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Monopolizing, Mutualizing, or Muddling Through: Factions and Party Management in Contemporary Thailand

Paul W. Chambers and Aurel Croissant

Abstract: In democracies throughout the world, intra-party factions manifest themselves in parties and governments. Formal and informal institutions have, however, proved crucial in managing factionalism. This is especially true in Thailand's emerging parliamentary democracy where the management of factionalism has become a major objective for Thai parties. This study explores factions and factionalism as well as how different types of parties try to manage intra-party dissension especially in the case of Thailand. The findings suggest that management style tends to be a function of a party's organization, with parties which practice a collegial style tending to be the more successful in controlling intra-party cliques over time. At the same time, the most important tools which party leaderships can use to control factions are the careful use of constitutional provisions and manipulation of party finance.

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Keywords: Thailand, faction, factionalism, management, institution, party

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1 Introduction

This study¹ examines intra-party factionalism, especially with regard to the case of Thailand. Factionalism – a commonality in Thai parties – is significant primarily because intra-party disputes can destabilize parties and, indirectly, coalitions. Indeed, in many emerging democracies such as Thailand's, loose coalition governments provisionally exist within a highly regulated, though extremely oligopolistic, political bazaar. Yet because Thai parties only weakly cohere, intra-party factions are important actors in their own right. Because of factions' potential clout, it should come as no surprise that efforts have been made to manage them. Such management is imperative to building stability within not only parties, but coalitions, the Council of Ministers, and parliament itself. Some party leaderships have succeeded in monopolizing party control, others have mutualized a consensus among factions, while still others have muddled through factional management – often only establishing temporary intra-party compromises. All parties, however, have been forced to deal with factionalism, using various tools or institutions. Amidst a dearth of literature on the management of factions particularly in new democracies, this study explores party management in the case of Thailand.²

The effective management of factions is crucial because it enables a party's internal cohesion and ability to work within cabinets and parliament, thus ensuring democratic stability, an essential issue for young democracies. Yet a thorough understanding of management style necessitates comprehension of factions and factionalism as well as how different types of parties connect with party leaderships' attempts to rein in intra-party dissension. In an effort to address these issues, this study analyzes the following questions. What are factions? What gives rise to factionalism? What might explain the behavior of parliamentary actors, specifically factions? How do parties vary in their management of factional conflict? What explains differences in management style across parties? The findings suggest that in highly-factionalized parties such as in Thailand, their approach to the management of factions is a function of their party organizational type.

1 Research for this article was funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). An earlier version of this article was presented at the 5th ECPR General Conference 2009, Potsdam, Germany.

2 Works relating to the management of factionalism have either been limited to cases in Europe (Waller and Gillespie 1995) or longer-established democracies (Boucek 2001, 2009).

2 Factions and Factionalism

In a pioneering work on the subject, Beller and Belloni define faction as any relatively organized group that exists within the context of some other group and which (as a political faction) competes with rivals for power advantages within the larger group of which it is a part (Belloni and Beller 1978: 419).

Thus, political factions can be defined as the often temporary grouping together of Members of Parliament (MPs) and their support groups both within and apart from an overarching party structure. Boucek defines factionalism as

the partitioning of a political party (or other organization and group) into subunits which are more or less institutionalized and who engage in collective action in order to achieve their members' particular objectives (Boucek 2009: 468).

Such factionalism can be cooperative, competitive, or degenerative. Cooperative factionalism can be good for parties and democracy since it can integrate the opinions of intra-party groups. Competitive factionalism likewise facilitates democracy since it provides for the circulation of factional elites, thus smoothing out intra-party conflicts. Yet degenerative factionalism hinders democratic stability since its prioritization of patronage can lead to the disintegration of parties or coalitions of which the party is a member (Boucek 2009: 469-48). It is this third variant which the management of factions particularly seeks to guard against.

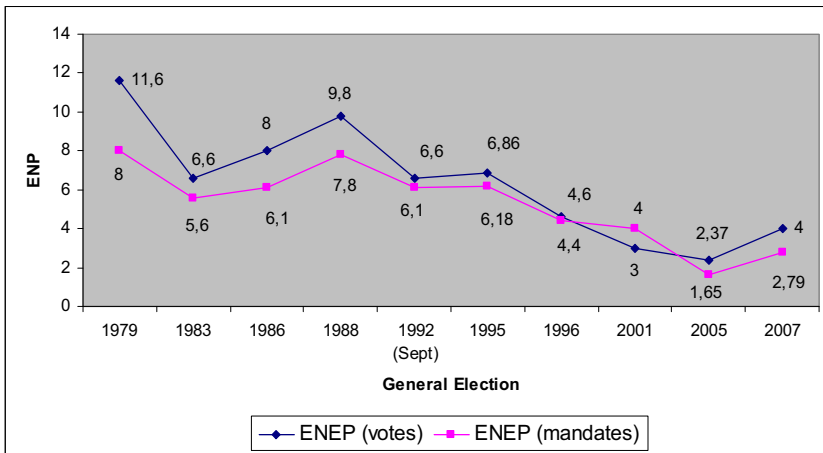
3 Parties and Factions in Contemporary Thailand

When Thailand has had elected or semi-elected governments (at least since 1975), it has tended to experience multi-partyism along with multi-factionalism. Measuring such phenomena necessitates the use of mathematical formulas such as the reciprocal of the Hirschman-Herfindahl index, which can be used to delineate the effective number of parties and factions.³ Starting from 1979 to 2001, there often were as many as 16 relevant parties in Thailand competing in an election, and the effective number of parliamen-

3 The effective number of parties/factions in parliament can be calculated by squaring each party's/faction's share of seats, adding all the values together and calculating the inverse value. See Laakso and Taagepera 1979.

tary political parties hovered around 6.0. After the enactment of the 1997 constitution (which buttressed party power) as well as the rise of Thaksin Shinawatra’s Thai Rak Thai party to prominence, the effective number dropped from 4.6 (1996) to 1.6 in the 2005 election. In 2007, following passage of the 2007 constitution, it climbed again to 2.79 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Effective Number of Parliamentary and Electoral Parties



Note: The 2001 and 2005 elections were held under the auspices of the reformist 1997 constitution. During the 2006 election, the opposition parties refused to field candidates. Besides Thai Rak Thai, only one minor party managed to win seats. The 2007 numbers represents the effective number of electoral/assembly parties following that year’s election.

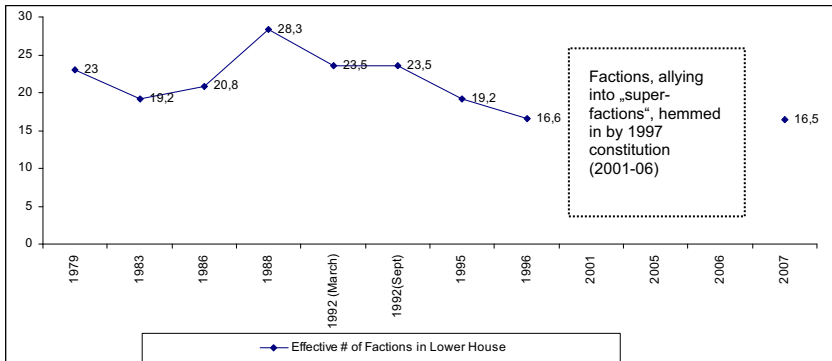
Source: Authors’ calculations based upon data from the Election Commission of Thailand.

As for the effective number of parliamentary factions across these elections, the period 1979-2007 has shown first, a rise in their numbers (1988), second, a diminishing in their quantity and a growth in their size until 2006, and third, a re-expansion of their numbers amidst reduced factional size in 2007 (see Figure 2). What accounts for these fluctuations? Following the 1996 election, the two largest parties (Democrat and New Aspiration) each held over 120 seats in parliament. Such relative party size meant that factions were compelled to expand in membership (an indicator of their weakness) to maintain effective voice, and as such they merged with other smaller factions, a phenomenon which slightly reduced their number. The number of factions dropped precipitously in 2001 following the election of Thaksin Shinawatra. Candidates were elected under the single member district plurality system (established under the 1997 constitution). This system was more expensive for candidates than its predecessor, allowing only wealthy factions

to compete successfully. Thaksin’s party Thai Rak Thai (TRT) was a particularly large party in terms of seats. Because of the sizeable number of smaller factions within TRT, they merged together into larger intra-party groupings (e.g. *Wang Nam Yen*, *Wang Bua Ban*).

At the same time, factions fluctuated in membership and began to exhibit more party discipline. Ultimately, a general level of factional harmony within TRT developed during 2001 to 2006, owing to both charter restrictions on factional maneuverings and Thaksin’s personalist and balanced management style. The 2006 coup against Thaksin decapitated an able personalist party manager from his party. This, followed by the dissolution of Thai Rak Thai in 2007 disrupted the management style of TRT under Thaksin. TRT’s proxy successor parties (*Palang Prachachon* and *Puea Thai*) were never as successful. Meanwhile, as is stated below (see Section 6), structural changes following the enactment of the 2007 constitution allowed factions greater power relative to party leaderships (Chambers 2008a). Indeed, as of 2010, factions seem to be growing in number and they appear to have regained some of their autonomous tendencies (e.g. in 2008 the faction of Newin Chidchob bolted to a new party).

Figure 2: Effective Number of Factions in Thailand (1979-2007)



Source: Chambers 2008b.

3.1 Causes of Factionalism: in General and in Thailand

Overall, what gives rise to factionalism? Zariski (1978) considered four possible causes: the electoral system, the multi-party system, party organization, and socio-cultural reasons. First, the use of multi-member district plurality electoral systems forces candidates to run not only against candidates from other parties but also against candidates in their own party. Sec-

ond, where there are many parties, there can be more factions in each party because the given faction has more opportunities to switch to another party. Third, where party organization is decentralized, factions can predominate. Fourth, where socio-economic conditions have imbedded patron-client relations in emerging democracies, such conditions can give rise to intra-party factionalism (see Zariski 1978).

Two other causes can be located in the case of Thailand. This includes power aggrandizement through the quota system. That is, a large enough faction (which is part of the ruling coalition) guarantees itself some voice in party affairs as well as at least one cabinet portfolio or other posts, which allows for rent havens for recouping election losses,⁴ building campaign war chests, or attracting more MPs to the faction. Intra-party conflicts over government postings necessitate that bigwigs seeking them attract enough party followers to increase their “voice.” As such, intra-party conflicts can lead to the formation or expansion of factions. A final cause which has led to reinforcement of factionalism is party reliance on voter-canvassing networks and related local support groups which are in actuality not controlled by a party’s central office but by regional factions. Successful MPs often owe such a faction at least as much loyalty as the party which hosts the faction. These factors can all encourage factionalism, and all six causes can be found in Thailand (Chambers 2003: 86).

3.2 Thailand’s Institutionalization of Factions

Factionalism in Thailand has engendered intra-party conflict where factions compete with each other for seat(s) in the cabinet, “the disgruntled losers often seeking to topple ministers within their own party” (Ockey 1994: 265). Such factional bickering has given rise to the negotiating of informal intra-party institutions – “gentlemen’s agreements” – to swap seats between factions every six months (hence cabinet reshuffles every six months), leading to concerns that governments might become destabilized.⁵

Factions became increasingly institutionalized in Thai politics given the expansion of political parties during the 1980s as well as effects from the use of multi-member district magnitude during elections (Chambers 2003: 86-

4 Rent-seeking behavior refers to when one actor expends resources in order to cause an uncompensated transfer of goods or services from another actor or actors to the first actor’s self as the result of a “favorable” decision on some public policy. See North 1990.

5 Information gleaned from *Bangkok Post* 1999b; *Bangkok Post* 2008; personal interview, Anusorn Wongwan, son of politico Narong Wongwan, former cabinet minister and MP for Thai Rak Thai, People’s Power Party, 20 October 2008.

88). Their growing clout was facilitated by ambiguous laws relating to political parties as well as the election system. Neither the 1981 Political Party Act nor the 1991 Constitution effectively curbed factionalism though both enactments sought to develop Thai political parties into Duvergian mass parties (see Duverger 1954), stipulating for instance that parties must compete for at least 25% of all electoral seats, and that candidate finance must be limited to 350,000 THB each (McCargo 1997: 269). Moreover, Thailand's pre-1997 usage of a multimember plurality electoral system (MMP) encouraged MP candidates to run against each other at election time while forcing these people to attach themselves to certain affluent factional bigwigs.

The 1997 constitution, however, effectively put a squeeze on intra-party cliques (Chambers 2003: 112). Indeed, this charter was essential to establishing the heightened control of political party leaderships over their members, providing Thaksin Shinawatra the institutional wherewithal to guarantee his democratic means of ascent and ability to maintain a strong party structure. His party Thai Rak Thai was extremely verticalized and organized. Yet so was the Thai military (and its royalist allies). Eventually, trouble brewed between them, and with Thaksin refusing to buckle under, a coup d'état finally occurred. Following the voiding of the 1997 charter, drafters drew up the 2007 constitution, specifically designed to re-enfeeble parties and undermine parliamentary rule precisely so that strong parties (such as Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai) could never again threaten entrenched social forces and interests such as the monarchy, military and old established metropolitan businesses (Chambers 2008a: 53-54, see Section 5). Both the 1997 and 2007 constitutions have served as sites "of social and political conflict and a means to structure and limit political participation" (Hewison 2007: 929). Moreover, the 2007 constitution effectively stimulated the impoverishment of party strength and re-invigoration of intra-party factions (Chambers 2008a: 53-54). Today, factions have re-established their pre-1997 role as important actors in the making and breaking of parties and cabinets.⁶

4 Making Sense of Intra-Party Behavior

To conceptualize intra-party factionalism in disjointed party systems such as that in Thailand, this study, borrowing from transaction costs analysis (TCA), postulates that in the marketplace, transactions by multiple actors regularly

6 It has been demonstrated that multiple Thai parties and factions significantly influenced durability in Thai coalitions, parliaments, and Councils of Ministers from 1979 to 2001 with numbers of factions being more significant than parties. See Chambers 2008b.

and rapidly occur. These transactions become costly primarily because information is incomplete and the market environment is uncertain. This makes contracts difficult to measure and hard to enforce (North 1990). Two behavioral assumptions undergird TCA (Williamson 1985). First, actors use bounded rationality: decisions are made on the basis of partial information and preference-satisficing rather than preference-maximizing (Simon 1961). Bargains – spontaneous and easily collapsible – are the result. Secondly, actors are opportunistic, defined by Williamson as “self-interest seeking with guile” (Williamson 1985: 47). Taken together, bounded rationality and opportunism exacerbate the risks and costs of market transactions. To overcome intra-party transaction problems, actors often agree to establish institutions that impose costs on opportunistic behavior, disciplining dishonest agents, and improving the flow of information. The assumption is that structured political exchange will nurture stability (Cox and McCubbins 1993: 83-135). Still, in many parts of the developing world (political market-places), emerging democracies have continued to experience institutional disarray and political instability. Thailand is such a country. From 1979 to 1997, and 2007 to the present, its constitutions have allowed numerous decentralized parties and numerous powerful factions to exist side by side.

4.1 A Nested Network of Games

The complexity of inter- and intra-firm bargaining necessitates a focus on inter-actor behavior (parliamentary bargaining, cooperation, and conflict situations), which Tsebelis (1990) calls “nested games” – occurring simultaneously at the party and factional level of the parliamentary system (Tsebelis 1990). Parties and factions are the units of analysis since parties are *formal* (legally-formalized), partisan veto players while factions are *de facto* though interest-maximizing veto players as well.⁷ Yet the extent to which factions become veto players depends upon a) the management style of the party and b) the size of the faction relative to the total size of the party (i.e. if a faction is small, its opportunities to challenge the party leadership diminish). All intra-party factions are involved in leverage tussle, seeking to maximize gains and minimize losses. Party leaderships also aim to achieve the highest payoffs – maintaining the top posts of party leader and secretary general while shaping strategies to control factions, managing the flow of party finance and applying by-laws – to maximize party payoffs.

Factions possess significant advantages over institutionalized parties. First, unlike parties, factions are not legally institutionalized since few laws

7 Individual Members of Parliament must assemble into parties and can unite in factions. See Tsebelis 1995.

pertain specifically to factions. Thus, each MP must legally identify with a single party. On the other hand, the membership of factions, though perhaps known by party leaders, is not legally regulated. At times, this allows factions an informational advantage over party leaderships or rival factions in terms of the exact factional membership, longevity or level of coherence. Information uncertainty sometimes allows factions to misrepresent themselves in terms of membership numbers and make threats to opponents that the latter must pause to consider (though parties can also make threats). Ultimately, unlike parties, a higher modicum of bounded rationality must be applied towards factions. Secondly, lacking the constant legal scrutiny confronted by parties, factions generally possess autonomy in terms of organization and finance relative to their party, giving factions greater maneuverability.

Yet factions also face three potential constraints. This includes a) laws or by-laws; b) lack of clear information about the resources, strategies, and goals of party leaderships or other factions; and c), the often brief or uncertain state of a factional lifespan.

The significance of inter- and intra-party nested games – occurring simultaneously at different levels – is that they can affect party, coalition, and parliamentary stability (Tsebelis 1990). Factions immersed in these games (generally and in Thailand) meddle in politics in several ways. First, factions bitterly compete for cabinet seats, sometimes precipitating reshuffles; second, factions become involved in choices of coalition partners; third, factions affect the level of a party's commitment to a ruling coalition; fourth, factions influence the hammering out of coalition (and quota share) agreements; fifth, factions affect the timing of coalition formation; sixth, factions influence whether a party will follow the coalition consensus; and seventh, factions can determine whether a party will remain in or bow out of ruling coalitions/cabinets (Maor 1998; Ockey 1994). As such, a balancing of factions – through a combination of institutional restraints and appeasement – has generally been essential to securing intra-party and coalitional stability.

In Thailand parties are merely coalitional groupings of non-ideological factions held together through the use of a myriad of payoffs and penalties. A party's dominant faction generally controls the party leadership and/or secretary-general positions. With often-changing constitutions, and a parliamentary system composed of multiple fragmented parties, nested games and factionalism tend to be endemic to Thailand.

5 Carrots and Sticks: Managing Intra-Party Conflict

“For as long as parties have existed, party management has been an organizational necessity, and for party managers, factions are bad news” (Waller and Gillespie 1995: 1). Given factionalism’s tendency to undermine verticalized party cohesion and destabilize coalitions, party leaders must settle intra-party disputes to ensure harmony. Indeed, mismanagement can aggravate factionalism or even obliterate a party (Boucek 2009: 477). As such, it becomes imperative for party leaders to effectively manage their factions. What then explains management style, what kinds are there, and what tools are most common or efficacious in managing factional friction? This section addresses this question.

5.1 Types of Parties and Party Management Styles

Party management styles refer to the behavior approaches used by a party leadership in overseeing party activities and minimizing intra-party dissension. They involve a myriad of strategies pacifying and pressuring intra-party cliques to tow the line of party leaders. For example, in Thailand, if a party controls a ruling coalition, an able party manager must ensure a balanced allocation of ministerial seats among the factions.⁸ By necessity this means that the party leader must ensure that no one faction obtains more payoffs relative to other factions or at the expense of others. Party leaders can use a “carrot” approach, giving in to factional demands for income, policy, posting, even delegating to the faction greater authority or autonomy, thus increasing the space of factional flexibility. But too much “carrot” can intensify into “degenerative factionalism” (Boucek 2009: 477). Party leaders can also use the “stick” to rein in recalcitrant party cliques. This involves the careful use of withholding spoils to uncooperative factions. In addition, party-controlled funds, by-laws, and constitutional clauses can be applied to pressurize factions to obey party leadership decisions. Ultimately, where a leadership carefully centralizes control over finance and institutions (party and state laws), factionalism can become either cooperative or quelled.

Yet different types of parties possess distinct forms of party management style. Indeed to understand the ability of party leaderships to command consent, it becomes necessary to classify parties in terms of their methods of origin as well as their degree of leadership centralization. In

8 Interview with Anusorn Wongwan, son of (almost) Prime Minister Narong Wongwan, former cabinet minister (several times) and MP for Thai Rak Thai, People’s Power Party, 20 October 2008.

terms of origin, parties have generally arisen from four alternative sources. One path has been through their establishment by metropolitan politico-businesspeople (e.g. Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai). Secondly, parties have been created through mergers with other political parties (e.g. Democrat, Bhumjai Thai). Thai parties have thirdly arisen from factional splits (e.g. Social Action). Finally, parties have sprung up as instruments of retired military officers, seeking to maintain or enhance their political sway (e.g. Chart Thai party). Method of origin tends to influence the ability to control parties. Parties which spring up following mergers, as a result of factional splits or through the efforts of retired soldiers have tended to be loosely institutionalized, regionalized, mid-sized, not long-lasting, and often dependent upon financing from faction-linked financiers. Yet where businesspeople create parties using substantial quantities of capital, the greater access to and use of finance can ensure a more verticalized control of factions (Chambers 2003: 78-79).

The second classification, leadership centralization, refers to the degree to which party leadership is centered upon one person within the party. Unfortunately, few party typologies relate to centralization of party power. An exception to this tendency is a party taxonomy developed by Susan Scarrow (2005). On the basis of crucial features of concentration and centralization of internal decision-making power, she identifies five models of party organization (Scharrow 2005).

The first – leader-dominated parties – are loosely structured and dominated by a single prominent individual. Usually the party leader (often the party founder) is self-selected. Decision-making power is tightly held at the centre.

The second – cadre parties (based upon Duverger's typology) – tend to be dominated by a small and self-selected leadership group of notables. It is organized in closed, local caucuses which have minimal organization. Decision-making is dispersed among leaders at different levels of party organization. Party finance is also decentralized, drawn from intra-party groupings.

The third model is the party of individual representation (Duverger's mass party). Such parties tend to utilize highly centralized and ideological mass-mobilization of social groups (Krouwel 2006: 250).

In the fourth variant – corporatist parties, leaders and representatives of various interest groups have privileged positions within the party. Delegates from these social sub-groups and larger segments sit in party councils and act on behalf of their 'constituencies'. These parties can be either office- or policy-seeking. Decision-making tends to be less inclusive than in mass parties and more centralized than in cadre parties.

The fifth model is the party built on the principles of ‘basis democracy’. These issue-oriented, sometimes highly ideological parties have been less commonly found in emerging democracies.

These five party types are not entirely exhaustive nor are all these criteria mutually exclusive. In addition, there can be overlaps among them. Yet at the same time, this classification offers sufficient clarity, providing a conceptual map for empirical analyses. In emerging, non-ideological party systems such as in Thailand, only leader-dominated, cadre, and corporatist party structures are prevalent.

Moreover, within these parties, degree of leadership centralization and the ability of leadership to harness the tools of finance and rules tend to determine party management style. Where a party leadership overly constrains intra-party debates, where there are oppressive party by-laws, where there are multiple party options for MPs, and where there is no centralized control of party finance, mass party-switching by multiple factions can be rife given that they are provided little voice. On the other hand, where party leaderships are very slackly organized and where few, if any, by-laws exist (to centralize party decision-making and financial powers in the office of the party leader), factions easily group together and can become even more coherent than the party itself. Both situations give rise to unstable parties participating in cabinets. In the first case, factions fed up with tyrannical party leaderships sometimes cause their party to splinter, an event that can lead to a coalition’s collapse. In the second scenario, decentralized parties suffer such pandemonium that policy decisions are made at a snail’s pace and it is often difficult for weak PMs to simultaneously satisfy multiple factions with cabinet postings or other spoils.

Ultimately, the manner of party organization contributes to a party’s choice of approach in managing intra-party factions. Indeed, a continuum exists which distinguishes party management style on the basis of leadership centralization. Along this continuum four different management styles can be differentiated.

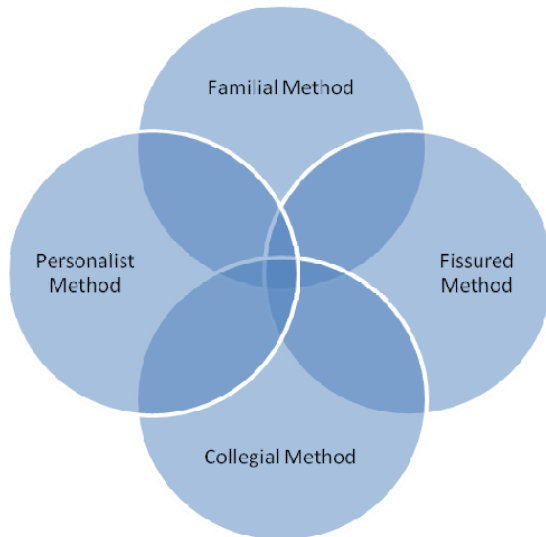
One is the fissured management approach – typical in cadre parties – which decentralizes party leadership attempting to deal with competitive or degenerative factionalism by offering prominence to factions in the supervision of party objectives. Though this kind of management is often unintended, other times a party’s official leaders have little choice but to cooperate with financially prominent faction bosses. Indeed, some parties are purposely and temporarily created for the sole objective of acting as legal “holding companies” for party-shifting factions that at least initially cooperate to divide the spoils of office (Boucek 2009: 469).

Another form of party management is the familial style. Such a style can be found in cadre parties verticalized towards a central personality: the party father. Indeed, “familial” harks back to deep ties between the party leadership and its MPs built around socially constructed patterns of proven trust over time. A parent-like figure directs the party but cohesion is strong because loyalty is often intense. Such parties tend to be regional.

A third management style is personalist, epitomizing party structure in leader-dominated parties. Such a style assumes that the party leader can and does dictate terms to party brethren. The party is generally a mere vehicle for the party leader. This has been a common form for medium and small-sized parties.

Finally, there is the collegial management style – found in corporatist, ideological, or policy-oriented parties. Collegiality implies that the Executive Committee makes decisions by voting or consensus rather than the decisions of a personalist politico or party “father.” A more inclusionary form of collegiality often seeks to craft party platforms/policies based upon the perceived needs of its party grassroots. Finally, the financial rewards which most party leaders require to ensure loyalty are often not as common in parties with collegial management styles (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Four Party Management Styles, Including In-between Areas



Source: Authors' own compilation.

Factions thrive – gaining autonomy – in fissured parties because such divisions imply a decentralization of management. Intra-party cliques often collaborate with familial parties where they feel positively treated by party leader “parents” – in the form of gaining sufficient government postings and are allowed to extract rent. Factions are more negatively inclined towards personalist and collegial management styles. Highly-verticalized personalist party control encourages factions to defect while collegial party executive committees require factions to give up much of their political autonomy to the whims of central committees. Each of these last two forms tends to reduce the political space of factional MP groupings.

Finally, management styles can transition from one to another. This can generally be seen when a personalist party leader passes from the scene and the party is left fissured. Alternatively, long-standing parties can evolve to exercise collegial or inclusionary styles.

6 Thailand – Party Type and Management Style

Over the last half-century of their existence, Thai political parties, originating as either individual-centered vehicles, mechanisms for rural godfathers and their families, or “clubs” for well-to-do notables, have generally followed two models: the leader-dominated and the cadre party. Meanwhile, mass membership, and issue-oriented parties have been slow to develop in Thailand. Finally, variations on the corporatist model are beginning to evolve. For the most part, Thai parties have preoccupied themselves with achieving material gains for their leaders and office-seeking instead of policy seeking, combined with a lack of ideological appeal and party platforms that would link political parties with social groups and provide a voice to mass memberships. Thai party organizations have been mere legal shells verticalized around a single personality, dominated by notables, or controlled by factions. In Thailand, idealized Duvergian mass parties have thus not evolved while cadre and leader-dominated parties have been quite common.

Given the low institutionalization of Thai parties and the tendency whereby choices of management flow from the way a party is organized, party management styles in Thailand have generally followed three models: fissured, personalist, and familial. Such styles have been the general trend in Thai parties, both large and small. Use of another model – the collegial approach – has appeared in only one seemingly anomalous Thai party. Table 1 lists several Thai parties since 1992, illustrating type of party and style of management.

Table 1: Types of Thai Parties

Political Party	Party Type	Party Management Style
Democrat	Cadre / corporatist	Collegial
Seritham	Cadre	Fissured
Rassadorn	Leader-dominated	Personalist
Ekkapap, Sam-makhitham	Cadre	Fissured
Social Action	Cadre	Fissured
Tin Thai	Leader-dominated	Personalist
Thai Rak Thai/ Palang Prachachon/ Puea Thai	Leader-dominated / corporatist	Personalist
New Aspiration	Leader-dominated	Fissured
Chart Thai / Chart Thai Pattana	Cadre / leader-dominated	Familial
Mahachon	Leader-dominated	Personalist
Palang Dharma	Leader-dominated	Personalist
Matchima Tippathai / Bhumjaithai	Cadre	Fissured
Puea Paendin	Cadre	Fissured
Ruam Jai Thai Chart Pattana	Leader-dominated	Fissured
Pracharaj	Leader-dominated	Personalist

Note: Coding based upon the perceptions of Democrat, Puea Thai, Chart Thai, Thai Rak Thai, former Chart Thai and Puea Paendin MPs as well as academics interviewed in 2008 and 2009. Table 1 includes major political parties in Thailand 1992-2010.

Source: Authors' own compilation.

6.1 Management Tools in Thailand

As in other countries, the degree to which Thai party leaders centralize their control over leadership determines their ability to brandish tools necessary to control factions. And as elsewhere, three tools have been prominently utilized by Thai party leaderships in an attempt to quell factionalism: party funding, party by-laws, and constitutions (some more successfully than oth-

ers).⁹ This section assesses each of these factors and explores how Thailand's four different types of parties vary in their management of intra-party factionalism.

6.1.1 *Party Finance*

Party finance refers to the resources which fuel the party's activities. In general, this has included private donations, membership dues, and budgetary appropriations.

In Thailand, there have traditionally been no centralized fund-raising organizations for political party candidates. Rather, regional notables and factions have dominated party financing (Siripan 2006: 95). The result has been that Thai parties have often become the personal fiefs of their financiers. The 1997 and 2007 constitutions forced parties to place limits on donations and make party accounts transparent to inspectors.

The most recent 2007 Organic Law on Political Parties mandates that political party fund-raising activities must be transparent (Section 54) while party revenues may come from party fees, sale proceeds, fund-raising, private donations, property revenue, and limited subsidies from the Fund for Development of Political Parties (Section 53).¹⁰ Parties receive a minimum of 5,000 THB per year depending on their membership size and success in the previous election ("the greater success, the more money allocated").¹¹ For a single individual, the maximum donation limit by a single individual or legal entity is 10 million THB per year (Section 59). Yet numerous loopholes have impeded the effectiveness of these rules.

6.1.2 *Party by-Laws*

Party by-laws are internal charters by which parties govern themselves, including rules governing party elections, membership, officers' duties, nominations, and MP discipline. Such edicts have been used by party leaders

9 These three factors were cited in personal interviews by Hakuan Choopen, political scientist, Sripatum University, 6 March 2009; Satapol Vorapanyatrakool, assistant to the Parliament of Thailand, 5 March 2009; Chatchawal Worachetwarawat, Committee Advisor, Lower House, Parliament of Thailand, 8 March 2009.

10 Establishing effective gate-keeping control between the state's distribution of this fund might offer party leaders a lever to control factions, especially since funding to party branches (often controlled by regional factions) must, by law, descend from the party leadership. However, the fund has not performed well, given that fund regulations are vague, subsidies have ended up in the coffers of inactive parties, and funding has generally been inadequate. See Punchada Sirivunnabood 2010: 20-22.

11 Personal interview, Aporn Saphadechochow, Election Commission deputy commissioner, 27 February 2009.

to keep back-benchers in line (e.g. MPs must follow the directives of executive committees or face possible expulsion).

Within Thailand, given the general lack of party longevity and institutionalization, by-laws have simply lacked enough time to take hold. Moreover, Thailand's ubiquitous party factionalism has made it difficult for any party constitutions to be effective anyway. Finally, party laws are generally viewed as simple guidelines, while generally not being enforced.

The 1997 "Cobra" case exemplifies an unsuccessful attempt of Thai party executives to control MPs through by-laws. During that year, 12 "rebel" MPs or "Cobras" (comprising three and one-half factions in Thai Citizens' Party [TCP]) refused to follow the directives of the party's executive committee.¹² This violated TCP by-laws and thus the committee expelled the 12 from the party. The by-laws were undergirded by the 1997 constitution. According to Article 118 (Section 22.4 of the Organic Law on Political Parties) of the charter, MPs who disobey party resolutions could be expelled from their political party (thus losing their status as MPs), with the votes of not less than three-fourths of the joint meeting of the party executive committee and the party MPs. As such, the Party Leader (Samak Sundaravej) ordered the 12 MPs out of the party (Political 7 November 1997; Key 8 November 1997). But the "Cobra" MPs argued before the Constitutional Court that their party expulsion violated Article 47 of the 1997 constitution. Article 47 (Article 65 in the 2007 Constitution) upholds the right of MPs to perform their constitutional duties in parliament. The constitutional court ruled in the Cobras' favor, allowing the TCP 12 "Cobras" to continue on as MPs, but giving them 30 days to find a new party, following section 106.8 of the 1997 constitution (*Bangkok Post* 1999a).

12 On 6 November 1997, following the resignation of Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, a coalition bloc led by the Democrat Party managed to gather the support of 196 MPs. Another bloc led by *Chat Pattana* meanwhile commanded the support of 196 other seats in the Lower House. Under these conditions, Thai Citizens' Party leader Samak Sundaravej held a late-night party conference meeting and attempted to gavel through support for *Chat Pattana*. Yet the "Paknam," Nonthaburi, Pitsanuloke, and one member of the two-man Uttaradit team refused to go along and announced their intention to defy Samak and back Chuan Leekpai. Support from the three and one-half Thai Citizens' Party factions – "the Cobras" as party leader Samak angrily called them – was instrumental in pushing Democrat Chuan Leekpai to the premiership, dramatically demonstrating how Thai factions can break and re-make ruling coalitions (see *Bangkok Post* 1997a, 1997b).

6.1.3 Constitutional Regulations

Thai constitutions have traditionally offered few devices which party leaders could use to threaten factions. Regarding party leaders who are in a ruling coalition, the constitutional power of the prime minister to delve out ministerial portfolios and other postings offered a management tool in that premiers could offer these to cooperative factions while denying any or more to recalcitrant cliques. The same holds true for leaders in auxiliary parties who have the authority to grant or withhold postings within their own party quota. Yet factional bickering over portfolio allocations was often destabilizing. In the mid-1990s, political fallout over allegations of connections among corrupt politicians helped to force constitutional changes that put greater restrictions on the power of factions. The 1997 charter thus contributed to centralizing control of party managers over their parties, ensuring greater cabinet durability. Charter stipulations became an important parameter, limiting factionalism in Thai parties. The 2007 constitution reversed this trend, resurrecting traditional factional maneuverability. Not surprisingly, this post-2007 institutional environment has created obstacles for party management (*Bangkok Post* 1999a). Four 1997-2007 constitutional changes were crucial in terms of either diminishing or building up control over factions.

First, corresponding to the aforementioned 1997 precedent-setting case of Thai Citizen's Party (TCP) versus its Paknam faction, articles 65 and 106.7 of the 2007 constitution maintained a loophole for factions seeking to defect from their party.

Second, for factions and MPs wishing to leave parties following the commencement of a parliamentary term, the 2007 constitution actually facilitates such a move. In the 1997 constitution, MPs were required to be a member of a political party for 90 days prior to a general election (Section 107 (4)). Constituency by-elections (Section 119 (2)), elections following expiration of a parliamentary term, and snap elections called by prime ministers always occurred within this 90-day window. Mere resignation from one's party generally meant termination of MP status as well (see section 118 (8)). As such, party migration by MPs and their factions was quite difficult. Party leaders could effectively use this rule to manage factions. For example, under the 1997 constitution, party leaders could nominate (or threaten to nominate) a new candidate for a sitting MP's seat within 89 days before an election, making it impossible for the latter to find a new party in time to compete in the election.¹³ However, the 2007 charter partially unlocked this cage. According to chapter 6, section 101 (3), following an unexpected

13 Personal interview, Democrat Deputy Leader Supatra Masdit, 18 July 2002.

House dissolution, a candidate must be a party member for at least 30 days prior to the new election. Meanwhile, chapter 6, section 107 and 108 specify that the time of parliamentary dissolution cannot be briefer than 45 days. If prime ministers did call a snap election, it would provide migration-minded MPs and factions the opportunity to move to another party. At the same time, the new rule means that prime ministers (as party managers) can no longer use the threat of snap election to keep MPs and factions within their parties (such MPs could resign from their party and seat and prepare to run in the next election). Only a natural expiration of the House would compel MPs to remain in their respective parties for ninety days (with the new general election date established for 45 days later) (Chambers 2008: 39). As such, it is to the advantage of party leaders – in managing factions – to complete the full parliamentary term to keep MPs within their parties.

Third, the 2007 constitution partially resurrected the MMP electoral system existing prior to the 1997 modifications (currently 400 out of 480 seats selected in this manner). As before, since there are 2-3 candidate slots per constituency, this would cause candidates from the same party to compete among themselves instead of uniting against candidates of other parties to ensure party victory. Such intra-party competition, facilitated by MMP, heightens intra-party factionalism (Weerayut and Kornchanok 2007).

Fourth, the revised Organic Law on Political Parties (Section 10) took direct aim at the centralization of parties, stating that no party rule will contain rules allowing the termination of membership of an MP because of the way he/she voted on a resolution in parliament. This section thus grants factions can have greater independent voice from the party leadership on parliamentary bills or resolutions.

The ability of party leaderships to effectively utilize tools for the management of factions depends upon management style. Yet management style is closely linked to the organization type of the party. Cadre and leader-dominated types of parties correspond to party management typified by fissured, familial, or personalist styles while more corporatist-oriented parties tend to be characterized by a more coherent collegiality (see Table 1). Moreover, different types of Thai parties – with different management styles – have experienced differing degrees of success in managing factional conflict. Cadre and leader-dominated party types, possessing less cohering party structures, more typically experience intra-party chaos than corporatist ones. Conflicts within such parties generally revolve around competition among personalist-led factions for rent: informal salaries or political positions for faction leaders. The larger such parties become, there will be less spoils to go around and thus an overabundance of party MPs. In such parties, “[o]nce you have more than 80 MPs in your party, [it is] sure to be destroyed be-

cause over time you cannot reward over 80 people.”¹⁴ On the other hand, in the cadre/corporatist Democrat party, conflicts appear more latent, regionally-oriented, and are often resolved through intra-party elections, which, unlike other parties, are held at all levels (Askew 2008: 293).

7 Managing Parties and Factions in Thailand: Four Case Studies

Given the connection between party type and management style, this next section focuses on four Thai parties as case studies to illustrate their management approach and use of management tools. Each case reveals a distinct style from the others.

7.1 Chart Thai/Chart Thai Pattana

Founded in 1974 and once ridden with multiple, regional factions, in 2008 Chart Thai became dominated by the rump faction of Banharn Silpa-archa family. In December 2008, the Constitution Court ruled to dissolve CTP. All CTP party executives (including Banharn) were banned from politics for five years. Banharn thus created a clone party under his brother Chumpol called Chart Thai Pattana (CTPP). It joined the current anti-Thaksin Shinawatra ruling coalition in mid-December, 2008.

Organizationally, CTPP appears as a cadre/personalist party with a familial management style. Indeed,

power is only with the party leader [Banharn Silpa-archa] [...] He is like the father of a family unlike TRT in which Thaksin was like the CEO of a corporation.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the Silpa-archa family and highly trusted party elders have great influence. The Chart Thai leader cannot only control all party activities but also veto any party resolution and decision of the party’s main organ, the Executive Committee. CTP (CTPP) has had a low level of institutionalization, where personalistic ties take precedence over regulations and elections. “This informal nature influences all aspects of the party’s structure and decision-making” (Thornton 2004: 414).

14 Interview with unnamed former Thai cabinet minister and current member of Thailand’s Privy Council, April 18, 2002.

15 Personal interview, anonymous former Chart Thai party candidate and current Chart Thai Pattana party executive, 20 March 2009.

While CTPP is leader-dominated since it is based around the Banharn Silpa-archa family, it is minimally organized around a group of local notables, making it also cadre-esque in nature. Furthermore, MPs are still required to foot part of the bill for their election or re-election. However, the lion's share of funding remains with the Silpa-archas. Indeed, Banharn has been able to control Chart Thai and Chart Thai Pattana by delving out salaries to MPs each month. As such, control over party funding is essential to maintain control over the party (Thornton 2004: 414).

As for party by-laws, they are a negligible tool to the party (Thornton 2004: 414). Informal patron-client and financial control by Banharn or his familial minions is much more prevalent.

7.2 Democrat

The Democrat Party (DP) is today Thailand's oldest still-functioning political party (Askew 2008). Formed in 1946, DP began to cohere with the 1991 accession to power of Democrat Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai (party leader 1991-2003). Chuan served as Thailand's PM twice (1992-5; 1997-2001). Though personalities are important in DP, region seems to best differentiate one faction from another. Thus, there have been Northern, Central, Bangkok, Northeast, and Southern wings. The Bangkok and Southern wings are by far predominant. Party switching by DP MPs is rare, though it does occur.¹⁶ In mid-December 2008, the Democrats successfully cobbled together a coalition government under Abhisit Vechachiwa. Despite attempts by anti-government demonstrators to bring down this coalition in 2010, it may remain in office until the end of the parliamentary term.

The Democrat Party appears as a cadre/corporatist party, being vote-seeking and office-seeking, as well as more transparent and less verticalized than other Thai parties, while practicing a collegial party management style. It possesses a general assembly, which elects an executive board that oversees the party. Open committee decision-making generally takes precedence over back-room deals by party elders. It is the only Thai party which has a formalized electoral process to select party leaders. The party leader (since March 2005: Abhisit) is less powerful than in most other parties. He/she is responsible only for party administration and for being the representative of the party and cannot appoint people to party positions or committees without the consent of the Executive Committee, the party's main decision-mak-

16 Ockey 1994: 273. Democrat Deputy Leader Supatra Masdit has discussed the Democrat Party's division into five regional groupings: South, North, Northeast, Bangkok, and Central. Personal interview, Democrat Deputy Leader Supatra Masdit, 18 July 2002.

ing organ. Given its long history, the party has become an institution under the collective responsibility of the Executive Committee – not a mere vehicle for a single Thai politico (Anusorn 1998: 424; Askew 2008). Former Democrat Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai adds:

The rules or norms which make the Democrat Party unique compared to other [Thai] parties derive from four sources. First, it was historically formed by professional leaders with a shared ideology rather than simple entrepreneurs. Second, the structure of DP is divided by region [...] Third, DP has a culture of organization. No businessman is allowed to make DP his private fief. Instead, in choosing DP leaders, economic position is not considered as important as personality/leadership qualities. Fourth, in terms of campaign, DP does not rely on money as much as other parties though finance is important. This prevents money dependence which leads to domination by factions or control over cabinet quotas by businesspeople. DP is thus more decentralized in decision-making.¹⁷

Another Democrat MP refers to DP as an “inter-democracy party.” Power comes not from one person but from a transparent committee structure systematized by constant rotation of personnel and input from all 192 branches of the party. This specific cultural management style is most important to maintaining unity in the party.¹⁸

Party funding in the Democrat Party derives from donations, membership dues, and fund-raising. DP is the “only party engaged in broad-based fund-raising and membership drives” while also taxing DP MPs.¹⁹ Every Democrat MP is required to donate 5% of his/her monthly income to the party coffers while DP ministers must donate 10%.²⁰

As for party by-laws, the Democrat Party’s rules are general and not so important per se in maintaining party unity. Still, they serve as a general framework which harnesses the party’s much more important management style.²¹

17 Personal interview, former Democrat Party Prime Minister and current party elder Chuan Leekpai, 31 March 2009.

18 Personal interview, Democrat MP and Chief Whip Chinnawan Boonkiap, 10 February 2009.

19 Personal interview, Buranaj Smutharaks, Spokesperson, Democrat Party, 7 March 2009.

20 Personal interview, Hakuan Choopen, political scientist, Sripatum University, 6 March 2009.

21 Personal interview, Hakuan Choopen, political scientist, Sripatum University, 6 March 2009.

7.3 Thai Rak Thai/Palang Prachachon/Puea Thai

Thai Rak Thai (TRT, Thais Loving Thais) was founded in 1998 by telecommunications billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra who became its first leader. In 2001, TRT won a landslide victory in general elections, remaining in power until the 19 September 2006 coup. In May, 2007 TRT was dissolved and its party executives (including Thaksin) were banned from politics for five years. Thereupon, the TRT Group (loyalists of ousted PM Thaksin Shinawatra), sought refuge in the Palang Prachachon (PPP, People's Power Party) (Sopon 2007). The December 2007 election returned pro-Thaksin politicians to power through a plurality victory. In December 2008, Thailand's Supreme Court ruled to dissolve PPP and PM Somchai Wongsawat was thus toppled. At this point, a key faction defected from the party to join an anti-Thaksin coalition. In late-December, PPP cloned a new party home for itself – Puea Thai (For Thais). As of 2010 Puea Thai was the leading opposition party in Thailand's National Assembly. There are currently four factions in the Puea Thai Party.²²

Regarding party management style, TRT (and its successors) – appearing as both a leader-dominated and corporatist party highly verticalized in terms of party organization – has utilized a personalist approach. Virtually every decision has depended on the party leader undergirded by a coterie of executives (whose lesser decision-making powers are reviewed by the party leader). Thus, Thaksin ran TRT much like a corporation with himself as CEO. Though PPP's organizational characteristics remained rather murky, one can surmise that since the party was meant to be a proxy for Thaksin's TRT, that Thaksin himself retained surreptitious control over it. Still, intra-party factiousness was more pronounced in PPP than it had been in TRT. This owed partly to the inability of party leader Samak to match the factional juggling abilities of Thaksin but also to the 2007 constitution which, to some extent, weakened party leadership control over MP behavior, making it more difficult for the party leadership to manage factions (Anucha and Aekarach 2008). Moreover, PPP was simply a large party with many factions seeking the spoils of office (Anucha and Aekarach 2008). Today Puea Thai is perhaps even more decentralized and factionalized than PPP.

Party funding for Thai Rak Thai (and Palang Prachachon, Puea Thai) has derived mostly from Thaksin Shinawatra and a few other backers. The ability of Thaksin and his wealthy associates to centralize control over party finance in TRT contributed to his ability to maintain a tight reign over the party. PPP was less financially dominated by him and Puea Thai even less so.

22 Personal interview with Wittaya Buranasiri (Puea Thai MP and Chief Whip), 8 March 2009.

Still, in all three parties, personalist control over finance has contributed to maintaining authority over the majority of affiliated MPs. This has included the paying of monthly salaries by the leadership to MPs.²³ A senior member of TRT/PPP told the author that state subsidies for parties have been of little benefit to his party since such funding is not working well in Thailand. He added that membership dues are also not important. What matters most is private funding.²⁴

Thaksin Shinawatra did something new when he became the BIG funder for TRT party. That way, he did not have to worry about having to please factions or worry about any party corruption by those factions.²⁵ Party by-laws possess little importance in TRT, PPP, and PT. However finance has been significant.

7.4 Puea Paendin

This party has been included in this study, despite its small size (32 MPs) and only recent formation (2007), as an example of where party management of intra-party conflict has been unsuccessful. Puea Paendin (PP) characterizes the common trend in most Thai parties which have come and gone with great regularity. The party represents a conglomeration of ex-TRT factions seeking to produce a compromise between Thaksin and the Democrats. During the 2007 election, PP possessed five cliques, soon diminishing into factional pandemonium. In late 2008 it joined the coalition led by Democrat Abhisit. Yet in 2009-10 PP has remained a party divided. With over 20 of its MPs aligned with DP (four factions), the remainder (one faction) is officially siding with Puea Thai (Saritdet 2009). According to a PP insider, the “main problem” for the party is that “members (and factions) think they don’t have to follow the party leader or the party by-laws.”²⁶ In June 2010, the party became even more disunited as a major faction refused to support the Democrat-led administration against a parliamentary censure motion (*The Nation* 2010).

Organizationally, PP represents the most desperate castle of cards imaginable. It is a classic cadre party which practices a fissured management

23 Anucha and Aekarach 2008. Personal interview, Itirat Chandrasurin, MP, Puea Thai party, 7 March 2009.

24 Personal interview, Anusorn Wongwan, son of politico Narong Wongwan, former cabinet minister and MP for Thai Rak Thai, People’s Power Party, 20 October 2008.

25 Personal interview, Anusorn Wongwan, son of politico Narong Wongwan, former cabinet minister and MP for Thai Rak Thai, People’s Power Party, 20 October 2008.

26 Personal interview, Puea Paendin MP Nachapol Tancharoen [son of PP faction leader Suchart Tancharoen], 26 February 2009.

style in which decisions must be unanimously approved by all faction leaders, otherwise there is no guarantee that the MP factions, which these leaders control, will go along with the party leader's decisions. PP has been especially fond of using gentlemen's agreements when it has served in a coalition given that it must appease its faction leaders with portfolio positions to prevent intra-party defections (see, for example, *Bangkok Post* 2008). Ultimately, "for order [to exist] in PP, everything depends on the balance of power among the interests of the leaders of the groups [factions]."

As for party finance, it is derived from the coffers of individual factions, though PP also receives money from the state. Still, the inability of any one factional group or person to instill stability in the young party has made it a difficult ship to steer. As such, intra-party infighting tends to be quite high and party control over such factiousness only occurs where "carrots" can be offered to the individual factions. Ultimately, party funding is just as important as the balance of power between the interests of faction leaders in securing order in PP.²⁷

Regarding party by-laws, though Puea Pandin possesses them, its rules are hardly clear and mostly unenforceable. As such, this institution is "not so important for PP" and has done little to reduce intra-party conflicts.²⁸

8 Conclusion: A Fissiparous Future?

Though cooperative factionalism can facilitate democracy, where factionalism degenerates into severe conflicts over the allocation of personalist patronage, then party and assembly stability – which fundamentally provide steadiness for democracy – become threatened. Party management seeks to keep such factionalism at bay.

In Thailand's evolving party system, the plethora of egoistic nested games involves sticky linkages between inter-party and intra-party levels. Factional behavior derives from intentions which are interest-maximizing in a quest for the highest payoff – not for the macro-level party at large but for the micro-level, personalist sub-party – the faction. Some level of factionalism is inherent in any party – though it can be latent. Internal party conflict leads to increasingly pronounced factionalism where such cliques outnumber the supply of potential benefits to be derived (e.g. government posts, control over state concessions, control over ministerial funds to recoup

27 Personal interview, Puea Paendin MP Nachapol Tancharoen [son of PP faction leader Suchart Tancharoen], 26 February 2009.

28 Personal interview, Puea Paendin MP Nachapol Tancharoen [son of PP faction leader Suchart Tancharoen], 26 February 2009.

election costs, etc.). Conflicts among dominant factions (who control the party leadership) and minor factions have debilitated both parties and ruling coalitions.

To maintain control over the party and limit intra-party factionalism, party leaderships seek to effectively manage it. Yet, as this study has argued, the management style available to party leaderships depends upon the type of party they lead. Of all Thai parties, it is the cadre/corporatist Democrat (since 1992) – with its collegial management approach (developed over time) – which has created a lasting and mutualizing coherence among party MPs and other members – helping to ensure control over lower-echelon party voices. On the other hand, Thaksin Shinawatra (with his financially-greased leader-dominated/corporatist parties and personalist management style) and Chart Thai (Pattana) (with its familial style and smaller organization) have only generally succeeded in monopolizing party control. Meanwhile, Puea Paendin, with its traditional loosely-cohering, fissured nature and material enticements to factions for short-term compromises, has managed only to temporarily “get by” or “muddle through.”

Party survival over time often reflects the ability of party leaders to restrain or deliver payoffs (e.g. financial rewards or the spoils of office) to their factions to resolve intra-party factional conflicts and prevent party realignments. In some cases, a single affluent faction leader dominates the party. In others, a charismatic party leader successfully arbitrates factional needs, the more successful mediations generally requiring more money. Indeed, the ability of these leaders to control party finance has been essential to their triumphs. Success has meant the ability of party leaderships to efficiently allocate interest so as to secure equilibrium among factions satisfactory to each clique’s material potentialities. However, such triumphs have been short-term with large parties (with more factions to appease) especially tending to be less successful (Nipun 1989).

As for party by-laws, these have generally been of little importance in managing intra-party factionalism in Thailand. With the exception of the Democrat and Chart Thai (Chart Thai Pattana) parties, no relevant Thai party today (2010) has had a party lifespan longer than two years. Thus, by-laws have had little time to take hold. Moreover, Thailand’s ubiquitous party factionalism has made it difficult for any party constitutions to be effective anyway. Finally, party laws are generally viewed as simple guidelines, while generally not being enforced.

In contrast, constitutions (and their manipulation by party members) have more effectively hemmed in or given breathing space to intra-party conflict. Some party leaders have effectively used constitutional provisions to ensure compliance by party members (e.g. the aforementioned article

107.4 90-day rule of the 1997 constitution). Meanwhile, some party factions have used constitutions to resist leadership demands (e.g. article 47 and 118.8 of the 1997 constitution, allowing in some cases disgruntled factions to defect from their party). The 2007 constitution, however, has clearly veered in favor of granting more autonomy to factions vis-à-vis their party leaderships.

All in all, the careful use of constitutional provisions (which centralize power in party leaderships per the 1997 constitution) and manipulation of party finance have been the most practical tools for party leaderships seeking to rein in potentially-roving factions. The ability to use these tools, however, necessitates that factions are neither temporarily compensated by too fissured a management approach or defect from the party given an overbearing personalist/familial one. Collegiality – as practiced by the Democrat party – thus serves the purpose of offering a sense of inclusiveness regarding party decision-making which mutualizes factional consent.

In sum, given the fissiparous nature of most Thai parties, this study offers two suggestions to diminish factionalism and manage intra-party conflicts in Thailand. First, if party leaderships are looking for smooth durability and longevity within their party, they should in future make more use of a collegial form of party management, following the model of the Democrat Party to ensure generally smooth party coherence. Though the personalist approach of Thaksin (directing the leader-centered/corporatist Thai Rak Thai party) was effective until the 2006 coup, his use of personalism to manage factionalism was limited to his ability to remain in direct personalist control of his party. Secondly, though the 2007 constitution has succeeded in empowering the “voice” of factions vis-à-vis their party leaders, a return to the factional controls of the 1997 constitution and a Political Party Fund which more effectively distributes subsidies to party leaders would contribute to the development of more cohesive parties in Thailand.

The relevance of factionalism in Thailand continues unimpeded. In December 2008, the defection by the Newin Chidchob clique from the pro-Thaksin PPP was instrumental in the formation of a new ruling coalition. In January 2009, Newin helped to form a new cadre and factious party. Arising as a marriage between the Somsak Thepsuthin faction – from the dissolved Matchima Thipataya Party (8 MPs), the Chidchob faction (22 MPs), and the Sora-at Glinpratrum faction (2 MPs), the new party was called Bhumjai Thai (*The Nation* 2009a). Abhisit administration Interior Minister, former Interim PM, and Newin confidante Chaovarat Chanvirakul was named party leader though Newin was informally the dominant power behind the party. Bhumjai Thai (BJT) has ample party funding given that it receives massive support from Thai corporations. It is run as a “public company”, with party MPs

receiving a monthly allowance as well as a budget for various activities (*The Nation* 2009b). The party has apparently amassed enough funding to equip its own paramilitary (through Chaovarat's position as Interior Minister). This group is called "the Blue Shirts," and its members have exchanged blows with pro-Thaksin "Red Shirt" demonstrators, as exemplified in March-April 2009 (Somroutai 2009). In terms of leadership, BJT's style is fissured among faction leaders Newin, Somsak, and Sora-at, though, given Newin's overall supremacy, the party in many ways corresponds to the personalist management style of Thai Rak Thai (with Thaksin dominating TRT's inner workings).

BJT is today becoming more relevant to Thai party and parliamentary politics. It is a necessary coalition partner for Abhisit Vechachiva's Democrat Party-led coalition to remain in power. With Abhisit's government having barely weathered the tremendous 2010 demonstrations in Bangkok by pro-Thaksin "Red Shirt" demonstrators, some see BJT as perhaps leading the ruling coalition after the next general election especially given the rumored impending influx of several MPs from other parties into it (*Bangkok Post* 2010). If so, the party's personalist patchwork of fissured factionalism could become the model Thai party for the foreseeable future. Such a scenario means that intra-party factionalism will continue to play a significant role in Thai politics. It also suggests that Thailand might be reverting back to its pre-1997 system of unstable, weakly cohering parties amidst competitive, powerful factions. If so, then parties' management of factionalism will continue to be a serious issue. Such a phenomenon does not bode well for durable democratization in Thailand.

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