

**PROTEST EVENT ANALYSIS FROM ‘THAI RATH’ BETWEEN 1997 AND 2016:  
RESULTS AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES\***

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**Abstract**

This research is an attempt to quantify the protest events recorded by the Thai Rath from 1997 to 2016. By applying the content analysis method, the Protest Event Analysis (PEA) in particular, this paper presents a picture of the protests over the past two decades, whereby the ebb and flow of democracy in Thailand were evident. I, first, note the different searching results from two different words, Protest (807, and 535 for refined results) and Demonstration (4495, and 4051 for refined results). The search results of Demonstration are greater than those of Protest (approximately between 5 to 7 times greater). The next conclusion to be drawn from the Thai Rath is that it mostly reported about United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship or UDD, and the first day of August was the most likely time for the protest events to reach a peak in terms of frequency. The final conclusion comes from investigating phases frequently used by the campaigners in the protest events. I found that the main target of the protesters was the government, and their words contained a diagnosed frame and a motivational frame. My comprehensive investigation contributes greatly to researchers in many fields, especially for democratization scholars to test, for instance, the relationship between the middle class and democratic waves in Thailand.

**Keywords:** Protest Event Analysis (PEA), protest events in Thailand, content analysis,  
Thai democracy

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Protest was arguably common in Thailand before the almost two decades of political turmoil of the late-2000s. However, before the 2000s, most scholars explore the protests by focusing on a single case study, especially labor strikes (Tantayotin, 1990; Chaikan, 1987) or particular political events such as 14 October 1973 or 6 October 1976 (Kongkirati, 2012). Although this conventional pattern of protest studies continued after 2006, the academic focus shifted to social movement organizations or other fresh new actors, such as the media, in an attempt to debunk the protest events. For example, Buchanan (2013) interprets his protest experience of the 2010 May event and the Red Shirts activists' use of language, political performance, and symbols in the same event. This enables him to provide an insightful meaning of protest, especially exposing the Red Shirts participant's desires and understanding of the protest situations they were encountering. Moreover, scholars have attempted to unfold the actors' intentions in protest events. For example, Fratticcioli (2012) reveals how the two English-language newspapers, the Bangkok Post and the Nation, had a selection bias when reporting news about the Red Shirts in the 2010 May Protest Event—both newspapers tended to write articles in support of the government.

Protest studies began to change because of the rise of people politics, including social movements, after the events of Black May (1992) and the promulgation of the 1997 Constitution. In

his renown book on the Poor People Movement, Prapart Pintobtang (1998) estimates that in 1995 there were 754 protests but this increased to 1,219 in 2003. He used this figure to suggest that the larger number of protests in 2003 resulted from an expansion of social movements and networks; that is, the growing of movement industries related to the increasing numbers of protests. The numbers of protests were also significant when Pongsak Luangaram and Yuthana Sethapramote (2018) measured the impacts of political uncertainty in Thailand from 2006 to 2014, using front-page coverage as data. One important finding of their study is that although the newspapers carried less coverage of the protests after the 2014 military coup d'état, protest stories were still one of the major causes of political uncertainty. These two studies are an example of how protest studies have changed. Scholars began to use protest event frequency as 'the default variable' (Biggs, 2018, p. 19), and in so doing they tried to incorporate the quantified variables and to establish a causal-relation mechanism into their explanation of protest events. They were then able to measure the proliferation of political contention and waves of protests. This kind of protest study has been common among social movement scholars since the 1970s (Freeman & Johnson, 1999; Koopmans, 1993; Madestam, Shoag, Veuger, & Yanagizawa-Drott, 2013 and see also Biggs, 2018 for a comprehensive summary of the studies of protests).

However, these works did not seek to answer more fundamental questions, such as how many protests have really occurred, how many types of protest take place, who are the protesters and so on.

Although the answers to these questions do not offer a causal explanation of protest, they will present primary information that other researchers could use to perform a more sophisticated inquiry.

This article reflects my ambition to offer basic information about what protests are. Here, a set of data from scrutinizing 7,665 news articles between 1997 to 2016 from the Thai Rath, which is a popular newspaper in Thailand, will be presented. The basic facts displayed in this article are the names of the groups and when they were active. The claims made by the protesters are also displayed.

I begin this article by stating the research objectives, before moving on to the scope of this research. Later, I will discuss my research methodology and research results. I will conclude with a discussion and recommendation for further research.

## 2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The ultimate aim of this research is very simple: to illustrate the basic information of protest events with regards to numbers, groups protesters and their demands. Basically, the research aims are:

1. To count the protest events addressed in Thai Rath, from 1997 to 2017.
2. To illustrate the names of the protest groups.
3. To address some of the key frames that protesters made during their protest.

## 3. RESEARCH SCOPE

I started my research by following Koopmans's suggestion in his 1998 article to use newspapers to study protest events. Although newspapers can face a selection bias, which resulted in a distortion of information ( Oliver & Maney, 2000) , Koopmans (1998) contends that newspapers still have two advantages. First, because newspapers need to report daily and update the news, they unsurprisingly publish continuous and fresh information. This information is consequently preserved in the archives that are kept by newspaper organizations, thus the evidence is unlikely to disappear. Second, press organizations need to secure their credibility. Consequently, it is hardly possible for them to destroy their reputation by publishing a piece of fake news. If they intend to produce fake information, they will risk being wiped out from the newsstands. Nevertheless, I am aware that newspapers have faced many crises during my time of writing. For example, many newspapers have recently decided to close their print edition, such as Post Today, The Nation or Baan Maung. At the same time, many people are increasingly relying on social media networks to update their information. However, when I looked for online information for my inquiry, I encountered problems of continuity and of reliable sources of information. Therefore, newspaper clippings are still a valid and reliable source of information for an investigation.

### *3.1 Sources of information*

I have chosen to use the Thai Rath as my primary source of information for two reasons. First, the Thai Rath is a

‘popular newspaper’ (Siriyuvasak, 2007). This means that the Thai Rath is famous among most Thais and has a large share of the newspaper industry. Consequently, it must try to keep their good standing by reporting news that is of interest to their audience. Second, in any protest event, people seek to make their demands heard. In other words, they want the government or the public to recognize and respond to their presence and claims to ensure that their opportunity to make a change is made possible (Koopmans, 1998). Thus, they often perform their demands in the public sphere (William, 1975; Jenkins, 1995; Tilly & Wood, 2015). Drawing on these two reasons, presumably, if the Thai Rath publishes news about protest events, then this indicates the protesters' success in terms of making a public appearance because their stories finally caught journalists' attention<sup>1</sup>. It then increases the opportunity for public support.

### 3.2 Timeframe

After selecting Thai Rath, I then decided which database I should use to collect the data. The *Matichon Information Center* was chosen because it offers an online search through its website: <http://www.matichonlibrary.com>.

However, its limitation is that it only collects clipping news from 1997 onward. Consequently, I collected data from Thai Rath between 1997 and 2017. I work on approximately 7,665 issues (365 days \* 21 years).

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<sup>1</sup> Arguably, journalists have their own selection bias of which news to be reported (please see discussion in McCarthy & al., 2008; Myers & Caniglia, 2004)

## 4. METHODOLOGY

In this paper, Protest Event Analysis (PEA), which is a types of content analysis, is applied to explain protest events in Thailand from 1997 to 2017. The PEA method has been used by social movement scholars to explore protest events (see, for example, the lists of PEA works in Hutter, 2014). In particular, it has been used to ‘systematically assess the amount and features of protests across various geographical areas and over time’ (Hutter, 2014, p. 335). PEA analysis mostly uses newspaper articles as primary sources of inquiry.

Before explaining the procedure of the research inquiry, it is sensible for any researchers to self-reflect to establish the trustworthiness of their own inquiry (Elo, et al., 2014). Therefore, I would like to address the methodological difficulties that I faced before I created a coding system of the research.

I follow Bengtsson’s recommendation that the researcher should not set an aim of investigation that is too broad because ‘the risk of touching upon too many aspects may prelude the researcher reaching the desired depth of the studied phenomenon’ (2016, p. 10). I found this suggestion useful. After reading through a large amount of information, many interesting facts kept coming up and calling for further investigation. Thus, I often almost ‘slipped’ out the initial purpose of my investigation but it was possible for me to ‘drag’ myself back to my original aim because my research aims were very specific.

Another methodological difficulty was replicating the previous variables. To achieve my third research aim to address some key claims the protesters make during their protest, I replicated the structure of Koopmans claims in his *Codebook for the analysis of political mobilization and communication in the European public spheres*. In the codebook, he breaks down the claims into seven elements (Koopmans, 2002, p. 2). I then created a coding system following Koopmans' description. However, in practice, I found that this was not as straight-forward coding system as it seemed. In fact, it was hard to avoid introducing a coding bias because some variables, especially the variable WHY (FRAME), leave a large gap for the researcher's interpretation. Consequently, I decided to quote whole sentences of the protesters' explanations of why they protested. I then used the NVivo program to make a list of the most frequently used words. This procedure was a time-consuming task, almost as if I had conducted another research project. After I input information from nine years of newspaper issues (before the 2006 coup d'état), approximately 2,500 to 3,000 issues (365 days\*9 years and 8 months), I tested the data. The result was far beyond the original aim of the research purpose because it gave not only frequent uses of words but also indicated catalogs of words used by the protesters. I will present some of my findings later on.

The last point of the research methodology is that I developed my procedures based on seven steps which Ruch and Neidhardt (1998, p.85 cited in Hutter, 2014, p. 254) developed for their PEA research project, PRODAT: '(1) scanning and copying articles; (2)

selecting articles that definitely refer to protest events; (3) sorting articles according to protest themes and campaigns; (4) reading articles over a period of several weeks or months; (5) coding protest events; (6) putting aside problematic cases...; and (7) depositing articles in the hard copy archive.' The Prodat coding system helped me to answer the first and second aims of my research. To answer the third research objective, I applied Koopmans's codebook to code the protest events to investigate the claims made by the protester (as already discussed). A brief description of my research procedure follows:

- (1) Search for data using the *Matichon Information Center* database:
  - Input two subjects: 'protest' (การประท้วง – *Karn-Pra-Tuang*) and 'demonstration' (การชุมนุม – *Karn-Choom-Noom*).
- (2) Select articles that definitely refer to protest events.
- (3) Read articles over a period of several weeks or months.
- (4) Code protest events in Excel. The variable table in Excel contains nine headers<sup>2</sup>: Location (WHEN), Who (SUBJECT ACTOR), How (FORM), Size, Duration, At whom

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<sup>2</sup> Coding descriptions as follow: Location (WHEN) refers to when protest/demonstration started, Who (SUBJECT ACTOR) refers to claimants, How (FORM) means forms of protest the claimants introduced, Size means numbers of people joining a protest, Duration means the time period a protest lasted long, At whom (ADDRESSEE) refers to who the claimants addressed their claims, What (ISSUE) refers to main claims/ reasons they were gathering, For/Against whom? (OBJECT ACTOR) means the real opponents the claimants wanted to address their claims, Why (FRAME) refers to claims (for a codebook, please contact the author).

(ADDRESSEE), What (ISSUE),  
For/Against whom? (OBJECT  
ACTOR), Why (FRAME).  
(5) Deposit articles in the hard copy  
archive.

## 5. RESEARCH RESULTS

In this section, the research results are shown in accordance with the research aims: (1) to count the protest events addressed in Thai Rath from 1997 to 2017; (2) to illustrate the names of the protester groups; and (3) to address some of the key claims the protesters made during their protest.

### 5.1 Counting the Protests

To answer the first question of how many news stories were published about protests in the Thai Rath from 1997 to 2017, the word protest or การประท้วง (karn-pra-tuang) was input into the ‘subject’ of the Matichon Information Center database. The result was surprisingly low: only 803 newspaper reports (out of 7,665 issues). To increase the results, I looked further into the news article and found another word that had close meaning to protest in Thai, which was ‘demonstration’ or การชุมนุม (karn-choom-noom). Consequently, the news items increased to 4,495 news reports, or 5.57 times more than the previous result (see Table 1).

**Table 1:** Comparison of the search results between the word Protest and the word Demonstration from the Thai Rath (1997 to 2017)

YEAR	PROTEST	DEMONSTRATION	GREATER NO. OF DEMONSTRATION
1997	8	27	3.38
1998	16	90	5.63
1999	14	93	6.64
2000	26	101	3.88
2001	33	48	1.45
2002	16	56	3.50
2003	20	72	3.60
2004	34	80	2.35
2005	62	65	1.05
2006*	44	183	4.16
2007	36	179	4.97
2008	70	325	4.64
2009	72	446	6.19
2010	41	658	16.05
2011	79	291	3.68
2012	54	366	6.78
2013	62	598	9.65

\* The Military Coup d'état occurred in 2006 and 2014.

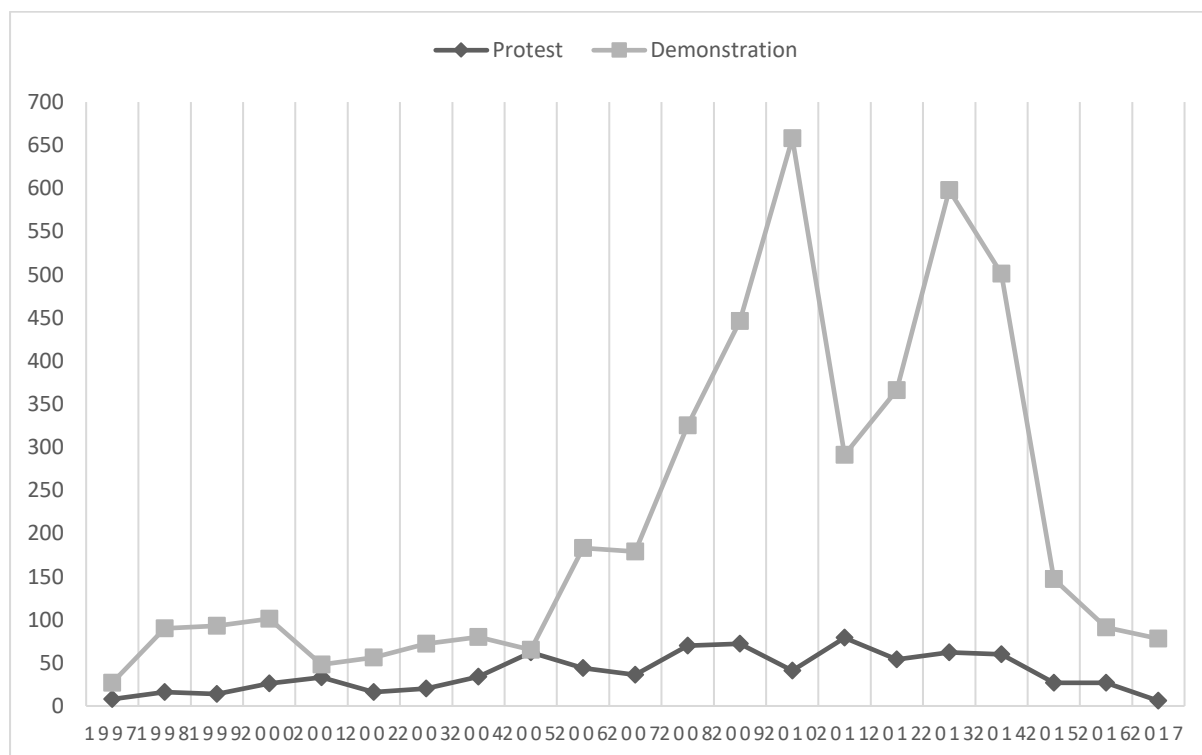
\*\* From 2014 to 2017 Thailand was under the martial laws.

<b>2014*</b>	60	501	8.35
<b>2015**</b>	27	147	5.44
<b>2016**</b>	27	91	3.37
<b>2017**</b>	6	78	13.00
	807	4495	5.57

Table 1 illustrates that Thai Rath increasingly used the word demonstration in 2006. Also, there was a significant rise in the news reports on demonstrations from 2006 to 2014. However, in 2015 (27

and 147) the news of protest and demonstration decreased significantly from 2014 (60 and 501), as presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Comparison of the search results between the word Protest and the word Demonstration from Thai Rath (1997 to 2017)



However, looking deeper into the details of these news reports reveals that some news reports were not valid because some were foreign news stories and some were

personal opinions. Therefore, the results needed to be refined. Tables 2 and 3 display the polished search.

**Table 2:** Refined search results for the word Protest from Thai Rath (1997 to 2017)

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NO. OF NEWS</b>	<b>NO. OF NOT INVOLVED NEWS (%)</b>	<b>REFINED DATA (%)</b>
<b>1997</b>	8	1 (12.50)	7 (87.50)
<b>1998</b>	16	1 (6.25)	15 (93.75)
<b>1999</b>	14	0 (0)	14 (100)
<b>2000</b>	26	0 (0)	26 (100)
<b>2001</b>	33	10 (30.30)	23 (69.70)
<b>2002</b>	16	3 (18.75)	13 (81.25)
<b>2003</b>	20	4 (20)	16 (80)
<b>2004</b>	34	6 (17.65)	28 (82.35)
<b>2005</b>	62	24 (38.71)	38 (61.29)
<b>2006</b>	44	13 (29.55)	31 (70.45)
<b>2007</b>	36	11 (30.56)	25 (69.44)
<b>2008</b>	70	20 (28.57)	50 (71.43)
<b>2009</b>	72	14 (19.44)	58 (80.56)
<b>2010</b>	41	14 (34.15)	27 (65.85)
<b>2011</b>	79	41 (51.90)	38 (48.10)
<b>2012</b>	54	29 (53.70)	25 (46.30)
<b>2013</b>	62	19 (30.65)	43 (69.35)
<b>2014</b>	60	29 (48.33)	31 (51.67)
<b>2015</b>	27	13 (48.15)	14 (51.85)
<b>2016</b>	27	15 (55.56)	12 (44.44)
<b>2017</b>	6	5 (83.33)	1 (16.67)
<b>TOTAL</b>	807	272 (33.71)	535 (66.29)

Table 2 presents the numbers and percentages of the decreased search results. The second column lists the number of news stories that were not related to protest events in Thailand or written to express personal opinions. The third column reports the final searching results of related articles under the word Protest. The last two columns show the percentages of refined data. Overall, the news articles decreased by 33.71% (i.e., 272 articles were omitted from 807 articles

of the previous search results). Therefore, the final research results for the word Protest included 535 news articles. It is worth noting that in 2011, 2012, 2016 and 2017 more than 50% of news articles were excluded. Most these excluded news articles were about foreign events, especially the Arab Spring events. After 2014, Thai Rath's reporters were less likely used the word Protest - they rarely used the term in 2017.



**Table 3:** Refined search results for the word Demonstration from Thai Rath (1997 – 2017)

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NO. OF NEWS</b>	<b>NO. OF NOT INVOLVED NEWS (%)</b>	<b>REFINED DATA (%)</b>
<b>1997</b>	27	1 (3.7)	26 (96.3)
<b>1998</b>	90	14 (15.56)	76 (84.44)
<b>1999</b>	93	5 (5.38)	88 (94.62)
<b>2000</b>	101	4 (3.96)	97 (96.04)
<b>2001</b>	48	3 (6.25)	45 (93.75)
<b>2002</b>	56	3 (5.36)	53 (94.64)
<b>2003</b>	72	23 (31.94)	49 (68.06)
<b>2004</b>	80	12 (15)	68 (85)
<b>2005</b>	65	17 (26.15)	48 (73.85)
<b>2006</b>	183	17 (9.29)	166 (90.71)
<b>2007</b>	179	31 (17.32)	148 (82.68)
<b>2008</b>	325	28 (8.62)	297 (91.38)
<b>2009</b>	446	18 (4.04)	428 (95.96)
<b>2010</b>	658	20 (3.04)	638 (96.96)
<b>2011</b>	291	11 (3.78)	280 (96.22)
<b>2012</b>	366	32 (8.74)	334 (91.26)
<b>2013</b>	598	70 (11.71)	528 (88.29)
<b>2014</b>	501	74 (14.77)	427 (85.23)
<b>2015</b>	147	32 (21.77)	115 (78.23)
<b>2016</b>	91	21 (23.08)	70 (76.92)
<b>2017</b>	78	8 (10.26)	70 (89.74)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4495</b>	<b>444 (9.88)</b>	<b>4051 (90.12)</b>

Table 3 presents the numbers and percentages of the decreased search results for the word Demonstration. The second column lists the news stories that were not related to protest events in Thailand or written to express personal opinions. The third column reports the final search results for related articles under the word

Demonstration. The last two columns show the percentages of refined data. Overall the news articles had decreased by 9.88% (i.e., 444 articles were omitted from 4,495 articles of the previous searching results). Therefore, the final results for the word Demonstration included a total of 4,051 news articles

### 5.2 Participants

The second research objective is to show the group names of participants in the protest events. I coded only those protest events that have group name,

resulting in 986 valid cases. Among these 986 cases, 439 group names are found. Table 4 shows the top-ten rank of group names that are frequently mentioned in Thai Rath from 1997 to 2017.

**Table 4:** Top-ten protest group names mentioned in Thai Rath from 1997 to 2017

Group Name	Total
United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD)	88
The Assembly of the Poor	78
People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD)	70
People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDPC)	28
Campaign for Popular Democracy (CPD)	17
Student and People Network for Reforming Thailand (NRT)	13
Democracy Organization Networks	13
The Red Shirt Participants	12
Pak Moon Dam Mob	12
Cassava Mob	10

From Table 4, it can be seen that the Thai Rath mostly reported about United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship or UDD (= 88 pieces). It is also worth noting that I did not merge some groups together, although they were arguable the same groups or shared the identical group members such as ‘the Red Shirts participants’ and the UDD, the Assembly of the Poor and the Pak Moon Dam Mob, or Campaign for Popular Democracy (CPD) and People's Democratic Reform

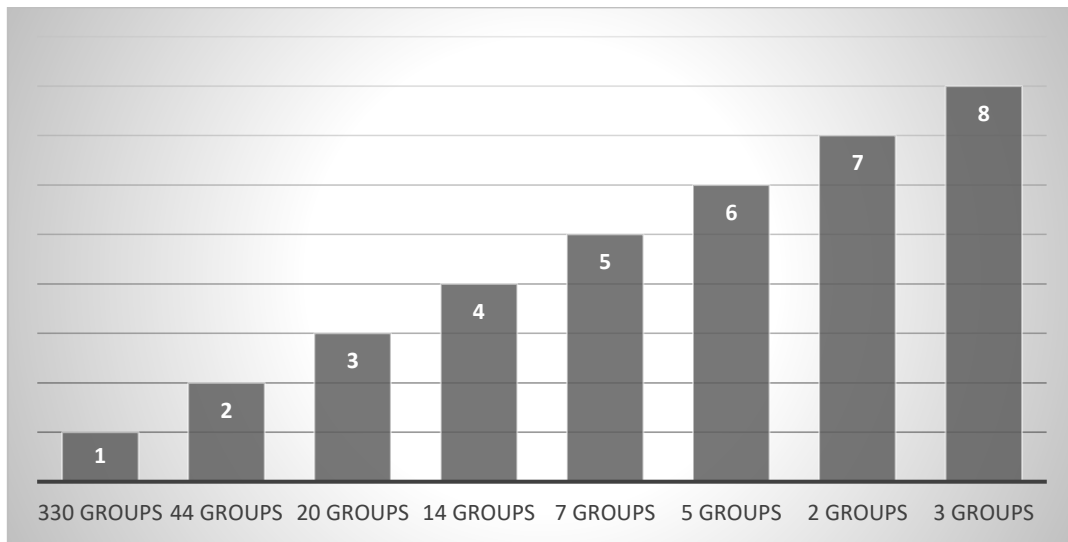
Committee (PDPC). It is because the Thai Rath reported these groups’ activities separately from each other and it was beyond this research scope to clarify the networks of the groups (for those who interested in group networks, please see Cheangsan, 2018; Pitidol, 2016; Pasuk, Treerat, & Baker, 2016).

Another point raised from the investigation is that 330 group names (out of 439 names) were reported just once.

Meanwhile, 44 groups, 20 groups, 14 groups, seven groups, five groups, two groups, and three groups were named

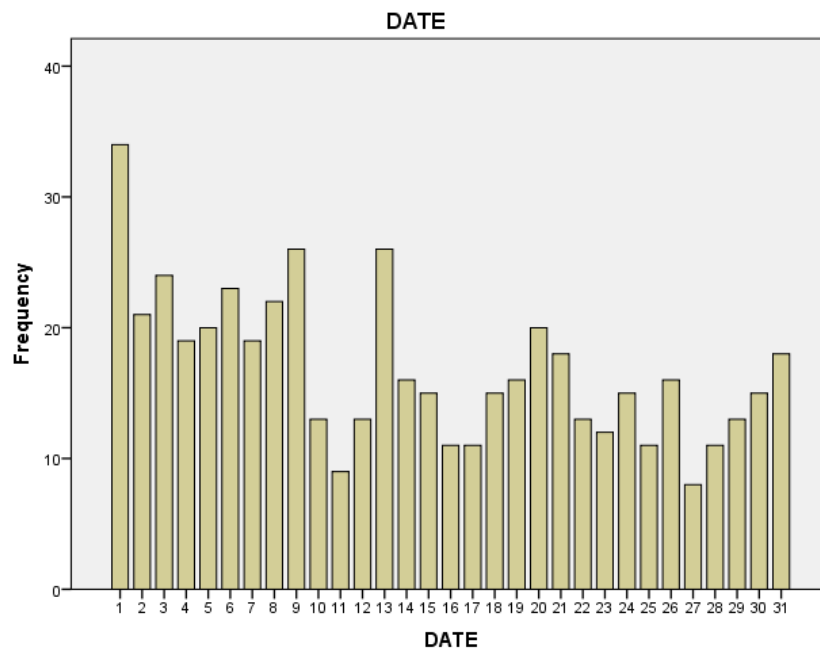
twice, three, four, five, six, seven, and eight times, respectively as showing in Figure 2.

**Figure 2:** Frequency of group names (1997 to 2017)



I also coded the date (i.e., day of the month and month). Figures 3 and 4 display the findings for the 986 cases.

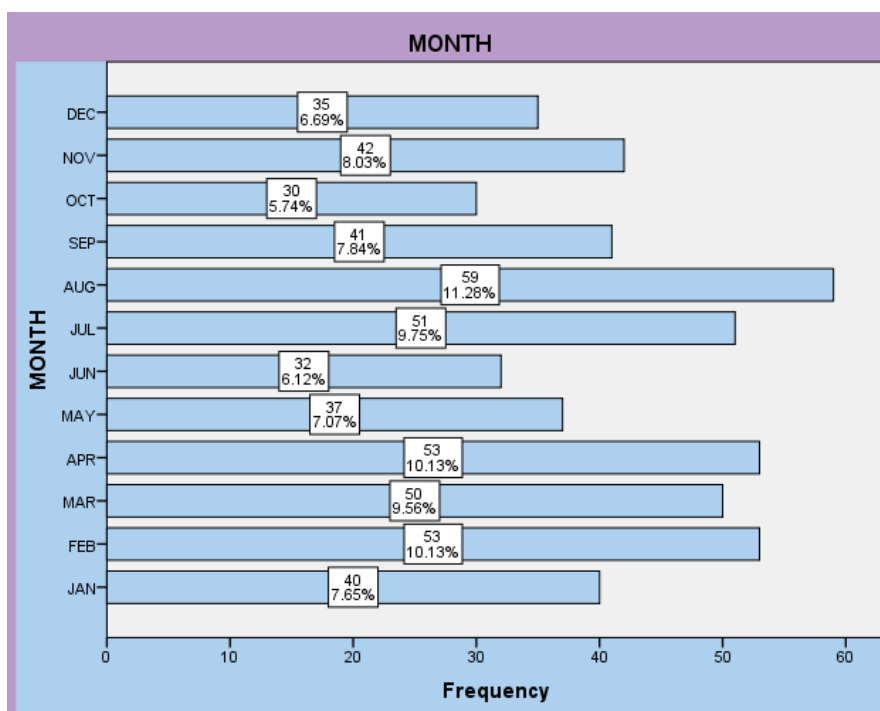
**Figure 3:** Frequency of date of protest events from Thai Rath (1997 to 2017)



From Figures 3 and 4, it can be seen that the first day of August was the most likely time for a protest event to occur. Moreover, by looking at the figures critically, in late-July, the number of protest events gradually increases before

reaching a peak on the first day of August. In addition, when I ran NAME \* DATE \* MONTH crosstabulation in SPSS, only three group names activated in that day and month, but the frequency of news reports was still high.

**Figure 4:** Frequency of month of protest events between 1997 and 2017



It is also worth noting that these findings did not take the severity of the protest events into the calculation. Thus, the findings are against the public recognition, which perceives April, May, and October as the important months of

protest events because at least six significant mass protest events have occurred in these months (i.e., April 2009 and 2010, May 1992 and 2010, and October 1973 and 1976).

5.3 Explaining Words

The last point of investigation is to address some of the key frames that the protesters made during their protest. As discussed earlier, my initial aim was to address the claims that the protesters made. However, I faced coding difficulties

and therefore decided to look at only one variable—the Why (FRAME). The NVivo program was then applied to capture the most frequent phrases used among the protesters. The results are given in Table 5 and Figure 4.

Figure 5: Frequency phrases used among the protesters from Thai Rath (1997 to 2006)



Figure 5 shows the phrases that the protesters used in the protest events from 1997 to 2006 in the Thai Rath. The NVivo program was used to capture all of the

phrases. The bold phrases illustrate the most frequently used phrases in the news articles. Table 5 presents the top nine phrases used by the protesters.

**Table 5:** Frequency of phrases used among the protesters in Thai Rath from 1997 to 2006  
(literally English translated in parentheses)

Word	Counts	Weighted Percentage (%)	Under the government
ขายชาติขายบ้านขายเมือง (Sell country, Sell a home, Sell cities)	2	1.32	Chuan Leekpai
ทักษิณขาดคุณธรรมและจริยธรรม (Thaksin lacks morality and ethics)	2	1.32	Thaksin Shinawatra
รัฐบาลทำงานบกพร่อง (malfunctioned government)	2	1.32	Chuan Leekpai
และเป็นสิทธิเสรีภาพของประชาชน (citizens' Rights and Freedom)	2	1.32	Chuan Leekpai Thaksin Shinawatra
กฎหมายขายชาติ (Laws to sell the nation)	1	0.66	Chuan Leekpai
กฎหมายทาส (Laws to become a slave)	1	0.66	Chuan Leekpai
กฎหมายประเคนฝรั่ง (Laws to offer the nation to the foreigners)	1	0.66	Chuan Leekpai
กฎหมายปลดทรัพย์คนไทย (Laws to confiscate the Thai people's assets)	1	0.66	Chuan Leekpai
กลุ่มที่ออกมาเคลื่อนไหวในวันนี้ได้ร่วมกันต่อสู้ เพื่อให้ได้มาซึ่งประชาธิปไตย (Groups were here together today to fight for democracy)	1	0.66	Chuan Leekpai Thaksin Shinawatra

From Table 5, the findings indicate that the main target of the protesters was the government. Four frequent phases are ขายชาติขายบ้านขายเมือง (literally translated as Sell country, Sell a home, Sell cities); ทักษิณขาดคุณธรรมและจริยธรรม (literally translated as Thaksin lacks morality and ethics); รัฐบาล

ทำงานบกพร่อง (literally translated as malfunctioned government); and และเป็นสิทธิเสรีภาพของประชาชน (literally translated as citizens' Rights and Freedom). The first three phases explain why it was legitimate for the people to stage a protest against the government. For scholars of the framing

process, these three phrases are recognized as a diagnosed frame, while the last phrase is a motivational frame (Benford & Snow, 2000) . The first phrase and the third phrases are linked to the protesters' dissatisfactions with the Chuan government's performance in coping with the economic crisis between 1997 and 2000. The second phrase is the protesters' dissatisfaction with the Thaksin government.

## 6. DISCUSSION

This research is an attempt to quantify the protest events recorded by Thai Rath from 1997 to 2016. The first point to note are the different search results from two different words, Protest (807, and 535 for refined results) and Demonstration (4495, and 4051 for refined results). The search results of Demonstration are greater than those of Protest (approximately between 5 to 7 times greater). The next conclusion to be drawn from the Thai Rath is that it mostly reported on the United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship or UDD and the first day of August was the most likely time for protest events to reach a peak in terms of frequency. The final conclusion comes from investigating phases frequently used by the campaigners in the protest events. The main target of the protesters was the government. The

protesters' words contained a diagnosed frame and a motivational frame.

Unlike previous research on protest, I not only counted protests or used only front-page coverage but I also examined the details of these protest events. In doing so, I could identify groups and their claims in detail. Also, I could see development of claims and activities a group created before they could call on the press editors' attention to be in the front page of the newspaper.

Although this research has some shortcomings (as discussed later on) and has encountered methodological difficulties (as discussed earlier), the data results offer some interesting figures that require further examination, especially when compared with the ebb and flow of Thai democracy. When analyzing the data, or even when coding them, I kept contextualizing the coded data and the research results with concepts of democratic breakdowns and erosion (see Schedler, 1998) and the political situation in Thailand between 2001 and 2014 (Jotikut, 2016).

What interests me is that the number of protest events before the 2006 military coup d'état and before the 2014 military coup d'état are different. In

particular, before 2006, the records of protests events are lower than those before 2014. Also, when looking into the details of the protest events between 2006 and 2014, protest events had spread across the country. Moreover, analyzing the final results shows the sense of dissatisfaction with the government's performance among the protesters, these results definitely cry for further investigation especially on the relationships between (active?) citizens and democratization process in Thailand.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper makes three recommendations for future research on protest events.

The first point is that data collection is a time-consuming method that requires the researcher to codify thousands of news reports. This painstaking task will get worse if the researcher is unfamiliar with the software, such as SPSS or NVivo, because they need to use this software to

analyze the codified data. Therefore, it recommended that the researcher should practice the software before conducting PEA or other content analysis methods.

The second recommendation is to develop other sources of data. This research presents the primary data, which could be used to test across other variables. However, the protest events data is still underdeveloped because only one newspaper, the Thai Rath, is used here. Hence, I would encourage other researchers to replicate my procedure to make a comparison with other newspaper titles.

The final recommendation is that the protest data offers primary information (Hutter, 2014) that can be tested in further research using other variables (i.e. Kriesi, et al., 2006 or Koopmans, 1993), such as the relationship between protest events, the rise of the middle class and the democratic waves in Thailand.



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