are brutally undermined, however, by the lack of correspondence between what Thaksin says abroad and what he does and says at home.

Conclusions

States like Thailand have to struggle to make their mark in the shaping of globalization, whether political or economic. Agential responses are therefore crucial. Agents cannot call all the shots, but there is definitely some scope for managing the global environment. Depending on their

global astuteness, this can be either to the benefit or detriment of their states in general and their states' democratization processes in particular.

Thus, agents can respond well or badly to the reality of international political scrutiny, either gaining trust and status from the global democratic community through transparency, or feeding distrust through nationalistic bluster and dissimulation. Thaksin has unfortunately veered toward the latter end of the spectrum.⁷³

Agents can likewise succeed or fail in learning to adapt to and manipulate the new power structures of international society. Success should be measured not by uncritical acceptance of the new norms, or by wholesale rejection of them, but by the identification and promotion of those norms that best represent the aspirations of bottom-up democracy in their societies. Thaksin's report card is not impressive here either. He has failed to realize that sustaining a reputable democracy gives states and leaders valuable trump cards in today's globalized world. Instead, he continues to seek power in old, troubling places.

Agents can also project different emphases on global norms. Their role could be hugely important here, mitigating the dominance of Western-oriented liberal democracy. Thaksin and his administration have made a contribution in this area, but their policies at home have unfortunately driven wedges between their input on global ideals and their management of local realities.

These shortcomings are lamentable not only for Thai democratization, which loses out on whatever support the global environment might offer, and enjoys less ability to influence this environment for its own benefit, but also for the international democratic community itself, which is deprived of a uniquely Thai perspective on what it means to democratize.

Endnotes to Chapter 5

¹ Given Thaksin's dominance of his cabinet, as noted in the Introduction, major Foreign Ministry statements on democracy and human rights can be considered to form part of the Thaksin approach even if not directly articulated by him.

² Thaksin, inaugural lecture, 'Forward Engagement: The New Era of Thailand's Foreign Policy', at the Saranrom Institute of Foreign Affairs, Bangkok, 12 Mar 2003. In the following sentence, he stresses that trust, confidence, and mutual understanding must be based on "respect and non-interference within ASEAN".

³ For example, he believes that APEC "could do more than just discussing economics" (Thaksin, address at dinner hosted by US-ASEAN Business Council, Washington DC, 10 Jun 2003), and argues that the ARF needs to go beyond the initial phase of confidence-building measures, and "should be encouraged to be a more active security forum in Asia" (Thaksin, 5 Jun 2003).

⁴ See, for example, Thaksin, remarks at the official luncheon in honour of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Government House, Bangkok, 13 Jul 2004.

⁵ Thaksin, 19 Jun 2002.

⁶ Thaksin, 13 Jul 2004.

⁷ *The Nation*, "Not-My-Father": Thaksin Retracts UN Jibe', 5 Mar 2003. Curiously, and revealingly, government spokesman Sita Divari (quoted in same report) excused the outburst by explaining, "Nowadays reporters want him to respond to something or someone all the time. He has only been asked about political issues, with virtually no questions at all concerning exactly what the government is doing for the people." He went on to note that Thaksin "wants to draw a clear line between political affairs and the country's affairs. Interviews at Government House should involve [the latter], such as a trip by him to a foreign country".

⁸ Quoted in *The Nation*, 'Thaksin Tells the World To Back Off', 2 May 2004. Similar comments were noted in *Bangkok Post*, 'Thailand Under the Microscope', 16 May 2003, in reaction to criticism of the anti-drug campaign. Thaksin is here quoted as stating that "we don't need anybody's help, we can rely on ourselves", and remarking that foreign assistance is not a "big deal".

⁹ *Bangkok Post*, 'Death Toll Secrecy Deplored', 28 Oct 2004; 'Thaksin: I'm Not Quitting; No Snap Poll', 29 Oct 2004; *The Nation*, 'It Wasn't Inhumane Treatment: Thaksin', 28 Oct 2004; *Business Day*, 'Tough Job for Thaksin, but a Really Bad Reputation for Thailand', 29 Oct 2004.

¹⁰ *The Nation*, "'Cover-Up' to 'Screw-Up': A Dubious Mutation", 5 Feb 2004.

¹¹ *The Nation*, 'Thaksin Tells the World To Back Off', 2 May 2004; 'Warrant Issued for Key Suspect', 5 May 2004; TNA, 'Thailand To Report Southern Violence to Islamic World and To Set Up Panel To Investigate Mosque Raid: PM', 5 May 2004.

¹² *The Nation*, 'Fact-Finding Body Surprises Appointees', 5 May 2004. An inquiry was also launched into the Tak Bai deaths, but only after Thaksin had already offered plenty of opportunities for renewed criticism of his "typically defiant and self-righteous" approach, and his "glib and dismissive tone toward the protesters" (*Bangkok Post*, 'Southern Bloodshed Deserves Answers', 29 Oct 2004; 'Critics Renew Calls for an Apology From PM', 17 Nov 2004).

¹³ *Asia Times*, 'Round Two in Thailand's War on Evil', 24 Mar 2004.

¹⁴ On allegations of growing de facto press censorship in Thailand, see, for example: *The Nation*, 'Journalists Lament the Year They Were "Reined In" by Thaksin', 29 Dec 2003; 'A Matter of Concern to Everyone', 24 Feb 2004; 'Media Freedom: Ex-Editor of Post Confirms Meddling', 5 Mar 2004; 'More Power Taken From the People', 21 Jun 2003; *Bangkok Post*, 'Climate of Fear Puts Thai Media in Crisis', 27 Feb 2004; *The New York Times*, 'Editor Critical of Thai Leader Loses His Job', 23 Feb 2004. McCargo, however, also cautions: "Students of Thai media need to adopt a sceptical and questioning stance, never assuming that an open and vigorous media necessarily amounts to an effective and critical media. A close study of Thailand beautifully

illustrates the fact that a country's press may be simultaneously unfettered, dynamic, vigorous, unprofessional – and deeply untrustworthy" (Duncan McCargo, *Politics and the Press in Thailand: Media Machinations*, Bangkok: Garuda Press, 2002, p.252). It is also worth recalling that when Thai respondents were asked about their trust in social and political institutions, newspapers enjoyed the second lowest level of trust (Albritton and Thawilwadee, 'The Meaning of Democracy', p.16). On Thaksin's inability to handle criticism, even from the domestic arena, see, for example, *The Nation*, 'Thaksin Taught the Value of Criticism', 5 Dec 2003; 'One-Man Show Endangers Nation', 26 Jan 2004; 'Break Down Thaksin's Bad News "Firewall"', 29 Jan 2004; 'All Those Not in Favour Say "Bye"', 24 Feb 2004; 'The CEO Is Fuming, Keep Off the Grass', 1 Apr 2004. Sometimes, his desire to respond to criticism outweighs any other public relations considerations, as in the libel case against activist Supinya Klangnarong and the *Thai Post* newspaper (*The Nation*, 'The Saga of David and Goliath Continues at PM's Peril', 7 Sep 2004).

¹⁵ *The Nation*, "'Cover-Up' to 'Screw-Up': A Dubious Mutation", 5 Feb 2004.

¹⁶ *Bangkok Post*, 'PM Blasts Press 'Inaccuracy', Prefers Radio', 4 Mar 2004.

¹⁷ *The Nation*, 'PM Lectures Media, Calls Again For Restraint', 5 May 2004.

¹⁸ TNA, "'We're Close to Grabbing Them": PM', 2 May 2004.

¹⁹ *Bangkok Post*, 'PM Hits Out at Reports by Foreign Media; Government News Centre To Provide "Correct Info"', 7 May 2004. As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, Thaksin does have some cause to suspect the impartiality of some foreign media. Nevertheless, such newsworthy reactions are hardly the way to rectify the problem.

²⁰ *Bangkok Post*, 'PM Hits Out at Reports by Foreign Media; Government News Centre To Provide "Correct Info"', 7 May 2004. The news centre was to be set up by the Public Relations Department.

²¹ *Bangkok Post*, 'PM Lashes Watchdog for Criticism', 6 Aug 2004.

²² *The Nation*, 'The Foreign Media Gave the Bangkok APEC Meeting a Resounding Thumbs Down', 25 Oct 2003. See also *Bangkok Post*, 'Is it Hubris That Defines Thaksin?', 17 Oct 2003.

²³ The preparations for APEC were curiously reminiscent of those made for the World Bank/IMF meetings in Bangkok in October 1991, a few months after the Suchinda coup. See Murray, pp.12-13.

²⁴ *The Nation*, 'Thaksin Fails To Recognise Importance of NHRC [National Human Rights Committee] Report', 9 Aug 2004.

²⁵ *The Nation*, 'Thaksin Fails To Recognise Importance of NHRC Report', 9 Aug 2004.

²⁶ *The Nation*, 'King Wants Drug Toll Explained', 5 Dec 2003.

²⁷ *The Nation*, 'Sabre-Rattling Does Not Kill Bird Flu', 12 Feb 2004. In reaction to renewed bans on cooked chicken, Commerce Minister Watana Muangsook said: "We will ask Japan to resume buying cooked meat. If they still refuse without proper reason, that would be unfair. We may ask them to steam their Toyotas before exporting them here."

²⁸ *The Nation*, 'Thaksin's Message: "Unite and Eat Chicken"', 8 Feb 2004. Thaksin regularly seems to forget that remarks made extemporaneously to the "crowd" will rapidly be relayed in the English-language Thai press, and become accessible via Internet around the world.

²⁹ Clark, *Globalization and International Relations Theory*, p.82.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.85.

³¹ *Bangkok Post*, 'Ambassadors Told To Be Leaders', 5 Aug 2004.

³² Panithan Watthanayakorn, quoted in *The Nation*, "'Not-My-Father": Thaksin Retracts UN Jibe', 5 Mar 2003.

³³ *The Nation*, "'Not-My-Father": Thaksin Retracts UN Jibe', 5 Mar 2003.

³⁴ TNA, 'US Urged To Review Thailand's Human Rights Report', 28 Feb 2004. *The Nation* argued that it was "beyond the prime minister's comprehension why President Bush would allow such a critical report of Thailand's human rights record to come out", and quoted Thaksin as denouncing Bush as a "useless" and "annoying" friend (*The Nation*, "'Friend" – You've Got To Say it With Meaning', 2 Mar 2004).

³⁵ This initial miscalculation was compounded by attempts to portray the report as mistaken, and the subject of a "formal apology", whereas other accounts refer to the correction of just one error, and quote the US Embassy as dismissing claims of an apology. See TNA, 'US: Human Rights Allegations Were "Wrong"', 13 Mar 2004; 'US To

Review Report on Human Rights Situation in Thailand', 18 Mar 2004; 'US Apologises for Human Rights Allegations', 23 Mar 2004; *The Nation*, 'US Embassy Dismisses Apology Claim', 24 Mar 2004; *Bangkok Post*, 'US Stands By Report, but Removes Error; Claim About UN Cut, No Apology Offered', 25 Mar 2004.

³⁶ Hobson, p.10. Thaksin is likewise unable to grasp that strong state capacity is not produced or demonstrated by the wielding of despotic power – rather, strength is achieved through effective politics, which requires cooperation as opposed to abrasion with society (Hobson, p.238).

³⁷ Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order*, p.160.

³⁸ ibid., p.160.

³⁹ ibid., p.161. As Clark notes, this agenda did not arise with the end of the Cold War, but the demise of the Communist bloc provided a powerful opportunity for the reaffirmation of its assumptions.

⁴⁰ *The Nation*, 'Overconfidence Can Be Lethal in Foreign Affairs', 5 Jan 2004.

⁴¹ Shaw, 'The State of International Relations'.

⁴² Shaw, 'Unfinished Global Revolution', p.35.

⁴³ Mary Robinson.

⁴⁴ Barnett.

⁴⁵ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm; ratified by Thailand on 29 Oct 1996

('Human Rights Treaties and Agreements', http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/ihavearightto/four_b/treaties.shtml#).

This agreement stipulates that no-one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her life, and anyone charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law. Foreign Minister Surakiart also pledged in an address at the opening ceremony of the Ninth Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific Region, Bangkok, 28 Feb 2001, (<http://www.mfa.go.th/web/35.php?id=2408>): "In upholding the spirit of the new Constitution, this Government will, at the international level, remain committed to international human rights instruments to which Thailand becomes party."

⁴⁶ *Bangkok Post*, 'Is it Hubris That Defines Thaksin?' 17 Oct 2003.

⁴⁷ Kusuma, pp.191, 209.

⁴⁸ Thaksin, foreign policy statement delivered to Parliament on 26 February 2001, (<http://www.mfa.go.th/web/32.php>).

⁴⁹ Lynch, p.358. This again raises questions over the reaction to the drug war deaths. The overriding of the desire to assert a human rights-oriented identity in this instance suggests that the problem – the reason for the crackdown – had caused very deep national trauma.

⁵⁰ See Lynch, p.358, for examples.

⁵¹ Surakiart, 28 Feb 2001.

⁵² Lynch, p.358.

⁵³ Statement by Sorajak Kasemsuvan, vice-foreign minister and head of delegation at the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, Ulan Bator, 10 Sep 2003, <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/35.php?id=5735>.

⁵⁴ Surakiart, statement at the 57th Session of the Commission on Human Rights, 2 Apr 2001, Geneva, <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/35.php?id=2412>.

⁵⁵ See, for example, *Bangkok Post*, 'Killings Put Nation Under Negative Light', 11 Dec 2003; 'Critics Blame Murders on PM's "Policy of Violence"', 19 Jul 2004; *The Nation*, 'PM's Dominance Denying All Others Space', 26 May 2004; 'Are NGOs in it for the Money or Are They Just Anarchists?', 14 Jul 2004; 'The Sangha's Role in National Development', 18 Aug 2004. Hewison notes that many NGOs and other groups distanced themselves from Thaksin after initial support (Hewison, 'The Politics of Neo-Liberalism', p.12; see also Glassman, pp.54-58).

⁵⁶ Speeches in subsequent years revisit the same themes. See Surakiart, statement at 58th Session of Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, 26 Mar 2002, <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/35.php?id=2424>; and Sorajak, statement at 59th Session of Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, 21 Mar 2003, <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/35.php?id=4097>.

⁵⁷ Surakiart, 2 Apr 2001.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Kishore Mahbubani, 'An Asian Perspective on Human Rights and Freedom of the Press', in *Can Asians Think?*, Kishore Mahbubani, Singapore: Times Books International, 2000, pp.57-80.

⁵⁹ Mary Robinson.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ Surakiart, 2 Apr 2001.

⁶² *Asiaweek*, 'ASEAN's Iconoclasts: Thailand Is Shaking Up the Status Quo in Foreign Relations', 14 Aug 1998; Lynch, p.357. On Thailand's relations with Myanmar, its "unprecedented efforts to seek democratic change within ASEAN" during the mid- and late 1990s, and other attempts to promote democracy internationally, see Lynch, pp.352-357, and Kusuma, p.197.

⁶³ *The Nation*, 'Burma, ASEAN, Democracy, Dreams, and Realities', 13 July 1999, quoted in Kusuma, p.199. Comparisons can be made with India's changing stance. See *Bangkok Post*, 'Delhi Moving Closer to Burmese Junta', 27 Oct 2004.

⁶⁴ Kusuma, pp.197-202.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, pp.201-202.

⁶⁶ *The Nation*, 'Overconfidence Can Be Lethal in Foreign Affairs', 5 Jan 2004; *Bangkok Post*, 'Thaksin: Carrot, Not the Stick, the Only Way Forward', 22 Oct 2004. Thaksin has also been accused of allowing his Myanmar policy to be shaped by family investment concerns. See *The Nation*, 'Burma-Thai Relations: US Senator Slams PM', 4 Mar 2004.

⁶⁷ *Bangkok Post*, 'Living With Burma: ASEAN Cannot Continue Accommodating Junta', 28 Jun 2004.

⁶⁸ *Asia Times*, 'EU's Myanmar Move Risks ASEM Ties', 11 Aug 2004.

⁶⁹ *ibid.* The report continues: "Just as it was a miscalculation on the EU side to believe that South Africa's President Mbeki ... would be inclined and have the leverage to influence changes in Zimbabwe's policies, it is misguided to believe that increased EU pressure on other ASEAN member states will make a significant impact on their policies toward Myanmar."

⁷⁰ Morton Abramowitz, in *The Washington Post*, 'Time To Lean on Thailand', 9 Jun 2003. For critical comments on US Myanmar policy, see *Asia Times*, 'Washington's Myanmar Bashing', 22 Oct 2004.

⁷¹ *Asiaweek*, 'ASEAN's Iconoclasts: Thailand Is Shaking Up the Status Quo in Foreign Relations', 14 Aug 1998; Lynch, p.356.

⁷² The policies Surin and Sukhumband put forward were also so openly identified with American interests that the two were accused of being "lackeys of the Americans" – a particularly negative association in the climate of 1998 (*Asiaweek*, 'ASEAN's Iconoclasts: Thailand Is Shaking Up the Status Quo in Foreign Relations', 14 Aug 1998). This is again of dubious value for democracy propagation.

⁷³ Woods ('Political Economy', p.11) notes that economically "strong" states which have exerted control over their degree of economic integration are often also "ferocious guardians of their independence in foreign policy, human rights and security issues, as well as their own domestic political arrangements". Thaksin's ambitions definitely fall into this pattern. This is unfortunate, as states would find greater scope to survive and manage the two facets of globalization – economic and political – if these two packages were deconstructed.

Conclusion

It is with good reason that the impact of globalization has become a "source of endless debate".¹ Its effects on Thailand's democratization process have been correspondingly varied. Economic globalization has been both celebrated for its potential to promote democratization and excoriated for its ability to subvert and dilute it. Thailand offers ample evidence of its capacity to do both at the same time. But while this environment undoubtedly poses considerable management challenges, especially for weaker democratizing states, the Thai experience indicates that it *is* manageable. There is room for manoeuvre. Non-conformist solutions are possible.

The political aspects of globalization, on the other hand, tend to attract less criticism – indeed, the structural changes they encompass are often greeted with enthusiasm as intrinsically favourable to democratization and the promotion of human rights. Yet Thailand's situation suggests that these potentially constitute a more subtle but much greater challenge to genuine democratization. Ironically, the international climate that has been deemed so propitious for the global spread of democracy may in some cases be proving to be its most insidious enemy, and the hegemony of a certain strand of liberal democracy may be impeding the search for "better alternatives" that could more satisfactorily meet democratic and participatory aspirations both in Thailand and the rest of the world.² In this light, "the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism" can hardly be a subject of rejoicing for partially democratized, partially globalized states like Thailand.³

Globalization and democratization in Thailand

This thesis used the backdrop of globalization to contextualize recent developments in Thailand's democratization process. Chapter 1 began by examining definitions of democratization and globalization, pointed to the highly contingent and complex nature of their interaction, and emphasized the interplay of structure and agency in mediating between the two processes.

Chapter 2 then considered the proposition that economic globalization might contribute to democratization, via modernization and/or economic structural change. It concluded that economic globalization has both helped and hindered Thailand's democratization process. Chapter 3 went on to examine Thaksin's agential responses to the structural constraints and opportunities of economic globalization, assessing them against the yardstick of their potential to improve the climate for democratization. It concluded that his policy thrust, if not the policies themselves, did have such beneficial potential. Notwithstanding charges of nationalism and populism, Thaksin effectively broadened the space for political choice. By offering voters a platform combining localism and globalism, he enabled them to regain a sense of reclaiming the initiative in the process of economic globalization. By stressing the importance of inclusive economic growth, and actively promoting concrete measures to help Thailand's poor, he introduced an agenda focus that has the potential to bring poorer people more directly into the political mainstream.

Chapter 4 next considered the proposition that the changes in transnational structure wrought by political globalization – growing interconnectedness and the increasing salience of the democratic norm advocated by the "global state conglomerate" – might be favourable to Thai democratization. It concluded that they had such potential, but the partial nature of political globalization, together with the one-sided model of democracy that it sometimes intentionally promotes and always

powerfully projects, means that considerable reservations must surround such a conclusion. Chapter 5 then viewed Thaksin's agential responses to the structural positives and negatives inherent in political globalization, again measuring these responses according to their capacity to promote democratization. It argued that Thaksin's policies in this area lacked the vision needed to strengthen Thailand's role in the international democratic community. His intolerance of international criticism, the negative aspects of his nationalism, and his failure to recognize, adapt to, and manipulate the new power structures of international society have led to reactions and pronouncements that weaken Thai democracy in the eyes of the world, and undermine the global democratic dialogue needed to support the aspirations of bottom-up democracy in all societies. In the political realm, he has failed to promote the local element that is so necessary for healthy democracy.

The search for local solutions

Sustaining and consolidating the democratization process in face of the challenges of economic and political globalization certainly seems to require a greater emphasis on local solutions. In Thailand's case, Thaksin has pointed to some of the options available in the economic arena. Admittedly, his shallow commitment to democracy has meant that their implementation has fallen far short of their democratic potential. Nevertheless, his emphasis on economic autonomy, home-grown solutions, local creativity, national distinctiveness, innovative recipes for growth, and commitment to poverty alleviation is an emphasis that must surely be noted by policy-makers keen to manage globalization in a way that supports democratization. It is not an emphasis that has always been greeted with enthusiasm by the international economic community. This is unfortunate, as reluctance to countenance locally driven solutions can exacerbate nationalistic defensiveness in ways ultimately harmful to democratization.

In the political arena, however, the local solutions that can promote democratization in a climate of globalization have not been adequately harnessed. The germs of such solutions can probably be found in Thailand's village communities, social movements, and monasteries, but Thaksin has displayed little willingness to comprehend their relevance. The climate of political globalization similarly offers little encouragement to their development and expression because it simply sees no need for them. As a democratization expert wrote:

The democratic systems of Costa Rica, Great Britain, India, Sweden, the United States, and so forth each have their particular features. But what matters most is that they share basic elements of an underlying liberal democratic model. What is notable about the recent democratic trend is the similarity of the political aspirations of such different societies, from Mongolia to Mali to Macedonia, and the conformance of those aspirations to that basic model.... In general, ... the notion fashionable in the 1970s that democracy would branch out into a range of fundamentally different forms ... has lost much credibility. Telling a young, politically active Latin American or East European that "of course your country doesn't want Western-style democracy; I know you want to find your own special path based on your own national traditions" is effectively an insult.⁴

These comments showcase a number of assumptions frequently expressed, explicitly or implicitly, in Western pronouncements on democracy. No distinction is made, for example, between the similarity of political aspirations and the similarity of the vehicle chosen to satisfy them. No suspicion is voiced that the former may be genuine, and the latter artificial. No acknowledgment is made of the pervasiveness of the dominant democratic model, or the difficulty of composing one's own distinctive music in a room where a rich and powerful competitor is already broadcasting prestigious tunes that it promises are the best available. Thailand has indigenous traditions that it could build on, and philosophies that could contribute to better alternatives for the wider world. Yet the pursuit of élite-led, top-down liberal democracy means that these often have difficulty gaining traction. After all, the democracy specialist cited above greets with evident relief the homogenizing process that flattens the notion of different forms of democracy.⁵ It is taken for granted that a non-Westerner's "own special path" based on her "own national traditions" must necessarily be so inferior that its recommendation would be regarded as an insult. Neither is it recognized

that the non-Western activist's response may differ markedly according to whether she is a member of the élite, who is broadly content with the national and global status quo, or a rural peasant, who is not.

The Thai case suggests a troubling analogy between the democracy developed and advocated by the global state conglomerate, and that promoted by the powerful Thai middle-class elements who framed the 1997 constitution. At the heart of the 1990s reforms, suggests Ockey, lies a "possessiveness toward democracy" on the part of the middle classes, a desire to eliminate the negative elements that thwarted their electoral will, while increasing their control over the political process and "their" democracy.⁶ The Thai middle class thoroughly distrusts the lower classes and their "inadequate" grasp of democracy, and sees a need to carefully regulate their political space until education has enabled these classes to understand democracy properly.⁷ "Once *they* understand as well as we do," the argument seems to go, "they will want and can have the right political things."

A similarly proprietary, paternalistic, and tutelary attitude pervades much Western thinking with regard to non-democratic and democratizing polities.⁸ Pressure, direct or indirect, for a particular brand of democracy is an educative process, an attempt to target particular bugbears (unpredictable authoritarianism, investor-hostile environments, people flows, security concerns), and allow Western states to increase the range of influence of "their" democracy. Like the Thai middle class, the conglomerate seems less interested in seeking out indigenous patterns of participation, and supporting the integration of those traditions, than in ensuring that everyone ticks off the same checklists, and essentially does the democratic "right thing". It cannot draw up a formal constitution for its democratizing pupils, but the next best thing is to exert concerted pressure to join the liberal democratic club. Such pressure is seen as one of the "means by which the political will for democracy is generated and entrenched".⁹ The problem, of course, in Thailand and globally, is that tutelary approaches even of the mildest nature can just as easily ensure

that the "political will for democracy" is stifled, diluted, distorted, or antagonized.

The Thai élite's unwillingness to accept "them" as "they" are, and its restriction of empowerment to the route that the élite itself has taken – "to have what we have, you must want what we want for you, and *become like us*" – makes Thailand in some ways a microcosm of the dynamic at work between established democracies and those deemed to be less advanced on the democratic road. It is perhaps no surprise if gatekeepers reflect back what they allow to enter, and have the capacity to mirror the original image in a way that is a little too realistic to be comfortable.

This parallel not only underlines the extent of the capacity for alliance between global stakeholders and the Thai middle class that was highlighted in Chapter 2, but also acts as a reminder that not all the blame for the problem of Thai élite-dominated democracy can be laid at the door of the West and political globalization. As Thongchai notes, there is no globalization without localization – ideas can be globalized only because they can be localized. Thus, no such process as globalization is possible without an agency that translates, adapts, and selects the alien elements of one culture into a form that survives and evolves further in the local context.¹⁰ The local agency that does the translating and transforming can clearly not be interest-free or ideology-free, and the middle class that was largely responsible for the democracy translation process clearly had its own agenda in mind.¹¹ While democracy must inevitably maintain safeguards to protect minorities of any description against the dictatorship of the majority, it is hard to believe that the current balance is right, either in Thailand or in the world at large.

The need for local solutions suggests a wealth of topics for future research. These might include a more detailed examination not only of the potential for indigenous Thai traditions of participation to be identified and integrated into national democracy, but also of the process by which a variety of agents localize external democratic influences. A comparison

of leadership strategies for managing the structural environment of economic and political globalization constitutes another such topic, as some of these solutions will inevitably be more favourable to democratization than others. The issues of nationalism and populism are particularly intriguing here. How does Thaksin's populism compare with that of Hugo Chavez or Vladimir Putin, for example, and how can Thaksin's alleged "economic nationalism" be contextualized?¹² Thaksin and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva have attracted particular attention as "shapers of revised geo-economic strategies for emerging economies" – leaders who have replaced "trust in Western-dominated liberalism" with "efforts to find a place for self-identity and self-generated policies".¹³ Are any broad implications for democratization discernible in policies of "economic nationalism"? Can equivalent strategies be identified for managing the pressures of political globalization, and in the pursuit of "self-identity and self-generated policies", how can the positive aspects of nationalism be protected from the negative ones? If it is accepted that the sharing of "basic elements of an underlying liberal democratic model" is *not* necessarily "what matters most", then the scope for researching local solutions becomes enormous.

Covering a dead elephant with a lotus leaf

Globalization is not an unstoppable, all-flattening steamroller. It is managed and shaped by a large array of agents. Smaller, middle-income states are not deprived of room for manoeuvre, but the most powerful agents in the global community – both electors and elected – bear a particularly heavy responsibility in this shaping process. That globalization is all too frequently "a tangible expression of the inequalities of the international system" is a result of agential choice, not divine fiat.¹⁴ The powerful should beware, though. As the Thai proverb puts it, "When the water rises, the fish eat the ants; when the water falls, the ants eat the fish."¹⁵ Those with the most power – who are often those who shout

loudest for "freedom and democracy" – neglect their long-term interest by failing to enable all states to play more of a part in shaping the kind of globalization that would not only ensure a more equitable economic future for the majority of the world's inhabitants, but also create a more hospitable climate for deep-rooted democratization. The latter goal starts with a recognition by the powerful that democracy is not "theirs".

Democratizing nations like Thailand have a huge contribution to make in the search for "better alternatives" to the globally dominant norm. This contribution is hampered, however, by power disparities both at home and abroad. The top-down democratic establishment agenda and the bottom-up democratic revolutionary agenda – potentially converging but frequently incompatible pro-democracy forces – are inextricably entangled in today's unipolar, partially globalized, partially democratized world. This complicates the emergence of alternative norms able to challenge dominant Western patterns, and satisfy the aspirations of those who, globally and locally, have been left behind by liberal democracy's tolerance of a far from perfect status quo. Preventing the top-down agenda from swamping its bottom-up counterpart is possibly one of the most critical tasks facing democracy today, both in Thailand and the rest of the world. It is not only the so-called democratizing nations who will lose out if this task is bungled. The established liberal democratic polities who spearheaded and still powerfully shape globalization need to recognize that pretending all is well in their own democratic world is truly a case of "covering a dead elephant with a lotus leaf".¹⁶

Endnotes to Conclusion

¹ Woods, 'Political Economy', p.7.

² Diamond, 'Universal Democracy?'; Levine, pp.392-393.

³ Fukuyama.

⁴ Thomas Carothers, 'Think Again: Democracy', *Foreign Policy*, 107:11 (Summer 1997), page numbers not available in Internet format.

⁵ See also Steve Smith, 'US Democracy Promotion', pp.67-72; Jason Ralph, 'High Stakes', pp.214-215.

⁶ Ockey, *Making Democracy*, pp.166-170.

⁷ ibid., pp.166-170. The 1997 constitution, for example, targeted particular phenomena (vote-buying and corruption) that were perceived as undermining middle-class democratic power, mandated a national education policy that would teach democratic principles, and by insisting that all candidates must have a university degree, effectively barred the lower classes from running for Parliament.

⁸ This stance has a long history, and many liberal writers have displayed a paternalistic attitude toward their own populations. John Stuart Mill's recommendation of a system of plural voting, for example, stemmed from a position of "educational élitism", which allotted the leading political role in society to a class of intellectuals. While "fully committed to the moral development of all individuals", this is a view which "simultaneously justifies substantial inequalities in order for the educators to be in a position to educate the ignorant" (Held, pp.108-109, 117). Neither did misgivings about the role of "the masses" disappear with the 20th and 21st centuries. It may no longer be fashionable to refer to the "common herd", but different terminology often conceals very similar sentiments (see Arblaster, pp.49-52).

⁹ Diamond, 'Universal Democracy?'. Just such an approach is manifested in an article – aptly entitled 'Our Way or the Highway' – advocating the establishment of an "alliance of democracies", which "countries could join as they demonstrated a deeply rooted commitment to democratic governance", and membership of which "could provide a powerful incentive for democratising countries to complete their journey" (Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, 'An Alliance of Democracies: Our Way or the Highway', <http://www.brookings.edu/views/op-ed/daalder/20041106.htm>, published in *Financial Times*, 6 Nov 2004). It is hard to imagine such an alliance showing much patience with struggles to locate and establish indigenous traditions of democracy.

¹⁰ Thongchai, pp.82, 85.

¹¹ ibid., p.85. See also Ockey, *Making Democracy*, p.3.

¹² See *The New York Times*, 'Hugo Chavez Wins', 18 Aug 2004; Ivan Briscoe, 'Beyond the Zero Sum: From Chavez to Lula', *openDemocracy*, 30 Jul 2003, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-3-33-1396.jsp>; David Marquand, 'One Nation Under Blair: An Interview With David Marquand', *openDemocracy*, 30 Sep 2004, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-6-28-2131.jsp>. Populism is of course not limited to middle-income states, as Marquand makes clear in discussing Tony Blair, George Bush, and Silvio Berlusconi. Da Silva, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Vladimir Putin also invoked economic nationalism in their election rhetoric, and received first a "hostile reception from the investing community" and then plaudits as their policies seemed to enjoy some success (*India Times*, 'When Left Is Right for Investors', 19 May 2004).

¹³ *The Nation*, 'Can Thais Samba With the Brazilians?', 18 Feb 2004.

¹⁴ Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation*, p.197.

¹⁵ Mont Redmond, *Wondering Into Thai Culture*, Bangkok: Redmondian Insight Enterprises, 1998, p.260.

¹⁶ ibid., p.259.

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